

# NIELSEN PARK SYDNEY HARBOUR NATIONAL PARK



## CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Prepared For  
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service  
Office of Environment and Heritage



NSW National Parks  
and Wildlife Service

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Nielsen Park from Shakespeare's Point looking towards Steele Point and the ferry wharf, *circa* 1920 (*NPWS Collection*)

Images of Nielsen Park (Robert Newton, NPWS, 2004)

**Final Conservation Management Plan: Sign off sheet**  
**Nielsen Park**  
**Sydney Harbour National Park**

**Nielsen Park Conservation Management Plan Final Report**

This final version of the Nielsen Park Conservation Management Plan has been endorsed and adopted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service under delegation from the NSW Heritage Council. This endorsement takes effect from February 2013 and remains in effect for a period of five years or until the document is amended or revised.

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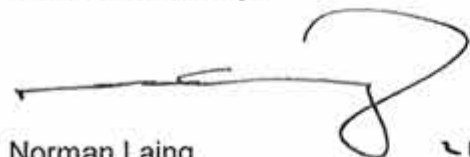
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## Executive Summary

Nielsen Park is a 20-hectare waterfront recreation reserve in Vaucluse, a harbourside suburb of Sydney, that was incorporated into Sydney Harbour National Park in 1968. The park has rich and diverse cultural, social, aesthetic and natural values, containing re-growth and modified landscapes, a range of buildings and structures from different phases of use, Aboriginal sites and remnant flora and fauna of state, regional and local significance.

The present park developed during a series of historical phases, including; occupation by the Birrabirragal Clan (up to 1793), subdivision and purchase (1793-1910), management by the Nielsen Park Trust (1911-1968) and management by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (1968-to present). Changing land-uses over time have left an indelible mark upon the landscape, with now five distinct landscape zones identifiable; natural or re-growth, open parkland, the Greycliffe Gardens, military zone and utility or service zone.

Nielsen Park provides evidence of a number of national historical themes, these include; tracing the evolution of Australia, peopling Australia, developing local, regional and national economies, governing and developing Australia's cultural life. The park also provides evidence of state historic themes; environment, Aboriginal cultures, health, defence, domestic life and leisure.

As a whole, the park is of state significance as it represents the mostly intact Greycliffe Estate, including the JF Hilly designed Victorian Gothic marine villa, and has associations with the Wentworth Family and a number of prominent men and women from the political, legal and commercial circles of Victorian Sydney.

The park has strong associations with William Notting and his community funded organisation, the Harbour Foreshores Vigilance Committee which lobbied for the preservation of harbour foreshore lands for public recreation, and with Niels Nielsen, the Secretary for Lands responsible for the resumption of the private Greycliffe estate to form Nielsen Park.

Greycliffe House became the Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies, only the second hospital established in Australia for infants under the age of 2 years, and later used as the Vaucluse Tresillian Mothercraft Home and Training School, only the third such home established. The Margaret Harper Wing acknowledges an association with Dr Margaret Harper, medical director of the Tresillian hospitals. Surviving the different land-uses and found only in Nielsen Park is the Nielsen Park She-oak (*Allocasuarina portuensis*), which is considered one of the most endangered plants in Australia.

The park is of state significance for the rarity and intactness of two dominant features, the Greycliffe Estate, including Greycliffe House and its historic connectivity to the harbour, its outbuildings and labourer's accommodation and the Steele Point Battery, one of the most intact of the 1871 series of harbour defences surviving within Sydney harbour. The utilisation of the park for defence provides evidence of two major events; the sudden transfer in 1870 of responsibility from Britain to the Colony for its own coastal defence and the arming of the Harbour during World War 2 to protect Sydney from the first clear and present threat, that of Imperial Japan.

The park provides a suite of recreational facilities which were sympathetically designed to match the surrounding landscape, and some of which have been used continuously by the public for over 90 years.



Nielsen Park is also of significance as it conserves a comparatively large area of remnant bushland, consisting of two vegetation communities once common across the eastern suburbs of Sydney and provides habitat for fauna, some species of which are now rare within the local area.

Neilsen Park provides evidence of Aboriginal occupation of the area over hundreds of years, having once provided essentials for life; shelter, food resources and fresh water.

The Park today provides features essential for human existence in the city, open space and access to the harbour foreshore, drawing thousands of visitors each year, but it is unlikely that the appreciation for the dominating headlands and access to the harbour has altered in any way over time.

## How to use this Document

The purpose of this Conservation Management Plan (*the Plan*) is to provide guidance for the on-going conservation and evolution of Nielsen Park as an important place within Sydney Harbour National Park.

Sections 1 - 5 provide a heritage assessment of the Nielsen Park, including its history; a record and analysis of both the built and natural environment, and an assessment of its heritage significance. Sections 6 - 8 provide conservation policies and strategies for conserving the Park's heritage significance. The Plan divides the Park into a series of precincts (see below) for ease of management.

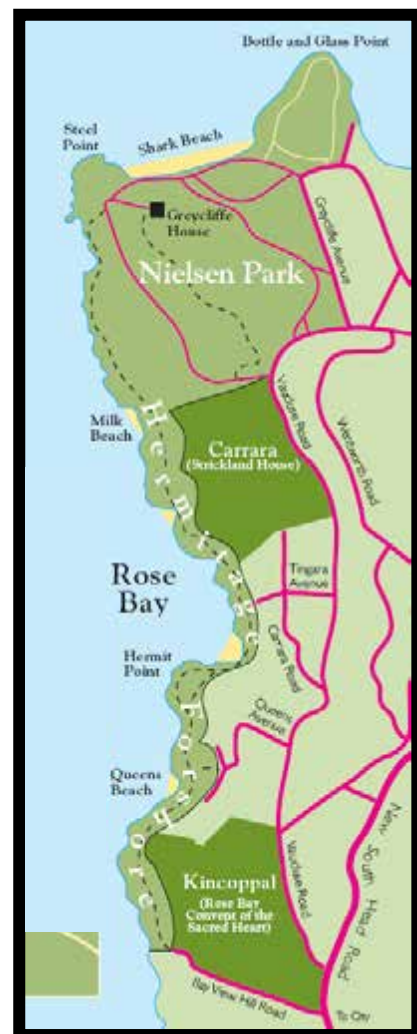


Figure 1.1  
Location context and map of Nielsen Park source NPWS  
(refer to Appendix 2 for plan of the Park's precincts)

The Plan provides the framework for both the short and long term conservation of the heritage significance of the Park. It is an important component in the management of the Park and complements other planning and operational documents. The policies within this document provide park managers with the direction for maintaining and conserving the Park and its values.



Figure 1.2

Site Plan of Nielsen Park source Sydney Harbour National Park *PoM 2012*  
 (refer to Appendix 2 for plan of the Park's precincts)

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Report Objectives

The objectives of this CMP as outlined in the project brief are to:

- identify, direct and achieve long term conservation and management outcomes for Nielsen Park;
- assist NPWS to meet corporate objectives and statutory requirements;
- ensure the balanced and compatible management of cultural and natural heritage values of the Study Area;
- consider the cultural significance of Nielsen Park as an individual place as well as being part of a broader suite of similar places managed by DEC;
- develop forward looking management policies within the context of legislative requirement, the NPWS management framework and stakeholder issues.

### 1.2 Report Structure

This Plan follows the structure set out in Kerr JS, *The Conservation Plan: A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance*, published by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) Fifth Edition 2000 and is consistent with the guidelines to *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999*, and *The Australian Natural Heritage Charter: Standards and Principles for the Conservation of Places of Natural Heritage Significance*, published by The Australian Heritage Commission in Association with the Australian Committee for IUCN.

### 1.3 Location

The Park is located on the eastern shore of Port Jackson between Vaucluse Bay and Rose Bay. It can be reached by public transport bus via Vaucluse Road or by car via Greycliffe Avenue. A service road off Vaucluse Road gives pedestrian and NPWS vehicle access to the Park Workshop, Steele Point and Greycliffe House.

### 1.4 Site Identification and Curtilage

The study area is known as Nielsen Park and is continuous and closely related to the Hermitage Foreshore Reserve, both being part of the Sydney Harbour National Park, however for the purposes of this report the Hermitage Foreshore Reserve does not form part of the study area.

Nielsen Park is bounded on the west and north generally by the high water mark of the natural shoreline (low water mark at the beach), to the east by Coolong Road, Greycliffe Avenue and Vaucluse Road, and to the south by a chain wire fence boundary with 'Cararra' (Strickland House) and a continuation westwards following the line of the fence until the boundary meets the shoreline (see Figure 1.1).

To allow clear description and analysis, the Park is divided into five precincts (refer to Figure 1.2, and Appendix 2 for a more detailed map). These form the basis for the various sections of the report. The precincts do not necessarily relate to all of the characteristics of the Park and analysis and policy are not restricted to specific precincts. However, the use of precincts is useful in understanding the development of the Park. They are:

- 1 Mt Trefle
- 2 Greycliffe House and its immediate setting
- 3 Steel Point Battery
- 4 Shark Beach and the public recreation areas behind it
- 5 Bottle and Glass

## 1.5 Sources Consulted

Apart from the conservation reports, photographs and drawings located at PWG *Greycliffe House* office files, the following sources have also been consulted:

- Australian War Memorial Archives
- Commonwealth Defence Property Records
- Historic Houses Trust of NSW
- La Perouse Aboriginal Land Council
- Mitchell Library Pictures and Map Records
- National Trust of Australia (NSW) Archives
- Public Works Archives
- Royal Australian Historical Society
- Woollahra Council Local History Library

## 1.6 Authorship

This 2012 report has been prepared by Paul Davies Pty Ltd to update and replace the significance, policy and inventory sheet sections of the previous CMP prepared in 2004-6 by David Sheedy Architects, Graham Brooks & Associates and Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects. This plan reviews and builds on the findings of the 2006 report and, based on a more concise recognition of the site's values, provides recommendations and policies for more wholistic management approach for the site. No additional historical research has been undertaken for this revision.

This 2012 report is authored by Paul Davies, Principal of Paul Davies Pty Ltd, Architects Heritage Consultants, assisted by Ed Beebe, Heritage Architect, who prepared the inventories.

## 1.7 Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance given towards source material in this report from the following people and organisations:

- Robert Bird, Robert Newton, Caroline Lawrance, Cath Snelgrove, Robin Aitken, Dave Costello and Rob Porter of NPWS
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- Jane Britten of the Woollahra Council Local History Library
- Peter Poland of the Woollahra History and Heritage Society
- Lynn Collins and Amanda O'Brien of the Vaucluse House Museum of The Historic Houses Trust of NSW

## 2.0 Historical Analysis

### 2.1 The Park Generally

This history of the Nielsen Park reserve as part of the Sydney Harbour National Park can be divided into four main periods:

- the Birrabirragal people,
- subdivision and purchase (see Figure 1.2),
- Nielsen Park Trust and
- National Parks and Wildlife Service.

#### 2.1.1 The Birrabirragal

This section is based on a report from Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions, 2004 (reproduced as Appendix 5).

It is known from early accounts, oral histories and remaining Aboriginal paintings, carvings and middens within the Park that this was an area well used by the Eora people (coastal people).

The Eora people comprised a number of sub-groups often referred to as 'clans', based upon religious and/or totemic associations to country. Ethnohistoric sources indicate that the *Gadigal* clan occupied the south side of Sydney Harbour from Double Bay to Cockle Bay, while the neighbouring area from Double Bay to South Head (including Nielsen Park) was occupied by the *Birrabirragal* clan. (AHMS 2004 and D Ingrae, pers comm. 2005)

Also well known are the Aboriginal names given to prominent local landmarks such as Burrawang or Burraway for Steele Point, Mering or Moring for Vaucluse Point and Coolong, Kulong or Kooe-lung for Vaucluse Bay. A well watered area, close to abundant fish and shellfish and easily accessible would have proven popular with the original inhabitants.

The traditional life of the Eora people was broken through the course of the early 19th century. The impact of smallpox and influenza decimated the Aboriginal population, with individual epidemics killing large numbers of people. Early white settlement of traditional hunting lands deprived Aboriginal groups of sources of food and access to camping and ceremonial sites. This forced individuals to either relocate into the potentially hostile lands of neighbouring Aboriginal groups, partially integrate into colonial society as fringe dwellers or to resist. Resistance by Aboriginal groups was often met with retaliatory action by white settlers and the colonial administration. A combination of these factors led to the demise of traditional lifestyles and a decrease in the Aboriginal population.

By studying accounts of early settlers, we can reconstruct aspects of the Eora lifestyle. The subsistence and economy of Aboriginal groups depended largely on the environment in which they lived. While coastal groups exploited marine and estuarine resources, hinterland groups relied on freshwater and terrestrial animals and plants. A distinction between the two lifestyles is clearly made in early European accounts. During a trip along the Hawkesbury-Nepean during 1791, Watkin Tench wrote that:

*[hinterland people] depend but little on fish, as the river yields only mullets, and that their principal support is derived from small animals which they kill, and some roots (a species of wild yam chiefly) which they dig out of the earth'.*

In contrast, Collins wrote that for coastal people:

*'Fish is their chief support...the woods, exclusive of the animals which they occasionally find in their neighbourhood, afford them but little sustenance; a few berries, the yam and fern root, the flowers of the different Banksia, and at times some honey, make up the whole vegetable catalogue'*

Although early observations have provided much useful information about Aboriginal society at contact, archaeological investigations have shown clear deficiencies. Archaeological excavations on the NSW coast have clearly shown that coastal people exploited a wide range of hinterland terrestrial resources, which contradicts early records that coastal people were almost exclusively 'fishers' and inland people were 'hunters'. The contradiction is probably accounted for by the visibility of fishing and gathering activities on and near the water as opposed to the relative invisibility of hunting and foraging activities in the hinterland.

From the historical record it is clear that quite large populations were supported along the coast. One such account reported by Tench in 1796 observed:

*"on the north west arm of Botany Bay stands a village which contains more than a dozen houses and perhaps five times that number of people .....Governor Phillip, when on an excursion between the head of the harbour and that of Botany Bay, once fell in with a party which consisted of more than 300..."*

Aboriginal groups living in the Hawkesbury sandstone region made extensive use of the natural rock overhangs and caverns that are characteristic of the area. George Barrington observed:

*"Those who build bark huts are very few compared to the whole. Generally speaking, they prefer the ready made habitations they find in the rocks".*

Tench also described how native huts were constructed by laying pieces of bark together in the form of an oven. The end result consisted of a low shelter, which was opened at one end and sufficient to accommodate one person lying down. Tench concluded:

*"there is reason, however, to believe that they depend less on them (huts) for shelter than on the caverns with which the rocks abound".*

Plant management practices that bear remarkable similarity to those reported in northern Australia were also conducted in the Sydney area. For instance, there is good evidence that the Eora practiced fire-stick farming in and around Sydney. When the first fleet arrived in Sydney, Captain John Hunter found an environment where:

*"the trees stand very wide of one another, and have no underwood; in short the woods ... resemble a deer park, as much as if they had been intended for such a purpose" .*

This is the classic result of Aboriginal firing of the landscape. Ethnographic evidence from Northern Australia suggests that the systematic burning of the landscape was carried out for a variety of reasons. 'Fire-stick farming' opened up access to land and created pockets of early succession vegetation that increased the amount of important plant foods. Early regrowth vegetation, particularly grasses, attracted animals, which in turn made them easier to hunt. Aboriginal firing of the landscape was an important tool in manipulating the environment to increase food sources.

The vast majority of dated Aboriginal sites in the Sydney region are less than 5,000 years old (35 out of a total of 48 dated sites). It has been argued that this is a result of increased populations and 'intensification', during this period. The prevalence of

sites dating to the last 5000 years may also be a result of the last significant rise in sea level, approximately 6000 years ago. The sea level rise would have submerged many of the older sites along the coastal fringe.

### 2.1.2 Subdivision and Purchase 1793 – 1910

Approximately half of the present Park area was part of the 1793 grant by Governor John Hunter to Thomas Laycock, Deputy Commissioner – General and Quartermaster in the NSW Corps. The property was purchased in 1797 by Capt. Thomas Dennett and named 'Woodmancote.' In 1803 Sir Henry Brown Hayes purchased this property along with another early grant of 40 acres to Francis McGlyn forming thereby his famous 'Vaucluse' estate. Hayes built a small cottage on the estate and cleared 50 acres, establishing a farm with cattle, orchards and vegetable gardens. This pattern of use extended right into the period of ownership of the Nielsen Park Trust with livestock grazing in the Park up until at least 1916.



Figure 2.1

View of Greycliffe house from Shakespeare Point. Note mast, yard and gaff on Steele Point and the bathing enclosure with associated dressing cabin on Shark Beach, c 1870 source *NPWS Collection*

In 1804 the property was leased to Samuel Breakwell by Hayes. Breakwell in turn leased it to Sir Maurice O'Donnell, the Lieutenant Governor who then leased it to Captain John Piper. Piper eventually purchased it in 1814. Shortly afterwards Piper's daughter married Arthur Thrupp and they took up residence. Piper suffered financial collapse in 1827, and the property was sold to William Charles Wentworth.

Throughout this period and into the 1840's, colonial artists portrayed the Vaucluse estate from various vantage points: the lower parts of Nielsen Park are shown as pasture contiguous with the paddocks around Vaucluse House itself.

Following the acquisition of the estate Wentworth was granted a further 370 acres bringing his total holding to 515 acres. Wentworth set about major improvements including extending the villa in the picturesque Gothic - Tudor style and commissioning the architect George Cookney to design sandstone stables in the same style.



Wentworth's daughter Fanny Katherine married the wealthy pastoralist John Reeve in 1847. Reeve subsequently purchased 14 acres of Vacluse fronting Shark Bay in 1850 and commissioned the architect John Frederick Hilly to design a villa for Fanny and himself which was completed in 1851 and named 'Greycliffe.' A small estate cottage was built around the same time and subsequently became known as the Gardener's Cottage.

If the Reeves lived at 'Greycliffe' it was possibly for only two short periods being the latter half of 1851 and /or in late 1853/early 1854 as in March 1854 they both departed to live in England permanently.

In November 1870, the NSW Government, after the findings of a Royal Commission into the defences of the Colony, decided to build a system of artillery batteries at the entrance to Port Jackson and as part of this system, one acre, one rod and 10 perches of land at Steele Point was resumed in April, 1871 for the construction of a battery.

The Reeves leased the Estate to seven different families during their ownership. In 1887 they sold the property to Sir John Robertson who quickly sold it to Fitzwilliam Wentworth in the same year. Wentworth had previously leased the property between 1873 and 1877.

In 1911 the property was finally resumed by the NSW Government for public recreation ending its private ownership. At this time Greycliffe House was excluded from the land set aside for a public reserve, being noted as a proposed site for a nurses' home.

Prior to resumption the property was leased on a short-term basis to a number of resident tenants.

### 2.1.3 Nielsen Park Trust 1911 - 1967

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a strong public movement arose to prevent alienation of the remaining natural foreshores of the harbour. In 1905 the Harbour Foreshores Vigilance Committee was formed to lobby successive State Governments to buy back privately owned foreshore land for the establishment of public parks. With William A. Notting as its Honorary Secretary, the Committee was successful in persuading Mr Niels R W Nielsen, the new Secretary for Lands, to establish the Foreshores Resumption Scheme on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1911. The first acquisition under this Scheme was the 'Greycliffe Estate', resumed on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1911, which was created as a public reserve and named Nielsen Park in honour of Mr Nielsen. It appears Nielsen was quick to recognise the value of preserving the foreshore. When he announced the establishment of the Foreshores Resumption Scheme he had been in office for about nine months. The *Sydney Morning Herald* report of the launch states that Nielsen said '*Although he had been living in Sydney for the past 12 or 13 years, he must plead guilty to having known very little about Sydney Harbour up till a few months ago*' (21/7/1911). Previously, on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1910 a similar resumption for the same purpose had been made of the Vacluse House Estate: both actions were prompted by Fitzwilliam Wentworth and the Trustees of the late WC Wentworth subdividing areas of both the Greycliffe and Vacluse estates.

By 1911 the original Greycliffe estate had been sub-divided with ownership shared between 10 individuals. A contemporary survey plan of the site showed the following structures:

- a galvanised iron house, shed and stable on the north eastern side of Mount Trefle with garden and fowl yard;
- a stone reservoir on the ridge supplying water via pipes to Greycliffe House and 'Greycliffe Road';
- a wood/ iron cow bail and feed room and fowl yards in the vicinity of the Gardener's Cottage, and
- A stone house under construction at the northern end of Shark Beach.

The Nielsen Park Reserve comprised 51 acres of land including Greycliffe House, Shark beach, Bottle and Glass Point and the W C Wentworth Trustee's land around Mount Trefle as well as a parcel of land belonging to George Donaldson containing a house and stables at the summit of Mount Trefle. Greycliffe House and a two acre curtilage was later, in 1914, dedicated for hospital purposes, while the Steele Point Battery remained in Commonwealth of Australia ownership, transferred from the State Government in 1903.

In 1912, the Nielsen Park Trust was established, comprising a board of 8 Trustees, to manage the new park. William Notting was appointed as one of its founding members and the first meeting was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1912. For the first 8 years the Park retained its near natural appearance except for the construction of the first stage of the Kiosk (see 2.5.1) and a number of small shelter sheds and the start of the promenade called Notting Parade in 1918. In 1917 the Steele Point Battery Reserve Trust was formed and the Commonwealth transferred the area to it, on the condition that the land could be used for defence purposes at a future date. A flagpole was erected there in 1925 but after an aeroplane accident, when an aircraft crashed into it, the pole was removed in 1937. This Trust existed until transfer to the NPWS in 1968.

The Nielsen Park Trust carried out a number of major works supporting activity centred on the new swimming enclosure and beach promenade seawall. The construction of the promenade required enclosing the creek, known as Shark Creek, into underground pipes. Other improvements included new women's and men's dressing sheds and toilets, picnic pavilions, and kiosk additions and improving access with the construction of a new ferry wharf. In 1939 sand was taken from the beach to fill the gun emplacements.

Following the advent of war with Japan, the strategic position of the Nielsen Park was demonstrated with the occupation of 9 acres of the Park by the 61<sup>st</sup> Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Company and the construction of a mess and barracks building in the centre of the Park. During this time two picnic pavilions were converted into air raid shelters, along with the construction of two brick lookouts with concrete flat roofs. The latter were sited on Steele Point and Bottle and Glass respectively and used to support the Marine Bomb Spotting Squad. The squad was formed within the National Emergency Services and manned by volunteer Wardens as young as 16, The group was active from early 1942 and was charged with monitoring the fall of any aerial bombs or mines from enemy aircraft in Sydney Harbour. Working shifts, some Wardens were recruited from local Scout groups and were provided with helmets, gas masks and powerful binoculars for the task.

The war diary of the Second Australian Army records that 'Nielsen Park' was the site of B Troop, 654<sup>th</sup> Australian Light Anti-Aircraft Battery (Static) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1943. Noted as being raised in June 1943, the Battery was reduced to part-time manning by March 1944. (Ref: Army Museum of NSW) From mid-1944 when the men were transferred to northern Australia, approximately 15 women of the 61<sup>st</sup> Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Company (now a unit of the Australian Artillery) occupied the

Park. The female privates were paid 3/8d per day (4/2d if over 21) in contrast to the male wage of 6/-d per day.

In May 1950 both Nielsen and Vacluse Parks were combined into the single Nielsen - Vacluse Trust which continued until Nielsen Park was transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1967.

Greycliffe was used as the Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies between 1914 and 1934. It was under the direction of the Baby Clinics, Pre-Maternity and Home Nursing Board established by the NSW Ministry of Health. The Hospital taught the importance of fresh air, breast feeding, strict routines and cleanliness. It was possibly the first institution to provide accommodation for mothers so that they could participate in treating their babies. In 1915, 288 babies were admitted of which 70% suffered from gastroenteritis and a quarter died. Eighteen years later only 140 babies were admitted of which only 5% died.

Due to general improvements in health standards relating to mothers and infants it was decided that the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies should establish the third Tresillian Mothercraft Training School at Greycliffe to be known as Tresillian Vacluse. The Tresillian Hospitals were developed under the medical directorship of Dr Margaret Harper, to provide training for nurses and to provide a place where mothers could seek assistance in managing their babies, particularly with regard to breast-feeding and sleeping difficulties. Accommodation was provided for mothers with the babies housed in nurseries. In 1939 the Margaret Harper House was added, providing additional accommodation. This establishment operated successfully for both mothers and nurses until changed health standards resulted in closure on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1968. The Minister for Lands approved the site of the hospital to be added to the Vacluse House Historic Site and to be administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the transfer occurring on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1970.

#### 2.1.4 National Parks and Wildlife Service 1968 - present

Recognising that Nielsen Park was one of the few harbourside parks in Sydney at the time, the NPWS determined, upon assuming management of it, that it would remain primarily a place for public recreation within the NPWS Charter for the protection and management of natural areas. Initial works included the removal of fencing to 'open up' the beach area, banning of car parking and the removal of picnic pavilions Numbers 1 and 2. A lack of maintenance and storm damage also led to the eventual demolition of the wharf and its pavilion in 1979 along with the nearby Women's Dressing Shed and Bathing Shed. Also removed at this time were the swimming platforms, pontoons and diving tower in the enclosure and the fireplaces ashore in the Vacluse Point area.

Restoration of a sandstone terrace in the front of Greycliffe started in 1971 followed by Greycliffe itself in 1974: the NPWS moved into the house for use as offices when it became the headquarters for the newly formed Sydney District. Improvements were also made to the Steele Point Cottage and the Gardener's Cottage. In 1965 a small sandstone toilet block was built on the eastern headland above Shark Beach. A severe storm in 1984 damaged the Kiosk and the swimming enclosure net and piling system. Repairs were carried out as well as a major restoration of the Kiosk building that re-opened in 1985. This restoration work marked a change in the NPWS attitude towards the heritage significance of buildings constructed during the Trust administration years: the structures came to be recognised as important elements in their own right within the Park.

Around the same time a program of replanting some of the cleared areas of the Park with indigenous trees commenced. In 1989 a new steel framed workshop and compound was built in the old quarry site behind Mount Trefle: the old workshop site as well as the demolished picnic shelter sites were then replanted with native species. Fencing around the Park was also removed and replaced by low rails to stop vehicle access. Opening times for the public were extended to the period between sunrise and sunset.

Recent times have seen a number of conservation programs focused on the built environment. The Halbert Pavilion has been adaptively re-used as a function centre, extensive stone wall and roof repairs have been carried out on the swimming and life saving club building and the old clubrooms have been converted into a harbourside kiosk. Major conservation works were also undertaken to the Dressing Pavilion while the Notting Parade tunnel, providing direct pedestrian and wheelchair access from the Dressing Pavilion to the beach has been stabilised and re-opened.

## 2.2 Mt Trefle Precinct

This most prominent feature in the Park was named after the Hon. J L Trefle, Secretary for Lands from 1912-1915. Trefle followed the Hon. N R W Nielsen who had been Secretary in the McGowen Government from 1910 and 1911. It is a sandstone outcrop with evidence of a basalt dyke extending from Mount Trefle down to the Bottle and Glass Point. Prior to the period of public ownership a quarry was in use on the eastern side. Accessed by a spur off the thoroughfare from Vaucluse Road the quarry is currently the site of a workshop for PWG.

In the early management by the Trust revenue was generated from the agistment of horses on cleared land on the northern slopes of Mount Trefle towards the rear of Greycliffe. Rate notices from that time identify a Mr Donaldson as being resident on the northern side of Mount Trefle, with his home standing just to the north of the quarry. Some further clearing took place in 1953 when a new path was built and 3 new seats erected on the summit. Following the closure of parking facilities at Bottle and Glass Point in the 1960's provision for parking was made available on land near Mount Trefle that was formerly used as a rubbish tip.

## 2.3 The Greycliffe Precinct

This precinct contains the former residence named 'Greycliffe', its stables and coach house, as well as a nearby building known as the 'Margaret Harper House' and at a further distance to the north, the original Gardener's Cottage.

### 2.3.1 Greycliffe House

The wealthy pastoralist and former explorer John Reeve married WC Wentworth's daughter Fanny Katherine in 1847, purchased just over 14 acres fronting Shark Beach from Wentworth in 1850. He engaged the noted Sydney architect John Frederick Hilly to design a residence which was constructed in the period 1850 - 1851. Reeve was described by the squatter WA Brodribb in 1851 as intending to reside in the Gippsland District where he owned extensive property. He also owned properties in Bathurst, Moreton Bay and city properties in Melbourne and Sydney. In February 1852 he was appointed territorial magistrate for the Gippsland area.

It appears that he never intended Greycliffe to be his principal residence as he and his wife are thought to have lived only briefly in the house in the latter part of 1851 and in late 1853 and/or early 1854. On the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1854 Fanny and John Reeve with WC Wentworth departed for England.

Arrangements were made to lease the property until 1879 to the following tenants:

1851 - 1853	Lt.Col. John GN Gibbes
1856 - 1857	Augustus Morris
1857 - 1859	Lt.Col. John GN Gibbes
1859 - 1872	Joseph Scaife Willis (see Figure 3)
1873 - 1877	Fitzwilliam Wentworth
1878 - 1879	William Bede Dalley

In 1879 Sir John Robertson purchased the property from the estate of the late John Reeve who died in 1875. In 1880 the property was conveyed to Fanny Reeve and Sir John Dervall as Trustees. The house was evidently vacant for nearly 2 years until it was re-leased to Lady Isabella Martin (and her children) from 1882 until 1887 when the property was purchased by Fitzwilliam Wentworth, the second son of WC Wentworth. He acquired it from his sister, Fanny Reeve, for £6,250.

Between 1887 to 1894 George Miller, General Manager of the Bank of NSW, leased Greycliffe and a Mr CA Neville was noted as caretaker there. In February 1897 a fire destroyed most of the interior of the house but Wentworth had it rebuilt largely to its original design but with some with alterations. By May 1898 Mary and Fitzwilliam Wentworth had returned to live there. They remained until 1912 when it was resumed by the State Government.

The resumption of the adjoining land for the Nielsen Park Reserve had taken place in 1911 and a decision was made in 1914 to adapt Greycliffe as the Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies (see Figure 2.3). This lasted until 1934 when the hospital became the Tresillian Mothercraft Training School, a use it had until 1968 when the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) assumed control. During the hospital use period the building was extensively altered with a number of mainly timber-framed additions for wards. NPWS later progressively removed these additions to adapt the house as administrative headquarters for the new Sydney Harbour National Park.



Figure 2.2

Greycliffe house with members of the Willis Family c1860 source *NPWS Collection*



Figure 2.3

"On the lawn: open air treatment". Greycliffe during the period as the Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies, c1914: Government Printing Office 1-16180. State Library of NSW.



Figure 2.4

Greycliffe in 2011. Paul Davies

### 2.3.2 Gardener's Cottage

This small stone cottage (see Figure 2.5), built in a similar Gothic Revival style to Greycliffe, was referred to in a 'To Let' advertisement of 1857 and a sale

advertisement of 1879 as a 'Gardeners' House', stone-built containing four rooms and a laundry. It was used, at least in part, by an estate gardener for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century period.



Figure 2.5

The Cottage in 2011. Paul Davies

The 1853 trigonometrical survey map of Sydney shows the cottage, it is likely to have been built around the same time as Greycliffe for estate workers. There were descriptions of an '*excellent vegetable garden near the gardener's cottage*' and also 'a large area of land laid out as a fruit and vegetable garden and in it is a gardener's house' and the c1860 map of the estate shows fenced paddocks near to the cottage.

Once the cottage and estate were resumed in 1911 for the Nielsen Park Reserve it seems to have been used as a residence for park rangers with a number of alterations dating from this time. Some changes were possibly made following the 1897 fire on the estate and the terracotta tiled roof may date from that period. The house continued to be used as a residence for the park ranger.

In 1984 the cottage was again damaged (internally) by fire and repair work was carried out. The skillion laundry annex was demolished in 1990 due to borer damage.

### 2.3.3 Margaret Harper Wing

In 1939 a hospital wing associated with the Tressilian Home was constructed to the rear of Greycliffe. The building was named in recognition of Dr Margaret Harper who had contributed greatly to the welfare of mothers and babies in the area of baby health in the 1920's and 1930's. The substantial rendered brick hospital wing was designed by architect Gilbert Hughes and was used mainly for mothers in private wards and for student nurses accommodation. Since ownership by the NPWS the building has been adapted as a residence for NPWS staff.



Figure 2.6

Margaret Harper Wing 2011. Paul Davies

## 2.4 Steele Point Precinct

Steele Point was named by Governor Phillip after Thomas Steele, joint Secretary to the Treasury with George Rose, after whom Rose Bay is named. The precinct contains the former gun battery structure, the adjoining timber cottage and detached garage and store shed. A building owned by the Department of Defence (Navy) is situated in the centre of the precinct.

### 2.4.1 The Battery

The Steele Point Battery was completed in 1874 as part of an elaborate system of harbour defences sited on both sides of the harbour entrance prompted by the withdrawal of British troops in 1870, the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War and rumours of a 'filibustering expedition' from San Francisco to raid Sydney.

The work, designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet, provided for three gun pits, connecting passages and a number of underground magazines. Fitzwilliam Wentworth, then living at Greycliffe, refused permission for the guns to be installed. In September 1875 Wentworth allowed the three 80 pounder rifled muzzle loading (RML) cannons to be taken through his property to the battery. It appears they were poorly maintained before being replaced by three, 5-inch calibre breech loading guns in 1894 (BL).





Figure 2.7

Steel Point Battery – remaining unfilled gun emplacement 2011. Paul Davies

In 1903, the battery was transferred to the Commonwealth and the guns removed in 1910. The site was transferred in 1916 to the Nielsen Park Trust, but in 1917 it was agreed to manage it under the Steele Point Battery Reserve Trust. In 1940 the area became part of the Nielsen Park Reserve however in June 1942 the military resumed the battery and adjoining land. Finally, the area was transferred back to the Trust in 1945.

The Royal Australian Navy established a degaussing station over the centre of the battery in the 1950's; the remaining land became part of Nielsen Park under NPWS administration in 1968.

#### 2.4.2 Steele Point Cottage

The timber cottage near to the portal entrance of the Battery was built in 1880 as a two-roomed Gunners' Barracks presumably also to a design of the Colonial Architect James Barnet. In 1883 two rooms were added to assist in servicing the duty gunners. With the removal of the battery guns during World War I a District Gunner had been on duty at the time until 1917 and then the use of the cottage remained solely with the Steele Point Battery Reserve Trust until 1940.

In 1930 the Trust added the enclosed veranda to the western side and probably in the period prior to that parts of the building were adapted for a kitchen and bathroom. An early separate toilet block, known to have been built also in 1880, was still in existence at the period before World War 2 but seems to have been removed during the military re-occupation.

During the Trust ownership a Caretaker occupied the building and when the NPWS assumed control it initially became a residence for NPWS staff. A conservation project was undertaken during 2006-2007 after which the cottage has been used for short-term holiday accommodation.



Figure 2.8

Steele Point cottage, former Battery Barracks, following adaptive reuse, February 2008 source *Rob Newton*.

### 2.4.3 The Store Shed

This building has not been dated definitely but its use in relationship to the original Barracks and the type of building construction suggest it dates from 1880 as part of the Battery complex. It contains two sets of double doors originally for wagon access. This suggests that it could have been used in part as an ordnance store prior to ammunition being stored in the Battery magazine. A stone flagged roadway connects it to the main access road and it may also at times have housed transport vehicles for the gunnery detachment. The building has been disused or partly used only as a store in recent years. In 1950 the building was utilised as accommodation for a family of 6, who occupied the shed for 12 months.

## 2.5 Shark Beach Precinct

The precinct contains: the Park Kiosk; its attached cottage and garage - sited above the beachfront promenade; the nearby William Notting Memorial; the western toilet block; the dressing pavilion; a beachfront dressing shed and; the Halbert Pavilion. They are all situated around the central beach area enclosure with its shark proof net.

### 2.5.1 The Kiosk and Attached Cottage/Garage

The Park Kiosk dates from 1914 (see Figure 2.9) and was the first building commissioned by the newly formed Nielsen Park Reserve Trust to provide refreshment facilities for visitors, reflecting the new status of the park as a recreation ground. Due to the isolated nature of the facility a small cottage was built adjacent for the Kiosk lessee. Both buildings were designed by the Government Architect. Its original form was an octagonal shaped pavilion. In c1925 wings were added each side to give it the present form and later (date unknown) storerooms were added to the rear that connected it to the once detached cottage.

Conceived as a tea-room and kiosk, since 1985 it has operated as a café and restaurant. In c1932 a garage was built next to the cottage and in 1984 the kiosk building was restored by NPWS. Currently the cottage is used as an office for the lessee.



Figure 2.9  
The beachfront kiosk, 2011. Paul Davies.

### 2.5.2 The W A Notting Memorial

Immediately to the west of the Kiosk is a large curved masonry stuccoed Roman Seat. It is set into the slope of the land with a levelled paved platform. Views to the water are available from the seat.

Erected in 1927 by the Nielsen Park Trust, it contains a plaque at the eastern end which honours William Albert Notting who was largely instrumental in having the reserve established through his involvement with the Harbour Foreshore Vigilance Committee (see Figures 17 and 21). A second plaque at the western end of the memorial, honouring Niels Nielsen, was unveiled by Nielsen's grand-daughter, Mrs Norma Bailey, in 1995.



Figure 2.10  
Notting Memorial 2011. Paul Davies.

### 2.5.3 The Western Toilet Block

This small sandstone walled toilet block was built by the Nielsen Park Trust c1920 to supplement the Ladies' Bathing Pavilion (since demolished) adjacent to the former

wharf walkway and was initially used as Ladies' Toilets. It is unclear who designed the building but it is likely to have been the Government Architect as he designed the toilet block at the other end of the beach at about the same time.



Figure 2.11

The Western Toilet Block 2011. Paul Davies.

These structures pre-date the dressing pavilion and provided the first public toilets in the reserve.

#### 2.5.4 The Dressing Pavilion

This large open-roofed brick stuccoed building was designed by the Government Architect and completed in 1932 using labour from the Unemployment Relief Work Fund that employed builders during the Great Depression. The building provided dressing, locker and toilet facilities for males and females located on each side of a central office area. This provided the sole access way, via a tunnel, to the swimming enclosure which was then fenced off from the rest of the Park.

The pavilion was planned by the Trust partly to cope with the increasing numbers of visitors in the 1920's, and also to improve the standard of facilities over that provided by the older dressing sheds located on the beach. In the 1970's the access tunnel was closed. In recent years the building has been returned to its near original appearance and condition. The tunnel re-opened following major conservation works by NPWS.



Figure 2.12 The Dressing Pavilion. Paul Davies 2011

### 2.5.5 The Beachfront

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the beachfront of Shark Bay (see Figures 2.1 and 2.13) remained in its natural state apart from a small change shed and piled swimming cage at the eastern end for the use of Greycliffe residents.

Although resumed for a public reserve, swimming was initially discouraged by the Trust, probably due to the danger of shark attacks. A small sea wall and fence along the beachfront was provided in c1918. At the same period the upper level promenade was built named 'Notting Parade'. During this period a large number of small shelter sheds were built in the park behind the beach.



Figure 2.13

'Picturesque and romantic' - Shark Beach and Greycliffe house, during Fitzwilliam Wentworth's period of residence, c1898  
source *ML*



Figure 2.14

Overviews of beach, concrete seats and parade, the swimming net and the cultural plantings at the rear of the beach flanked by the regrowth on the headlands. Paul Davies 2011.

The ferry wharf, built in 1916 resulted in increased Park patronage. By 1930, to accommodate the increased patronage, the Trust decided to build the first triangular swimming enclosure. This was quickly replaced by a larger enclosure in 1931 with a central diving tower, anchored nets on either side and two fixed piled platforms supplemented by pontoons. Over the next few years Notting Parade was extended and a larger terraced seawall built. This latter structure has suffered from storm damage at various times but remains in use today.

The beach fencing was removed in 1968 along with the diving tower and platforms and by 1979 the wharf was also demolished. Most remaining shelter sheds and picnic pavilions were removed during this period.

### 2.5.6 The Halbert Pavilion

Nielsen Park Trust built the picnic pavilion in 1958 (see Figure 2.15). A cut and filled grassed area, retained by a sandstone wall, was formed behind the Kiosk and cottage and reached by steps and a cement path from the access road to the Pavilion.

When built the building had no windows and the sides were partly sheeted. After the NPWS assumed control of the site it was used from the c1970 to c1996 period as a workshop and store. The openings were fitted with security screens.

In 1997 the lessee of the Kiosk operated the building as a seminar and function area and works, including fitting windows, were carried out. Further works were undertaken in 2007 to utilise the building for functions and events.



Figure 2.15

The Halbert Pavilion during its use as a workshop in the early period of NPWS management, c1972 source *National Trust of Australia (NSW)* courtesy Julie Petersen.



Figure 2.16

The Halbert Pavilion in its 2011 adapted form. Paul Davies.

### 2.5.7 The Surf Life Saving Club and the Toilet Block

This building, located at the eastern end of the beach is an amalgam of structures constructed under the Nielsen Park Trust administration. It may contain part of the Men's Dressing Shed with stone turreted walls built in 1920 to the Government Architect's design. This structure adjoined an earlier timber and fibro shed sited on the beach. The new dressing sheds were opened on 21 October 1921 and in 1924 a Life Saving and Swimming Club was formed that used part of the original dressing shed; it was disbanded in 1927 due to inappropriate behaviour by some members.

During this period, the Trust requested that alterations and additions to the building be designed by the Department of Public Works. This work was completed in 1931

providing locker and toilet facilities for men. In 1933 some further alterations were made - the old asbestos cement clad section was demolished and the office converted into an ambulance room.



Figure 2.17

The Surf Life Saving Club and Men's Toilet.. Paul Davies.

After World War II, a boatshed leading onto the beach was incorporated into the Surf Life Saving Club. In 1948, a timber-framed addition was made at the rear and the castellated formations were removed from the top of the walls. In 1956, the boatshed was demolished. In 1964, the shed was re-built in a smaller form. At the same time the clubrooms were extended towards the beach with another room and open veranda deck.

In recent years the club was closed and its spaces used as storerooms by the NPWS. The storeroom at the southern end of the building was converted into a disabled toilet. In 2003, the beach front end of the former club rooms was used as a small kiosk with a servery and sitting area. Repairs have been completed to damaged stone walls, the roof and rear timber-framed wall.

### 2.5.8 The Ladies' Toilet Block

This small toilet block was one of the last buildings to be constructed under the Trust administration. Completed in 1965, it was to a Government Architect design using stone walls but in a contemporary architectural idiom and discretely sited on the hill behind vegetation. It provides current Ladies' toilet facilities in the Park.





Figure 2.18 The Ladies Toilet Block. Paul Davies 2011.

## 2.6 Bottle & Glass Precinct

The Bottle and Glass Precinct derived its name in the early nineteenth century from the shape of two rocks at the end of the point.

Parts of the headland were cleared, levelled and replanted with trees by relief workers in 1935. The harbour landmark was destroyed on the night of Wednesday 2nd November 1938 when large quantities of rock were cut away and carried off in a in a boat (SMH, 3rd November 1938, p.12). A rotunda was constructed on Shakespeare Point (headland in background of Figure 2.7, rotunda is not visible) early in the Trust's administration. It was demolished by 1959. In spite of the excellent public transport access provided for visitors to the Park, by the 1950's the increasing level of private car ownership led to a parking problem. A decision to build a car park adjacent to the Park on the corner of Greycliffe Avenue and Vaocluse Road set a precedent which eventually saw car parking facilities introduced to Bottle and Glass in 1961. This required the placement of some 18,000 cubic yards of fill on the Point.

Further pressure on this Precinct saw a number of proposals for more levelling and filling during the 1960s with the access road sealed in 1967. Final closure to traffic occurred in 1969 following the transfer of administrative responsibility to the NPWS, and in line with the new management polices for the Park proposed by the Minister for Lands, Mr Tom Lewis in 1965. Aesthetically, these changes were a significant improvement in the appearance of the area.



**Figure 2.17** Shark Bay looking north towards Shakespeare Point c1875. Note the timber-piled swimming cage at the northern end, the natural configuration of the beach and early foreshore vegetation source *ML*



**Figure 2.18** Bottle and Glass. Paul Davies 2011.

## 2.7 Chronology

Table 2.1 Chronology

Date	Evidence	Period
Pre1788	The Gadigal people lived in the Vaucluse area. Archaeological evidence suggests Nielsen Park was first occupied at least 1,200 years ago.	Birrabirragal people
Jan 1788	Captain Arthur Phillip lands at Camp cove and subsequently establishes a colony at Sydney Cove.	
1793	Included in grant of land by Governor John Hunter to Thomas Laycock, Deputy Commissioner – General and Quartermaster in the NSW Corps.	Subdivision and purchase
1797	Property purchased by Capt. Thomas Dennett and named 'Woodmancote.'	
1803	Property purchased by Sir Henry Brown Hayes along with another early grant to Francis McGlyn to form the 'Vaucluse' estate. Cleared 50 acres and built a small cottage.	
1804	Property leased to Samuel Breakwell, who in turn leased it to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Maurice O'Donnell. He leased it to Capt. John Piper.	
1814	Purchased by Capt. John Piper.	
1827	Vaucluse estate purchased by William Wentworth.	
1847	Wentworth's daughter Fanny married John Reeve.	
1850	Reeve purchased 14 acres of 'Vaucluse' fronting Shark Bay and commissioned architect John Frederick Hilly to design a villa.	
1851	'Greycliffe' completed in the Gothic Revival Style, along with Gardener's Cottage.	
March 1854	John and Fanny Reeve depart for England to live permanently.	
1854 -1887	Leased to at least seven different families.	
1867	Greycliffe tenant Joseph Willis clears scrub from estate.	
April 1871	One acre, one rod and 10 perches of land were resumed by the NSW Government for a battery on Steele Point.	
1874	Battery completed and commissioned with three 80pdr RML guns the following year.	
1880	Gunners' Barracks erected on Steele Point.	
1887	Greycliffe purchased by Sir John Robertson who sold to Fitzwilliam Wentworth.	
1894	Steele Point Battery modified to hold 3 x 5" breech loading guns.	
1897	Fire seriously damages Greycliffe which is rebuilt with a terracotta tiled roof.	
1903	Steele Point Battery transferred to the Commonwealth of Australia.	
1905	Harbour Foreshore Vigilance Committee formed with William Notting as Honorary Secretary.	

Date	Evidence	Period
1910	Guns removed from Steele Point Battery.	Nielsen Park Trust
1911	Greycliffe estate had been subdivided with ownership shared between 10 individuals.	
21 <sup>st</sup> August 1911	The property was resumed by the NSW Government for public recreation.	
24 <sup>th</sup> May 1912	First meeting of trustees of the Nielsen Park Trust.	
c1914	Rotunda constructed on Shakespeare Point.	
1914	<i>Greycliffe House</i> dedicated for hospital purposes. Opened as the Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies.	
1915	Kiosk, with lessee's cottage attached and shelter sheds constructed.	
1916	Ferry wharf and jetty constructed.	
1917	Steele Point Battery Reserve Trust formed and the land transferred to it from the Commonwealth.	
1918	Notting Parade promenade along Shark Bay constructed.	
1920	First swimming enclosure constructed.	
	Men's Dressing Shed constructed at northern end of Shark Bay with further alterations and additions occurring during the period 1931 to 1933.	
1921	Sandstone Men's dressing shed and boat shed opened at the north end of Shark Beach.	
1922	Concrete sea wall built.	
1924	Life saving and swimming club formed in Men's dressing shed.	
1925	Flagpole and gaff erected on Steele Point.	
	Wings added to each side of the Kiosk.	
1927	W A Notting Memorial Roman seat constructed.	
1931	Swimming enclosure extended with central diving tower and pontoons.	
1932	Dressing Pavilion constructed.	
1934	Tresillian Mothercraft Training School established in Greycliffe.	
1935	Rotunda refurbished.	
1937	Flagpole removed following aviation accident.	
1939	Steele Point battery gun emplacements filled with sand taken from beach.	
	Margaret Harper House constructed as a wing to Greycliffe.	
1940	Steele Point Battery Reserve became part of Nielsen Park Reserve.	
1942	A number of temporary buildings were constructed to support military operations associated with the 61 <sup>st</sup> Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Company.	
1948	Life saving and swimming club re-constituted and addition made to original clubhouse.	
Date	Evidence	Period

Date	Evidence	Period
May 1950	Nielsen Park and Vaucluse Park were combined into a single Nielsen – Vaucluse Trust.	
1956	Boat shed demolished.	
1958	Halbert Pavilion built.	
1959	Rotunda on Shakespeare Point demolished.	
1964	Boat shed rebuilt and additions to clubhouse made.	
1965	Ladies toilet block completed.	
	New management polices for the Park proposed by Mr Tom Lewis, Minister for Lands.	
10 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1968	Tresillian Vaucluse closes.	NPWS
1968	Administration of the Park assumed by the NSW, National Parks and Wildlife Service.	
	Diving tower and pontoons, along with fence removed from beach.	
1972	Wharf closed.	
1974	Restoration of Greycliffe commenced and it became the Headquarters for the newly formed Sydney District.	
1979	Ferry Wharf demolished. Most remaining shelter sheds and picnic pavilions also removed.	
1984	Severe storm damaged the Kiosk leading to a major restoration with reopening in 1984.	
1986	10 specimens of a new species, <i>Allocasuarina portuensis</i> (the Nielsen Park She-oak), were first identified.	
1989	New Steele-framed workshop and compound created for NPWS activities in the former stone quarry.	
1997-1998	Major conservation and restoration works at <i>Greycliffe House</i> .	
2001-2003	Greycliffe Gardens reconstructed.	
2002-2003	Major restoration works in the Dressing Pavilion.	
2003	Beach end of former swimming and life saving club rooms restored and adapted for use as a beach kiosk.	
2004	Notting Parade tunnel restored and re-opened.	
2006	Major conservation and restoration works to Steele Point Cottage	
2007	Adaptive reuse works to the Halbert Pavilion	

## 3.0 Physical Analysis

### 3.1 Introduction

Nielsen Park is a highly modified landscape that reflects three phases of occupation: pre-settlement landscape; a modified landscape seen as both a natural and planned picturesque landscape around Greycliffe House; and a public landscape for recreation that includes a number of support structures. In addition the Steel Point fortifications add a further layer to the use and appearance of the park.

Nielsen Park has had its pre-settlement landscape dramatically altered by extensive clearing and modifying of land forms and vegetation but also by replanting and regenerating a form of natural bushland on parts of the site. This has resulted in recent years of the overall impression that areas of the landscape appear similar to that which existed prior to European settlement. However the areas of native vegetation that now exist do not reflect the form of the historic native landscape.

The shift to regenerating native landscape has taken place during the NPWS management of the site and contrasts to the Trust management that focussed on the recreational aspects of the place.

In its current form the Park does not reflect any of the specific periods of use in its overall landscape setting but rather a combination of regenerated native landscape, modified garden landscape related to the house and very modified park landscape related to the recreational uses.

The landscape is also modified by the buildings that have been constructed and that are viewed as part of the now largely picturesque landscape. These buildings are mostly of a small scale and were sensitively designed to be viewed as components of a picturesque setting.

In addition, inventory sheets have been developed for the four buildings which have not yet been subject to adaptation and which present the greatest opportunities for new uses in the future. These are the buildings which will require clear guidance on future adaption should this be required. They are Greycliffe, the dressing pavilion, the Margaret Harper wing and the Gardeners Cottage. The Inventory sheets are located at Appendix 1.

#### 3.1.1 Natural Vegetation

As is common in all coastal and estuarine areas of the Sydney Region, the Park contains many rock outcrops, particularly along the foreshore headlands. These are given some added interest by the remnants of the effect of a basalt dyke that runs from Mount Trefle to Bottle and Glass Point resulting in the unusually formed rock formations still visible.

The native vegetation consists of tall heath along the western foreshore containing *Allocasuarina portuensis*, Smooth-barked Apple and Port Jackson Figs associated with the various exposed sandstone outcrops. In the northern and eastern slopes of the hill formations exist also Tick Bush, Tea Tree, She-oak, bushy Needlewood, Banksia and pockets of Smooth-barked Apple trees. In the lower slopes and flat areas there are stands of Sydney Peppermint Gum, Red Bloodwood and some Port Jackson Figs. Low level vegetation also contains Sweet Pittosporum, Cheese Tree, Blueberry Ash and a ground cover of Kangaroo Vine.

### 3.1.2 Introduced Plantings and Modifications to Land Form

Apart from the introduced lower grassed areas, other newer introduced tree plantings include Tuckeroos, Brush Box and Moreton Bay Figs. Plantings include those along Notting Parade and around the W A Notting Memorial, the Hill Fig Avenue, tree plantings adjacent to the cottage and the Brush Box Tree boundary planting along Greycliffe Avenue and Vauclose.



Figure 3.1

A view from the Greycliffe entry drive showing managed lawns, cultural plantings and regrowth along the steep escarpment edges to the harbour with filtered views available in open areas. Paul Davies 2011.

The introduced plantings originally related to the original layout of Greycliffe House and then later to the establishment of the Trust and public recreation. These two uses can be understood from the landscape plantings.

In its earlier known state the Park was bisected by a small watercourse known as Shark Creek which flowed into a lagoon behind Shark Beach that drained into the harbour at the north end of the beach. This system has now been replaced by a series of large diameter pre-cast concrete pipes with grassed areas extending over the former creek. It is likely that the land around this creek would have been heavily timbered with dense undergrowth which would have thinned out at the higher elevations.

The landscape modifications can be summarised as:

- cut and filled platform for Greycliffe.
- cut and filled roadway entry drive to Greycliffe.
- excavation and landfill for Steel Point Battery group.
- modifications to beachfront for concrete promenade.
- infilling the creek and presumably changing the levels around it to create the current lawn area.
- levelling for carparking in various areas around the park.

- the Mt Trefele Quarry.
- cut and fill for the Notting Memorial.
- filling the swamp behind the beach (site of dressing pavilion).
- minor changes for paths and minor works around the site.

## 3.2 Landscape Management Zones

The Park can be usefully separated into landscape management zones (see Appendix 3). While they are not precise they indicate differing management requirements and regimes. They are:

### 1 Natural Zone.

This consists mainly of the revegetated Mount Trefle and its western slopes and includes most of the heavily wooded indigenous plantings. It also includes Bottle and Glass Point to the north and the steep and dense scrublands above the western shore area;



Figure 3.2

Mt Trefle viewed across the parkland with the land from rising from the grassed areas with a tree canopy and understorey. Paul Davies 2011.





Figure 3.3 The natural landscape of Bottle and Glass bounded by the access path. Paul Davies 2011.

## 2 Parkland Zone.

This includes all of the grassed lower areas, the beachfront and the slopes up to Greycliffe House (but not the garden). It contains most of the large lawn areas, introduced trees and paving, and many of the buildings on the site.



Figure 3.4

Open parkland. Paul Davies 2011.

## 3 Greycliffe Garden Zone.

This small zone includes the remnant gardens of '*Greycliffe House*' and those adjacent to the Margaret Harper Wing which incorporates a parterre garden;



Figure 3.5 Section of Margaret Harper Garden in foreground with Greycliffe garden beyond. Paul Davies 2011.

#### 4 Military Zone.

This consists of Steele Point and contains the above ground and subterranean remains of the Battery and its associated buildings. It is noted that military activity at times included a number of sites in the Park.



Figure 3.6

The fenced off Degaussing Station that does not form part of the park area, which is built over sections of the Steel Point Battery. Paul Davies 2011.

#### 5 Utility Zone.

This includes the NPWS workshop situated in the old stone quarry near the entrance of the original access road from Vaucluse Road.



Figure 3.7

The workshop built into the former quarry area. Paul Davies 2011.

### 3.3 Nielsen Park Vegetation

The following table summarises the vegetation types found at Nielsen Park.

Table 3.2 Vegetation

PRECINCT	PLANT	YEAR OF PLANTING	COMMENTS
The Park Generally	Southern Blue Gum	1930's	Introduced
	The 'Avenue' of <i>Ficus microcarpa</i> var. <i>hillii</i> (Hills Weeping Fig)	1930's	Probably planted after the completion of the Dressing Pavilion
	The 'Avenue' of <i>Lophostemon confertus</i> (Brush Box) along Greycliffe Avenue	1930's	
	<i>Glochidion ferninandii</i> (Cheese Tree) near the Gardeners Cottage		
Greycliffe	<i>Bumfusa</i> (Giant Bamboo)	1850's	A popular driveway entrance feature, at Vaucluse House.
	<i>Tecoma capensis</i> (Cape Honeysuckle) hedge	1850's	A popular driveway entrance feature
	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> (Southern Magnolia)	1890's	Understood to be a late Wentworth planting
	<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> (Camphor Laurel)	Pre 1900	Adjacent to Gardeners Cottage
	<i>Camelia japonica</i> (several)	1950's	Part of the Tresillian garden plantings

	Stenocarpus sinuatus (Qld. Firewheel Tree)	1950's	Part of the Tresillian garden plantings
	Bougainvillea hedge	1950's	Part of the Tresillian garden plantings
Mount Trefle	Closed scrub community	Indigenous	Locally rare
	Low open woodland	Indigenous	Locally rare
	Allocasuarina portuensis (Nielsen Park She-Oak)	Indigenous	Endangered – National Significance
	Acacia terminalis (Sunshine Wattle)	Indigenous	Endangered – State Significance
Steele Point			
Beach	Cupaniopsis anarcardiodes (Tuckeroo) along the beach front	1930's	Planted after completion of the Dressing Pavilion
	Ficus rubiginosa (Port Jackson Fig)	Pre 1900	
Bottle and Glass	Closed scrub	Indigenous	Locally rare

### 3.4 Nielsen Park Fauna

Prior to European settlement in 1788, the Vacluse area hosted a rich variety of fauna species. The following species have been recorded in the Vacluse area but are now locally extinct:

Table 3.3 Extinct Fauna

SPECIES	STATUS
Long-nosed bandicoot	Locally extinct
Eastern quoll	Extinct on mainland Australia
Three-toed skink	Locally extinct
Black, brown and tree snakes	Locally extinct
Green Tree Frog	Locally extinct

In addition to these species, it is likely that a number of native rats and carnivorous marsupials along with other reptiles and amphibians once existed in the area. A number of bird species once common in the Vacluse area are now locally extinct.

The only remaining native mammal species found within the Park is the Brush-tailed Possum. The Grey-headed Flying Fox (vulnerable) visits the Park to forage from food trees but utilises day camp sites in other areas, such as the Royal Botanic Gardens. Insectivorous bat species are also recorded occasionally.

The Park contains two introduced species including the European Fox and the Black Rat. The fox is a major threat to vertebrate fauna within Nielsen Park. Animal carcasses recorded near fox dens include the Brush-tailed Possum, Little Pied Cormorant, Tawny Frogmouth and Pied Currawong.

The Park also contains a number of reptile species including; Blue-tongued lizard, Southern Leaf-tailed gecko, Yellow bellied three-toed skink, Weasel skink, Garden skink and the Sun skink. There have been no snake species recorded in the Park for several decades. The Common Brown Toadlet is the only amphibian to have been recorded in the Park in recent times.

Resident bird species recorded as breeding in the Park include; the Grey Butcherbird, Pied Currawong, Superb Blue Fairy Wren, Tawny Frogmouth, New Holland Honeyeater, Laughing Kookaburra, Rainbow Lorikeet, Australian Magpie, Noisy Miner, Spotted Pardalote, Crested Pigeon and the Australian Raven. Resident non-breeding birds include the Magpie-Lark, Feral Pigeon, Eastern Rosella, Silvereye, Welcome Swallow, Red Wattlebird, and Willie Wagtail.

Migratory or transitory bird species recorded breeding in the Park include; the Channel-billed Cuckoo, Figbird and the Common Koel. Non-breeding migratory recorded visiting the Park include; the Red-whiskered Bulbul, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Dollarbird, Spangled Drongo, Maned Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Pacific Black/Mallard Hybrid, Grey Fantail, Red-browed Finch, Silver Gull, Powerful Owl (vulnerable), White-browed Scrub-wren and the Rufus Whistler.

Seabirds utilising the foreshore areas only are not listed. Numerous bird species once recorded in the Vaucluse area are now considered rare visitors to Nielsen Park.

### 3.5 Nielsen Park Archaeology

A number of indigenous and historical archaeological sites have been identified at Nielsen Park. For a full discussion of indigenous archaeology refer to the Aboriginal Heritage Study in Appendix 5. For a map of historical archaeological sites refer to Appendix 4. There is also some further discussion of historical archaeology in the following sections on each precinct.

### 3.6 Mount Trefle Precinct

Mount Trefle is largely in its natural state, noting that it has been subject to both regeneration and introduced species plantings. The hill is a residual sandstone outcrop with shallow sandy soils. The area can be accessed by a series of formed walking tracks that allow access to the summit and limit the impact of access on natural areas.

The recent regeneration of native species has recovered the appearance of natural vegetation, restoring the previously cleared slopes which had been maintained since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The exposed rock surfaces near the summit are a striking feature of the locality allowing sweeping views especially to the north and Watsons Bay. The vegetation grows densely around and over the exposed summit with the dominant tree species Smooth Barked Apple (*Angophora costata*), Red Bloodwood and Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) with occasional specimens of Port Jackson Fig.

Figure 3.8

Base of marble urn or column piercing the surface in a rubbish tip, Mount Trefle August 2004 source Steven Adams



Tall heath species evident include Tick bush (*Kunzea ambigua*) and Teatree. She-oak (*Allocasuarina distyla*) and Bushy Needlewood (*Hakea sericea*) also occur in areas around the hill slopes in areas of shallow soil.

The entrance drive from Vaucluse road to Greycliffe passes through the western edge of the precinct and is an important heritage feature with links not only to the House, but also to the erection and operation of the Steele Point Battery. A Workshop for the NPWS is located on the site of the former stone quarry on the eastern side of the summit.

This Precinct also contains a number of sites with archaeological potential. Possibly dating from the period of private ownership, two sites have been identified as former rubbish tips with material penetrating the surface (see Figure 3.8).

## 3.7 Greycliffe Precinct

### 3.7.1 Greycliffe House

Greycliffe House is a 2-storey 'Marine Villa' of sandstone construction with steeply sloped gabled roof covered with Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles, the roof originally was timber shingled. It was designed in the Victorian Gothic Revival manner by architect J F Hilly for the owner John Reeve and completed in 1851 (see Figure 2.2). Hilly probably based his scheme on a pattern book design as he did for many other similar houses at that time. The result is very picturesque, well suited to its woodland harbourside and hillside setting. As viewed from the harbour it is very similar to its original appearance although its original design intent has been somewhat altered by later alterations and additions at its rear.

The original design consisted of an two storey villa for the main living quarters with bedrooms above and a single storey kitchen and scullery at the rear. Nearby was a detached attic storey sandstone coach house and stables with staff quarters above. This arrangement is clearly shown on a c1860 map of the area with the house served by the present access road. This plan also shows the fencing that separated the property from the rest of the Vaucluse estate and the adjoining Carrara estate.

Following a major fire in 1897 that severely damaged the house it was rebuilt, and was altered and added to providing more staff accommodation. The owner, Fitzwilliam Wentworth, added another storey to the kitchen wing in a similar style to the main house. During its conversion after 1914 for hospital use numerous small alterations and additions were made, some of which remain. However, NPWS commenced a restoration process for the house to remove the Tresillian period changes in the main part of the house and the formal northern elevations and restore the 19<sup>th</sup> Century layout and details.

Hilly's design for the House conforms to the 'picturesque' philosophy of landscape design common in large contemporary estates. A noted horticulturist of the time, Thomas Shepherd, held that in such a style the lawn should be bold and sweeping, and enclosed on both sides by groups of trees, leaving an open park in front of the house. The early landscape layout of Greycliffe appeared to have been influenced by this philosophy; the sandstone outcrops and harbourside location were almost made-to-measure natural elements enhancing the 'picturesque.' Subsequent development of the landscape and curtilage of the House barely progressed beyond sporadic plantings and clearing; this state of affairs was consistent with the continuous leasing of the House for almost the first 50 years. The garden setting today is little changed from early images.

### 3.7.2 The Gardener's Cottage

This small sandstone cottage with terracotta tiled roof (as did 'Greycliffe') was probably also built in 1851 for John Reeve to a design by J F Hilly in the picturesque Victorian Gothic Revival style. He appears to have used a pattern book design for the basis of the planning as it is very similar to standard designs available for 'two farm labourers' in separate dwellings within the one building. It is likely that the building was used for two dwellings as there is evidence of a second staircase providing for access to a bedroom from each of the two ground floor rooms but as early as 1857 it was referred to as the Gardeners' Cottage' (see Figure 3.9).

As there was an early connecting road to Vaucluse House past the cottage it is possible, as it is sited right on the boundary of the two properties, that it may have been intended as a combined gate lodge and worker's cottage.

Changes to the cottage appear to have been made after 1911 when the Trust took control. A rear veranda was added in 1912 and the bathroom annexe (to the side and now demolished) was added in 1923 when the sewer was connected. When the NPWS assumed control after 1968 further improvements were made including the upgrading and installation of the kitchen on the rear veranda, the demolition of the garage, bathroom annex and rear skillion and the reconstruction of the current rear addition.

Figure 3.9

The cottage set in the park area.  
Paul Davies 2011.



Figure 3.10

Design for a dwelling to provide separate accommodation for two estate workers from an 1833 architect's 'pattern' book. Note the conceptual similarities to the Greycliffe Gardener's Cottage.  
source *Loudon*



It also appears that the cottage was used in association with fruit and vegetable gardens for the estate as these are shown fenced and adjoining the cottage, and afterwards in Trust and NPWS ownership it has served as quarters for park rangers.

Despite various works having been undertaken, the building is in quite poor condition and requires substantial upgrade. In particular drainage around the building and termites are causing substantial damage.

### 3.7.3 The Margaret Harper Wing

Built in 1939 as a hospital wing for Greycliffe in its role as a Tresillian House it was designed by architect Gilbert Hughes to provide private ward accommodation for nursing mothers and student nursing staff. The asymmetrical planned building of rendered brickwork with gabled terracotta tiled roof reflects the character of Greycliffe and was originally physically connected. The design has been referred to as being in the Interwar Mediterranean style however its Tudor Gothic Revival roof, chimneys and wall details with its colonial Georgian windows and Spanish colonial arcades possibly suggest the emphasis may be towards Neo Colonial Gothic Revival style.

The NPWS has carried out some alterations and removed some internal walls to improve living areas for its use as a residence.

Some significant moveable heritage is associated with the Tresillian period of occupation of the site including a number of baby bassinets. From time to time birth and health certificates are also donated to PWG by people who were admitted to the centre. These are held on site.

## 3.8 The Steele Point Precinct

The battery, dating from 1871 is of sandstone construction, at least half being below ground level and roofed with sandstone slabs. The construction was 'cut and fill' with spoil being used to mound around the emplacements so that they were not visible from the harbour. The two northern gun pits and connecting trenches are open (see Figure 13) but the one southern gun pit is filled with sand and has been turfed over. The fortification also consists of a north-south tunnel with a western branch down a stairway to the original magazine. A small room, probably intended as a 'stand to' area for gunners is situated at the north end of the tunnel wall. At the south the tunnel branches south easterly to a stair connecting to the filled gun pit and westerly to a tunnel portal recently re-opened that led to the barracks.

At various places both above and below ground are original cast and wrought iron fittings either built into the stonework as hooks, etc or loose items having been partly dismantled from their original form. There are also other parts of surviving fittings such as timber door frames, glazed brick vents, brass fixings, terracotta pipe drains and traces of white lime wash to walls and some black stencilled lettering.

In at least two places, steel roof props have been fitted to prevent collapse but otherwise the structure appears to be in good condition and largely intact.

The fortification is mostly located on Park land, although a section of underground tunnel is under the land occupied for the degaussing station and is not under park control.

The site of the guns provided extensive views to the harbour however regrowth of the surrounding bushland has obscured the setting from the installation.

### 3.8.1 The Cottage

The cottage is a single storey timber-framed structure clad externally with weather boards with a hipped corrugated steel roof. It was originally built in 1880 as a two-roomed barracks for the Gunners as this was probably sufficient for a normal detachment at any one time attached to the fort. The two skillion roofed additions to



the north and south were probably added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most likely to make the building more suitable as quarters for the District Gunner. A verandah was added in 1930 by the Trust and it was later enclosed to form a room. Despite these changes and some inconsequential awning additions, the building retains most of its original details including doors, windows, fireplaces and chimney. Significant conservation and restoration works were undertaken in 2006 and the building is now used for short term holiday accommodation.

### 3.8.2 The Store Shed

This timber-framed structure has a gabled roof and the walls and roof are clad with corrugated iron, some wall sheets having the 'Gospel Oak' brand visible indicating probable 19<sup>th</sup> century derivation and fragments of military use building fabric such as traces of pitch on the concrete floor. The building had two sets of double doors presumably to house two wagons but one of these bays is enclosed and a window fitted. A later timber trellis has been added at the north side. Conservation and restoration works have been completed in conjunction with the works to the cottage. The building is in good condition.

## 3.9 Shark Beach Precinct

### 3.9.1 Kiosk, Cottage and Garage Group

The single storey pavilion kiosk is of timber-framed construction set on a rusticated sandstone spandrel up to window sill height interrupted in two locations by doorways accessed by sandstone flights of steps. The main and central entrance is marked by a decorative timber-gabled porch in the Edwardian style complementing the Federation period style of the building. The hipped roof is clad with Marseilles pattern unglazed terracotta tiles with finials at ridge junctions (see Figures 2.9 and 3.11).

Internally, the north area has a raised timber floor while the south kiosk has a painted cement paved floor and part-raised timber floor. The vaulted ceiling expresses the original octagonal 'tent' form, which is extended north and south over the additions and the ceiling follows the roof line and is panelled with timber boarding. Doors are panelled in the Edwardian style and the windows consist of clear glass lower panes and multi-coloured small glazed panes at the top suggesting the 1920's period. This design, coupled with the rear room having windows and a stuccoed masonry wall, suggests that when originally built the kiosk was open at the sides or had a form of opening screens for day use.



Figure 3.11

The cottage and garage located behind the cafe and beachfront pavilion. Paul Davies 2011.



Figure 3.12

Kiosk, April 2004. The timber deck has recently been removed (Sept. 2004) source *David Sheedy*

The rear of the building has a series of kitchen and store spaces with tiled and skillion roofing above panelled timber or rendered brick walls. These are now connected to the originally detached small cottage as an office for the kiosk manager. This weather board cottage also has a tiled roof and it has been extended at its southern side in recent years up to a courtyard wall that encloses a small service area at the south side of the kiosk. Its main architectural feature is its decorative veranda balustrade.

The building has been conserved and upgraded and is in good condition.

### 3.9.2 Western Toilet Block

This small toilet block originally built in c1920 as a Ladies Toilet block has rusticated sandstone walls and is relieved by small glass louvered window openings and screen entrance walls at each end. The hipped terracotta tiled roof was originally of gambrel form, while internally it has been partitioned to create a Gents Toilet at its southern end. At the same time during the initial period of NPWS control a shower was installed, some toilets replaced with benches and cubicle doors replaced. The building is to be in good condition.

### 3.9.3 Dressing Pavilion

This is a single storey building or enclosure, dating from 1932, designed in a restrained Inter-war Mediterranean style popular in the 1930's, to provide change and shower facilities for paying visitors using the beach. It was designed to provide separated men's and women's toilets, lockers and changing spaces around two large courtyards (see Figure 3.13). Between the two courtyard wings is a central entrance court with an administration area. The building is constructed from cement rendered and painted brickwork walls, recessed externally and capped with narrow pitched terracotta tiled roofing on a timber framework. Additional amenity was provided by free standing shelters in the courtyards.

The central access area provided entry, from the rear of the building, where patrons paid for use of the beach. This led to a semi-circular area between the pavilion and the promenade before leading through a pedestrian tunnel under Notting Parade onto Shark Beach. This arrangement was developed due to the prevailing social attitude that changing clothes could not be done on the beach and as the beach was fenced off from the public and admission charged. Extended daily access was made possible by wearing strips of colour-coded wool.

In 2002-2003 structural and restoration works were carried out within the Dressing Pavilion and in 2004, the tunnel linking the Pavilion with the beach, running beneath Notting Parade, was restored and re-opened. The building is now in very good condition and use of the Pavilion has been revitalised.



Figure 3.13

Dressing Pavilion, interior showing male changing enclosure, April 2004 source *David Sheedy*.

#### 3.9.4 W A Notting Memorial

The memorial is in the form of a semi-circular Roman Seat, set into the hillside, looking out across the harbour. It has bronze plaques at each end and a continuous seat with a low wall behind.

The memorial forms a landscape focal point to the western end of the reserve and is given added visual importance by being elevated on a podium above Notting Parade. It is accessed by two low flights of concrete steps. The memorial is finished in unpainted cement render and given interest by classically inspired capping mouldings. The structure is as originally built and is in good condition.



Figure 3.14

William Notting Memorial. Styled as a Roman Seat it is the only example of such a feature on Sydney Harbour, April 2004 source *David Sheedy*

### 3.9.5 Halbert Pavilion



Figure 3.15

Halbert Pavilion, following further adaptive reuse works, March 2008 source *Rob Porter*.

This is a single storey former picnic pavilion built in 1958. It is timber-framed structure built on a rusticated sandstone foundation wall. The walls above are lined

with vertically placed corrugated galvanised 'ripple iron' sheets. The gabled roof is covered with terracotta tiles. In the 1997 adaptive re-use project to convert it to a function room, clear glass windows were installed replacing the original timber lattice screens. In 2007, further works were undertaken including the construction of a deck and doors (see Figure 18).

### 3.9.6 Beachfront

To supplement the installation of the initial beach swimming enclosure, around 1930 the Trust built a large concrete beach wall and terrace for the full length of the beach. This replaced a grassed bank that had been part of a formal landscaped setting provided by the Trust around 1916. This work resulted in the low lying land beyond, into which the creek discharged being filled and the area being suitable for the construction of the dressing pavilion.

The present structure is in the form of a high retaining wall behind which are areas of mown lawns abutting the Notting Parade pedestrian and service vehicle road. A concrete walkway follows the base of the wall along the beach and below are three large terraced steps which also serve as seating levels. Reinforcing the formal beach backdrop is a flight of steps from the top level onto the beach and symmetrically aligned on the centre of the kiosk. Other smaller stair flights between the upper and lower walkways have been recently fitted with stainless steel handrails.



Figure 3.16

Beachfront and walkway. Paul Davies 2011.

In 2003, the north eastern end of the concrete terrace was rebuilt with smaller steps with a new wider connecting path to Notting Parade. Elsewhere the beachfront wall and terraces are in fair to poor condition and reflect the numerous repairs made over the years to stabilise the structure in the face of the harsh waterfront environment. The shark-proof netted enclosure of semi-circular form is suspended on braided stainless steel cable attached to timber and concrete encased piles extending 75 metres from the beach. It extends for almost the full length of the beach.

### 3.9.7 Former Surf Life Saving Club and Toilet

This former swimming and life saving club building with male toilet is incorporated into one of the two buildings in this precinct at the north eastern part of the beach and park. Dating from 1920, the building is in two sections. One is a rusticated sandstone walled building with a sandstone parapet containing toilets, former shower and dressing room and boatshed facing the Park. The other section, added 1948-1964, is constructed of timber framing accommodating the former SLS clubrooms.

The male toilet area is largely in its original state while an adjoining store was converted in recent years into a disabled toilet. In 2003, the metal skillion roofing was extensively repaired as was the rear timber framed walling. To combat a severe stone exfoliation problem adjacent to the beach in 2003 a poultice was applied to the lower level of the wall to draw out the damaging salt composition build up on the wall.

The north end of the SLSC section was refitted in late 2003 as a kiosk, when repairs were carried out including re-painting internally. This part contains an open deck supported in timber posts over the beach and includes a timber-floored room. All roofing is of skillion low-pitched profile while internally the concrete floors are either tiled or painted cement paving. Wall and ceiling linings to the timber-framed areas are generally of painted hardboard. The building is generally in good condition.

### 3.9.8 The Ladies' Toilet Block

The other building in the precinct dates from 1965 and is the last building to be constructed in the park except for the NPWS workshop near Mount Trefle. It has been sensitively sited above the other toilet building and well screened from view by careful tree and shrub plantings.

The ladies' toilet has a standard toilet interior, covered by a steep mono-pitched corrugated steel roof. It is in good condition. It is accessed by a stair and concrete path leading off Notting Parade close to the Park entrance.

## 3.10 Bottle and Glass Precinct

Rock formations and steep cliff faces dominate the north and west sides of the point. A low hill comprising a sandstone outcrop provides a dramatic anchor for the Port Jackson Figs growing over it on the southern side. Other vegetation growing around the base of the hill includes Red Bloodwoods, while Tick Bush (*Kunzea ambigua*) and Ball Honey Myrtle (*Melaleuca nodosa*) occurs on the summit. A road winds around the hill variously enclosed by trees and exposed sandstone until it reaches the mown grass areas on the northern side, giving panoramas of the Harbour.



Figure 3.17

Bottle and Glass viewed from the foreshore of the park. Paul Davies 2011.



Figure 3.18 The shoreline looking west from Bottle and Glass with the city in the background. Paul Davies 2011.

## 4.0 Comparative Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The comparative analysis outlines 5 main aspects including;

- 1 a precinct containing Indigenous sites of significance;
- 2 a public recreation reserve including a beach swimming enclosure;
- 3 a reserve containing natural bushland;
- 4 an historic house site, and
- 5 an historic fortification.

Each aspect is dealt with separately.

### 4.2 A Precinct containing Indigenous Sites

A number of archaeological surveys have been undertaken in and adjacent to Nielsen Park during the last 20 years. A summary of these studies is provided below to provide a local archaeological context to the current investigation.

- **Tessa Corkhill 1990** - *Survey for Aboriginal Sites at Strickland House, Vaucluse*  
Corkhill undertook a survey of 5 hectares of land comprising the Strickland House estate, just south of Nielsen Park. No new sites were found, however one previously recorded midden site was located and assessed. Corkhill's report recommended conservation of the site within the Hermitage Foreshore Reserve.
- **Elizabeth Rich 1983 & 1984** – *Hermitage Foreshore Reserve – Survey and Test Excavation of a Midden*. Rich undertook a survey and limited test excavation within the Hermitage Foreshore Reserve. During a survey in December 1983 for a proposed walkway, Rich found 3 middens, axe grinding grooves and a potential archaeological deposit. An additional midden was found along the alignment of a proposed fence. In 1984 Rich carried out limited test excavation at the site which found a cultural sequence approx 600 mm thick and containing a variety of rock platform shell fish species.
- **Attenbrow 1992** – *Port Jackson Archaeological Project Stage II*, As part of the Port Jackson Archaeological Project, Attenbrow carried out test excavation at two sites within Nielsen Park (45-6-1045 'Hydrofoil Cave' and 45-6-0560 'Mt Trefle Cave').

A total of six 50cm by 50cm squares were excavated within deposits at Mt Trefle Cave. Deposits ranged between 150 mm to 700 mm deep to natural sandstone bedrock. Stone artefacts, bone and shell artefacts, faunal remains, charcoal and ochre were recovered. Two bone unipoint artefacts and six pieces of worked shell (scrapers) were found. Stone artefacts were predominantly made from quartz with forms characteristic of the late Bondaian period (the last 1,600 years). A total of 48 species of shellfish were identified, the dominant species being hairy mussel, black nerita and oyster. Carbon dates on charcoal and shell recovered during excavation indicated early occupation approximately 1,200 years ago.

One square metre was excavated within deposits at Hydrofoil Cave, a small rock shelter on Bottle and Glass Point. Deposits were approximately 800 mm deep. Faunal remains, shell artefacts, stone artefacts and charcoal from an Aboriginal hearth were recovered. A fish hook file and 2 fish hooks were found, but very few



stone artefacts. The deposits were highly disturbed by modern visitation and use. The dominant shellfish species represented were black nerita, limpet, heavy turban and hairy mussel. A shell sample was submitted for carbon dating; however the results had not been received at the time of writing.

- **AHIMS Site Register.** A search of the OEH *Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System* (AHIMS) for sites within Nielsen Park returned a total of 14 sites. Site types and frequencies are as follows:
  - Rock Shelter with Midden – 4;
  - Midden – 3;
  - Rock Shelter with Art – 3;
  - Rock Shelter with Deposit – 2;
  - Axe Grinding Groove / Rock Engraving – 1, and
  - Rock Shelter with Art & Midden – 1.

The AHIMS search results show a predominance of middens and a variety of rock shelter sites. Site patterning in Nielsen Park reflects the topographic, geological and environmental context of the area. Rock engravings, axe grinding grooves and rock shelters are all found in areas of sandstone outcropping. Midden sites are found in greatest number on the margins of the estuary. (Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd)

### 4.3 A Public Recreation Reserve

There are some 20 enclosed public swimming baths in Sydney Harbour and its tributaries, however, there are only 6 that are comparable in character and setting to Nielsen Park, in that they have a landscaped shoreline reserve adjoining the netted swimming area. These are:

- Balmoral netted enclosure
- Clifton Gardens pool
- Forty Baskets Beach pool
- Little Sirius Cove baths
- Little Manly Cove baths
- Parsley Bay enclosure

The remainder, even on the Hawkesbury, Georges and Port Hacking River systems are small enclosures with minimal beachfronts and little shore space and all are generally surrounded by suburban development. Nielsen Park pool area is the largest of the seven locations being assessed in Sydney Harbour and has significantly more accessible recreation space than the others. Only Forty Baskets Beach has a more natural bush setting.

Historically, as a recreation reserve the Clifton Gardens reserve is the oldest and has (albeit on a smaller scale) a similar character to Nielsen Park, though without the historic built environment. Clifton Gardens represented the late 19<sup>th</sup> century version of a harbourside park reached by ferry from Sydney Cove while Nielsen Park is the early 20<sup>th</sup> century equivalent (see Figure 19). They are on opposite sides of the harbour.

Of all the similar harbourside reserves with public baths Nielsen Park would appear to be unique in that it combines the following aspects;

- it retains a rich collection of Indigenous cultural heritage;
- it encompasses the last surviving parcel of remnant bushland in the eastern suburbs consolidated in one continuous shoreline;
- most of the reserve area was once part of a famous estate being Vacluse house and it has historic buildings relating to the Wentworth family and still contains an intact marine villa setting;
- a small historic harbour fortification is located within its boundaries;
- it has a large protected swimming beach relatively close to the influence of the harbour entrance plus associated infrastructure;
- there is a range of large areas for picnicking and public recreation and numbers of support buildings of architectural interest, and
- It resulted from the socio-political motivations of residents to preserve foreshore land in public ownership in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Possibly no other park reserve on Sydney Harbour (with the exception of Ashton Park) has captured the public imagination to the extent of the efforts to preserve it for future generations. The park also provides an invaluable space for healthy recreation and relaxation in pleasant surroundings.



Figure 4.1

Trust members inspect the Park with uniformed rangers from Vacluse (left) and Nielsen Park (right) Trusts. c1927. Note the campaign ribbons being worn by the Rangers source *NPWS Collection*.

The Dressing Pavilion remains part of a small number of Inter-War Mediterranean Style bathing pavilions in Sydney. These include the Bondi Beach Pavilion, the Bathers' Pavilion at Balmoral Beach and the Brighton Le Sands Beach Pavilion. These three other examples have to varying extents had their original functions changed while the Nielsen Park remains almost unchanged and provides the same facilities as was originally intended.

The three other sites were all built in 1928 at the height of a development boom and reflected the heightened public aspirations of that time, particularly in regard to beachside recreation. By contrast the Shark Beach pavilion was built at the height of

the Great Depression in 1932 using restricted resources. It differs from the other three as it was purposely made to be subservient to the park landscape and is accordingly set well back from the beach. The others were sited on the beach and busy roads and were meant to be dominant landmarks adjacent to the baths or main surf beach.

Nielsen Park's pavilion has the distinction of retaining its original function while the other pavilions have largely been adapted for different uses. It was designed as a single function dressing and bathing facility for beach patrons based on open courtyard planning, the others were multi-function complexes with the Bondi building incorporating a stage and open air cinema. Bondi is the only example to demonstrate internal open courtyards similar to Nielsen Park and may have been influential in the design for the Park Dressing Pavilion.

#### 4.4 A Natural Bushland Reserve

While the remaining parts of the natural bush landscape in Nielsen Park have been affected by human intervention over a long period they still retain a varied collection of important native species such as the remnant *Angophora* forest and *Kunzea* heath. The reserve contains almost undisturbed harbour foreshore settings in a prominent part of Sydney Harbour. The park contains many impressive natural sandstone outcrops and cliff formations. This area contains *Allocasuarina portuensis* and *Acacia terminalis subsp terminalis*, both shrubs listed as endangered species on Schedule 1 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. This varied combination of natural features has assisted in the retention of a range of birds, animals and marine animals along the foreshore.

Nielsen Park is one of the most interesting harbourside reserves is that it still possesses a rich diversity of plant types (many of these are original pre-settlement species within a highly urbanised area) in combination with its function as a public reserve with planted park spaces. This makes it is rare on the southern shores of the harbour. It compares with the bushland of South Head, however, this area is still in the process of regeneration by NPWS after being cleared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the colonial military forces.

#### 4.5 An Historic House Site

The '*Greycliffe House*' estate can still be appreciated in its built form. This was preserved from residential subdivision until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Wentworth family. Then, at a critical time, when re-development seemed inevitable by public intervention, in the form of the Government resumption, it was reserved as a result of community pressure.

There are some harbourside estates with their original houses that portray their original relationship to the harbour. Notable examples with their support buildings are as follows:

- *Vaucluse House* and *Carrara* (Strickland House) at Vaucluse
- *Admiralty House* at Kirribilli
- *Carthona*, Darling Point
- *Government House* at Government Domain, Farm Cove

Two further examples are found on the upper reaches of the Parramatta River:

- *Garryowen* (part of Callan Park) at Rozelle

- *Yaralla* (part of Thomas Walker Hospital) at Concord

Of these examples, Greycliffe retains a more immediate relationship to the harbour with the exception of Carrara.

Greycliffe was part of that group of residences planned and built on the lower reaches of the harbour originally in response to Governor Macquarie's desire for all harbourside buildings to be in the picturesque Tudor Gothic idiom. A style used by Francis Greenway for public buildings such as Dawes Point and Fort Macquarie Batteries and Government House stables. This theme was continued during the Victorian era and it became fashionable to own a Gothic inspired style of harbourside villa. Usually referred to as 'Marine Villas', many such residences were built facing the lower reaches of the Harbour. Apart from Government House and Vacluse house, the privately owned examples which survive include Bishopscourt (original section designed by Hilly), Callooa, Carthona, The Swifts and Lindsay at Darling Point, Gladswood House at Double Bay and the Hermitage at Rose Bay.

This design of house lost favour towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in favour of the Italianate style which had been inspired by the introduction into Australia in the 1840's of the 'Italian Villa' style.

Comparing the architectural quality of Greycliffe with similar houses of the period, is quite difficult. While there are some pre 1850 examples surviving of similar design such as Carthona and Lindsay at Darling Point, and many others from the 1860's up to 1890, there appear to be very few examples surviving from the 1850's. This may be explained as Sydney at that period was the main centre of building and other contemporary examples have fallen victim to the pressure of urban development. It may have been that resources were dissipated elsewhere due to the gold rush fever of the 1850's seen in both the shortage of materials and tradesmen.

Other comparable extant examples are;

- Bega Rectory (c1850) – designed by Edmund Blacket
- Kirribilli House (1859) – architect unknown
- Roslyndale at Woollahra (c1856) – designed by Francis Clarke
- Bishopscourt at Darling Point (c1858) – designed by Edmund Blacket as a major rebuilding of John Hilly's earlier cottage.

All examples surviving are of equal architectural quality to the high standard of *Greycliffe*.

Similarly, few 1850's examples of Victorian Picturesque Gothic Gardener's Cottages remain. The only examples so far located are the lodges in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Those few forming part of country estates in the Southern Highlands are all of a later date.

The survival of *Greycliffe* Gardener's Cottage is a rare example in Sydney of what was once a common practice both in the Georgian and Victorian periods, of building lodges (usually at the gate entrances to estates), gardeners and farm or estate workers cottages. They were sometimes even in the form of small terrace houses or as is the case at *Greycliffe* as a cottage containing space for two self-contained dwellings in the traditional English estate manner.

Other later examples known to have survived in Sydney include; the *Domain Lodge* for *Government House*; the *Hermitage Lodge*, Vacluse; *Toxteth Lodge*, Glebe; the Gardener's Lodge at Camelot Estate, Narellan; The Gatehouses for Old Government House, Parramatta and the estate cottages at *Yaralla*, Concord.

## 4.6 An Historic Fortification Site

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries a large number of harbour batteries were built in Sydney Harbour, Botany Bay and at various places on the coast including Newcastle. As a result of a Royal Commission and a Defence Committee recommendation in 1870, a series of supplementary forts were built in Sydney Harbour, designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet. They were built in accordance with then current British military requirements even though in 1870 all British Regiments in Australia returned to Britain leaving relatively untrained colonial army personnel to man the new and extended batteries. The Steele Point Battery (at times referred to as Shark Point) was one of the new group of batteries described as 'outer defences' namely; Middle Head (7 guns), Georges Head (2 guns), Inner South Head (5 guns) and Steele Point (3 guns) and 'inner defences' at Bradley's Head (2 guns). All were built from either the natural or quarried sandstone. Construction having open gun pits, below ground passages and magazines, and above ground barracks built from either sandstone or timber (as at Steele Point).



Figure 4.2

Nielsen Park during occupancy of the 61<sup>st</sup> Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Company, c1944. Note the temporary barracks located near the present day sewage-pumping station and trailer-mounted generator for powering the searchlights source  
*Courtesy Barbara Milford.*

In 1871 construction started at Steele Point (the date is inscribed in a stone lintel of an outer passage) and appears to have been completed in 1880. A later valuation of the fort described it thus:

*'A Battery with three gun pits connected by open passages and covered passages to magazine, shell and artillery store and two shell and lamp recesses built of stone. Quarters with outhouse and store and pickets fence. Barbed wire fence surrounding fort, including gates jetty and approach. Roads and sundry improvements.'*

During the 1880's and 1890's technological gunnery advances saw the replacement of the original battery at Steele Point but any further development seems to have been halted in 1910 with the removal of the guns. In contrast other contemporary harbour and coastal batteries were updated even during World War II.

Steele Point forms part of a very significant group of defences built during the 1870s and has had relatively little change. It is the only fort to retain its original barracks.



Figure 4.2

The main avenue of figs leading through the parkland area. Paul Davies 2011.

## 5.0 Assessment of Significance

### 5.1 Basis of Assessment

Cultural significance has been established in this study using the methodology and terminology of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter), 1999. 'The Conservation Plan' guidelines by J S Kerr and the NSW Heritage Office Heritage Manual assessment criteria. The assessment has been developed from an understanding of the history of the site and its buildings and an inspection of the existing fabric.

### 5.2 Assessment of Significance

Nielsen Park as a whole, along with specifically identified items, has been assessed against criteria established by the NSW Heritage Office.

These criteria are set out below along with those aspects of the Park which give rise to significance under each criterion.

#### **Criterion (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)**

- Nielsen Park Reserve represents an early 20<sup>th</sup> century appreciation by both citizens and the State Government of the value of an important harbourside landscape;
- Nielsen Park for almost 100 years has epitomised the recreational value of Sydney Harbour and the Sydney lifestyle;
- Nielsen Park Reserve retains a diverse range of historic items that span the entire range of human occupation of the site including pre-colonisation;
- It was one of the first major recreational reserves created along the southern shore of Sydney Harbour;
- Nielsen Park forms part of one of the first land grants in Australia as well as being part of the original grant to William Charles Wentworth;
- The original area and buildings of the *Greycliffe* estate including *Greycliffe* and the Gardener's Cottage, dating from 1851, survive in a recognisable form. They are rare examples of a Marine Villa that has retained its setting in relation to the harbour. The Greycliffe Estate is significant at a state level.
- *Greycliffe House* was used as the Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies, only the second hospital established in Australia for infants under the age of two years;
- *Greycliffe House* was used as the Vaucluse Tresillian Mothercraft Home and Training School, the third such home established;
- The Gardener's Cottage has been continuously occupied for over 150 years by those charged with managing the Park; Estate Gardeners, Nielsen Park and latterly NPWS Rangers;
- Steele Point Battery, which was part of the 1870's harbour chain of defences, occupies a prominent headland location and retains much of its layout and form. It is significant at a state level as part of a suite of harbour fortifications;

- The Gunners Barrack building is a rare example remaining around the harbour;
- The Park played an important part of Sydney's anti-aircraft defences during World War 2;
- The Dressing Pavilion is a rare and largely intact example of interwar community values in relation to bathing.

**Criterion (b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)**

- The former Greycliffe Estate has strong associations with John and Fanny Reeve, the Wentworth Family, in particular Fitzwilliam Wentworth, and a range of notable tenants who were prominent men and women from the political, legal and commercial circles of 19<sup>th</sup> century Sydney;
- Nielsen Park has a strong association with William Notting, Secretary of the Harbour Foreshores Vigilance Committee and Park Trustee, who led the public move to have the area preserved;
- The name of the reserve – Nielsen Park, acknowledges the Secretary of Lands at the time, Niels Nielsen who provided Government support for the establishment of the Park;
- The later use of Greycliffe as an Infant Hospital saw a close association with Dr Margaret Harper.

**Criterion (c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area))**

- Nielsen Park contains two fine, state significance architectural examples of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century residential buildings - *Greycliffe House* and its related outbuildings designed by architect J F Hilly and the Steele Point Battery and Barracks designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet;
- Set within Nielsen Park are a diverse range of recreational park buildings such as the Kiosk, Cottage, Dressing Shed and toilet buildings mostly from the office of the Government Architect. They all are excellent examples of their type and demonstrate the importance of the park as a recreational area.

**Criterion (d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons**

- Nielsen Park has held a special relationship with local residents and visitors for nearly 100 years as a favoured place of resort for relaxation in the open air with a strong emphasis on its swimming beach. The park offers a major harbour beach in contrast to ocean beaches in the eastern suburbs. It is of outstanding social significance at a state level;
- Its identification with swimming saw the early setting up of swimming and life saving club within the Park;
- For most of its time as a public reserve it has been one of Sydney Harbour's most popular recreational places in the summer months.



**Criterion (e) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)**

- Due to its rich and diverse range of uses from pre-settlement times to the present including uses such as a private residential estate, a colonial fort and recreational reserve, the Park is able to contribute to the understanding of both the cultural and natural history of the harbour;
- Archaeological potential exists in the Indigenous sites;
- The rubbish deposits on the western side of Mount Trefle may contain material of significance from the fire-damaged *Greycliffe House* or nearby historic properties.

**Criterion (f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)**

- Nielsen Park retains a rare example of a waterfront mid-19<sup>th</sup> estate that has survived in a near original state;
- The Steele Point Battery is the only harbour fort to survive in its entirety;
- Nielsen Park contains a rich collection of Indigenous sites;
- Nielsen Park contains two endangered plant species including the Nielsen Park Sheoak (*Allocasuarina portuensis*), which is of state and national significance.

**Criterion (g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places or cultural or natural environments**

- Nielsen Park represents one of the finest public recreational harbour areas in Sydney and is of state significance for its recreational history and values;
- Within Nielsen Park is a fine examples of a mid-Victorian marine villa with its outbuildings (*Greycliffe House*);
- At a prominent position on its harbour front Nielsen Park contains one of the 1870’s fortification complexes that were built as a group on promontories around Sydney Harbour.

### 5.3 Historical Themes and National Values

Nielsen Park meets a number of the State Historic Themes and National Values for heritage items. In particular the Park meets the following:

Table 5.2 Historic Themes

AUSTRALIAN THEMES	STATE THEMES
Tracing the natural evolution of Australia.	Environment – naturally evolved.
Peopling Australia.	Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures
Developing local, regional and national economies.	Health
Governing	Defence

Developing Australia's cultural life.	Domestic life Leisure
---------------------------------------	--------------------------

### 5.3.1 National Criteria

These themes are based upon those developed by the Australian Heritage Register. These identify the major processes of land settlement and occupation which are represented at diverse sites around Australia and which create the modern form of Australia.

The following principle themes are relevant to Nielsen Park's particular historical development.

#### ***Tracing the natural evolution of Australia***

Although Nielsen Park has had its original landscape altered in various ways since European settlement, the indigenous vegetation has regenerated under current NPWS management. This has resulted in areas of the landscape appearing similar to those that existed prior to European settlement.

#### ***Peopling Australia***

The Park can demonstrate patterns of land use associated with the Aboriginal inhabitants by the predominance of middens and a variety of rock shelter sites. The site patterning in the Park reflects the topographic, geological and environmental context of the area.

#### ***Developing local, regional and national economies***

The extended use of *Greycliffe House* as a pioneering Hospital for babies in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century demonstrates the progress of health care in this specialised area as a response to the health issues facing the population at the time.

#### ***Governing***

The defence scheme of which Steele Point Battery was a part, was conceived as a response to the perceived military threats of the day. The Battery and its associated structures demonstrate the nature of coastal defence in the late Victorian era while the strategic location of the Park is further reflected in its use for defence purposes during World War 2 by the anti-aircraft searchlight companies. These units, manned largely by women demonstrate the expectations of the military in defining the role of women in the warfare.

#### ***Developing Australia's cultural life***

Since its resumption, Nielsen Park has been used for public recreation in both active and passive ways. The beach improvements represent the expectations of Park users for swimming, while the development of the area behind the beach with pavilions and shelters demonstrate the popularity of harbourside locations for picnickers and family groups.

*Greycliffe House*, and the associated Gardener's Cottage, along with the other residences demonstrate the level of housing and amenity available to people at different levels of Australian society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These ranged from landed gentry and their servants to military personnel, health workers and more recently to Government officers working for the NPWS.

### 5.3.2 NSW State Heritage Inventory Criteria

The NSW State Heritage Manual identifies a range of themes which describe historical activity. Those which are relevant for Nielsen Park are listed below.

#### ***Environment – naturally evolved***

Nielsen Park can demonstrate the naturally evolved environment on the estuary of Sydney Harbour, through geological phenomena, flora and fauna.

#### ***Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures***

Nielsen Park was an area heavily used by Indigenous peoples and can demonstrate their land use and culture through the middens and cave art.

#### ***Health***

The pioneering use of Greycliffe for new-born and infant health through the Lady Edeline Hospital and later as a training facility for early childhood through the Tresillian Mothercraft Training School demonstrates the development of specialist healthcare in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### ***Defence***

The construction of the Steele Point Battery reflects the defence strategy of the NSW colonial government in the mid to late Victorian period. One of a series of similar emplacements around the eastern arm of the harbour, the Battery demonstrates the technology of ordnance of the period, while the rare survival of the associated above-ground structures demonstrates the level of infrastructure needed to support the Battery and its staff.

#### ***Domestic life***

During the period of private ownership, *Greycliffe* was inhabited by wealthy and prominent families from Victorian Sydney; the specifications and amenity of the House reflects this. In the same way the role of servant, estate workers and labourers is demonstrated in the provision made for them on the site. *Greycliffe* has high rarity value, as one of very few harbourside residences surviving from this era, and remaining with its grounds.

#### ***Leisure***

Resumed for recreation, Nielsen Park demonstrates patterns of public leisure activities from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present, all centred on Shark Bay and the interface with the Harbour.

## 5.4 Statement of Heritage Significance

Nielsen Park is of State heritage significance for its rich and diverse cultural, social and natural history.

It has rarity value for the series of preserved Indigenous cultural sites within a much used recreation reserve on the Sydney Harbour foreshore. Its regenerated bushland setting contains a significant inventory of indigenous flora including some endangered species, along with a 20<sup>th</sup> century beach-orientated landscape and related buildings.

The superb Victorian Gothic residence Greycliffe, designed by the noted architect John Frederick Hilly, and its association with high profile residents of importance to Australia's cultural history give it significant heritage value. In the same way the remarkably intact and extensive Steele Point Battery and Barracks designed by the colonial architect James Barnet is of outstanding heritage value. The Park retains the ability to demonstrate the original estate grouping of Greycliffe complete with its rare example of a Gothic Gardener's Cottage, along with the strategic fortification in relation to the defence of Sydney Harbour. The pioneering use of Greycliffe for newborn and infant health through the Lady Edeline Hospital and later the Tresillian Mothercraft Home give the house and the Margaret Harper House high social significance. The adjacent parterre garden laid out by the first Matron of Vaucluse, Matron Kaibel has strong aesthetic value.

An important aspect of its cultural significance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century lies in the establishment of the Nielsen Park Trust. An early demonstration of community concern for the conservation of harbour foreshore saw lobbying to secure its future. This was achieved in large part due to William Notting, Niels Nielsen and the Government of the day. The park has been maintained by successive members of the Nielsen Park Trust and subsequently the NPWS.

The use of the Park during the 20<sup>th</sup> century mostly as a public swimming and recreational park is of outstanding social significance to the state. It provided a much needed waterfront public facility on a large scale when Sydney was threatened with the loss of its natural harbour waterfront. The foreshore, the promenade and associated buildings are of high recreational, social and aesthetic significance. The Nielsen Park Trust, under difficulties during the Great Depression, was able to provide public building facilities within the Park which were of a high standard, and were well designed assets sympathetic to the natural landscaped character of the Park.

The entire Reserve is of state significance as a harbourside recreational reserve, heritage precinct and natural landscape.



Figure 5.1

The beachfront viewed from Bottle and Glass showing the stepped concrete promenade, mature plantings and pavilion beyond. Paul Davies 2011.

## 5.5 Schedule of Relative Heritage Significance

### Legend

<b>Addresses relative significance for fabric and elements</b>		
<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Recommendation for fabric or element</b>
Exceptional (Red)	Rare or outstanding fabric or element directly contributing to an item's local and State significance	Preservation, restoration or reconstruction only. Retain all significant fabric.
High (Green)	High degree of original fabric. Demonstrates a key element of the item's significance	Alterations, which do not detract from significance. Preservation restoration, reconstruction or reversible addition. Aim to retain all fabric. If adaptation is necessary for the continued use of the place, minimise changes. Aim not to remove or obscure significant fabric and give preference to changes, which are reversible
Moderate/ Medium (Blue)	Altered or modified elements. Elements with little heritage value, but which may contribute to the overall significance of the item	Preservation restoration, reconstruction or limited adaptation. Aim to retain most of the fabric. If adaptation is necessary, more changes can be made than would be possible for fabric of high significance, but the same principles apply
Low/ Little (Yellow)	Alteration, difficult to interpret, does not make a contribution to overall significance	Fabric of little significance may be retained or removed as required for the future use of the place, provided that its removal would cause no damage to adjacent significant fabric.
Intrusive (Grey)	Detracts from the item's heritage significance	Modification or removal. Intrusive fabric should be removed or altered to reduce intrusion when the opportunity arises. Minimise damage to adjacent fabric of significance.

### Building Schedule

<b>Grading</b>	<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
<b>Greycliffe House</b>			
Exceptional	External appearance of the two storey main Greycliffe Estate House N, E, W elevations.	All verandahs, roof, walls, materials, fixtures, finishes and embellishments	Retain unaltered.
Exceptional	The ground floor plan of the main Estate House.	Internal floor plan and orientation, ie room size, door and window location and relationship to	Retain unaltered.

Grading	Attribute	Detail	Comment
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
		verandah and exterior.	
Exceptional	Architectural details and finishes in the ground floor	Ceilings, walls, finishes and moulded decoration, floors, all joinery, fireplaces, window and door hardware and any surviving c 1890s and earlier fittings (including gas fittings and servant bells).	Retain unaltered. All the formal ground floor rooms and their suite of decoration, especially the Victorian Gothic style joinery, date from the 1850s and 1890s. (Earlier paint layers may exist under the current scheme).
Exceptional	Architectural details and finishes in the first floor	Ceilings, walls, finishes and moulded decoration, floors, all joinery, fireplaces, window and door hardware and any surviving c 1890s and earlier fittings (including gas fittings and servant bells).	All the first floor rooms and their suite of decoration, especially the Victorian Gothic style joinery, date from the 1850s and 1890s. Earlier paint layers may exist under the current scheme.
High	First floor plan of the main Estate House	Internal floor plan and orientation, ie room size, door and window location.	The first floor accommodated the less formal private family rooms. Some minor reversible subdivision of the rooms is possible, while retaining the fittings.
Exceptional	Views	To and from the NW and NE to the main house.	The frequently drawn and photographed views, to and from the main house, through the landscape setting, expressing the Marine Villa connection to the harbour. The views should not be obstructed. A clearer view to and from the harbour is desirable.
High	External appearance of two storey rear Kitchen and Stables.	All c1890s materials, fixtures, finishes and embellishments.	The original 1850s single storey wing had a first floor added in 1870s and the wing was altered post 1914 for the Lady Edeline and Tresillian Hospitals. Modifications are possible, affecting the 1970s restorations Some evidence, not all, of the Hospital occupancy should be retained for interpretation
High	Former Kitchen and	The rooms retain the 19thC	The rooms were less

Grading	Attribute	Detail	Comment
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
	service rooms on the ground and the 1870s first floor rooms	plan and some fittings, with later post 1914 hospital alterations fittings such as the baby baths.	formal service areas. The ground floor is in poor condition. Some first floor rooms were restored in the 1970s. The rooms and location of doors and openings can be modified as long as the overall plan is still legible. Some evidence, not all, of the Hospital occupancy should be retained for interpretation.
High	Stables' attic rooms	Likely to be 1850s rooms which survived 1890s fire. Ceilings, walls, floors and finishes, all c1850s joinery, window and door hardware	The rooms were less formal service areas but are important for their mid 19thC origins and tangible association with the Estate staff and workers. The surviving finishes are fragile and should be retained and consolidated. Some modifications such as door widening and opening rooms to each other, using nibs and downstand beams, are possible as long as the plan remains legible. An additional stair to the ground will be needed for emergency exit.
High	Views	To and from the NE to the Kitchen Wing and Stables	The elevations have been modified and some trees have grown up but generally the late 19th C and early 20th C views up the slope to the Kitchen Wing and Stables are still legible.
Moderate	The toilet fitout in the rooms at the stair landing	The 1950s fitout, ie partitions, tiles, sanitary fittings and fixtures except the 1890s walls, joinery and sink cupboard which is of high significance.	The rooms were converted to toilets in the 950s. Removal or modification of the 1950s fitout is possible. However, the 1890s walls, and joinery should remain.
Moderate	The pair of first floor rooms at the south end of the Kitchen Wing	All parts, except the fireplace which is of high significance.	The Tresillian period nurses rooms and fitout were removed in the 1970s. Modifications are possible. The fireplace should be retained (at the time of this



Grading	Attribute	Detail	Comment
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
			report it has not been confirmed if all or part of the fireplace was reconstructed since the 1970s )
Moderate	The Stables ground floor rooms		The 19th C structure remains without its linings. The Tresillian period rooms and fitout were removed in the 1970s.
Moderate	The rear, south elevations of the Kitchen Wing and Stables.	All elements except the open entry and the surviving stone flags which are of high significance	The elevations were altered during the hospital occupancy and then parts were removed in the 1970s. The stables can be altered and enclosed, as long as the wide entry is legible and the stone flags and walls are protected.
Moderate	Views to the rear of the building.		The views of the rear service areas were never as important as the formal front. The views are hemmed in by the cliff and the bush above. Alterations are possible to improve servicing to the building.
Low	The fitout in the ground floor SW room	Fitout, finishes and cupboarding. The room envelope itself and door entry is high significance, however the fitout is low	The room can take further alterations
Low	Open area adjacent to the east wall of the Stables	Paving and planting	Area was occupied by Tressillian period buildings removed in the 1970s. The area has little meaning as an empty space between Greycliffe and Margaret Harper when the buildings were initially connected.
<b>Margaret Harper House</b>			
High	External appearance of the house N, E, W elevations.	The roof, walls, materials, fixtures, finishes and embellishments, notably the north and west gables	These elevations have been slightly modified and are concealed by vegetation, but they still

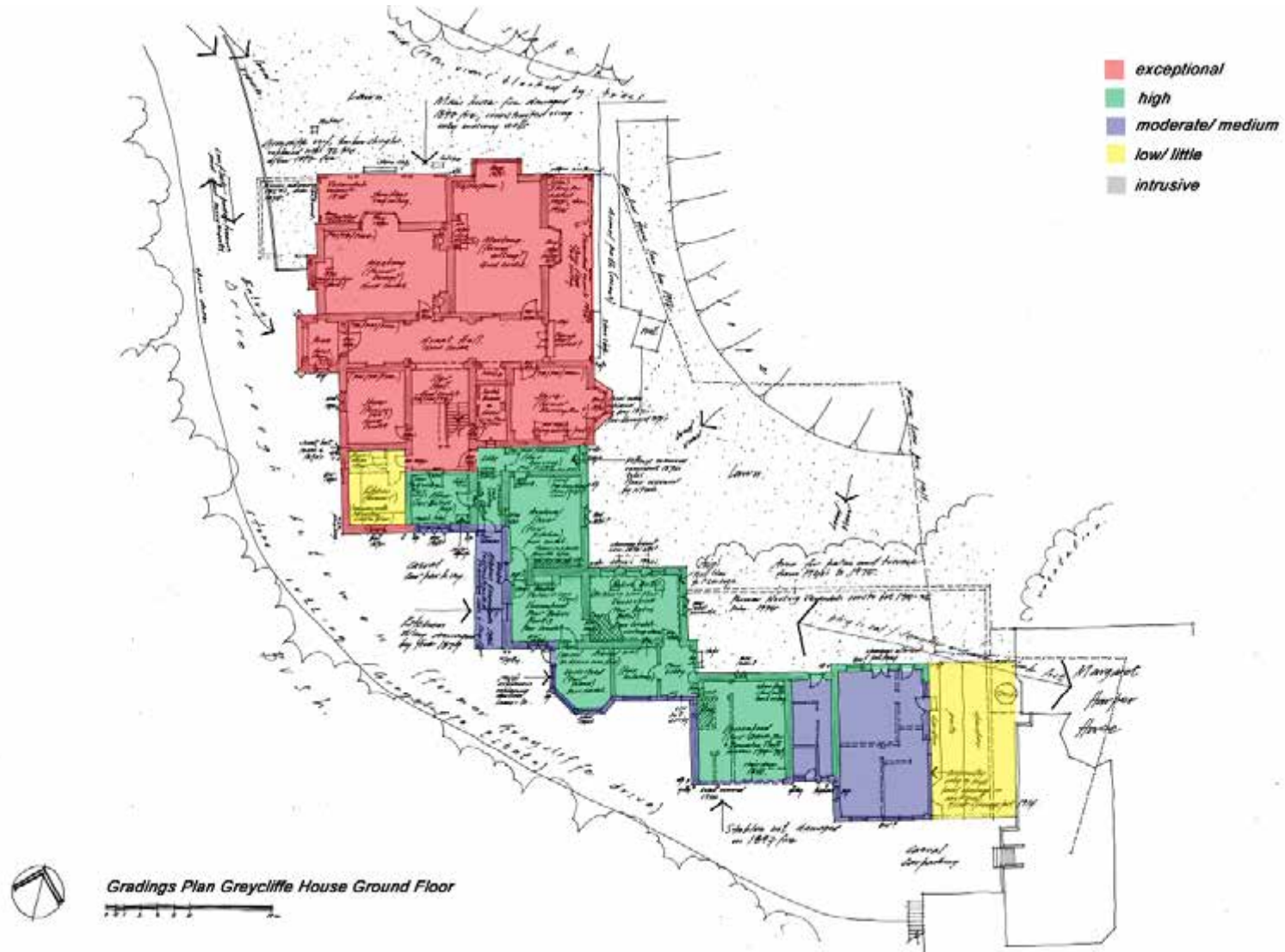
Grading	Attribute	Detail	Comment
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
		and paired east gables which articulate the design.	show the architect's intent. Some new openings can be made, but should not overwhelm the original composition.
High	The courtyard	Open air, private and partially walled courtyard with its stone paving, as a forecourt to the building.	The building's main architectural elements such as the stairs, the arched windows, the front entry and cupola over the bathroom front the courtyard should be retained. The west wall and the north west corner were altered. The stair connecting the courtyard to the north was removed and the west wall may have been moved to reduce the courtyard area. Some alterations are possible to the west and north.
High	The former bathroom, the adjacent hall and the bedrooms and verandah in the NE corner	Room size, fittings and the bedrooms' relationship to verandah and exterior	While the rest of the interior has been altered, these rooms still show details that embodied the Tresillian Society's healthcare aims in a domestic scale setting. The rooms can sustain minor alterations, but the room size, finishes and fittings and position of main openings should be retained.
High	Matron Kaibel Garden	Stone flagging, paths and garden beds.	The garden was restored in 2002. The importance is in the association of the garden with Margaret Harper House than with the physical paths and beds. Some alterations are possible as long as the main walkway flanked with stone bordered beds is retained.
High	Views	Close view and connection to the Matron Kaibel Garden and long views to the east	The view to Matron Kaibel Garden is currently obstructed by regrowth which should be thinned. The paired east gables were once prominent to the east, now obscured by

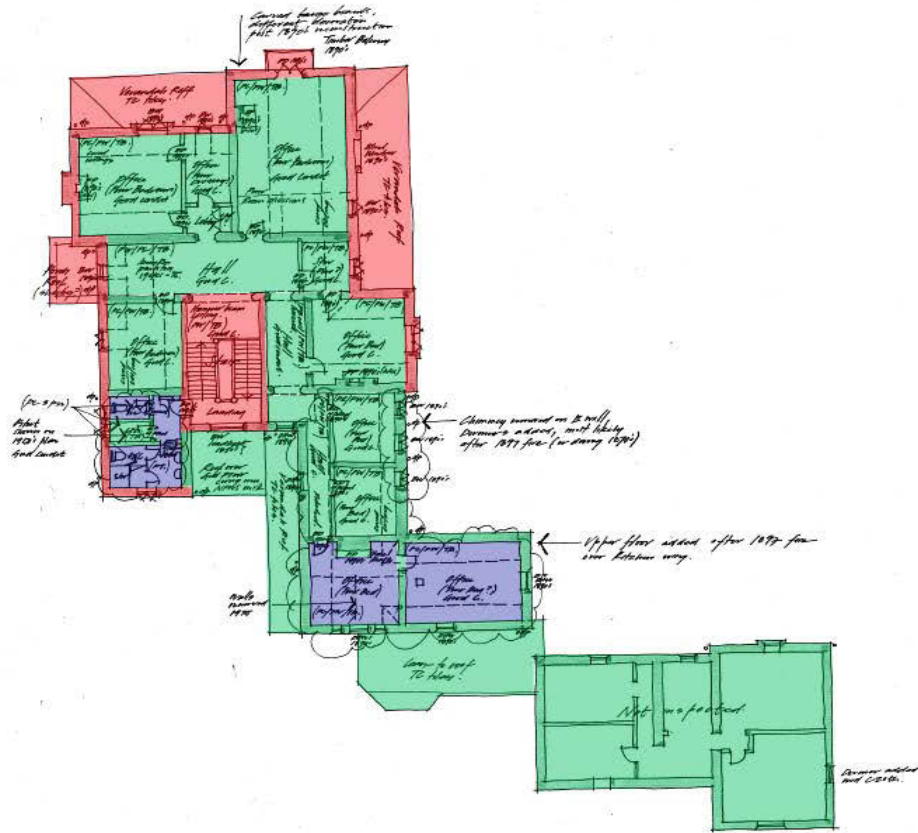
Grading	Attribute	Detail	Comment
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
			large trees.
High	Functional connection between Greycliffe and Margaret Harper House	The close connection between the buildings from 1930s to 1960s.	The connection gives additional meaning to the nature of the Tresillian modifications in Greycliffe. The connection is now severed but could be interpreted either by a physical reconnection or as information presented to the public
Moderate	Parts of the Entry Lobby, the former Laundry and drying room and south toilets	The plan, and any original fixtures and finishes	The rooms retain original finishes and some of the original layout, but, as most of the interior was altered in the 1970s, they are now isolated or cut off from a legible association with the original plan. Alterations are possible.
Low	S elevation and N face of the SE wing	The overall building composition remains as high significance but the S elevation and the N face of the SE wing have been substantially altered.	New additions and modifications are possible against these elevations but should retain an understanding of the building's main composition.
Low.	Most of the building's interior.	Most of the interior of the building.	The modification of the interior for the residence altered the original design of corridors and cellular rooms. These areas can be modified in conjunction with alterations to the S and SE elevations.
Intrusive	1970s external alterations	Sliding doors and SE terrace and pergola	The openings and fittings used are not commensurate with the quality of the rest of the building. A level external area in the location of the terrace is still useful to the functioning of the building, noting the steep slope.
<b>Gardener's Cottage</b>			
Exceptional	External appearance of the 19th C Estate Cottage, particularly N elevation.	High pitched tiled roof and chimneys (originally taller), stone walls, small cottage-like windows, and the	Retain unaltered. The design still clearly shows the architects intent, (possibly JF Hilly)

Grading	Attribute	Detail	Comment
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
		Rustic Gothic decoration.	
Exceptional	The four 19th C rooms, on the ground and first floors	Internal floor plan and orientation, ie room size, stair, door and window location and relationship to the exterior, all 19th C fittings and joinery	Retain unaltered. The floor plan and some fittings have been altered slightly but the interior still clearly shows the character and scale of the mid 19th C Estate staff cottage. Some minor additional internal fittings are possible, ensure reversible.
Exceptional	Views	To and from the N to the harbour, W to Greycliffe and E across the former watercourse and the location of the former garden.	Removal, or thinning of trees for a clearer view to and from Greycliffe and the harbour is desirable.
High	The Park Trust additions	The c1910s N verandah and the original design of the open rear verandah	The rear verandah was designed to be open but is now enclosed for the intrusive Kitchen, etc.
Moderate	Existing home paddock fence	Timber post and palings	The age of the fence has not been confirmed but the materials suggest construction by the Park Trust
Intrusive	Fitout in the rear verandah and the concrete paving outside	Internal linings and fittings	The fitout encumbers the open verandah and the external paving may be exacerbating the damp problems.
<b>Shark Beach Main Dressing Pavilion</b>			
High	The exterior	The appearance and character of the restrained internalised pavilion with its centre block and lower wings, its simple panelled walls, copings, opposing entries, restrained joinery, and decoration.	There is little potential for modifications to the exterior. Judicial openings on the east and west are possible
High	The setting	Lowered behind fore-dune and Notting Parade, original encircling pavements, retaining walls and garden beds, mature trees, tunnel connection to the beach and open setting to the west	Retain these elements
High	The interior and its major	The internal fitout including	Most of the original 1932

Grading	Attribute	Detail	Comment
<b>Refer to Grading Plans</b>			
	fittings.	the main timber framed rooms in the centre area and the Male and Female open dressing courts with their timber shelters.	works survives. A few parts of the interior spaces have been altered, ie the admin area and access to the tunnel have been altered and M&F lockers have been removed. Sanitary fittings and services in the courtyards are poorly presented.
High	Use	Publicly accessible dressing pavilion and beach facilities Dressing areas, wet areas	Community value and esteem is embodied in the facility being publicly accessible and providing beach facilities. Not all the building needs to be publicly accessible to demonstrate this value. A part of the building can accommodate more private uses.
High	Views	The building seen in the round in the Park, taller to the E and S and partially built in to the fore-dune on the N and W.	Additions to the building would be contentious.
Intrusive	Recent equal access ramp	The concrete ramp and handrail	An equal access ramp into the building at a centre location is needed. However, the design of the current ramp and handrail could be improved and its relationship with the formal semi-circular stair.

Plans

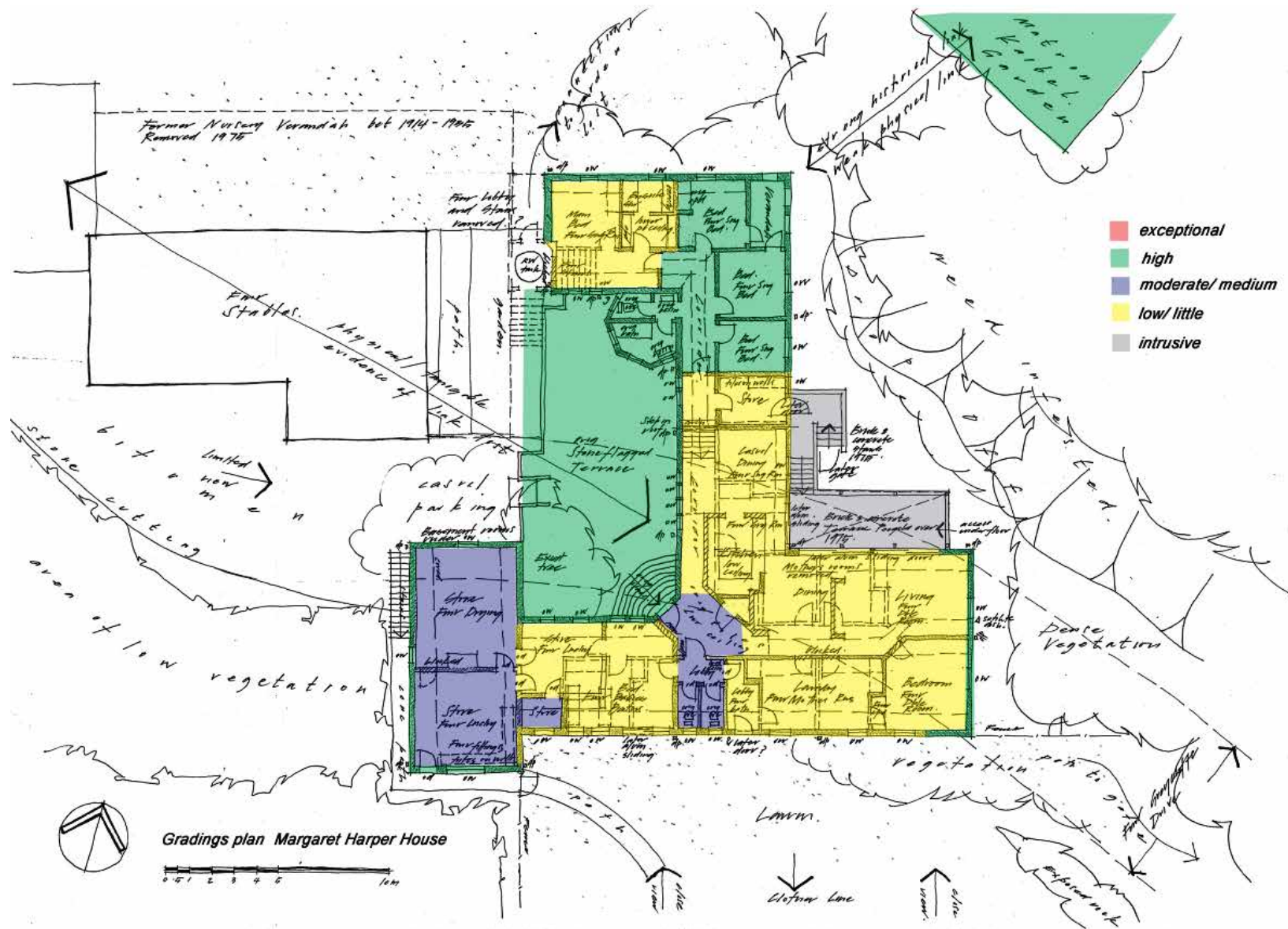




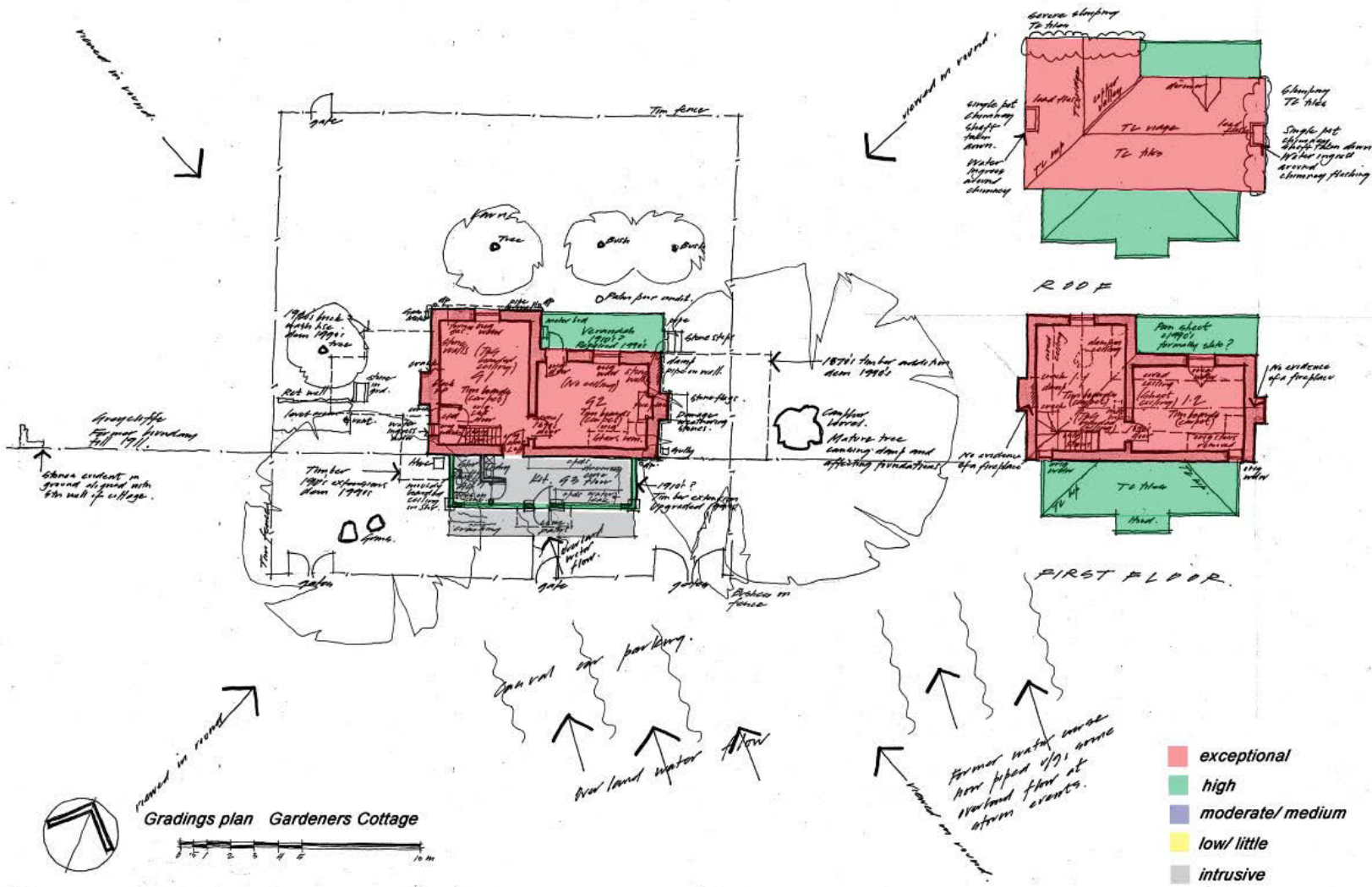
Gradings Plan Greycliffe House First Floor

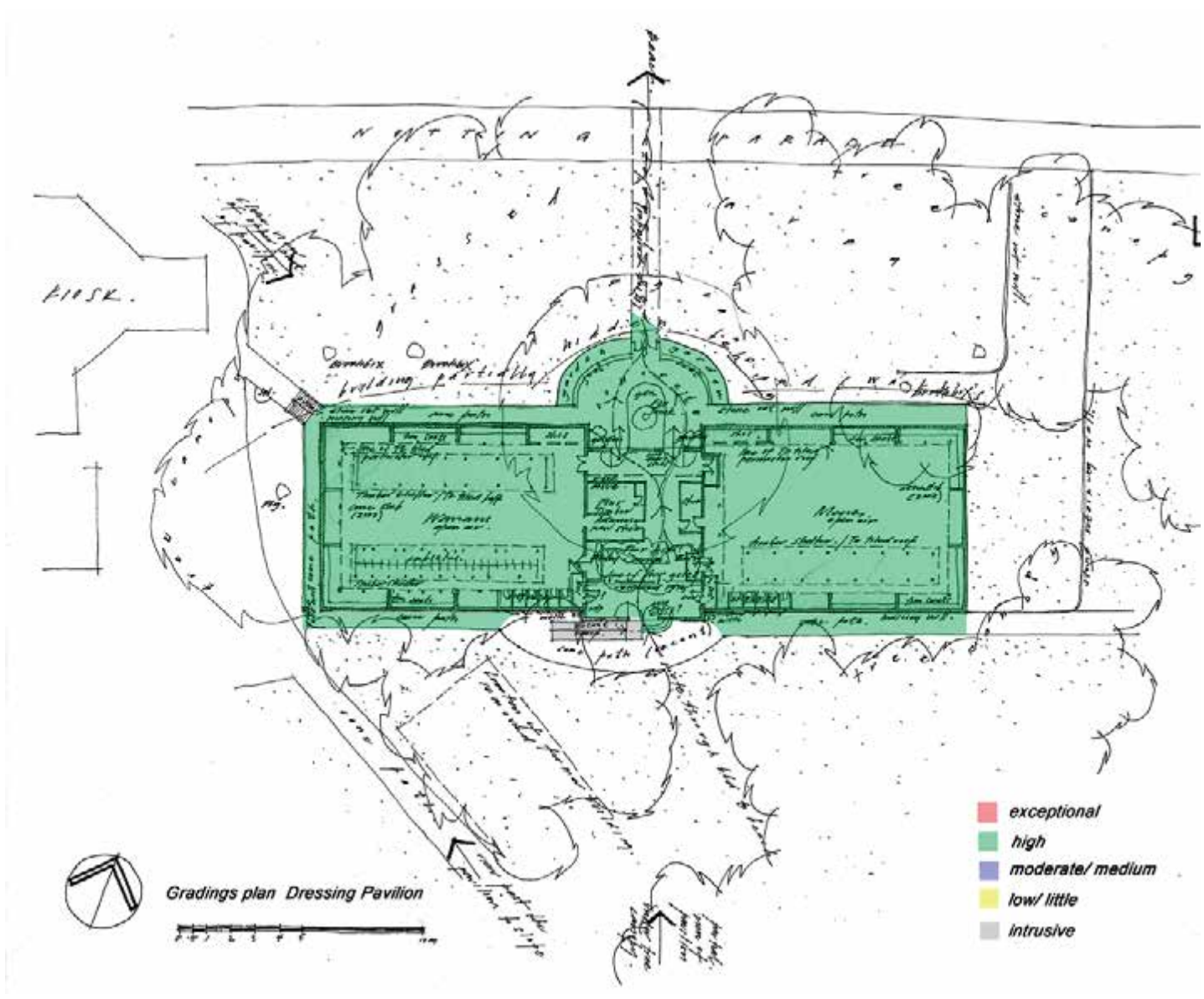


- exceptional
- high
- moderate/medium
- low/little
- intrusive









## 5.6 Remaining Buildings - Schedule of Relative Significance

References include:

- Sheedy D. 2004 and Brookes G. 2006
- Woodhead International. Steele Point Battery Heritage Management Plan 2005
- USyd Masters Program Student Survey, Steel Point Battery, 1996

Grading	Item	Comment
Exceptional	Steel Point Battery, 3 gun emplacements, tunnels, munitions and powder rooms	as part of the full suite of Harbour Fortifications
High	Steele Point Cottage, former Barracks.	Steele Point Cottage is in good condition and has been extended, repaired and conserved.
High	Western, Gents, Toilet Block.	The Gents toilet is in poor condition
High	1914 Kiosk structure and fabric including early major additions.	The exterior of the Kiosk is intact but the interiors have been altered slightly
High	1914 Cottage structure and fabric.	The exterior of the Cottage is intact but the interiors have been removed and are low significance
High	Halbert Pavilion.	The Halbert Pavilion has been altered and is currently in use as a function space. It is historically significant as part of the tradition of picnic shelters in the park
High	SLSC and Toilet Block.	The SLSC and the Park's toilet blocks have been repaired and/or been altered to varying degrees. The 1920's fabric is high.
High	East, Ladies Toilet Block.	The Ladies toilet building including access steps
Moderate	Steele Point Store Shed	The Store Shed is a utilitarian building with some older fabric built in to it. It was repaired by NPWS. There are opportunities to adapt it for a range of uses to support the use of the nearby Cottage.
Moderate	Kiosk Garage.	The interior of the Garage has been altered and is of low significance.
Moderate	Steel Point Cottage Garage	The Garage is a mid 20thC addition to the site. It is a useful structure which could be altered to support the use of the nearby Cottage.
Low	NPWS Workshop at Mount Trefle	The workshop area is not noticeable from within the Park.
Intrusive	Naval Degaussing Building	The building is owned and managed by the Australian Navy. Although architecturally intrusive, it is technically and historically significant for the role it plays in harbour operations.

## Landscape - Schedule of Relative Significance

From Sheedy D. and Brooks G. 2006, not included on Grading Plans

Grading	Item
<b>Nielsen Park Generally</b>	
Exceptional	Line and formation of 1851 road to Greycliffe.
High	Identified Indigenous sites and artworks. Surviving indigenous vegetation. Beach and littoral associated landscape. Rock outcrops including Mount Trefle and Bottle and Glass Point. Foreshore plantings of Tuckeroos, Brush box and Moreton Bay Figs. Early plantings related to Greycliffe Beach net enclosure and promenade. European garden and walls adjacent to Greycliffe incl Matron Kaibel gardens
Moderate	The Hills Fig Avenue Plantings related to Notting Parade and beach. Network of concrete paths and roads leading to the beach. Brush Box street boundary plantings. Tree plantings adjacent to the Gardener's Cottage Areas of native re-vegetation
Low	Bitumen road to Vaucluse Point. Park signs, seats and litter bins. Concrete sea wall and terracing at beach.
Intrusive	Chain wire fencing. Concrete road adjacent to degaussing range building and car park. Changes to ground levels from cutting and filling for the carparks and the creek works
<b>Steel Point Precinct</b>	
High	Stone paved roadway to Cottage and shed
Low	Veranda enclosure to cottage. Sand filling in gun pit.
Intrusive	Chain wire fencing. Vegetation obscuring field of fire from gun pits. Timber trellis additions to cottage and store shed. Bricked up battery entrances.
<b>Shark Beach Precinct</b>	
Exceptional	Notting Parade precinct as an open public space
High	W A Notting Memorial
Low	

<b>Grading</b>	<b>Item</b>
Intrusive	Lattice at south kiosk entrance on boundary Alterations to cottage, glass roof section.
<b>Bottle and Glass Precinct</b> - No specific landscape elements identified	
<b>Mt Trefle Precinct</b>	
High	Rubbish dumps
Moderate	Walking tracks
Low	Workshop Access road

## 6.0 Background to Policy Formulation

### 6.1 Introduction

The Office of Environment and Heritage is the Government agency responsible for administration and management of Nielsen Park and is subject to specific statutory requirements and management structures. These impose different legislative and regulatory obligations and constraints upon the future management of Nielsen Park, which are detailed below.

While the heritage significance and values of Nielsen Park pose constraints on management, the heritage value of the place as a cultural resource provides opportunities for enhanced recreational facilities and services, cultural tourism and environmental education and heritage studies.

### 6.2 National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The responsibilities of NPWS are defined in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

The objects of this Act are as follows:

- (a) *the conservation of nature, including, but not limited to, the conservation of:*
  - (i) *habitat, ecosystems and ecosystem processes, and*
  - (ii) *biological diversity at the community, species and genetic levels, and*
  - (iii) *landforms of significance, including geological features and processes, and*
  - (iv) *landscapes and natural features of significance including wilderness and wild rivers,*
- (b) *The conservation of objects, places or features (including biological diversity) of cultural value within the landscape, including, but not limited to:*
  - (i) *places, objects and features of significance to Aboriginal people, and*
  - (ii) *places of social value to the people of New South Wales, and*
  - (iii) *places of historic, architectural or scientific significance.*

NPWS is also subject to the requirements of the *National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2002*, and to the requirements of the *Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management (PoM) 1998* (amended November, 2003). The PoM is currently under review.

The overriding principles for the management of Nielsen Park are structured to fit within the Departments Corporate Plan 2004 - 2006<sup>1</sup>. This plan outlines the role of NPWS as follows –

#### 6.2.1 The National Parks and Wildlife Service

NPWS conserves protected and threatened native plants and animals, objects and places of Aboriginal and historic heritage significance within reserves and wilderness areas through:

- *acquisition and management of parks and reserves, including field-based conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage and control of pests, weed and fires;*
- *partnership with Aboriginal communities and private landholders, and*

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<sup>1</sup> Dept of Environment and Conservation NSW Corporate Plan 2004 – 06, p.2, (op. cit. section 7.1 below)

- *visitor facilities and promoting sustainable tourism.*

### 6.2.2 Approvals Processes

The approvals process for cultural heritage items are set out in NPWS guidelines *Guide to approvals: Cultural Heritage Items on Land Gazetted under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. These guidelines set out in detail the assessment and approval requirements to fulfil the NPWS statutory and heritage management responsibilities under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), the *Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act) and the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) and provide additional advice to accompany the NPWS REF guidelines and EP&A Manual.

## 6.3 NSW State Government Agencies

### 6.3.1 NSW Heritage Council

Nielsen Park is not listed on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR), but is considered to be of State Significance. Any works which may affect the significance of the Park, and which fall outside the policies and guidelines contained within the CMP, or future plans, should be referred to the NSW Heritage Council for consideration under the provisions of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.

### 6.3.2 Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995

The *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSCA) aims to conserve threatened species, populations, ecological communities and their habitats; to promote their recovery, and manage the processes that threaten or endanger them.

As species found in the Park which fall into these categories, the Powerful Owl and the *Allocasuarina portuensis* (Nielsen Park She-oak) and the *Acacia terminalis* (Sunshine Wattle) must be managed in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

### 6.3.3 Noxious Weeds Act 1993

The Noxious Weeds Act 1993 declares noxious plants in four categories – W1 to W4. Weeds are classified on a local government area basis. Nielsen Park is under Woollahra Municipal Council Local Government Area. Noxious plants are categorised according to the specific action required to control them.

The objects of this Act are as follows –

- *To identify noxious weeds in respect of which particular control measure need to be taken;*
- *To specify those control measures;*
- *To specify the duties of public and private land holders as to the control of those noxious weeds, and*
- *To provide a framework for the State-wide control of those noxious weeds likely to spread.*

If noxious weeds are found within the Park, such weeds will be controlled and managed under this Act.

### 6.3.4 Department of Planning and Infrastructure

Schedule 4 of Sydney REP (Sydney Harbour Catchment 2005) lists two heritage sites at Nielsen Park, No. 61 – former Nielsen Wharf remains and No. 62 – Shark Beach promenade and amenities. Because these are within a National Park, any

development proposals that affect them would be assessed under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979).

## 6.4 Local Government Agencies

Nielsen Park is within the local government area of Woollahra Municipal Council. The two following items are listed on the Heritage Schedule of Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 1995, last amended June, 2004 –

- Shark (Steele) (*sic*) Point, Vacluse, listed as “Shark (Steele) Point Battery and associated underground remains”, and
- Vacluse Road in Nielsen Park listed as “*Greycliffe House* – building, stoneworks”.

Under the EP&A Act, Woollahra Council has no formal role in the statutory approval of proposed works within Nielsen Park.

## 6.5 Community Consultation

The process for the carrying out of community consultation is set out in Part 6, Approvals, in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

## 6.6 Community Groups

Various community groups, non-government agencies and professional associations have an on-going interest in the conservation and management of the cultural values of Nielsen Park.

### 6.6.1 Aboriginal Community

NPWS has developed the *Cultural Heritage Community Consultation Policy* which outlines the process for staff and consultants in planning and conducting consultation with communities on cultural heritage issues. The policy also includes significant cultural considerations for when consulting with the Aboriginal communities.

NPWS has also developed *Interim Community Consultation Requirements for Applicants* when considering proposals under Part 6 of the NPW Act, the NPWS recognises that:

- *Aboriginal heritage has both cultural and scientific/archaeological significance and that both should be the subject of assessment to inform its decision-making.*
- *Aboriginal people are the primary determinants of the significance of their heritage.*
- *Aboriginal community involvement needs to occur early in the assessment process to ensure that -*
  - *their values and concerns are taken fully into account;*
  - *their own decision-making structures are able to function, and*
  - *information arising out of consultation allows the consideration of Aboriginal community views about significance and impact, as well as the merits of management or mitigation measures to be considered in an informed way.*

Hence, when administering its approval functions under the NPW Act, NPWS requires applicants to consult with the Aboriginal community regarding Aboriginal



cultural heritage values (cultural significance) of Aboriginal objects and places within the area being considered for development. Nielsen Park lies within the land of the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The following recommendations are guidelines to determining management protocols whilst retaining cultural significance. These guidelines follow the principles contained in the *NPWS Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Guidelines and Standards Kit (1997)*.

- The management, conservation and analysis of the Park must at all times recognise that Aboriginal culture is living and unique and that Aboriginal people have a right to protect, promote and preserve their culture.
- Joint and equitable management of Aboriginal sites must be maintained with Aboriginal participation in decision-making processes.

#### 6.6.2 Local Precinct Committees

Any current or future local precinct committees (such as the Vaucluse Progress Association), heritage associations (such as the Woollahra History and Heritage Society Inc and the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society), interest groups (such as the Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee) and residents who have a strong interest in the Park and for whom the Park has high social and historic significance should be participants within, and contributors to, any community consultation process. The feelings of attachment and the interest of such groups, with their strong basis in the history of community activism, should be taken into consideration in the Park's management and future use, particularly when identifying human resources for the interpretation of the heritage values of the Park.

#### 6.6.3 National Trust of Australia (NSW)

The Park has been classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The National Trust of Australia (NSW) is a community-based organisation, which holds no legal role over the places which it has assessed and classified.

#### 6.6.4 Australia ICOMOS

Australia ICOMOS is the National Committee of the *International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)*

Its publication, *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter)* has become the agreed professional practice standard for the methodologies and philosophical approaches to cultural heritage conservation work in Australia. Its status is advisory not statutory, however, most public sector cultural heritage conservation work complies with the principles and guidelines of the Charter.

The articles from *The Burra Charter* have relevance to Nielsen Park and should guide the general discussion about opportunities for the future conservation, re-use and interpretation of the historic landscape and built form of the place.

Heritage interpretation is a process that plans and provides for all visitors and the public at large, physical, intellectual, emotional or spiritual access to the cultural and ecological significance of places.

Through appropriate media and technologies and the responsible stimulation of ideas and opinions, it encourages the protection and conservation of the cultural and natural heritage. It also encourages and facilitates their appreciation by and for

present and future generations. There should also be a separate interpretation plan prepared for Nielsen Park.

Nielsen Park is a site with rich resources for interpretation. It has an attractive setting, a variety of landscapes, a number of picturesque and intact structures, and a well-documented history. It is sited within Sydney Harbour, and is easily accessible.

#### 6.6.5 Educational Community

The NSW Department of Education and Training introduced a mandatory environmental education policy for schools in 2001. NPWS has the ability to participate in and enhance this program.

### 6.7 Obligations Arising from Significance

The following obligations, or constraints, arise from a consideration of the heritage values expressed in the Statement of Significance.

1. An integrated conservation approach to the complex and layered cultural, natural (which includes ecological) and Aboriginal significance of the Park should underpin policy.
2. Conservation of all the values of the site, in relation to their relative significance should be undertaken.
3. The Park was the subject of one of the first social movements dedicated to reserve foreshore lands for public access. Public access to the foreshore and recreational areas should be retained.
4. The buildings within Nielsen Park, namely the Steele Point Cottage, Greycliffe House, The Kiosk, the Dressing Pavilion and the Gardener's Cottage contain significant fabric. Conservation of exceptional or high fabric should take priority.
5. The Aboriginal community, other local community members, and the scientific ecological community should be involved in the use, management and conservation of the natural areas of the Park.
6. Interpretation of the Park should include all aspects of cultural significance and all aspects of the Park's historic evolution.
7. The significant characteristics of the landscape, both cultural and natural, shall be recognised, managed and conserved.
8. If new structures, services or infrastructure are required, they must not adversely affect the visual, cultural or natural character of the Park.

### 6.8 Opportunities Arising from Significance

The following opportunities arise from a consideration of the heritage values expressed in the Statement of Significance.

1. The Park represents a layered cultural resource in terms of natural and cultural heritage, and provides examples of numerous heritage themes, providing opportunities for cultural tourism, environmental education, heritage studies, etc.
2. The Park has a strong history of providing (from 1913) recreational opportunities and facilities associated with the use of Shark Beach.

3. There are, within the Park, opportunities for the continuing use or potential adaptive re-use of buildings.
4. Opportunities exist for temporary uses of the grounds for various functions or events as detailed in the PoM. Historically, some areas of the Park have been used temporarily for other uses (light anti-aircraft, searchlight company, marine bomb spotting squad post), which while alien to the function of the Park, have not interfered with, or prohibited the use of, the rest of the Park for recreation.
5. The Park has a solid user base over several generations, which provides opportunities to continue to interpret and promote the Park's significance.
6. It is essential that various sections of the Park are not separated for the exclusive occupancy of a particular interest group or developed without consideration of the nature of the place and its re-use opportunities. While individual buildings may be licensed, leased or otherwise contracted for specific purposes or by specific user groups, no components of the Park should be isolated from the whole in terms of the ability of people to move around the Park in a managed way.

## 6.9 Visitor Experiences and Facilities

An important element in the visitor experience is the "sense of place" that being in the park elicits. *Sense of place* can include all aspects of the visitor experience and their remembrance of the site after the visit is finished. It is however an intangible element that is difficult to quantify.

The overall quality of Nielsen Park is one of separation from the surrounding suburbs, of being in a managed landscape with mature trees, a range of eclectic and interesting heritage structures and the dominance of the beachfront and wooded headlands. Nielsen Park, although often very busy, can be tranquil and offers quiet along with its more active recreational activities. The park is also seasonal with an intensification of use during summer and holiday periods.

Nielsen Park, in the future, should retain its present overall recreational quality and 'sense of place' while providing for select new uses that are consistent with its character.

Additional visitor facilities generally should not be required. Nielsen Park is well serviced by the existing building facilities and temporary structures for specific events may be appropriate in the locations identified in the PoM. Retail and food and beverage outlets in particular should reflect a harmonious design style and be sympathetic to the quality of the Park. The sense of place of Nielsen Park would be disturbed by blaring music from food outlets or commercial bunting and advertising boards on historic structures.

PWG should take care to ensure that its own infrastructure and facilities in the park are unobtrusive and sensitive to the park landscape.

## 6.10 Potential Visitor Experiences

Learning about cultural significance and history should not be limited to a didactic experience for the visitor. Cultural significance, if interpreted properly, can greatly enhance the visitor experience even if it is an unexpected end result or a recreational outing. Revealing the cultural significance of a place can help protect it through enhanced appreciation within the community and support for the aims of

conservation. There are a range of reasons why people visit Nielsen Park. These will change and expand over time as the NPWS extends the range of functions offered within the Park.

## 6.11 Leasing

Within the terms of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* No. 80, 151B states that Leases and Licences of reserved land are to be in accordance with the plan of management. Leasing and licensing includes new –

- *Licences for ‘modified natural areas’ for ‘any purpose’*
- *Leases for ‘adaptive reuse’ of existing buildings and structures for specified purposes*
- *Restrictions on leases for residential accommodation, and*
- *Public register for all leases, rights of ways and easements.*

In relation to Nielsen Park, The Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management (amended November, 2003) states:

*A lease may be granted for the permissible purposes listed in the plan [Section 151B of the National Parks & Wildlife Service Amendment Act 2001] to enable the adaptive reuse of the buildings and structures at Nielsen Park within the area shown on Map 3. A licence may be granted for the permissible purposes listed in the plan of any building, structure and modified area within the area shown on Map 3.*

The permissible purposes for which a lease may be granted are<sup>2</sup> –

- *Educational facilities for natural heritage, cultural heritage, park management or fire management;*
- *Research facilities for natural heritage (including natural phenomena) and cultural heritage;*
- *Retail outlets commensurate with the needs of the area in which that outlet is located;*
- *Restaurants, cafes, kiosks and other food outlets;*
- *Cultural institutions, including museums and galleries;*
- *Visitor and tourist accommodation;*
- *Facilities for conferences and functions;*
- *Sporting facilities;*
- *Facilities and amenities for tourists and visitors, including information centres and booking outlet, and;*
- *Facilities in relation to Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal cultural activities.*

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<sup>2</sup> Amendments to Sydney Harbour Plan of Management, 1998, November 2003, p. 7)

## 7.0 Conservation Policies

### 7.1 Principal Conservation Policy (Vision)

The NPWS Corporate Plan 2004 – 2006 sets out a broad vision for Nielsen Park:

*VISION*                    *A healthy environment cared for and enjoyed by the whole community and sustained for future generations.*<sup>3</sup>

The CMP vision for Nielsen Park aligns within this overarching departmental vision framework:

*CMP VISION*            *Nielsen Park is a recreational destination where the current and future community (Sydney, interstate and international) can safely enjoy the quality of the Park's setting within the harbour and its historic, cultural and recreational facilities, all within an environment of protected and nurtured native flora and fauna.*



Figure 7.1

Nielsen Park, showing the rocky headland, the bathing area and the mature trees within the beachside parkland source NPWS



Figure 7.2

The Kiosk at Nielsen Park adjacent to the beachside walkway source NPWS

As a component of the Sydney Harbour National Park, the strategies for the individual *place* that is Nielsen Park embody this vision for the Park, and reflect the “overall strategy”, as set out in the Sydney Harbour Plan of Management 1998 (as amended November, 2003) and the exhibition draft SHNP 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW) Corporate Plan 2004 – 06, p.1.

The overall strategy for Sydney Harbour National Park is the protection, and where necessary, restoration of the Park's natural vegetation, and the maintenance and use of important historic places. High standard visitor facilities will be provided to cater for public use. Private sector involvement will be encouraged where appropriate to provide opportunities for public use and the conservation of structures and natural qualities of the park. In all precincts within Sydney Harbour National Park, the protection of the existing natural and cultural values will be given priority. In addition, emphasis will be given to the encouragement of public and commercial use of the buildings that will promote their conservation and interpretation (p.9).

## 7.2 Principal Conservation Policies

Specific policies are required to guide the process of conservation. While the assessment of significance identifies the most important aspects of the place, it is the whole of Nielsen Park that is valued and it is the broad values as well as specific elements that require conservation.

### **Policy 1**

*Conserve the natural and cultural resources of Nielsen Park as a key part of Sydney Harbour National Park.*

### **Policy 2**

*Retain the Park as a single entity.*

*Reductions in the size or boundaries of the Park will not be permitted; However, consideration may be given to extending the boundaries should opportunities arise and where adding land to the park enhances its values*

### **Policy 3**

*Management of the Park will recognise the layers of significance of the site, and the contribution of each component or characteristic to the whole.*

### **Policy 4**

*Management will recognise that the Indigenous and non-Indigenous associations with the landscape represent a shared use of its resources over time.*

### **Policy 5**

*Continue the core historic recreational uses of the Park.*

### **Action Statements**

- Protect and conserve the natural ecosystems, geo-diversity and bio-diversity.
- Manage the park for all of its values, however manage the park principally for its public recreational values.
- Select future uses for buildings that provide for public access, potential revenue generation and conservation.

## 7.3 Operational Management Policies

These general policies refer to the actions required for the management of the Park.

### 7.3.1 Sydney Harbour National Park

#### **Background**

The guiding principles for the management of Sydney Harbour National Park, of which Nielsen Park is a component, is *The Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management 2011*.

### **Policy 1**

*Nielsen Park will be managed to retain and conserve its natural and cultural significance in accordance with this CMP and the Sydney Harbour Plan of Management 2012.*

### **Action Statements**

- Ensure that future amendments to the Sydney Harbour Plan of Management reflect current issues relating to the management of Nielsen Park;
- In accordance with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and the *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act 2001*, relevant conservation, development, management, research, education, promotion, environmental programs and supporting infrastructure development for Nielsen Park will be undertaken to ensure integration within the broader framework of Sydney Harbour National Park

## 7.3.2 NSW Heritage Council

### **Background**

Nielsen Park has been assessed as a place of State Significance, however it is not included on the NSW State Heritage Register. It is appropriate, irrespective of its listing status to manage the park as a place of State level significance.

### **Policy 2**

*Nielsen Park will be managed as a place of State heritage significance.*

### **Action Statements**

- Irrespective of the heritage listing status, manage the Park in accordance with the requirements of the *Heritage Act 1977*, including the additional criteria outlined in the *Heritage Amendment Act 1998* (as updated);
- Seek endorsement of this CMP from the Executive Director of the Cultural Heritage Division of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water,
- Prepare appropriate documentation and permit applications for proposed work or activities within the park.
- Manage any potential or known archaeological material, with the exception of Aboriginal relics, in accordance with the relevant archaeological management provisions of the *Heritage Act 1977* and the *Heritage Amendment Act 1998* (as updated), and
- Ensure that Nielsen Park is listed as an item of state significance on its S170 Heritage and Conservation Register.

## 7.3.3 State and Local Council Agencies

### **Background**

Nielsen Park is situated in a suburban environment surrounded by public roadways, domestic dwellings, the beachfront and Sydney Harbour. There are a number of

government and local government agencies with which NPWS liaises in the day to day management of the Park.

**Policy 3**

*Liaise, as required, with other local, State and Federal Agencies*

**Action Statements**

- Liaise with Sydney Water to remediate and minimise the visual impact and public risk of the underground sewerage pumping station;
- Liaise with HHT and the State Properties Authority on joint tour and promotional activities and events associated with Vaucluse House (HHT) and Strickland House (SPA);
- Comply with the relevant provision of statutory requirements regarding Easy Access and Disability Discrimination and OEH guidelines;

7.3.4 Consultation

**Policy 4**

*Continue to develop strong links with local community groups.*

**Policy 5**

*Identify areas of specific community interest in the site.*

**Policy 6**

*Maintain regular contact with Woolhara Council over issues of common concern and interest.*

**Action Statements**

- Maintain liaison with local community and recreational groups as appropriate in relation to the ongoing management of the Park.

7.3.5 Approvals Process

**Background**

OEH is the consent authority for activity approvals within National Parks in New South Wales. Any activity requiring consent as a minimum will require the submission of a Review of Environmental Factors (REF).

An REF is an assessment under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) which is required as part of the assessment of activities needing approval under State legislation. This legislation includes:

- the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NP&W Act) and National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2002 (NP&W Reg), covering leases, easements, licences and permits;
- the *Wilderness Act 1987*; and
- Sections 60 and 140 of the *Heritage Act 1977* (NPWS is responsible only for on-park activities).



Part 5 of the EP&A Act requires that: *'For the purpose of attaining the objects of this Act relating to the protection and enhancement of the environment, a determining authority in its consideration of an activity shall ... examine and take into account to the fullest extent possible all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment by reason of that activity'* (s 111(1) EP&A Act).

### **Policy 7**

*Follow formal approval processes in development applications.*

#### **Action Statements**

- Ensure that the process for approvals, as set out in the Proponents Guidelines for the preparation of REF's is followed, and
- Ensure that the process for approvals, as set out in the *Guide to Approvals: Cultural Heritage Items on Land Gazetted under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* is followed.

### 7.3.6 Secure Adequate Funding

#### **Background**

The financial cost of operating and maintaining the Park is high and funds for the ongoing conservation and maintenance of the significant cultural values of the Park are limited. Ensuring adequate funding is essential for the long-term retention of heritage values and the safe use of the site.

### **Policy 8**

*Obtain on-going funding for Nielsen Park.*

#### **Action Statements**

- Ensure that adequate, consistent and long-term funding is sought and secured for the implementation of staged research, education, promotion and management programs; for building and cyclical maintenance, and for landscape management programs, both cultural and natural.
- Develop strategic approaches to government, and, where appropriate, private funding sources.

### 7.3.7 Maintain Security

#### **Background**

The Park covers an extensive area of diverse topography with a range of buildings and facilities that is accessible to the public until 10pm at night. There are issues regarding the security of the buildings and the safety and security of both park users and staff that should be planned for with the current park operation and as potential new uses are considered.

#### **Action Statements**

- Consider any potential uses and activities with regard to security and safety.

### 7.3.8 Review of the Conservation Management Plan

#### **Background**

The process of reviewing CMP's ensures that they remain relevant to the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resource in the face of changed or changing circumstances.

**Policy 9**

*Review the CMP at regular intervals, usually between 5 and 10 years, or as needed in response to specific new management issues.*

**Action Statements**

- Review the CMP every five to ten years.

## 7.4 Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Policies <sup>4</sup>

### 7.4.1 Recognition of Significance

**Background**

Aboriginal heritage and archaeological significance has been recognised as an integral part of the cultural significance of the Park. (See Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions; *Aboriginal Heritage Study for Nielsen Park CMP*, National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW, 2004)

**Policy 1**

*Integrate the conservation, management and interpretation of Aboriginal heritage items into the planning and management procedures for the Park.*

**Action Statements**

- The Birrabirragal people are to be acknowledged in any relevant onsite interpretation;
- Conserve Aboriginal heritage and seek appropriate approvals prior to any development in the vicinity of known Aboriginal sites.
- Facilitate updating of previously recorded Aboriginal sites on the Aboriginal Sites Register;
- The precise location of Aboriginal sites will not be highlighted on any map or plan provided for interpretation programs;
- Facilitate access to Aboriginal cultural resources for Aboriginal groups and individuals. Recognise that there may be times when non-Aboriginal people may be denied access for cultural reasons and when Aboriginal people might need to be denied access for ecological reasons;
- Provide regular monitoring of the condition of identified Aboriginal sites from landscape management, education or cultural tourism activities, and
- Recognise that some Aboriginal communities are continuing to establish or refine the nature of the cultural significance for the lands with which they have a connection.

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<sup>4</sup> These policies have been derived from the AHMS 2004 report.

## 7.4.2 Consultation with Aboriginal Communities

### **Background**

The Park is within the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council area. The representatives of the LPLALC, and Traditional Owner or Descendant organisations are PWG's Indigenous contacts in relation to the Park and its Aboriginal cultural resources.

### **Policy 2**

*Liaise with the LPLALC on matters relating to Aboriginal heritage together with Traditional Owner or Descendent organisations on matters relating to the protection, management and interpretation of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Park.*

### **Action Statements**

- The LPLALC and relevant Traditional Owner organisations will be consulted on any proposal for the conservation or maintenance of the natural or European cultural resources in the vicinity of known Aboriginal sites, and
- A formal consultation procedure will be developed with the LPLALC and relevant Traditional Owner organisations to address proposals that may impact on Aboriginal cultural values and resources.

## 7.5 Cultural Landscape and Natural Heritage Management Policies

### 7.5.1 The Park Generally

#### **Background**

The Park overall is a recreational landscape, typical of the Edwardian to Inter-war periods, that contains areas of remnant coastal vegetation that once covered much of the harbour foreshores in the area. The sandstone cliffs and beaches within the park and the vegetation of heath, scrub and woodland (Mt Trefle), provide a contrast to the maintained grassed picnic areas in the central area of the park.

The modified landscape includes:

- informal planting of Eucalypts
- the formal gardens adjoining *Greycliffe House and Margaret Harper Wing*
- the cottage garden around the Gardener's Cottage
- the avenue of Weeping Figs, *Ficus macrocarpa var. hillii* adjoining the Dressing Pavilion
- the foreshore brushbox avenue
- the foreshore promenade
- formal paths throughout the site
- the piped former creek alignment
- recent landscape areas across former lawn areas
- the entry drive with its grassed edge

- the quarry area.

The bowl like form of the central area of the park with Bottle and Glass to the north and the Mount Trefle to the south accentuate the open park like form of this central zone and determines the dominant recreational character of the place.

### **Policy 1**

*The diverse character of the varied landscape precincts of the Park will be retained and maintained:*

- *Ensure that small changes such as installation of signs, and the placement of bins and recycling stations, does not affect the aesthetic significance and public appreciation of the place.*
- *Maintain low key style of park furniture (avoid ad hoc placement of new picnic shelters, barbeques and related infrastructure) throughout the park.*
- *Maintain open spaces for public use.*

### **Action Statements**

- Retain the recreational character of the park by maintaining the open lawn areas with both formal and informal plantings;
- Maintain existing views and vistas through the Park;
- Maintain the existing mix of native and introduced tree species that represent the historical layers of the place;
- A tree replanting program, to replace senescent trees is to be undertaken to maintain the present landscape character;
- Manage existing trees between Greycliffe and the harbour to retain views and vistas between the house and the water; and
- The Hills Weeping Fig avenue is to be retained

## 7.5.2 Precinct 1: Mt Trefle

### **Background**

The predominant landscape character of Mount Trefle is woodland with rocky outcrops. There has been extensive regeneration of native plant species endemic to the area. The topography of Mt Trefle combined with minimal and controlled pedestrian access has facilitated substantial bush regeneration undertaken by NPWS and volunteers.

The precinct has informal viewing locations where the harbour can be appreciated from a natural setting.

Mt Trefle is a valuable area of re-generated bushland that has an endangered She-oak, known as the Nielsen Park She-Oak (*Allocasuarina portuensis*) and the endangered *Ascia tenuialis tennalis*.

The regeneration of native vegetation in recent times has also facilitated the area as a test zone in regards to bushfire and revegetation rates. Weed species also occur in the landscape. They are gradually being removed, leaving many portions of the bushland in close to pristine condition.

## **Policy 2**

*The landscape character of Mount Trefle will be maintained and re-generation of native bushland continued.*

## **Policy 3**

*Retain the form of Mount Trefle as a vegetated backdrop to Greycliffe House and Sydney Harbour.*

### **Action Statements**

- Continue bushland regeneration so that its function as an important part of the naturally vegetated portions of Sydney Harbour is continued.
- Continue to allow controlled pedestrian access across the area.
- Maintain weed management programs.

### **7.5.3 Precinct 2: Greycliffe House**

The visual relationship of *Greycliffe House* to its harbour setting has been diminished over time through the maturing of specimen trees that have obscured views from and to the house and the harbour.

The curtilage to the property has also been modified over time. Prior to WWI it was a relatively open landscape flowing into the surrounding parkland. With the change to a Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies in 1914 a fence and private space was established around the house, (removed after 1968). Much of the planting associated with this time has disappeared, with some remnant shrubs associated with the northern wing remaining as a legacy of the institutional use of the place.

The relationship of the house to its surroundings is now defined by cultural plantings (such as the Giant Bamboo and Cape Honeysuckle Hedge to the drive) and the retained native vegetation and once semi cleared areas of the slopes of Mount Trefle. It is the relationship of villa to landscape that formed one of the distinguishing characteristics of place. *Greycliffe* was a marine villa in a semi-wild setting.

Planting of trees (in particular) around the house has since obscured this relationship with the harbour making the house more detached from its maritime setting. A number of trees have since been removed to restore the relationship of the house to the harbour. There has also been an increase in the density of other plantings around the house that now separate it from the parklands and from views towards the cottage. The Matron's garden area, is an important landscape feature of the *Greycliffe* setting that is also partially obscured by dense surrounding plantings.

The former link road to Vauclose House is also partially obscured by landscape (and the development of the Margaret Harper Wing) and would benefit from careful recovery.

The regeneration of the vegetation communities of Mount Trefle has strengthened the natural background to the house and visually supports its setting through a combination of both topography and vegetation.

## **Policy 4**

*Careful management of the landscape setting of the house is required to recover and maintain the visual relationship of the house to the harbour, to provide an immediate landscape setting for the house that is consistent with its historic form, including the*

*layers from later periods of use, that link the house to its broader park and which provides the recovery of the native vegetation in select areas.*

### **Action Statements**

- Smaller trees, planted within the last 30 years within the immediate north-west façade of *Greycliffe House* may be removed to enhance the relationship of the house and the harbour in particular. Alternatively as these trees age replace them with species that will not impede the harbour views and enhance the connection to the harbour setting;
- Continue and strengthen the theme of 19<sup>th</sup> century planting to the western portion of the garden and maintain the 20<sup>th</sup> century planting to the northern wing, reflecting the hospital use of the place;
- The 19<sup>th</sup> century planting of the bamboo grove and the Cape Honeysuckle hedge are to be maintained as a primary landscape characteristic of the entry drive;
- The exposed rock ledges are to be maintained and contrasted with 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape planting where existing to highlight the contrast between the cultural landscape and the underlying geology;
- The original pedestrian access from the house to the beach is to be investigated and, if possible, re-created to strengthen the link between the house and the harbour and as a principal access route to the house from the parklands.

#### 7.5.4 Precinct 3: Steele Point

### **Background**

Steele Point is characterised by a grassy knoll on which former gun emplacements are located. Views from the point highlight the strategic reasons for the gun emplacement. Steele Point represents an important layer of the site's development which formed part of the defensive system of Sydney Harbour. The slopes around the knoll are increasingly becoming heavily vegetated, that will in time remove views from the gun emplacements to the harbour making this aspect of the site history difficult to interpret.

### **Policy 5**

*The landscape immediately around the gun emplacements is to be kept clear of vegetation.*

### **Policy 6**

*Landscape clearing will be required to recover and maintain views from the gun emplacements to the harbour.*

### **Action Statements**

- Trim or remove vegetation to the lower slopes to ensure that the views gained from the gun emplacements remain relatively unimpeded;
- Ensure that the grass around the sandstone gun emplacements is maintained;
- Maintain views to the beach;
- Develop appropriate interpretative material about the fortifications.

#### 7.5.5 Precinct 4: Shark Beach

##### **Background**

The beach zone represents a major destination in the Park and highlights the recreational values of the place. The relationship of the rows of Tuckeroos and Brushbox trees to the concrete promenade and the articulation of the concrete benches giving access to the beach form a distinctive sense of place. This is an introduced landscape setting that contrasts strongly with the adjacent wooded headlands.

These landscape elements are set around a group of recreational buildings and features including the kiosk, the underground access to the Dressing Pavilion and the Pavilion itself, smaller beach structures and the swimming net located in the harbour. The dense stands of Tuckeroos to the rear of the promenade create a distinctive landscape form that is a key aspect of the significance of the place as a recreational area.

##### **Policy 7**

*The dominant public recreational use and character of the beachfront area is to be retained and maintained as a core use and character of Nielsen Park.*

##### **Policy 8**

*The contrast between introduced cultural elements and plantings in the beach precinct and the vegetated headlands is to be maintained in future management of the park.*

##### **Policy 9**

*The group of buildings and site features that have been built to provide for recreational use are significant and are to be retained and maintained as a core feature of the park.*

##### **Policy 10**

*Ensure the precinct is retained for public use.*

##### **Action Statements**

- Retain and maintain the built elements of the precinct as identified in specific building policies;
- Retain existing plantings and undertake replacement plantings of avenue trees when required.
- The Tuckeroo and Brushbox trees are to be maintained;
- Trees will be under-pruned where necessary to ensure clear sight lines through the area.
- The parklike grassed areas between and under trees is to be retained without new introduced gardens or plantings.

### 7.5.6 Precinct 5: Bottle and Glass

#### **Background**

The Bottle and Glass Point precinct is a bushland area used for informal or passive recreation. The informal recreational areas provide opportunities for elevated views of the harbour. The low sandstone cliffs are an important aspect of the natural values of the park and contrast with the more manicured late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century character seen elsewhere in the park. The bushland area is a closed scrub predominated by *Kunzea ambigua* and *Melaluca nodosa*. The area also contains the threatened Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis* subsp *terminalis*). The area is accessed by formed tracks and paths.

#### **Policy 11**

*The principally natural landscape character of Bottle and Glass will be maintained while maintaining the current access paths, viewing locations and passive visitor uses.*

#### **Action Statements**

- The natural landscape features of the area will be maintained.
- Pedestrian access is to be restricted to access paths and defined areas with visitors discouraged from accessing re-vegetated areas;
- The informal recreational areas will be maintained at their current extent;
- The pedestrian links from the beach and the park generally to the surrounding residential zone will be maintained and strengthened by managing the existing native vegetation that does not obscure the dominant early 20<sup>th</sup> century characteristic of the park;
- The open space and cultural links between Nielsen Park and *Vaucluse House* will be recognised and interpreted (see 7.8.8 below).

### 7.5.7 Natural Heritage Conservation

#### **Background**

The natural bushland of Nielsen Park contains a significant inventory of native flora including two threatened plant species, the Nielsen Park She Oak (only found within Nielsen Park) and the Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis* subsp *terminalis*).

The small scale of the park and network of paths allows the public to see significant plant species in their natural setting. This should continue to be encouraged.

The park also contains native mammals such as Brush-tailed Possums and the threatened Grey Headed Flying Fox. Several reptile species including skinks, geckos and dragons are found within the park. There have also been sightings of the threatened Powerful Owl within the park. Powerful Owls may use the park as part of their home range.

#### **Policy 12**

*Protect and manage the biodiversity and, in particular, any endangered species, as part of the overall management of the Park.*

#### **Action Statements**

- Continue to implement the Recovery Plans for endangered species;



- Utilise PWG procedures to manage the natural heritage features of the Park;
- Protect and manage the identified endangered and rare species in accordance with relevant legislation.

### 7.5.8 Managing Climate Change

#### **Background**

Nielsen Park is likely to be affected by projected rises in sea level and increases in storm surge over the next 100 years. The most likely impacts would be around the beach area where the beach, concrete steps and walkway and the beachfront structures may be impacted. Stabilisation work to the concrete beachfront and possibly removal of beach structures may be required over time.

#### **Policy 13**

*Monitor the impacts of sea level change and other related climate change issues on the site.*

*Ensure that any beach side stabilisation and engineering works are informed by predicted sea level rise scenarios.*

*Where there is evidence of potential impacts to cultural elements of the park, such as the beachfront structures, develop strategies and approaches to either mitigate impacts, or remove features that are threatened.*

*Retain the recreational use of the beachfront as a priority in addressing climate change issues.*

#### **Action Statements**

- Conduct an assessment of assets at risk from both 2050 and 2100 sea-level rise scenarios;
- Develop and implement an approach to mitigation measures for significant assets and infrastructure within Nielsen Park that may be affected by established climate change impacts.

## 7.6 Built Environment Conservation Policies

### 7.6.1 Conservation Principles and Processes

The Conservation and management of the historic values of the Park will be undertaken in accordance with the principles and processes of The Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS).

The park contains a range of structures and built features of varying historic value which make an important contribution to the historic character of the place. A number of the structures have changed use over time and are no longer used for their intended original purposes. While conservation of significant built elements is a core action, developing appropriate new uses for some buildings and enhancing existing uses to achieve the overall objectives of the Plan of Management, including recreational uses and public access will guide decisions on some of the conservation works to take place. A key objective of the CMP is to define uses for built elements as this is the best way to ensure their ongoing conservation and maintenance.

## 7.6.2 Historical Archaeological Resources

### **Background**

Despite changes of use over the years, much of the original fabric of the many building components at Nielsen Park has survived and there are likely to be areas of archaeological significance. A site wide comprehensive analysis of the Parks resources has not been undertaken to date

### **Policy 1**

*Further research should be carried out to identify the potential and significance of the historical archaeological resource of the park. This may include the preparation of an archaeological zoning plan.*

### **Policy 2**

*Planning for significant works that may impact archaeological resources will require the early input of an archaeologist.*

### **Action Statements**

- Any proposed ground disturbance in areas of high archaeological sensitivity will require an archaeological report to be submitted to support the proposal;
- Any newly identified archaeological resources will be conserved and managed in accordance with the recommendations arising from this Archaeological Assessment;
- Ensure that any Historical Archaeological Assessments undertaken take proper consideration of Aboriginal cultural heritage and be in a compatible format to incorporate the findings of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment undertaken by AHMS (Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd) in June, 2004, and
- As noted in this report, Nielsen Park is identified as demonstrating State significance, but is not included on the State Heritage Register (SHR). With this any development that has the potential to disturb *relics* as defined under the Heritage Act needs to be preceded by an application for approval under s140 of the Act in accordance with the NSW Heritage Branch guidelines.

## 7.6.3 Conservation of Significant Fabric

### **Background**

This CMP provides an analysis of the relative significance of built components of the site including elements of the various structures. The broad principal in considering built fabric is to retain significant fabric wherever possible and only to replace or remove it where there are over-riding reasons for that action. Such reasons may include the physical failure of material, wear and tear where OH+S or related issues demand a safe finish or where original material is causing damage to other materials and cannot be rectified without replacement. While any conservation activity will affect the place in some way, the aim should be to minimise the work necessary. In this way authenticity will be retained as far as possible within a process of evolutionary change and good maintenance practice.

This policy refers specifically to detailed fabric rather than whole buildings, which are addressed separately.

**Policy 3**

*Extant significant landscape components, and building fabric, both internal and external, are to be retained and conserved to a high standard using methods and techniques that best suit each material and its context, in accordance with the levels of significance identified in Section 5.3 Schedule of Relative Heritage Significance, of this CMP.*

**Policy 4**

*Significant fabric should be treated in accordance with its level of significance so that the conservation of fabric of high significance will generally take precedence over fabric of modest significance.*

**Policy 5**

*Conservation work is to be managed by a suitably qualified heritage professional such as a heritage architect or conservator.*

**Policy 6**

*Conservation works are to be undertaken by contractors skilled in conservation and/or the specific trades and traditional techniques of working on heritage fabric.*

**Policy 7**

*Conservation activities should not just focus on components that have a higher potential at the expense of lesser significance elements. The nature of Nielsen Park as an integrated cultural landscape means that all components make a contribution to the nature of the place.*

**Policy 8**

*Identified fabric, features and associated elements of High Significance should be conserved. The appropriate conservation objectives and processes are maintenance, preservation and restoration. Limited or minor reconstruction is acceptable if there has been a minor loss of integrity.*

**Policy 9**

*Identified fabric, features and associated elements of Medium Significance should be conserved, however change or adaptation of these elements may be acceptable to accommodate new uses or to recover elements of high significance. The appropriate conservation objectives and processes are maintenance, preservation and restoration. Limited or minor reconstruction is acceptable if there has been minor loss of integrity.*

**Policy 10**

*Identified fabric, features and associated elements of Low Significance may be retained but are the more suitable elements for change and adaptation if this is required,*

**Policy 11**

*Any elements to be altered, adapted or removed are to be recorded prior to adaptation or removal.*

## Action Statements

- A schedule of all of the emergency stabilisation and catch up works required should be drawn up and implemented as resources allow.
- Where it is significant, evidence of the evolution of buildings and specific fabric should ideally be retained.
- Materials such as face brick, stone, terracotta and slate that were not originally painted should remain unpainted<sup>5</sup>.
- Materials such as timber or metal work which were originally painted, and for which an effective paint system is an integral part of the preservation, should remain painted.
- Structural assessment, and surveys for termite activity of all buildings to identify future conservation and repair requirements, should be regularly undertaken.
- Where feasible, deteriorated building fabric will be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, the new work should be based on existing fabric and on historical evidence.
- Specific significant features of buildings that demonstrate their operational use, such as ventilation, lightning, security measures, signage, fittings and fixtures, should be conserved *in situ*.
- Original timber, parquetry and concrete floors within buildings should be retained and conserved. Damaged or removed sections of flooring should be replaced to match the existing.
- Internal rendered or plastered walls should be retained and conserved.
- Conservation works should not reconstruct faulty building detailing or inadequate earlier repairs, rather researched solutions that retain significance and address performance issues should be developed.
- Intervention into the building fabric for non-conservation purposes should generally be restricted to programs of research, re-use or upgrading of service areas and facilities.
- The Conservation Management Plans and data sheets for individual buildings within Nielsen Park should be consulted for place-specific detailed policy and operational management guidance if those issues are not set out in this CMP.
- Intervention into any building fabric should where possible, respect the integrity of the extant material, be carefully controlled, and be limited to that required by the proposed works.
- Existing service areas may be upgraded.
- New internal floor coverings are permissible, but should have minimal impact on the floor structure.
- Landscape components, moveable items and original external and internal fabric, which have been identified as of exceptional or considerable significance will be retained and conserved.

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<sup>5</sup> This does not include such practices as the application of sacrificial render, necessary for the conservation of significant material.

- Continue to maintain the landscape elements of the park to a high standard to ensure continued strong definition between built, natural and recreational areas within the park.
- Decayed building fabric, which is not likely to be causing on-going deterioration should not be repaired for visual reasons if by doing so the patina of age and ability to successfully interpret various stages of use is degraded.
- All structural elements should be retained as existing and left exposed, with appropriate maintenance. No structural members should be removed, other than those that are degraded beyond repair.
- Paint schemes/colours both internal and external should be based on historic evidence including paint scrapes, photos and other illustrative material.

#### 7.6.4 Reinstatement of Missing Fabric

##### **Background**

Over time, elements of the built fabric can deteriorate, and, due to a number of contributing factors, may be lost. Where an element is no longer extant, evidence of the configuration and structural or design form of such elements is sometimes revealed through research, either from original plans or from drawings or photographs or may be apparent from site investigation.

Where sound evidence exists, replacement of missing elements is appropriate, particularly when it recovers a significant element or assemblage of the place.

##### **Policy 12**

*Replacement of missing significant fabric is appropriate on all the structures at Nielsen Park, but should only be undertaken after appropriate research has been undertaken and the form of the element is ascertained and understood.*

##### **Policy 13**

*Reinstatement of major built elements should only be undertaken following a detailed assessment of the element, where there is an established need for the work to take place (this could be to reinstate elements that are important in protecting the place, interpreting the feature or that allow it to function for future uses) and where there is sufficient evidence of the feature.*

##### **Action Statements**

- Reinstatement or reconstruction of missing fabric will only occur where there is sufficient documentary or physical evidence, where it will contribute to the significance or interpretation of the item, or where it is essential to the continuity and conservation of the particular building or item.
- Where it is clear that original or significant fabric has been removed it may be considered appropriate to adaptively reconstruct the element based on extant fabric and archival evidence.
- Where repairs or alterations are required, new material should closely match original or adjacent materials.

## 7.6.5 Building Code of Australia

*(Since 2011, the Building Code of Australia (BCA) along with the Plumbing Code of Australia now forms the National Construction Code)*

### **Background**

The BCA is a uniform set of technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings throughout Australia that applies to all new work undertaken. There is often conflict between the requirements of the BCA (and other Acts that control building) and existing conditions in heritage buildings where significant elements of a place do not comply with the current code. The areas of greatest impact of the BCA on historic buildings are:

- provision of equitable access ad facilities such as toilets
- fire safety, and
- egress provisions

The provisions of the BCA are activated by making an application for work but do not affect conservation and maintenance works where new work does not take place.

The intent of the policy is to ensure that all buildings are safe for occupants and that wherever possible the provisions of the BCA are complied with. Where this is not possible due to the nature of the building or the significance of parts of it, designed, engineered solutions may be required to satisfy the intent of the Code.

### **Policy 14**

*New construction should comply with the provisions of the Building Code of Australia.*

### **Policy 15**

*Adaptation of significant buildings should comply with the BCA provisions wherever possible and alternative designed solutions should be developed for areas where technical compliance will adversely impact on the heritage values of the place.*

### **Policy 16**

*Professional advice should be sought in developing specific approaches to areas of technical non-compliance with the BCA to develop sound and safe alternatives.*

### **Policy 17**

*Where compliance with the BCA provisions has severe adverse impacts and the building cannot easily be made safe, strategies such as alternative uses should be investigated to minimise change to the building fabric.*

### **Policy 18**

*While the principal intent of compliance with the BCA is to protect occupants consideration should also be given to protecting significant structures to minimise their risk of loss.*

### **Action Statements**

- Assess all buildings and structures for BCA compliance. Identify areas of non-compliance and develop strategies
- Compliance strategies for easy access requirements and public safety should be carefully considered and integrated into individual buildings or other site features to minimise impact on significance, and

- Alternative interpretation or re-use proposals will be considered where compliance will adversely affect significant fabric or features or the ecological integrity of the landscape.

#### 7.6.6 Moveable heritage policy

##### **Background**

Nielsen Park and in particular, Greycliffe House has a small but significant collection of moveable heritage from the period of Tresillian use. This includes signs, bassinets, and an archaeological and building sample collection. The identification, assessment and cataloguing of the collection should be undertaken as part of the overall management of the historic values of the site.

##### **Policy 19**

*Moveable heritage will be managed in accordance with the NPWS Moveable Heritage Policy.*

##### **Policy 20**

*The collection should be stored in secure conditions and catalogued.*

##### **Policy 21**

*The collection should be interpreted as part of the overall site interpretation.*

##### **Action Statements**

- Compile an inventory of moveable heritage items associated with Nielsen Park.
- Conserve, as required, the collection to ensure its long term preservation.
- Interpret the collection as part of the ongoing use and management of the site.

### 7.7 Use and Adaptive Re-use Policies

##### **Background**

The Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management sets out the principles that control which and how buildings and structures may be used or adaptively re-used or modified.<sup>6</sup>

Adaptive re-use of buildings and structures can take place provided any proposed modification and use is carried out in a sustainable manner, is consistent with the conservation of the natural and cultural values of the land, and is compatible with the retention of the cultural significance of the buildings and structures. A range of uses for historic buildings and structures is considered appropriate in providing greater diversity and flexibility of use, improved public access and to ensure conservation outcomes for buildings and structures.

The place itself can also be modified for new or changing uses. Generally the policy that follows addresses the adaptation of buildings rather than landscape elements although built elements are included that are not buildings.

The following policies do not however prescribe that specific uses must be adopted. Instead options for use are explored that provide for each built element to be used to its potential in relation to its significance. It is also noted that buildings and structures

<sup>6</sup> Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management (2003 Amendments) pp. 4 - 5.

that are well used generally are better maintained and have lower risk of damage and deterioration.

**Policy 1**

*The use of the park and the components within it shall comply with the Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management 1998 (amended November, 2003).*

**Policy 2**

*The selection of future uses for buildings within the park should be guided by the level of significance of each building and the amount of adaptation that would be required to accommodate a particular use. Uses that require high level of adaptation or change to significant parts of a building are likely not to be appropriate uses.*

*This is to ensure that significant buildings and elements are not adversely impacted by a potential use.*

**Policy 3**

*Uses of buildings should provide public access, where appropriate, and should not alienate structures or areas for private use.*

**Policy 4**

*All buildings and structures should have viable uses that encourage their conservation and maintenance.*

**Policy 5**

*Buildings should not be unused or left empty.*

**Policy 6**

*Adaptive reuse or the introduction of new uses into the park should not adversely impact, and should reinforce, the core recreational values of the place*

**Policy 7**

*Adaptive re-use shall conform to the guidelines of the Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management 2012 and the conservation guidelines and levels of significance listed elsewhere in this document.*

**Policy 8**

*Adaptation of fabric and spaces considered to be of High Re-use Potential is acceptable if the change of use is compatible with the physical characteristics of the space, can be achieved without loss of significant fabric (as listed in this document), and does not reduce the overall significance of the building or element.*

**Policy 9**

*Adaptation or alteration work to fabric or spaces of Medium Re-use Potential is acceptable if the change of use is compatible with the physical characteristics of the place, can be achieved with only minor loss of significant fabric and does not degrade the significance of the building or complex.*

**Action Statements**

Nil



### 7.7.1 Use of Buildings and Features

The following tables present a graded framework for the possible adaptive re-use of significant elements in the Park. It builds on the *Schedule of Assessments* outlined in Section 5.3 of this Conservation Management Plan.

Table 7.1

#### Precinct 1: Mt Trefle

Number	Name	Flexibility	Potential Uses
3	Former sandstone pathways	High	If restored to original configuration, the reinstated paths would allow visitor access to Mt Trefle

Table 7.2

#### Precinct 2: Greycliffe House

Number	Name	Flexibility	Potential Uses
1	Greycliffe House	High	Administration and management. Education/research facility for natural and cultural heritage park management. Conference facility. Events/reception venue. Accommodation Museum/interpretation activities. Events in grounds (this may include erection of temporary features such as a marquee).
2	Gardener's Cottage	Medium	Residence Short term holiday accommodation. Interpretive education centre .
3	Margaret Harper Wing	High	Administration and management. Education or research facility. Accommodation. Short term holiday accommodation.
4	Greycliffe Stables	High	Administration and management. Events/reception venue (this may include erection of temporary features such as a marquee). Accommodation.

## DISCUSSION

### Greycliffe House

Greycliffe House is currently used for administration, housing the NPWS area office. This is a low key use that conserves the place, however it does not utilise all of the building and does not provide high levels of public access. Preferred uses would include higher levels of public access and use to the main rooms of the house, particularly the downstairs reception rooms, and supporting uses in minor rooms. Significant interiors including joinery, the configuration of the downstairs (and some of the upstairs) rooms, elements such as stairs and finishes will need to be retained and protected.

It is possible to accommodate several different uses that involve community, commercial offices and public uses such as reception facilities.

Intensification of use will require additional facilities including serving/kitchen, amenities, storage, some vertical connection between ground and first floor for equal access and goods (for example lifts), vehicular movements at the rear and any carparking. New services need to be located so they do not impact on significant fabric and spaces and views (refer grading plans). The building's physical constraints includes a suite of significant ground floor spaces in the formal house, significant views to and from the north and the proximity of the cutting to the south. These constraints will determine the extent of new amenities which will, in turn, determine the capacity of the building to accommodate new uses.

Uses that involve leasing the building or part of it for functions etc., will need to be carefully monitored and controlled to ensure that there is no damage to fabric, spaces and views.

The immediate grounds should also be used in connection with the house for functions and activities and consideration of reinstatement of the garden fencing could be appropriate to redefine the formal garden within the broader parkland setting.

Consideration of temporary structures such as marquees within the immediate setting of the house for specific functions could also be appropriate to support use of the house for activities, however this should not be a permanent or dominant feature that detracts from the house and its setting or which damages the landscape into which it is set.

### **Gardener's Cottage**

This diminutive dwelling, that was apparently constructed as two separate two room dwellings, has limited uses due to its location and the scale of the building. The main structure has four small rooms with an added skillion wing to the rear. It is presently used as a staff house, and while difficult in terms of available space and the overall condition of the building, the use is appropriate and consistent with its original use. If this use were to continue the building would require conservation and upgrade including reconstruction of the rear wing or the addition of a further wing, perhaps in a detached form.

Other uses could include a small scale administration office for the park or short-term holiday rental accommodation similar to nearby Steele Point Cottage.

For any ongoing or new use the building will require upgrade and conservation, drainage works to address ground water flow and damp, resolution of parking and access and consideration of privacy if used for accommodation as the site is located centrally in the parkland.

BCA implications should be considered in relation to any change of use of the building.

### **Margaret Harper Wing**

This building (once attached to the main house) has undergone significant adaptation to provide staff accommodation and it currently functions as a single residence. The building is in need of upgrade irrespective of future use as the current fitout is deteriorated.

With careful adaptation the building has several preferred uses, ongoing residential use or holiday accommodation and administration use for NPWS. A combination of these uses could be achieved although residential accommodation would be limited to a flat if shared with administration use.

The building is discretely sited and ideally situated for accommodation. Staff accommodation may be the most suitable use if high levels of direct supervision are required for activities in Greycliffe House.

Upgrade or adaptation will need to retain surviving rooms and fitout from the original construction to demonstrate the mothercare uses of the building.

### Greycliffe Stables

No longer easily accessible the upper level of the stables accommodated staff and the lower areas contain several rooms and a stable area. The complex requires considerable conservation and refit to accommodate a use including the provision of access to the upper floor.

There are two preferred uses, accommodation and office and related use. The area may also be suitable as an ancillary venue related to broader use of Greycliffe House.

Currently the building is not serviced and amenities would need to be added for any future use part from uses such as storage and parking.

Table 7.3

### Precinct 3: Steele Point

Number	Name	Flexibility	Potential Uses
1	The Battery	Low	The structure is not capable of uses beyond interpretation.
2	The Cottage	Medium	Short term holiday accommodation. Administration. Education
3	The Store Shed	Low	Storage.
4	The Garage	Low	Parking.

## DISCUSSION

### The Battery

The Battery is not capable of other uses apart from interpretation. It would be of benefit to remove the sand infill to one of the gun emplacements to recover its form and to undertake selective clearing to re-connect the site to the harbour.

### The Cottage

The cottage is presently used for short-term rental accommodation. This is a preferred and appropriate use as the building is relatively isolated from the main park area, has a level of privacy that facilitates the use and utilises the form and fitout of the building as it was intended.

Other uses are possible but are generally better accommodated in other structures on other parts of the site.

Table 7.4

### Precinct 4: Shark Beach

Number	Name	Flexibility	Reuse Possibilities
1	The Restaurant/Kiosk and attached	High	Restaurant/kiosk

	cottage/garage		
2	W A Notting Memorial	Low	Not applicable
3	Western Toilet Block	Low	Toilet facilities
4	The Dressing Pavilion	High	Dressing pavilion. Event space. (selected occasional events) Concession (use of central area)
Number	Name	Flexibility	Reuse Possibilities
5	The Beach Front	Low	Not applicable
6	The Halbert Pavilion	High	Functions and events. Picnic Pavilion
7	The SLSC and Toilet Block	High	Take-out café facility. Toilet facilities
8	Former Dressing Room	High	Public display space. Functions. Concession.

## DISCUSSION

### Kiosk

The kiosk and the associated structures have had continuous use as a kiosk/restaurant since constructed. The main structure is suited to the historic use and is the only preferred use option. The ancillary areas including the former cottage and buildings that are now used as part of the complex have some potential for adaptive re-use in relation to the kiosk activity, particularly if it recovers some of the earlier form of the group.

Ongoing outdoor dining as part of the kiosk use is appropriate and assists in activating the waterfront. Kiosk related use should be confined to the concrete apron around the building.

The kiosk complex is currently leased and changes in use are not anticipated within the time frame of the lease.

### Dressing Pavilion

The Dressing Pavilion, although having undergone some alteration, retains its essential fitout and function that is now rare within Sydney. The core use of the building for changing and showering should be retained, however, supporting uses could be accommodated that allow the spaces to be used at specific and non core times for events or functions given the interesting and attractive qualities of the building. Occasional uses should not involve any physical change to the building.

The central space, that was once used as the entry point to the beach and for rental of equipment, could again be used as a concession in relation to the park or waterfront. Some adaptation to accommodate this could be possible.

### Halbert Pavilion

This is the last of several picnic pavilions built in the park to house picnickers. It has also been used for site storage by NPWS and is currently leased as part of the kiosk complex for events. The building was adapted to accommodate this use that has

changed its character from a rustic pavilion to an enclosed building. The current use is appropriate and it should not revert to a service building.

The kiosk complex is currently leased and changes in use are not anticipated within the time frame of the lease.

## 7.8 New Development

### **Background**

This CMP recognises that, acknowledging the Park's significance as a recreation landscape and the importance of the park character and setting, there is limited potential for new development either through substantial new buildings or infilling open areas and gardens, except for the Mt Trefle area. However, there are localised sites within the Park that could sustain new development either as freestanding structures or additions to existing buildings.

### **Policy 1**

Ongoing use and re-use of existing buildings (and other features) within the Park is to be given priority over the construction of new buildings and facilities.

### **Policy 2**

Where new buildings or additions to existing buildings are proposed they should:

- be essential for the ongoing use of the building or park
- be subservient to existing buildings
- be located to avoid visual impacts
- in the case of additions be designed compatibly with the existing structure or reinstatement missing former significant elements.
- Temporary structures such as marquees may be acceptable on a short term and limited basis on the lawns around Greycliffe House and in other locations subject to approval.

### **Policy 3, (site specific policies)**

#### *Greycliffe*

- No new additions or new structures near to or alongside Greycliffe House on the north, west and east sides of the house, would be acceptable, even structures taking advantage of Tressillian period infills, as any addition will substantially encumber the formal elevations of the house and the house's important connection to the landscape.
- There is possibility, subject to approval of a design, for lightweight single storey glazed conservatory-like structure on the north elevation of the Stables Wing on the footprint of the former Tresillian Nursery Verandah which was demolished in the 1970s. This structure should interpret this room and any addition must be lightweight and transparent to its interior so it is subservient to the main house.
- New interior fitouts may occur in the deteriorated and altered Kitchen Rooms and in the Stables Wing including the interior reinstatement of the upper storey with the retention of the Wentworth and Tresillian periods fabric.

#### *Gardeners Cottage*

- No new additions or structures are acceptable on the north of the Cottage.
- There is potential for a single storey addition to the rear (south) added to the existing Park Trust extension (the former enclosed verandah refurbished in the 1990s), as a connected but separate pavilion to the south of the cottage.

#### *Margaret Harper House*

- Externally, there is potential for a single storey addition to the rear (southern) elevation extending into the service garden as a connected but separate pavilion.
- Internally, there is potential for alterations with the retention of surviving 1939 fabric and rooms.

#### *Dressing pavilion*

- No additions are acceptable.

#### *Garden at rear of Dressing Pavilion*

- Two pavilions were constructed by the Park Trust at the rear of the Dressing Pavilion. These buildings predated the 1958 Halbert Pavilion, but have been demolished. There is potential for new open pavilion-like structures built on the footprints of these buildings, as long as any structure does not impact on the health and longevity of the mature trees in the vicinity.

#### *Kiosk and Cottage*

- No external additions or structures are acceptable as the Kiosk, Cottage and Garage are visible in the round.
- Internally, there is potential for internal alterations to the Cottage with the retention of 1914 fabric and layout.

#### *Steele Point*

- Due to the steep topography, ie limited level ground and the placement of the existing buildings, the existing cottage, the garage and the .Store Shed, there is limited potential for substantial new structures in the Cottage Precinct
- There is potential to discreetly adapt the outbuilding.

#### *Mt Trefle Works Area*

- Up to two new single storey service buildings are appropriate each with a footprint up to 50% of the current shed. This would allow additional service requirements but prevent new buildings from affecting the setting outside the works area. Substantial excavation or cut and fill for new buildings is to be avoided.

#### *Bottle and Glass Point*

- No buildings or structures are acceptable.

## 7.9 Policies for Leases and Licences

### Background

The conditions for the granting of leases and licences are laid down in Section 151B of the *National Parks and Wildlife Services Amendment Act 2001*,<sup>7</sup> and in the *Sydney Harbour Plan of Management 2010*.

### Policy 1

*Leases and licences should only be put in place for uses that support the conservation of the significant elements of the place, continued public access and that can generate funds for the maintenance of the Park.*

### Action Statements

- Ensure that leases and licences for buildings, structures and landscape areas conform to the permissible uses outlined in the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act 2001 (Section 151B), and the Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management;
- Tenancies should only be selected/approved on the basis that the proposed or future uses are compatible with the significance, and the sensitive fabric, spaces, and landscape elements, and should ensure that any additions can be installed and removed without impact;
- New leases and licences should only be granted after a Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared analysing the likely impacts of the proposed use on the heritage significance of the fabric of the individual building or place. Parking within Nielsen Park will continue to be limited to what is currently available and will not be increased to suit new uses, and
- Leases and licences for activities that may impact on visitor use and enjoyment of the park (for example, trainers and rock concerts) will be subject to any relevant policies and recommendations of any environmental assessment for the proposal

#### 7.9.1 Protection of Cultural Significance within Individual Tenancies

### Background

To prevent the gradual loss of cultural significance through incremental change that can disguise, destroy or diminish the identified significance of individual buildings within the Park, a mechanism for controlling any modifications undertaken by tenants to significant fabric, including landscape components and the beach foreshore, needs to be established.

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<sup>7</sup> National Parks Association of NSW Inc. website, *Summary Extract of Changes to National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. [www.npansw.org.au/npwamend/Extract%20of%20Changes.htm](http://www.npansw.org.au/npwamend/Extract%20of%20Changes.htm)

## **Policy 2**

*All potential tenants of the built, landscape, beach and foreshore components of Nielsen Park should be made aware of their cultural significance.*

### **Action Statements**

- Current and future tenants should be aware of the Statement of Significance for Nielsen Park, and the Statement of Significance for the individual building/s which they seek to lease, and adopt the guidelines of the Nielsen Park CMP, and individual CMP/s for the individual building/s where required in their planning and design;
- The impact of proposed modifications to significant fabric, space and landscape elements should be adequately assessed by the proponent prior to the granting of owner's consent, and
- Heritage Impact Statements should be prepared by the proponent using a suitably qualified person and lodged with applications for any material changes within individual tenancies.

## 7.9.2 Managing Alien Uses and In holdings

### **Background**

Alien uses such as pumping stations and easements for utilities occur throughout the park. In addition, the naval degaussing station range represents a major piece of non-park infrastructure within the park. Where such uses exist they need to be managed to minimise potential impacts on the values of the park.

The impacts of these uses can be the use itself or the infrastructure that accompanies it. In the case of the de-gaussing station, which continues a long history of military use of this part of the park, it is issues such as the need and location of secure perimeter fencing, vegetation clearance and management, parking etc. that have the greatest potential impacts on the surrounding park. For example, the current tall chain wire perimeter fence, while necessary to secure the station, has a detrimental visual impact along the entry road and the adjacent Steele Point Cottage.

### **Policy 3**

*Ongoing liaison with the relevant authorities will occur regarding the heritage and environmental impacts of alien uses.*

### **Policy 4**

*Manage alien uses within the park to minimise their impact on the heritage and natural values of the park.*

### **Action Statements**

- If opportunity arises to acquire easements or in holdings within the park this will be undertaken and the sites will be rehabilitated and incorporated into the park.



- Liaise with Sydney Water regarding establishing an easement for operation of the sewage pumping stations.
- Negotiate with the Department of Defence to reposition the chain mesh fence and barbed wire fence between Steele Point Cottage and the Degaussing Station. Other routes for the fence closer to the principal security risks or using differing materials for the fence should be explored, with the aim to minimise its impact.

## 7.10 Managing the Visitor Experience

### **Background**

One of the primary components of the management of Nielsen Park is to continue to promote and protect the recreational values of the park. Interpretation of historic places essentially reveals long-term connections that underpin our cultural identity. To “interpret” an historic place in its geographic and physical setting, is to bring its history to life to increase the public’s understanding, and, through this extended understanding, to give them an enhanced experience of the significance of the place.

Amongst the difficulties in interpreting a cultural landscape as rich as Nielsen Park are the multiplicity of messages of themes that could be presented on this site. Too many messages could create confusion in a potential audience. This suggests that Nielsen Park’s interpretive strategies should be audience-directed, rather than message-directed.

The nearby Vacluse Estate was once the residence of William Charles Wentworth, the owner of much of Vacluse in the 19th century. The Historic Houses Trust of NSW (HHT) operates this historic residence, gardens and beach paddock. Nielsen Park’s ties with the Wentworth Estate and the Wentworth family make these two sites part of the cultural landscape of the area. It is possible that there could be additional synergistic promotion between the two sites. Guided tours could operate from site to site, education programmes could be shared and landscape design parallels could be explored.

### **Policy 1**

*Undertake generally low-key Interpretation that reflects the cultural values of Nielsen Park and ensures these values are readily accessible to visitors.*

### **Policy 2**

*Recognise Nielsen Park as a key recreational destination for visitors (including disabled access) from all parts of the Sydney Region.*

### **Policy 3**

*Acknowledge the formal historic relationship between Nielsen Park and Vacluse House.*

### **Action Statements**

- The ongoing management of Nielsen Park should include the development and implementation of an interpretation strategy, which reveals the cultural significance of the place.

- Interpretation programs should provide equitable physical, spiritual and intellectual access to the cultural significance of Nielsen Park.
- Interpretation at Nielsen Park should take into account all periods of development in the context of its history.
- The following elements of Nielsen Park should be recognised in the interpretive strategy:
  - Aboriginal Culture - Rarity value for the series of preserved Indigenous cultural sites within a recreation reserve on the Sydney Harbour foreshore;
  - Natural Heritage - Natural bushland setting containing a significant inventory of indigenous flora including two endangered species (one found only in Nielsen Park), significant fauna including a rare species of owl, along with a 20<sup>th</sup> century beach-orientated landscape and related buildings;
  - Colonial Heritage - The superb Victorian Gothic residence *Greycliffe*, designed by the noted architect John Frederick Hilly, and its association with high profile residents of importance to Australia's cultural history give it significant heritage value.
 

The Park retains the ability to demonstrate the original estate grouping of Greycliffe complete with its rare example of a Gothic Gardener's Cottage;
  - Military Heritage - The largely intact Steele Point Battery and Barracks designed by the colonial architect James Barnet is of outstanding heritage value, along with the strategic defence infrastructure of the fort in relation to the Harbour entrance formation;
  - Public Health Heritage - The pioneering use of Greycliffe House for new-born and infant health through the Lady Edeline Hospital and later the Tresillian Mothercraft Home give the house and the Margaret Harper Wing high social significance.
  - The Nielsen Park Trust. An early demonstration of community concern for the conservation of harbour foreshore saw lobbying to secure its future. This was achieved in large part to William Notting, Niels Nielsen, and the [NSW] Government of the day and has been maintained by successive members of the Nielsen Park Trust and the dedicated staff of PWG, and
  - Heritage of the National Park Movement - This includes use of the Park during the 20<sup>th</sup> century mostly as a public swimming and recreational park. This function is of outstanding social significance. The Park met the public's demand for a large scale water related public facility at a time when Sydney harbour was threatened with the loss of its natural waterfront.
- Interpretive Strategies should be developed for potential audiences using the interpretive media and messages appropriate to each audience.
- An interpretation programme for the park should address the variety of visitors through a range of media appropriate to the target audience.
- Signage should be developed for main park entrance points off Vaucluse Rd and Greycliffe Ave and adjoining the Degaussing Station. The signs should identify key elements of the natural and cultural significance of the site.
- On site signage should be limited and should engage the main audience of recreational visitors with a strong seasonal bias.

- Opportunities to promote the significance of the park to any audience, including promotional opportunities associated with the various leaseholders (such as the café) and functions co-ordinators should, within budget limitations, be pursued, and
- Opportunities for promoting the interpretation of Nielsen Park through the cafe and function coordinators should be pursued in the form of optional "table cards" or distribution of brochures, flyers and promotional materials to visitors to these sites. This requirement should be formalised in any future cafe or vending lease.
- Continue with inter-related, joint programs between the two sites of *Greycliffe House* and *Vaucluse House*.

## 8.0 Strategies for Implementing the Plan

### 8.1 Introduction

This Conservation Management Plan has been prepared to provide guidelines for the conservation, re-use, interpretation and management of Nielsen Park and to ensure that the heritage value of the site is maintained and enhanced.

This section sets out the implementation guidelines for the policies, including a list of management issues that, should Nielsen Park be entered on the New South Wales Heritage Register, will be endorsed by the Heritage Council delegate and will not require further reference for approval.

### 8.2 Management Issues

- Review and adopt this Conservation Management Plan;
- Continue to develop the emerging concepts for the use of Nielsen Park, its building components, landscape, beach-front and foreshore areas within The Sydney Harbour National Park;
- Develop and implement interpretation of Nielsen Park;
- Encourage tourist visitation;
- Ensure funding for recurrent long-term maintenance, and ensure that maintenance is made at the appropriate time;
- Ensure that potential risks are assessed to ensure the long-term safety of Nielsen Park as a visitor destination, and
- Recognise the high recreational value of the park.

### 8.3 Management of Significance

#### **Background**

The essential aspects of Nielsen Park's historic evolution and development have been summarised in the Statement of Significance (Section 5.6, Statement of Significance). This *Statement* encapsulates the cultural values of the Park.

#### **Policy 1**

*All management decisions must consider the values of the Park as encapsulated in the Statement of Significance.*

#### **Action Statements**

- The Statement of Significance should be adopted as the basis for heritage management: all decisions should consider and seek to retain the values identified in this Statement;
- Future uses should be compatible with the nature and significance of the built, recreational, landscape, beachfront and foreshore elements. Any proposed use should enable Nielsen Park to remain a vital and important component of both Sydney Harbour, and of the Sydney Harbour National Park;

- The existing built and landscape qualities of Nielsen Park should be retained and conserved. Conservation should be undertaken in the context of the on-going use of buildings, landscape, beachfront and foreshore components;
- Given the high level of significance of much of the fabric and landscape components of the Park, conservation, adaptation and maintenance will follow the principles of the Burra Charter;
- The progressive evolution of the Park shall be respected and retained.

## 8.4 Maintenance

### 8.4.1 General Maintenance

#### **Background**

The nature of any building is that its fabric will deteriorate due to the effects of aging, weather, vegetation incursion and use. To ensure the on-going conservation of significant building fabric, *a regular maintenance program should be implemented*, which provides for regular inspection and for remedial action to be taken where necessary.

#### **Policy 1**

*Maintain the building fabric and services within the Park.*

#### **Policy 2**

*Prepare a maintenance program for all elements across the site that are not subject to commercial lease and carry out works on a regular basis.*

#### **Policy 3**

*Ensure lessees have appropriate maintenance schedules in place and carry out works on a regular basis where part of their lease agreements.*

#### **Action Statements**

- Prompt preventative action and repair must be taken as necessary in addition to regular maintenance activities.
- Prevention of continuing deterioration must take priority over widespread repair or reconstruction.
- Inspection and maintenance works will only be conducted by those with professional knowledge and experience of buildings and materials.
- Maintenance work or repairs shall not negatively impact on significant fabric.
- Maintenance and repair works must be carried out by tradespeople with demonstrated heritage skills, experience and knowledge.

### 8.4.2 Controls on Intervention

#### **Background**

Article 3 of *The Burra Charter* indicates that conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric of a place and should therefore involve the least possible physical intervention in order not to distort the evidence provided by the fabric.

Adaptations of existing fabric for practical reasons such as installation of new services and equipment, and the need to meet fire safety and other statutory requirements may be required in terms of securing a viable use for the building components as a whole, and satisfying the changing needs of the general public.

#### **Policy 4**

*Intervention should not be detrimental to the original fabric. However it is noted that where original fabric has failed its replacement or repair is inevitable.*

#### **Action Statements**

- Intervention into any building fabric should where possible, respect the integrity of the extant material, be carefully controlled, and be limited to that required by the proposed works.
- Existing service areas may be upgraded.
- Any upgrading will be subject to the proper approval process.
- New internal floor coverings are permissible, but should have minimal impact on the floor structure.
- Landscape components, and original external and internal fabric, which have been identified as of exceptional or considerable significance will be retained and conserved;
- No conservation or maintenance work should alter or negatively impact on the significant elements of the landscape, the external façades, significant internal fabric/spaces, or beachfront components;
- Decayed building fabric, which is not likely to be causing on-going deterioration should not be repaired for visual reasons if by doing so the patina of age and ability to successfully interpret various stages of use is degraded;
- Where repairs or alterations are required, new material should closely match original or adjacent materials;
- All structural elements should be retained as existing and left exposed, with appropriate maintenance. No structural members should be removed, other than those that are degraded beyond repair, or to re-instate significant architectural elements, and
- Where it is clear that original or significant fabric has been removed it is considered appropriate to adaptively reconstruct based on extant fabric

### **8.4.3 Historical Archaeological Resources**

#### **Background**

Further research is required with regard to archaeological potential of Nielsen Park.

#### **Policy 5**

*Further research will be undertaken on archaeological potential and significance of the site as required.*

#### **Action Statements**

- PWG will ensure an Archaeological Assessment is undertaken and integrated into the management processes and environmental planning and assessment procedures when required, and
- Any newly identified archaeological resources will be conserved and managed in accordance with the recommendations arising from the Archaeological Assessment and the Policies outlined in Section 7.5.2.

## 8.5 Risk Management and Safety

### **Background**

PWG has a history of effective practice in the assessment of threats and risk to the flora, fauna, landscapes and cultural heritage that it is their mandate to preserve. Risk management approaches are also embedded in many established field operations from conservation programs to bushfire control. The Risk Management Strategic Plan of the OEH is reviewed annually.

### **Policy 6**

*The Risk Management Strategy for the Park should be regularly updated to reflect current international and national approaches.*

### **Action Statements**

- Regular inspections of the Park facilities, including bathing infrastructure, paths, steps and built structures, should be regularly checked to ensure the safety of users at all times, and
- The native flora and fauna, particularly endangered and rare species, as well as significant landscape features, should be monitored to ensure their survival in a natural and nurturing environment.

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## **10.0 Appendix 1**

### **10.1 Building Information Sheets**

- Greycliffe House
- Margaret Harper House
- Gardeners Cottage
- Dressing Pavilion



# Nielsen Park CMP Review – Building Information Sheet

<b>Name</b>	Greycliffe House	<b>Location</b>	Nielsen Park
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<b>Current Use</b>	NPWS Offices	<b>Former Use</b>	Private residence, then Babies Hospital, then Tresillian Mothercraft Hospital.
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## Historical Summary

William Charles Wentworth's daughter, Fanny Katherine, married the wealthy pastoralist John Reeve in 1847. Reeve purchased 14 acres of the Vaucluse estate fronting Shark Bay in 1850. Reeve commissioned the architect John Frederick Hilly to design a villa which was completed in 1851 and named 'Greycliffe.' It is unclear if John and Fanny lived at Greycliffe as they departed with WC Wentworth in 1854 to England on the *Chusan*. John and Fanny never returned to Sydney and the house was leased. During the next 28 years, from 1851 to 1879 the property was leased to:

- 1851 – 1853, Lt. Col. John GN Gibbes
- 1856 – 1857, Augustus Morris
- 1857 – 1859, Lt. Col. John GN Gibbes
- 1859 – 1872, Joseph Scaife Willis
- 1873 – 1877 Fitzwilliam Wentworth, the second son of WC Wentworth.

1878 – 1879, William Bede Dalley

In 1879 Sir John Robertson purchased the property from the estate of the late John Reeve who had died in 1875. In 1880, the property was conveyed to Fanny Reeve and Sir John Dervall as Trustees. The house was vacant for nearly 2 years until it was re-leased to Lady Isabella Martin and her children in 1882. In 1887 the property was purchased by Fitzwilliam Wentworth while he was still living in England. From 1887 to 1894, George Miller, General Manager of the Bank of NSW leased Greycliffe. For three years after 1894, Mr CA Neville was noted as caretaker in the electoral role for Woollahra. In 1897, another caretaker was recorded residing at the house.

In 1895 Fitzwilliam Wentworth and his wife returned to Sydney but did not move into Greycliffe. Instead they stored some of their furniture in the house. In late summer 1897, a fire started in grass near to the house and spread, fanned by a strong breeze. The fire, helped by the extensive external creepers and the timber shingled roof, severely damaged Greycliffe. The fire destroyed almost the entire interior, leaving most of the house's stone walls standing, but blackened. The fire did not damage the stables. Some of Wentworth's possessions were removed but most, including all items stored on the upper floor, were lost in the fire. The building was insured but the Wentworth's personal belongings were not. Wentworth commissioned the reconstruction of the house to mostly copy the original, reusing the stone walls and any material that could be salvaged. Some improvements were also included, such as terracotta roof tiles, instead of the flammable shingles and Wunderlich metal ceilings. A mixture of timber was used for new joinery, replicating the original designs, including sections of American Redwood (which had not been imported to Australia until the 1870s). By May 1898, Fitzwilliam and Mary Wentworth had moved into the reconstructed house.

In 1905, the Harbour Foreshores Vigilance Committee was formed with the objective of securing foreshore land for public benefit. The Committee, and its spokesman W.A. Notting, Honorary Secretary, campaigned via press articles urging the government to acquire foreshore land around the harbour, particularly Vaucluse, for public parks (for example SMH 1 October 1908, p. 6 article "Our Foreshores" by W.A. Notting).

In 1909, the NSW government acceded to public pressure and resumed Vaucluse House and 28 acres. Greycliffe was not included in the first resumption. The public praised the resumption of part of the foreshore but pressed for the acquisition of Greycliffe. In 1911, the Greycliffe Estate was resumed. Fitzwilliam Wentworth sought and secured compensation for the resumption of his property.

Nielsen Park was created in 1912, administered by the Nielsen Park Trust, and was named after the Hon. N.R.W. Nielsen, the NSW Secretary (Minister) for Lands (1910-1911). However, while the grounds were well suited to the Park's functions, there was no straightforward role for Greycliffe House and its outbuildings. After two years of consideration, a parcel of the Park including Greycliffe and its outbuildings was dedicated by the NSW Government to the Department of Public Health. A two acre lot was created, surrounded by the Park and accessed by the Wentworth's original drive from the west and south.

In 1913, Frederick Flower, Minister for Public Health supported the establishment of a hospital for babies in Greycliffe House. The Hospital was set up as the Lady Edeline Babies Hospital which provided accommodation for fifty babies. The Lady Edeline Babies Hospital was officially opened by the NSW Premier on 19 November, 1913 (SMH 13 November 1913, p.8). During the 1918-19 influenza epidemic following the return of soldiers from World War I, Greycliffe housed influenza patients, though presumably not in the Edeline Babies Hospital (ref: SMH, for example 2 April 1919, page 13 "18 deaths, 226 new admissions").

Greycliffe House was altered and added to during the 1920s for hospital purposes, including enclosing the house's north east verandah, construction of large timber framed verandah on the north, construction of a single storey room at the east end of the stables block and construction of a small enclosure and toilet on the south of the house. Greycliffe's interior was also adapted but documentary records to date do not evidence these changes. Documents record that in 1923 the hospital was housing 35 patients, 13 nursing staff and 10 household staff<sup>1</sup>.

In 1934, a proposal was submitted to the Director General of Public Health, to transfer Lady Edeline Hospital to the management of the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies (which had

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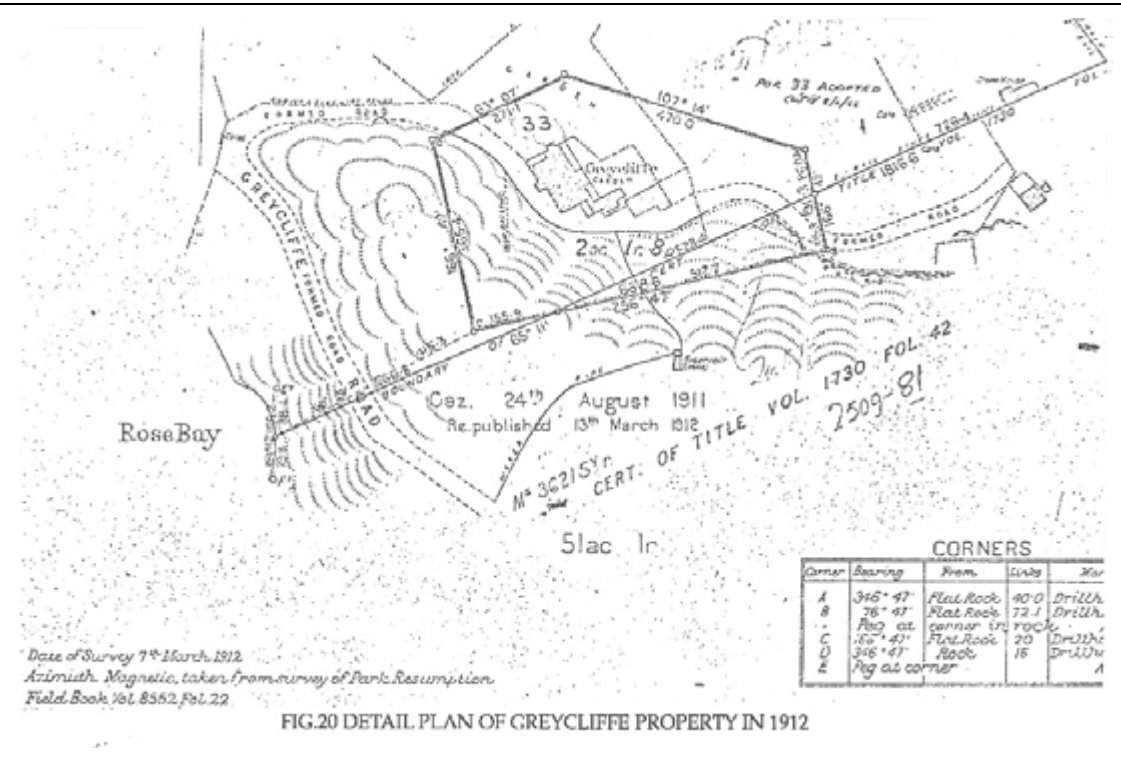
<sup>1</sup> Schwager Brooks 1991 p34

been formed in 1918 with its first Tresillian Training School established at Petersham in 1921). Greycliffe hospital became the third Tresillian Mothercraft Training Home, after Petersham and Willoughby. It was officially opened in 1936 by Lady Street.

Tresillian tailored and altered the house during their 33 year occupancy including subdividing the larger rooms for accommodation, toilets and storage. Measured plans were prepared in the 1950s identifying the rooms and their uses. In particular, a single storey extension, housing a nursery, was added in 1939 between Margaret Harper and Greycliffe, which involved demolition and alteration to previous work. The architect added a rotunda to this suite of rooms. A toddlers' room was constructed in 1953 on the north east corner of the enclosed verandah and Margaret Harper House was constructed to the east in 1939. The garden to the north of Greycliffe was well used by the Tresillian patients and staff. During the 1930s, Matron Kaibel established a stone path garden to the north east where flowers and vegetables were planted.

The Tresillian Home operated in Greycliffe House until October 1968. Its closure reflected a changing local population and a greater need for the Society's services in the north and west of Sydney. In 1970, Nielsen Park was added to the Vaucluse House Historic Site. Both sites were jointly administered by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Nielsen Park Trust. The future use of Greycliffe was discussed with options either as a hospital, institution or training school with Tresillian Society claiming compensation for the improvements to the site during their occupancy. NPWS lobbied to retain Greycliffe as part of the transfer of the Park to become the headquarters of the Sydney Harbour National Park. Under National Parks stewardship, Greycliffe was repaired and restored to its nineteenth century layout. The Lady Edeline and Tresillian external additions were removed, in particular the additions attached to the north and east of the former stables. The upper floor of the stables had not been not altered and still retains its mid nineteenth century plan. In 2002 the gardens around Greycliffe were reconstructed.

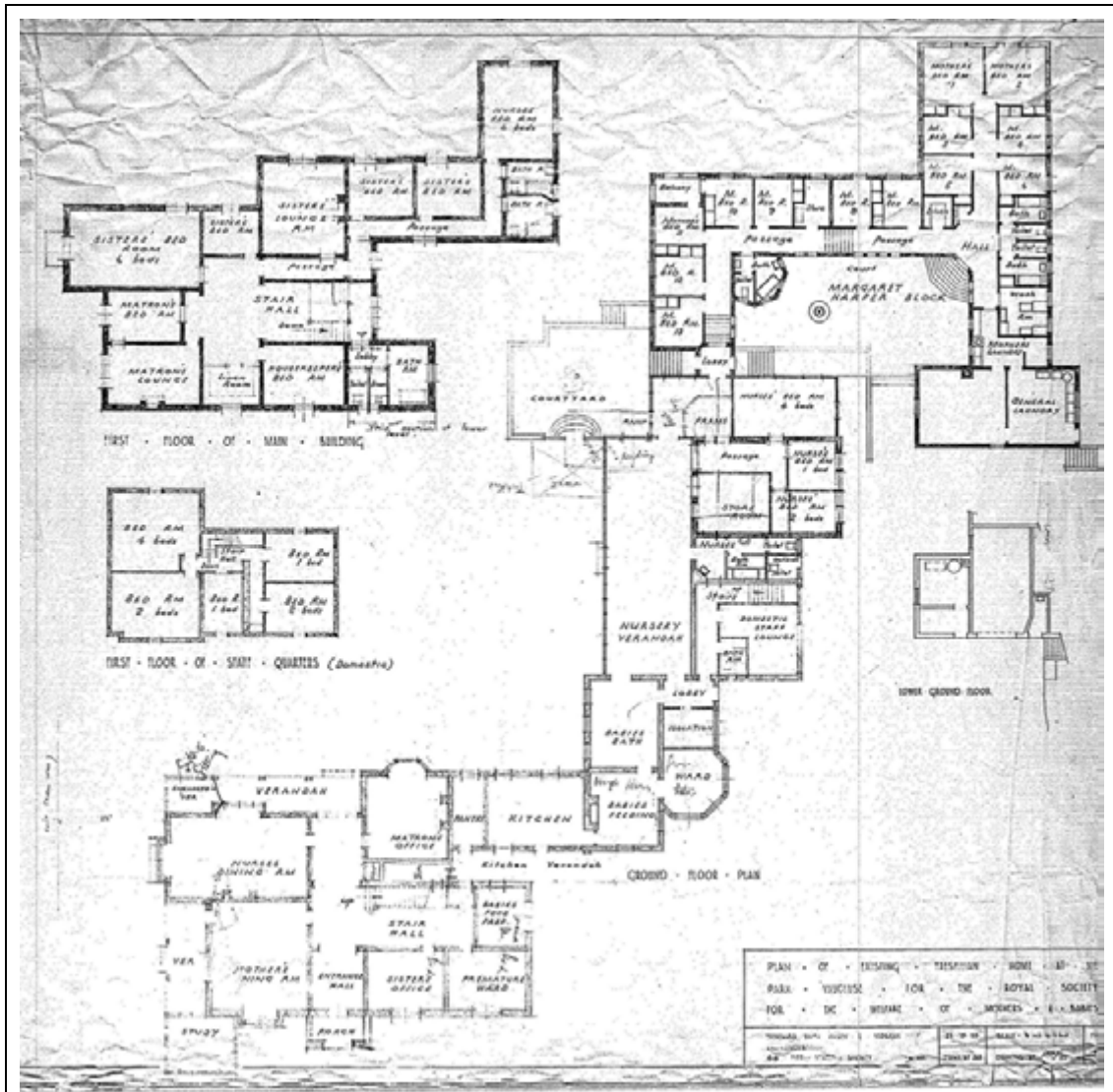
## Historical Images and plans



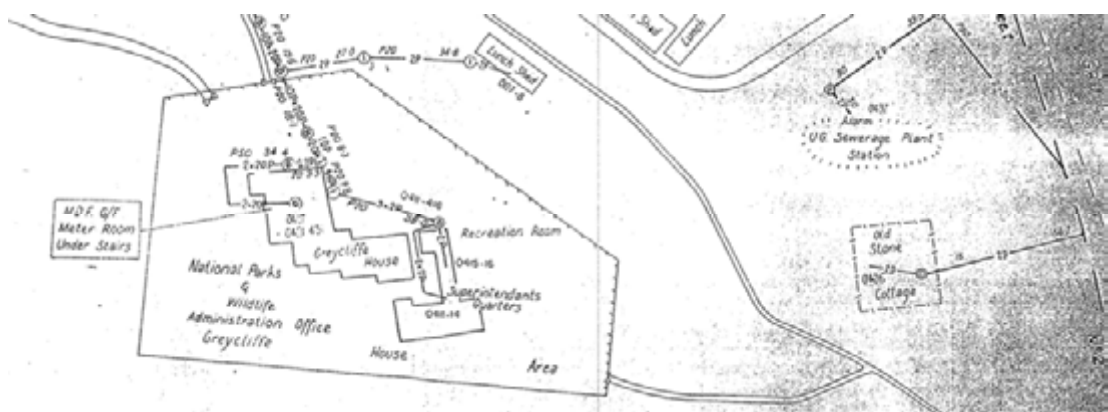
Part of the 1912 Survey (undertaken to establish the property to be transferred to the Nielsen Park Trust) of the Greycliffe Estate showing the two acre lot excised from the Park, used as the Babies Hospital and the Tresillian Home. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:



Part of the 1943 aerial showing Greycliffe (left) and Margaret Harper House (centre). Source: [www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au):



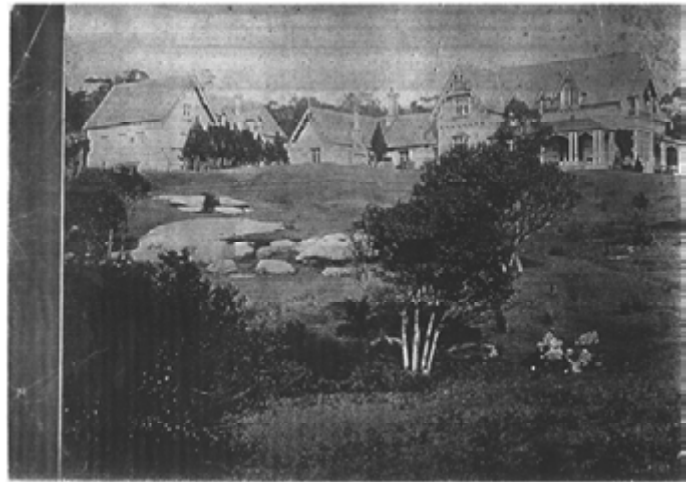
The 1950s plan of Greycliffe as the Tresillian home and Margaret Harper identifying the functions at the time. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:



Part of a late 1960s Hydro Survey of the Park showing the Tresillian home's two acre lot containing Greycliffe and Margaret Harper house. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:



Greycliffe from the north east in the 1880s showing the single storey kitchen wing. Source State Library NSW Ref a089396r



Greycliffe from the north east in the 1880s Source: Parks and Wildlife Group, Greycliffe house.



Greycliffe from the north east gutted after the 1897 fire with just the stone walls standing. Source State Library NSW Ref perier\_34367r





The north west corner of Greycliffe in 1914. Source: State Library NSW Ref: d1\_15811r. Note the width of the road



The east elevation of Greycliffe in 1914 showing the two storey kitchen wing in the centre, with its dormers, and to the left. Source: Source State Library NSW Ref 4346\_a020\_a020000184



Nurses and babies on the lawn in front of Greycliffe in the 1920s. Source Government Printing Office Ref GPO d1\_15816

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## Description

Greycliffe House is a substantial residence designed in the Victorian Rustic Gothic style by John Frederick Hilly who also designed a number of other fashionable houses in Sydney. Hilly's design coincides with a growing fashion in England in the 1830s and in Australia in the 1840s in medievalism and picturesque landscape design. The publication "An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture", published in 1839 by John Claudius Loudon, may have been a source of inspiration, as is suggested for the Gardeners' Cottage.

The house demonstrates the principal characteristic of the Rustic Gothic style in its irregular, picturesque massing, domestic scale, belying its extensive layout, dominated by large steeply pitched roofs with deeply carved and decorated external joinery. The original design consisted of an attic storey villa for the main house with bedrooms above and a single storey kitchen and scullery at the rear. Hilly was able to accommodate good sized rooms on the upper floor, lighting them with dormers and bay windows in the gable walls. Alongside and to the south east was a detached attic storey sandstone coach house and stables with staff quarters above. The present access road served the house and was cut into the stone cliff behind the house. Fencing separated the property from the rest of the Vaucluse estate and the adjoining Carrara estate. A second storey was added to the kitchen wing as part of the reconstruction following the 1897 fire.

The advertisement for the lease of the property in 1879 describes its attributes at the time:

*GREYCLIFFE HOUSE, built substantially of stone is erected on a gentle rise overlooking the bay, and contains large accommodation. On the ground floor, on two sides, there are verandahs; a handsome entrance hall, gives access to drawing and dining rooms, each having bay windows, and elegantly furnished with marble mantelpieces; study, pantry &c. On the first floor, opening off a wide lobby, there are six large bedrooms, two dressing rooms, bathroom &c. The kitchens are fitted with ranges; adjoining them are scullery, store rooms and other apartments, with two servants' room over. The coach house is a double one, and the stable contains 5 stalls and harness room, with three men's rooms and large loft over. These buildings are all of stone, and harmonise with the general style of the main house. The WATER supply is ample, conserved in IRON and UNDERGROUND TANKS fitted with pumps.....*

*As a MARINE VILLA RESIDENCE Greycliffe has no rival in the colony for beauty of position and accessibility to Sydney, and to gentlemen of fortune it can be highly recommended.*

The house is located and protected from the south and west by the northern slopes of the ridge running between Mt Trefle and Steele Point. The house looks out to the north to Shark Bay and to the east over the grounds of the former estate. A noted horticulturist of the time, Thomas Shepherd (1779- 1835 Source: Lectures on Landscape Gardening in Australia, Sydney 1836) held that in such a style the lawn should be bold and sweeping, and enclosed on both sides by groups of trees, leaving an open park in front of the house. The early landscape layout of Greycliffe appeared to have been influenced by this philosophy; the sandstone outcrops and harbourside location were natural elements enhancing the 'picturesque.' For the rest of the nineteenth century subsequent development of the landscape barely progressed beyond sporadic plantings and clearing. This state was consistent with the continuous leasing of the House for almost 50 years.

Greycliffe's prominent roof is finished with Marseille pattern terracotta tiles fitted after the 1897 fire to replace timber shingles. The gables are finished with deep carved barges topped with finials and exposed rafters decorate the deep eaves. Tall prominent paired twisted chimneys decorate the roofscape. The external walls are dressed ashlar sandstone finished with picked tooling. Some evidence of fire blackening survives on some walls. The north gable features an elaborate two storey bay, the bases of the chimney on the west elevation feature prominent weatherings, an elaborate battlement topped loggia shelters the front door on the western wall and well decorated posted verandahs fill the wall returns on the north and east. A smaller service verandah added in the 1890s is located on the south west.

The interior of the main part of the house features a suite of principal rooms focused on the spacious entry hall and handsome timber stair. The names of the original rooms are not exact, but the formal living, dining and withdrawing rooms with perhaps a morning room occupied the ground floor with bedrooms on the first floor. The kitchen and service rooms occupied the rear wing with servants accommodation. This area is now used for storage.

During its conversion from 1913 for the Edeline and Tresillian Hospitals the house was altered and upgraded. As part of the 1970s restoration work much of the early hospital alterations in the main sections of the house and service wing were removed.

The condition of the main part of the house and its principal ground and first rooms restored by NPWS is good. The secondary rooms in the kitchen wing and stables are in poorer condition with neglect evident and vermin infestation. These rooms retain some of their hospital finishes and fittings although their condition is poor.

### Photographs



*The main entry roadway continues past the house.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Main entry porch with medieval gothic detailing.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Terra cotta balustrade on upper northern balcony.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Second storey added onto the rear wing in the 1870s.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*The two storey stables with terra cotta roof tiles.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Original southern verandah linking kitchen wing.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Road continued behind house to stables courtyard.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Lawn and garden to the north of the stables block.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Southern room added by Tresillian Vaucluse in 1939.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Windows altered by Tresillian Vaucluse in 1939.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Alterations to stables for access to old verandah.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Hospital phase window alterations to stables wing.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Surviving wall plaster from hospital phase verandah.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



*Alterations to stair and doorways in stables wing.*

*Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991*



North east verandah with enclosure removed by NPWS.

Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991



North west verandah with enclosure removed by NPWS.

Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, Nielsen Park Conservation Plan, May 1991



The ground floor main stair and hall.  
Source: Author January 2011.





The main hall looking west towards the entry. Source: Author January 2011.



The north eastern of the ground floor formal rooms looking north. Source: Author January 2011.



The south western of the ground floor rooms used as office kitchen looking north. Source: Author January 2011.



Looking from the ground floor stair hall to the tiled rear room under the stairs, identified as the Babies Food Prep Room on the 1950s plan. Source: Author January 2011



The main stair looking to the landing and ceiling from the ground floor. Source: Author January 2011.

	<p>The ground floor room to the east of the stair looking south. The room currently houses the switchboard and comms equipment. Source: Author January 2011.</p>
	<p>The former kitchen verandah between the main house and the kitchen wing looking north showing the ceiling with the c1940s sliding door to Babies Food Prep Room. Source: Author January 2011.</p>

	<p>The south end of the former kitchen looking east showing the original kitchen hearth on the right, now propped with steel. Source: Author January 2011</p>
	<p>The former Ward room added in 1939 looking south west. Source: Author January 2011</p>
	<p>The former Babies Bath looking north east. Source: Author January 2011</p>

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### Summary Statement of Significance

Greycliffe House is exceptional and rare at a state level. It was the principal residence of the former Greycliffe Estate designed by prominent colonial architect John Frederick Hilly (who also designed a number of other fashionable houses in Sydney) for the daughter Fanny and son-in-law John Reeve of WC Wentworth, on land bought by John from his father in law.

Fanny and John did not occupy the house but leased it for many years to a procession of prominent and influential tenants including public servants, members of the NSW Legislative Council, Attorneys General, an acting Colonial Secretary, a former Premier, a President of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, a director and General Managers of the Bank of NSW.

The second son of WC Wentworth, Fitzwilliam, purchased the house and lived there from 1898 until it was resumed by the Government in 1911, in response to the vocal public movement to secure foreshore land for public benefit.

Greycliffe, as one of the most important surviving estate houses on the Harbour with its design, planning, location and decoration reflects the lifestyle and aspirations of the wealthy of the time and its specifications and amenity demonstrates the separation and role of servants, estate workers and labourers who serviced the house and grounds.

The house became an important hospital for mothers and babies, firstly as the Edeline Hospital for Babies in 1913, only the second hospital established in Australia for infants under the age of two years and later the third Tresillian Mothercraft Home in Sydney. Both organisations modified and added to the large house to suit their role. Although the ability of the house to demonstrate these periods has been diminished by the restoration works in the 1970s, there are still remnants of the alterations which convey the story of the organisations and their work.

Greycliffe is also of high aesthetic significance as a well executed and impressively sited residence on the rise above Shark Bay and the beach. The house has an elaborate and picturesque presentation designed in the Rustic Gothic style which was an increasingly fashionable style in the 1850s. Despite the consequences of the 1897 fire, the principle 1850s presentation still remains on the exterior with its tall steeply pitched roofs (now roofed with terracotta tiles replacing timber shingles) decorated with a multiplicity of gables facing west, north and east, dormers and chimneys (some have been removed or dismantled) and fine deeply carved geometric joinery. The exterior, rebuilt in the 1890s after the fire is still faithful to the 1850s original however, most of the original 1850s interiors have been altered, as a result of the 1897 fire, and are now reflect 1890s improvements of the 1850s design. The 1850s design and later work still sit comfortably as a whole although the additional accommodation built over the rear wing and Kitchen clouds the original hierarchy of compact main house and lower subservient rear extensions. Both the 1890s fire and the restoration undertaken by National Parks in the 1970s resulted in extensive change to the house and both events in their own way have compromised the ability of the existing house itself to evidence either the 1850s work or the hospital period use and alterations.

Greycliffe was referred to as a Marine Villa in the advertising of the property for lease, promoting its close association with the harbour at the time. However, the views and links between the estate house on its terrace to the beach and harbour backed by Mt Trefle and to the Gardeners Cottage to the east clearly available in the nineteenth century are now concealed by indigenous and non- indigenous trees propagated as part of improvements to the Park as a recreation reserve intended by both the Park Trust and NPWS.

Greycliffe House, as the principal building of both the Mothers and Babies hospital and Tresillian Home from 1914 to 1968, demonstrates high social significance as it provided a forward thinking and vital health service to many women and families; changing and improving the lives of the patients and babies who took advantage of its modern services. Greycliffe has never fully been integrated into the social function of the rest of Nielsen Park, being firstly a hospital then National Park offices. The house has much less a contribution to make, than other buildings in the Park, to the important social significance of Park as a recreation facility stewarded by both the Park Trust and National Parks. Current heavy public use of the park, focusing on the beach area and the central area, suggest that Greycliffe is probably peripheral to the esteem with which the current community values the Park.

The house and immediate grounds, including the facilities such as the reservoir to the south of the

house and any fence lines, have high potential to contain remains from all periods of use of the house and its outbuildings. Any surviving archaeological material is likely to be able to add further to the broad body of information about this important property, already evident in the extant fabric and documentary records, of the detailed functioning of the nineteenth century estate and the twentieth century hospitals. The rubbish deposits on the western side of Mount Trefle may contain material of which may provide more detail about the pre fire-damaged house and the consequences of the fire.

<b>Significance</b>	Exceptional	High	Moderate	Low	Intrusive
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<b>Condition</b>	Good	Fair	Poor	Ruinous	Site Only
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<b>Archaeological Potential</b>	High for pre 1911	Moderate for post 1911	Low
	Including 1850s and post fire fabric	Affected by 1970's works	

<b>Integrity</b>	High	Moderate	Low
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<b>Risk Assessment</b>		
<b>Structural</b>	Low	<b>Risk Assessment Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fire risk to the building arises from possible electrical fault and bushfire</li> <li>- Low wind loading risk due to protected location.</li> <li>- Low risk to visitors with current use as Park offices. Risk may increase if building open to public access without upgrades to services and the rear un-renovated rooms. Some trip and fall hazards exist internally and with unmarked single steps and no ramps and handrails.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire</b>	Moderate	
<b>Wind Loading</b>	Low	
<b>Visitor risk &amp; safety</b>	Low	
<b>Other</b>		

<b>Management</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Additions and alterations (in accordance with Gradings recommendations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No interior additions or alterations that affect significant spaces. Retention or interpretation of surviving hospital layers is important as most of the hospital alterations have been removed.</li> <li>- No exterior alterations and additions that affect significant fabric and views. Retention or interpretation of surviving hospital layers in conjunction with Margaret Harper House is important as most of the hospital alterations have been removed.</li> <li>- Minor alterations to the coach house attic rooms are possible to provide for future uses.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Uses</b>	
Conferences and functions	- Conferences and functions are unlikely to occupy the whole building

	<p>and the building can accommodate other potential uses and functions concurrently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efficient use of large formal rooms.</li> <li>- Provides good public access and enjoyment of interiors.</li> <li>- Good interpretation can be provided.</li> <li>- Service access and delivery would need to be upgraded.</li> <li>- Current carparking would be inadequate for functions involving larger groups of people.</li> <li>- Upgrade required to improve services and address safety and access issues.</li> <li>- Security would be required.</li> <li>- Has the potential to provide independent funding source.</li> </ul>
Short stay accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of whole building for accommodation may under use the ground floor formal rooms in particular.</li> <li>- Accommodation possible on first floor and service areas in conjunction with function use in ground floor principal rooms, eg Peppers Convent Pokolbin, Hunter Valley.</li> <li>- Independent accommodation also possible in the former service areas, kitchen and stables separated from main house.</li> <li>- Substantial upgrade and installation of toilets and other services would be required that may limit the use.</li> <li>- Limited carparking available.</li> <li>- Has the potential to provide independent funding source.</li> </ul>
Lady Edeline/ Tresillian or Park Interpretation centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lady Edeline/ Tresillian interpretation could be provided and possibly housed in parts of Margaret Harper House or in the rear service rooms in the Greycliffe kitchen wing that were not restored in the 1970s and still retain some of the hospital period finishes.</li> <li>- Some interpretation installations can be accommodated in the secondary rooms, separately accessed to the main house.</li> </ul>
Commercial or office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not recommended as it is not a good use of the building or its location. One or two small offices serving a general use could be accommodated in a rear wing.</li> </ul>
Mixed uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The building with its diversity of rooms and wings with their own doors/entrances could accommodate a variety of complementary uses, ie function/interpretation and office.</li> </ul>

<b>Source of the Information</b>			
<b>Study/Report:</b> Nielsen Park Conservation Management Plan review			<b>Year:</b> 2010
<b>Item inspected by:</b> Ed Beebe Paul Davies Pty Ltd	<b>Form completed by:</b> Ed Beebe	<b>Date:</b> 8 January 2013	<b>Issue:</b> C
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design 5 Architects. Fabric Analysis map December 1996</li> <li>- Forsite.EDAW. Nielsen Park Conservation Plan Stage 1, Landscape Analysis. 1992.</li> <li>- Ledingham, Hensby Oxley &amp; Ptnrs. Hydraulic Report of Nielsen Park. May 1991.</li> <li>- Schwager Brooks &amp; Ptnrs. Nielsen Park Historical Analysis. 1992</li> </ul>		

<b>Site Analysis Plans</b>
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<i>Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd, March 2011</i>
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## Nielsen Park CMP Review – Building Information Sheet

<b>Name</b>	Margaret Harper House and Matron Kaibel Garden	<b>Location</b>	Nielsen Park
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<b>Current Use</b>	Former staff accommodation, now unoccupied.	<b>Former Use</b>	Former Tresillian Hospital for Mothers and Babies and NPWS Staff accommodation
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### Historical Summary

In 1914, Frederick Flower, Minister for Public Health, took advantage of Greycliffe House, soon after the former estate was transferred to the Nielsen Park Trust, to establish a hospital for babies in the house. The Hospital was set up as the Lady Edeline Hospital which provided accommodation for fifty babies. Documents record that in 1923 the hospital was housing 35 patients, 13 nursing staff and 10 household staff.

The hospital was transferred to the management of the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies which had been formed in 1918 with its first Tresillian Mothercraft Training School established at Petersham in 1921. Dr Margaret Harper was appointed as the Society's first Medical Superintendent.

The Tresillian Vacluse Committee of Management was formed in 1936 and in the mid 1930s commissioned the design and construction of a new Mothers Bungalow wing to the east of Greycliffe to accommodate more patients.

The design of the new wing, erected in 1939, manifested an innovatory concept for the treatment of young babies. Previously, the need for close bonding between mother and child in the early weeks of life had not been appreciated. Typically, mothers were permitted to visit sick children for one hour on Sunday afternoons. At the new house mothers could stay for the duration of the child's confinement.

Dr Margaret Harper's contribution to the work of the Royal Society was acknowledged when the new wing was called "Margaret Harper House". The new wing was designed by Gilbert Hughes, Architect, employing the fashionable Mediterranean style promoted by Professor Leslie Wilkinson. Hughes customized the style to best complement Greycliffe's Victorian Rustic Gothic style. In particular, the bathroom rotunda is a playful acknowledgement of Greycliffe's Gothic style. Margaret Harper House is located over the original Greycliffe access road which ran behind Greycliffe House.

In the 33 years that the Tresillian Home operated at Greycliffe, mothers and babies usually stayed 10-12 days, although premature babies stayed longer. Tresillian provided a support service to the many cottage hospitals in Sydney, as the major hospitals would not take referrals from another facility. They provided 24 hour care of their charges and achieved a good survival rate among their patients, based on the level of nursing care and attention provided.

The Tresillian home operated in Greycliffe House and Margaret Harper until October 1968.

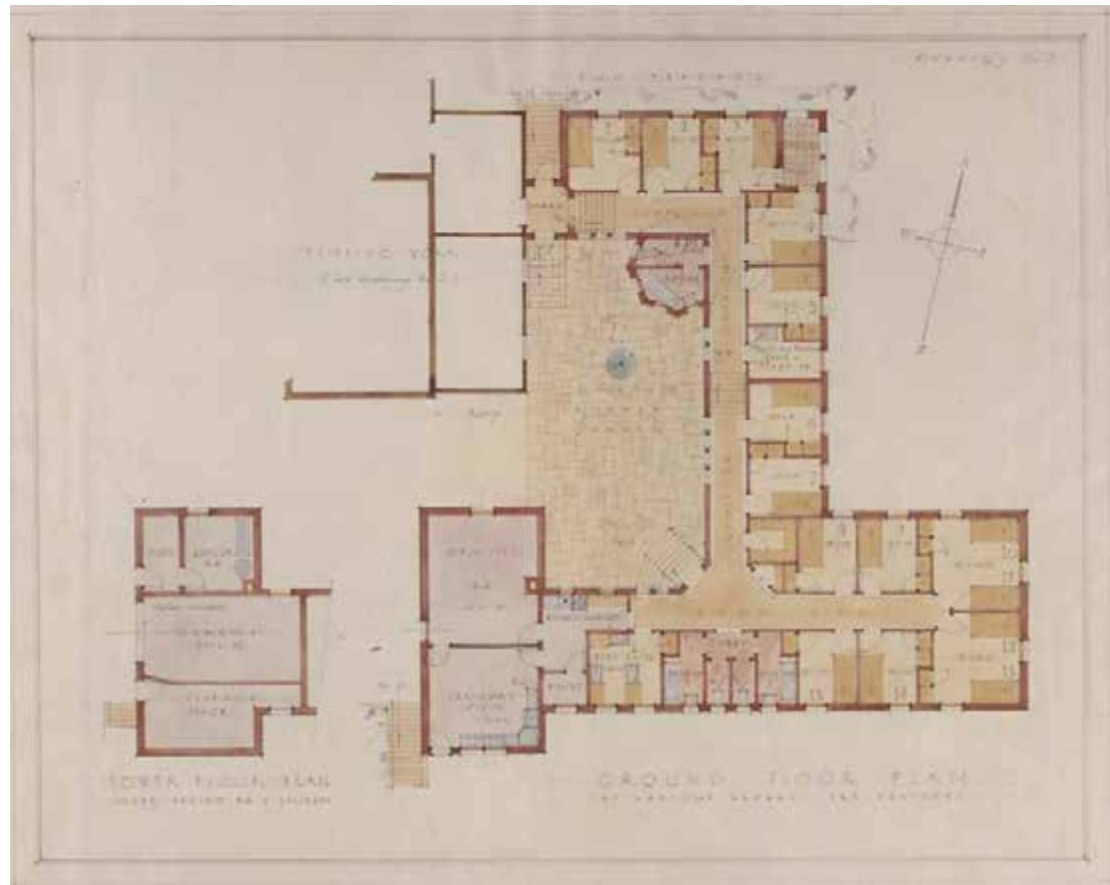
The Matron Kaibel garden was named after Matron Kaibel, who ran the Tresillian Mothercraft Home and Training School at Greycliffe House from 1935 until her retirement in 1952. The garden was constructed in the 1930s by Matron Kaibel herself with stone terraces and a sunken parterre garden.

In 1970, Nielsen Park was added to the Vacluse House Historic Site. Both sites were jointly administered by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Nielsen Park Trust. The future use of Margaret Harper House was discussed, with options either as a hospital, institution or training school, with Tresillian Society claiming compensation for the improvements to the site during their occupancy.

Under National Parks stewardship, Greycliffe was restored to its nineteenth century planning and the demolition of Margaret Harper was considered to restore the earlier setting. However, demolition for historic accuracy was considered to be extravagant, and the building was refurbished as a ranger's residence with laboratories and work rooms to service the National Parks archaeological section. The alterations were undertaken in 1975. A number of the mother's rooms were demolished to open up areas for larger family spaces and the demolition and alterations to the rooms between Margaret Harper and Greycliffe severed the link between Margaret Harper and Greycliffe.

The Matron Kaibel garden was restored by the National Parks and Wildlife service in 2002.

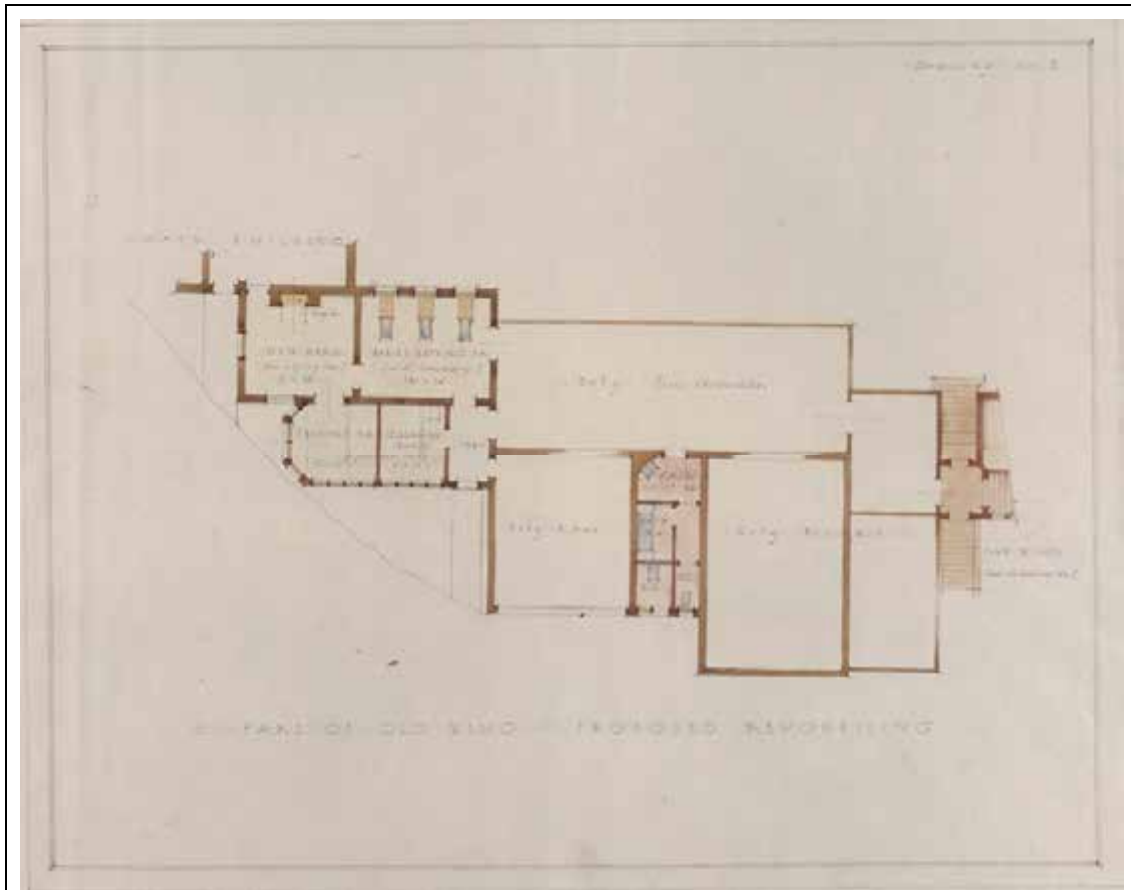
**Historical Images and plans**



*The c1938 Architect's Plans. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:*



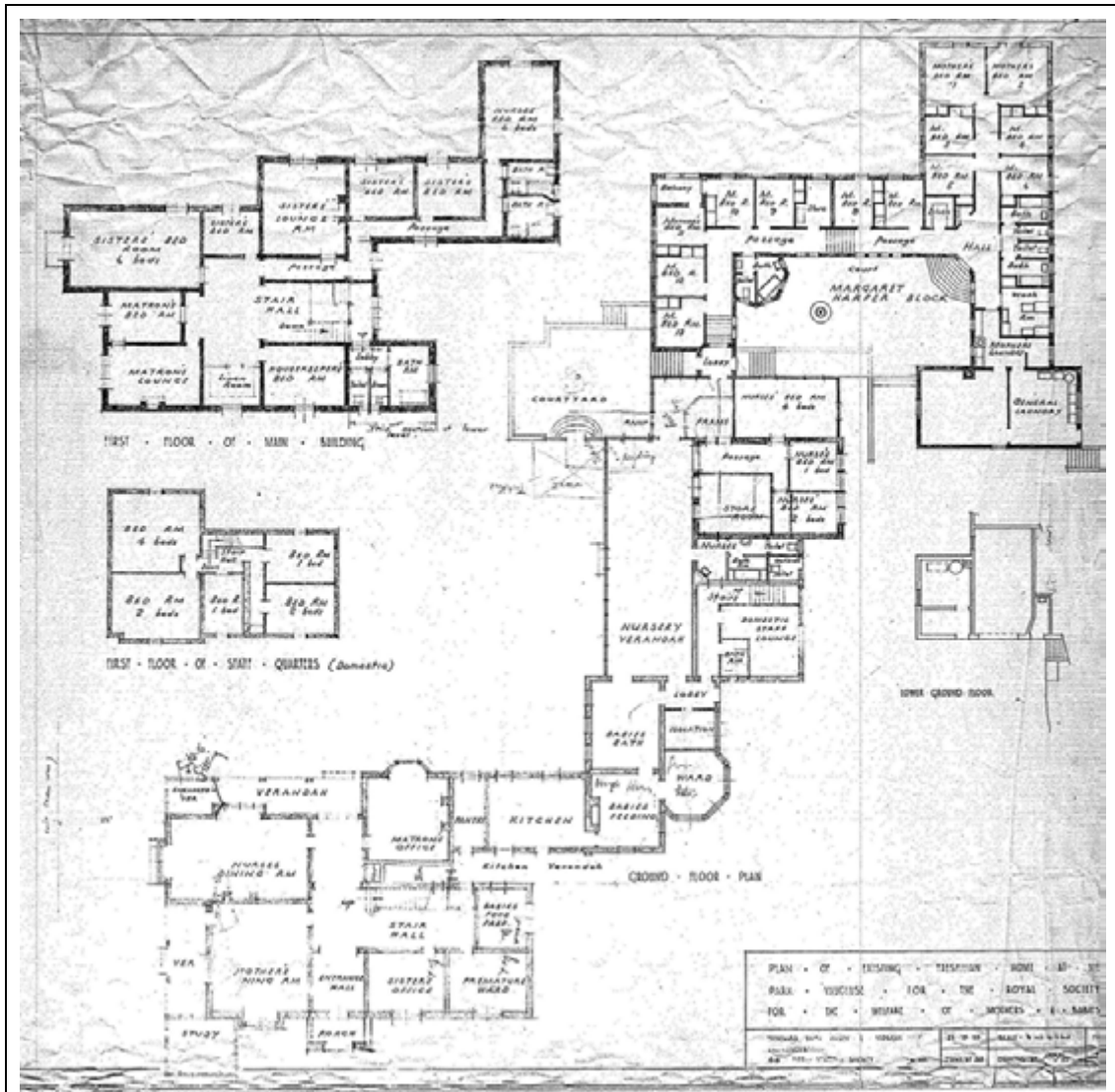
*The c1938 Architect's Elevations. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:*



*The c1938 Architect's Plans of the alterations in the Greycliffe kitchen wing and the stables between Margaret Harper house and Greycliffe. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:*



*Part of the 1943 aerial showing Margaret Harper House (centre) and the Matron Kaibel gardens to the north (upper) and the service area to the south (lower). Source: [www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au):*



The 1950s plan of Greycliffe as the Tresillian home and Margaret Harper identifying the functions at the time. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:

## Description

Margaret Harper House is a single storey building with a tall basement wrapping around three sides of a stone paved courtyard. It is designed in the Inter War Mediterranean style championed by Professor Leslie Wilkinson and characterised by informal composition, simple massing and fenestration and hints of classical detail. Although the design has been referred to as Interwar Mediterranean style, its Tudor Gothic Revival roof, chimneys and wall details with its colonial Georgian windows and Spanish colonial arcades possibly suggest the emphasis may be towards Neo Colonial Gothic Revival style. The building is roofed with Marseille pattern, unglazed terracotta tiles on simple timber framed gables and is finished with narrow eaves. External walls are rendered and painted and simple rendered label mouldings shield the windows. The windows are multi paned timber double hung with both arched and square headed lintels. The doors are mostly painted timber. The front door is accessed by an impressive ceremonial curved stone stair. The architect provided the building with a playful gesture to the Gothic design of Greycliffe in the rotunda fronting the stone courtyard housing the bathroom.

The original layout of the building was simple with a basic arrangement of north and south wings. The rotunda bathroom serviced the north wing. Toilets and bathrooms were also provided in the south

wing. The mother's rooms were arranged along a passage which wrapped around the stone paved courtyard, a short hall in the south wing allowed access to the eastern-most mothers' rooms. A laundry and drying area occupied the western rooms of the south wing. The original interior was finished with easily maintained and hygienic finishes with painted fibrous plaster coved ceilings, painted plaster walls and tiled floors on suspended concrete slabs. The mothers' rooms appear to have suspended timber floors. Doors have large single panels and the architraves and skirtings are typical Inter War style; with a simple splayed.

The exterior has had some alterations, mostly dating from the works in 1975, to convert the building into a ranger's residence. The most intact elevations front the courtyard. A sizable masonry terrace with dog-legged stairs which leads to the garden was added to the east, servicing the new family rooms. A timber pergola was erected to shade the terrace. Large openings, fitted with unsympathetic siding aluminium doors, were formed in the east and north walls to light the 1975 family spaces and the bedroom on the south elevation. At the same time the arched windows facing the courtyard may have been upgraded with aluminium framed sashes. The interior was altered in 1975. The range of mothers rooms on the east side of the north wing and the north side of the south wing were removed to create a family room, dining room and the kitchen which sits awkwardly in the centre of the house. The former baby bath room, at the western end of the south wing, was gutted and a storage area created. The mothers' rooms in the north west were converted into a master bedroom suite with ensuite and robe. Other works included filling in door openings and the north western stairs were filled in. Currently, the intact 1939 rooms consist of the former laundry and drying rooms on the west, the toilets on the south wall, the three mothers' rooms in the north east corner and the rotunda bathroom.

The building is in reasonable to good condition and is mostly weather-tight. However, the 1970s alterations are tired and there is an endemic problem with ceiling mould on the coved sections which has to be cleaned off regularly.

A lawn fronts the north of the building, which was the former sun terrace. A landscape area with surviving stone paths and evidence of former garden beds and a sunken parterre is located to the north east of the building. The garden was originally constructed by Matron Kaibel who ran the Tresillian Mothercraft Home and Training School at Greycliffe House from 1935 until her retirement in 1950. The garden stone bordered beds and paths were restored in 2002 under the supervision of Rob Newton of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The garden restoration also involved the removal of some trees "to restore the marine villa link of the view from the house to the water, and from the harbour to the house" (Sydney Morning Herald article "Garden Returns to Glory" by Geraldine O'Brien, November 22, 2002).

The area to the east of the building falls steeply and is overgrown. A paved hardstand is located to the west at the rear of Greycliffe House. A large lawn area also sits to the south of the building, possibly a former service area, which now houses the clothes line, accessed from the former laundry through a lobby formed out of the former south east bathroom.

**Photographs**



*View of Margaret Harper from the north west separated from Greycliffe's east wing. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of Margaret Harper from the north with the former sun terrace in the foreground now planted out. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the Bathroom rotunda and the west end of the north wing from the stone courtyard. Source: Author October 2010.*





*Looking north west to the south elevation and the lawn showing the 1975 opening with its sliding doors and the surviving original windows and the smaller bathroom windows. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the west end of Margaret Harper with the west elevation of the former laundry prominent in the view and walled stone courtyard in the centre background. Source: Author October 2010.*



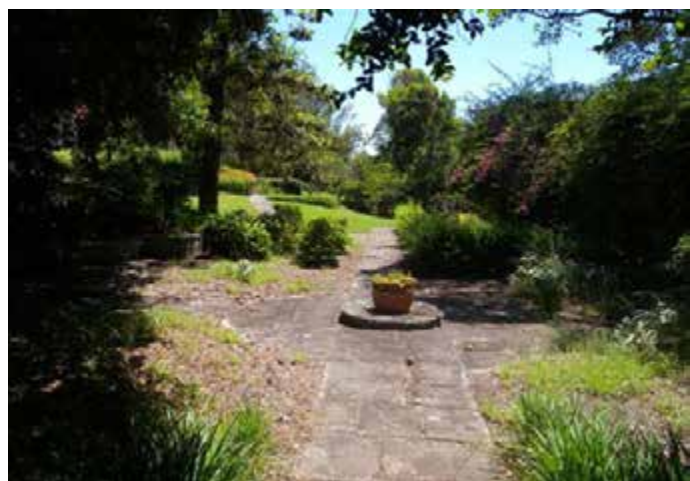
*Looking west along the 1975 terrace towards the east wall of the building showing the larger openings formed in 1975. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the dog-legged stairs leading from the 1975 terrace. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the east elevation from the base of the drop off through the dense vegetation. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the Matron Kaibel gardens to the north east of the building. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the living room converted from the mothers' rooms looking north west through the 1975 sliding doors to the terrace. Source: Author October 2010.*



*Looking west in the living room. Source: Author October 2010.*



*Looking north west to the elbow of the north and south wings with the 1975 kitchen on the left and the family room beyond, all converted from the mothers' rooms. Source: Author October 2010.*



*The family room/ breakfast room converted from the mothers' rooms looking north east. Author October 2010.*



*Looking south in the former Drying Room. Source: Author October 2010.*



*Looking into the former box room next to the former laundry. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the bedroom, former 1975 recreation room (with the sink unit in the alcove) converted from the Tresillian room which housed baby baths. Source: Author October 2010.*



*One of the surviving toilets in the south wing. Source: Author October 2010.*



*Looking south along the passage in the north wing. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the sink and part of the bath in the bathroom in the rotunda. Source: Author October 2010.*



*The surviving cupboard located in the former mothers' room in the north east corner of the north wing. Source: Author October 2010*

### Summary Statement of Significance

The Margaret Harper Building demonstrates high social significance at a state level. It was constructed by the Tresillian Society as the third centre in the state, particularly as the design of the new wing demonstrated an innovative concept in the treatment of young babies. Previously, the need for a close bond between mother and child in the early weeks of life had not been appreciated. At the new house mothers could stay for the duration of the child's confinement. The building, although modified, still retains, in its design and some surviving planning, the close link to the Tresillian Society embodying its healthcare aims.

The building has high historical significance for its close association the Tresillian Society, and its namesake, the Society's medical director Dr Margaret Harper. Dr. Margaret Harper achievement included being the honorary physician at the first Baby Health Centre opened at Alexandria in 1914, a council-member of the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies and medical director of its Mothercraft Homes and Training Schools (Tresillian) in 1919-49, a founder of the Rachel Forster Hospital for Women and Children in 1922 and first honorary doctor to care for new-born babies at the Royal Hospital in 1926. She was a foundation fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 1939, and an honorary member of the Australian Paediatric Association from 1952 (*Source: Australian Dictionary of Biography*).

The building demonstrates high aesthetic significance as a confident and accomplished work in the Inter-war Mediterranean style by the architect Gilbert Hughes, responding to a specific brief from the Society. The house responds well to its awkward location and the slope. It was designed to be viewed in the round alongside the Gothic massing of Greycliffe House (now screened by recent regrowth) and its stepped form addresses a difficult stepped site over the former Greycliffe Estate road. This is a rare bespoke building designed for the Tresillian Society, embodying the influential Society's philosophies at the time. The surviving intact rooms are important as they present the simplicity and small scale of the original building, demonstrating the intent of the Tresillian Society for caring for mothers and babies in the period 1939-1968 in a home-like environment.

The Margaret Harper building was never closely linked to the rest of Nielsen Park, either in its use as a mother and babies home or in its planning, inward looking and focused on the stone courtyard. The building is now more isolated from the Park, particularly now that the link to Greycliffe and the stairs providing access to the former north sun terrace and the Matron Kaibel garden to the north-east have been removed.

The Matron Kaibel Garden is of historical significance for its association with its builder/designer Matron

Kaibel and with the functioning of Margaret Harper House by the Tresillian Society. Matron Kaibel established the garden to provide a refuge for the patients but also to supply flowers and vegetables to the home. These links are not currently clear as the connection to Margaret Harper Building is obscured by dense regrowth and the loss of the northern stairs.

The garden has some aesthetic quality as a landscape item. However, the appearance of the simple stone work is somewhat diminished by the current meagre planting. The stone beds need to display more appropriate plants in order to fully interpret their historic use and original presentation.

<b>Significance</b>	Exceptional	High	Moderate	Low	Intrusive
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<b>Condition</b>	Good	Fair	Poor	Ruinous	Site Only
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<b>Archaeological Potential</b>	High	Moderate	Low
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<b>Integrity</b>	High	Moderate	Low
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<b>Risk Assessment</b>		
<b>Structural</b>	Low	<b>Risk Assessment Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fire risk to the building arises from possible electrical fault and bushfire.</li> <li>- Low wind loading risk due to protected location.</li> <li>- Low risk to visitors with current use as staff accommodation. Risk may increase if building is open to public access without upgrades to structure and services. Some trip and fall hazards exist internally and with no ramps and handrails.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire</b>	Moderate	
<b>Wind Loading</b>	Low	
<b>Visitor risk &amp; safety</b>	Low	
<b>Other</b>		

<b>Management</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Additions and alterations (in accordance with Gradings recommendations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generally retain surviving 1939 exterior and rooms.</li> <li>- Exterior additions may be possible to the south and the southern sections of the east and west elevations.</li> <li>- Removal of 1975 alterations has merit to support new uses.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Uses</b>	
Short stay accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building capable of adaption for this use.</li> <li>- Carparking and access requires resolution.</li> <li>- Provides public access.</li> <li>- Provides independent funding source.</li> </ul>
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continues current use.</li> <li>- Upgrade required, but less upgrade required than for public use or short stay accommodation.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carparking and access requires resolution.</li> <li>- Restricts public access.</li> <li>- Limits access to external funding sources such as short stay accommodation income.</li> </ul>
Commercial or office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building capable of adaption for this use.</li> <li>- Office use takes advantage of the isolated and private location within the Park.</li> <li>- Can utilise surviving 1939 planning for offices and support rooms</li> <li>- Planning suggests possible combination of office and staff or visitor accommodation.</li> </ul>
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both the 1975 and 1939 planning not easily suited to function use.</li> <li>- Good public access and interpretation provided.</li> <li>- Difficult and possibly prohibitive service access. Substantial and potentially costly upgrade required to improve services and address safety and access issues.</li> <li>- Provides independent funding source.</li> </ul>
<b>Source of the Information</b>	
<b>Study/Report:</b> Nielsen Park Conservation Management Plan review	
<b>Year:</b> 2010	
<b>Item inspected by:</b> Ed Beebe Paul Davies Pty Ltd	<b>Form completed by:</b> Ed Beebe
<b>Date:</b> 8 January 2013	<b>Issue:</b> C
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Australian Dictionary of Biography (On-line).</li> <li>- Forsite.EDAW. Nielsen Park Conservation Plan Stage 1, Landscape Analysis. 1992.</li> <li>- Ledingham, Hensby Oxley &amp; Ptnrs. Hydraulic Report of Nielsen Park. May 1991.</li> <li>- Schwager Brooks &amp; Ptnrs. Nielsen Park Historical Analysis. 1992</li> </ul>

<b>Site Analysis Plan</b>
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<i>Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd, March 2011</i>
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## Nielsen Park CMP Review – Building Information Sheet

<b>Name</b>	Gardener's Cottage	<b>Location</b>	Nielsen Park
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<b>Current Use</b>	Staff accommodation	<b>Former Use</b>	Estate and staff accommodation
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**Historical Summary**

The 1853 Trigonometrical survey map of Sydney shows a small building to the east of Greycliffe House which appears to be the first documented evidence of the cottage. The first written description referring to the cottage is an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald on 3rd February 1857 for the lease of Greycliffe House. The advertisement includes “a gardener's house, with four rooms and attached to it an excellent vegetable garden”.

The 1911 survey of the Greycliffe Estate (to establish the property to be transferred to the Nielsen Park Trust) shows the cottage built against the southern boundary of the Greycliffe Estate to the east of the main house and to the west of a wide shallow water course. Extensive gardens are shown which had been established to the east and north of the Greycliffe Estate. The gardens included a vegetable garden, orchard and paddock. As there was an early connecting road from Greycliffe House to Vaucluse House past the cottage, it is possible that the cottage may have been intended as a combined gate lodge and worker's cottage. Its original layout as two 'one up, one down' dwellings with separate staircases also suggests this use. However, it is not known if the cottage was ever occupied as two dwellings. As it was referred to as a gardener's house in the 1857 advertisement, it is most likely that it was a single occupancy.

The designer of the cottage is not recorded. However, its similarity to Greycliffe infers that the cottage was designed by J F Hilly. Inspiration for the building may have been a pattern book design for “two farm labourers' in separate dwellings within the one building” included on p184 of an Encyclopaedia of

Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture, 1839, by John Claudius Loudon.

Origins of any secondary structures or outbuildings associated with the cottage in the 1850s have not been confirmed. However, the 1911 survey shows there was a windmill to the north, a WC to the west, stone storehouse and fowl yards some distance to the south, outside the 6 acre property transferred to John and Fanny Reeve on the property retained by WC Wentworth. The buildings were included in the property resumed for the Park but there is no evidence how they were disposed of. Stone footings to the west of the cottage may be remains of the WC noted in the 1911 survey.

Later work to the cottage included a timber framed skillion extension built of re-cycled materials constructed against the east side of the cottage. The timber framed skillion addition may have been added in the 1890s, which may have coincided with the reconstruction of Greycliffe House after the 1897 fire (Earle D 1985). However, a description of the cottage in an auction advertisement of 6th September, 1879 states, "A large area of land of very rich soil, is laid out as a fruit and vegetable garden, in it is a gardener's cottage stone built, containing 4 rooms and laundry. The skillion may be the laundry referred to in the notice. The extension was demolished in the late 1990s due to extensive borer damage.

The use of the cottage from August 1911, after the Estate was resumed for the establishment of the public recreation ground and the sub-division of Greycliffe for the Lady Edeline Hospital in 1914, has not been confirmed as the Trust minutes do not record how the cottage was used. However, the enlarging of the original Estate to the south resulted in the removal of the boundary and fences and the cottage was able to expand to the south. Some improvements were undertaken early in the Trust's stewardship of the Park including the provision of the north verandah and south addition and the wash house against the west wall, now demolished. Interestingly, the 1911 survey does not show the north or south additions and suggests that the cottage at the time only comprised the 1850s four rooms and the eastern timber framed laundry/garage. Research and secondary sources to date suggest that the north verandah may have been added when Greycliffe House was rebuilt after 1897 or more likely, as it does not appear on the 1911 survey, was added after 1912. The design of the south addition indicates that it was constructed by the Trust after 1912 at the same time as the Kiosk. In 1922 a report was sent to the Under-Secretary of Lands indicating that the cottage had been connected to the sewer and that sanitary fittings had been installed.

Mid 20<sup>th</sup> C plans indicate that the current fenced compound may have been established by the Trust possibly as early as in the 1920s. The age of the current perimeter fence has not been confirmed. A photograph of the cottage shows a metal railing fence similar to the fences surviving in the grounds of Vaucluse House. However, reading NPWS correspondence suggest that it may be up to 50 years old as its condition was such that it needed attention in the 1970s.

Under NPWS ownership since 1968 the cottage has served as quarters for park rangers. In 1984 it was damaged internally by fire and repairs were undertaken. In the 1990s the interior of the south addition was refurbished to remedy damage by borers and to bring the toilet facilities out of the deteriorating wash house which was demolished. The east garage was also demolished. The north verandah was partially rebuilt as it was affected by borers.

**Historical Images and plans**

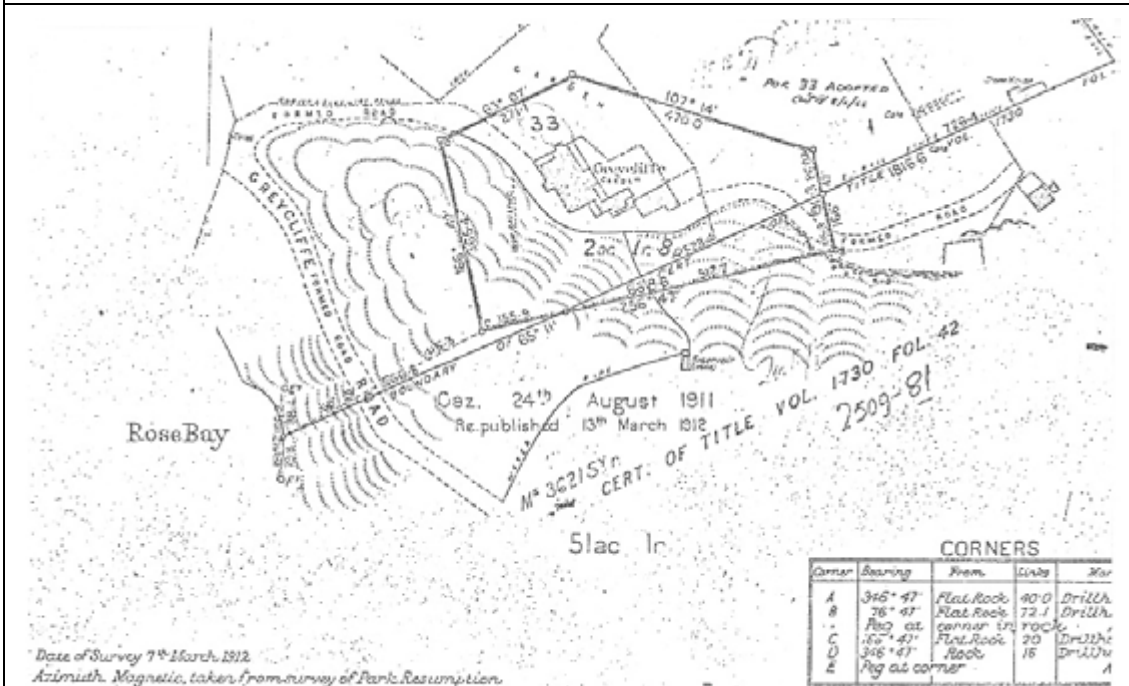
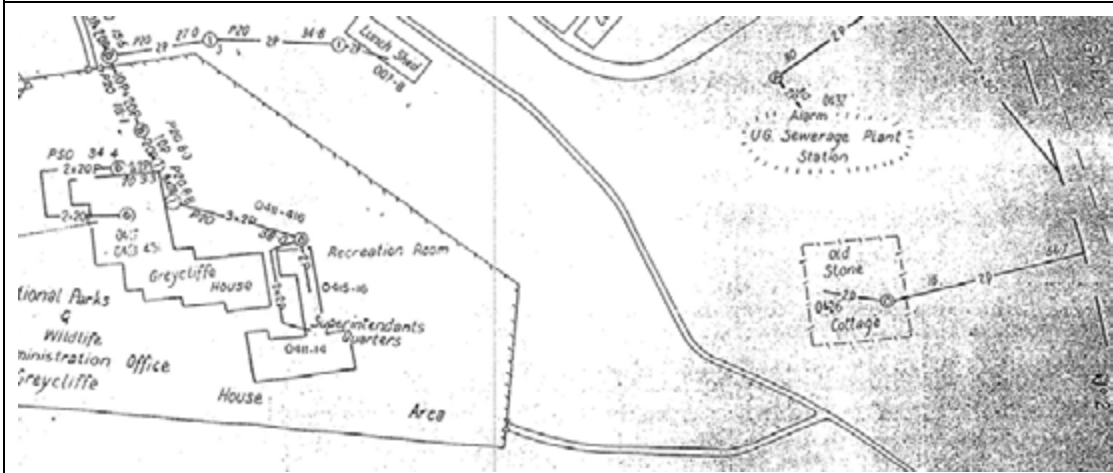


FIG.20 DETAIL PLAN OF GREYCLIFFE PROPERTY IN 1912

Part of the 1912 Survey (undertaken to establish the property to be transferred to the Nielsen Park Trust) of the Greycliffe Estate showing the location of the cottage to the east of Greycliffe house, against the boundary wall, and its fenced enclosure. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:



Part of the late 1960s Hydro Survey of the Park showing the Cottage's fenced garden. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992:



*Part of 1927 birds eye view of the park from the north west showing the cottage in the centre and its garden. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners, 1992:*



*The Gardener's Cottage from the north west in 1916, showing the fenced Estate enclosure. Source State Library NSW Ref d1\_18009r.*



*Looking north west in 1916 along the former water course towards Shark Bay in the distance with the Gardener's Cottage in the far left. The garden to the east of the cottage is just visible and the open un-vegetated ground in the former water course is used as pasture. Source State Library NSW Ref GPO ref d1\_18010*



*Part of the 1943 aerial showing the cottage (right) east of Greycliffe (left). The current fenced garden is not shown and a gabled building is located to the west of the cottage . Source: [www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au):*



*View of the cottage in 1992 showing the wash house attached to the west wall and the small verandah extension now demolished. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992.*



*View of the rear of the cottage in 1992 showing the condition of the extension originally constructed by the Park Trust and later altered and filled in. Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992.*



*View in 1992 showing the timber extension on the east used as a garage now demolished. : Source: Schwager Brooks and Partners 1992.*

### Description

The Gardener's Cottage is a small five roomed sandstone building designed in the picturesque Victorian Gothic Revival style. The 1850s cottage comprises a main floor level with two rooms aligned with the ground at the rear and two half attic bedrooms. The front of the cottage is elevated above the ground. The 1850s cottage is narrow, one room deep with its formal elevation facing the beach. The 1850s cottage is an "L" shaped configuration with a roughly north south main room on the west and a smaller east west orientated second room. The same arrangement is replicated in the attic.

Both the west and the east elevations feature chimneys with prominent weatherings at mid point as well as at the point where the wide lower stack originally became a tall narrow single flue turned 45 degrees in the Tudor manner. The upper narrow stack was demolished and the stumps of both chimney feature awkwardly placed pots which are poorly paraged.

The 1850s cottage features a steep Marseille pattern terracotta tiled roof, coursed rubble stone walls and copper rainwater goods. The existing late 19<sup>th</sup> C terracotta tiles may have replaced timber shingles (the roof space has not been inspected to confirm this) which would have matched Greycliffe House where the shingles exacerbated the extent of the fire damage in 1897. The 1850s painted timber windows are generally small with casement sashes.

A narrow timber framed verandah featuring a panelled and arched balustrade, timber boarded floor on rusticated stone base is located within the "L" on the front elevation. A low single storey hipped roof timber framed rear addition is attached to the original 1850s west wall. The addition is low to avoid the small mid flight windows lighting the two 1850s stairs. The rear addition features short stone piers supporting timber posts and lightweight infill with boarded cladding, flat cement sheeting and timber casement windows.

The interior of the 1860s cottage has stone walls (originally unfinished), suspended timber floors and some boarded ceilings. The interior stone walls have been screeded in parts with cement or plaster (drummy in areas) and are now painted. The timber floors are all carpeted. The 1850s floors have the characteristic bounce to indicate timber structure except in G2 where the floor is oddly firm. Internal joinery is painted timber. The 1850s work is simple and rustic with ledged and braced (not framed) boarded doors, double beaded architraves and simply moulded skirtings. The connecting doors on the ground and first floors between the original 1850s dwellings differ and feature typical late Victorian or early Edwardian panelled leaves and moulded architraves suggesting they are later.

The south addition has drummy quarry tiles on the kitchen floor, smaller tiles in the shower, flat cement sheeted walls and timber boarded ceilings (now badly affected by mould). Painted timber casements light the kitchen and the shower. The floor of the rear addition is almost aligned to the external concrete path and does not effectively exclude ground water from the building.

The general condition of the cottage is poor. Parts of the roof tiles are slumping, sections of the stonework are pointed with cement and a number of service accretions disfigure the exterior. The building is affected by extensive damp. There is falling damp from the failing lead abutment flashings,



the choked gutters (principally from the Camphor Laurel), the narrow valley gutter and the poorly flashed junction of the cottage wall and the south addition roof. Rising damp mainly affects the east of the building due to the wet ground from the nearby watercourse and the general damp conditions maintained by shade from the Camphor Laurel. There is penetrating damp within the cottage noticeable on the ceilings in the kitchen and shower. There is particular concern about the on-going ground water flow from uphill during storm events which is not re-directed around the cottage. There is over 30 years of correspondence recording the problem and its effects on the cottage. However, the problem has not been addressed and ground water flows into the rear rooms and under the cottage saturating the subsoil.

The current cottage garden is enclosed by a painted timber spaced picket fence decorated with acorn tops. There are gates on the south and a single gate on the north boundary. Fence panels are stepped and each consists of posts, two rails and precast narrow concrete plinth between the posts (which is similar to some of the path kerbs elsewhere in the Park). The fence is in reasonable condition with some deterioration at junctions, tops and ends of the grain. Some posts are propped.

The garden is predominantly open with a deep lawn area in the front. There are a pair of tall mature gums in the south west (affecting the nearby concrete paths and building foundations), a couple of midsized frangipanis, a palm in front of the north verandah and some non-indigenous bushes.

There are narrow double gates on the south boundary but there is no formal driveway to the cottage or paved carpark area. Occupants' cars are parked informally on the slope to the south of the cottage.

#### Photographs



*View of the cottage from the north west.  
Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the rear of the cottage from the south with the 1990s refurbished rear extension. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the side of the cottage from the east with the large Camphor Laurel just outside the fenced garden. Source: Author October 2010.*



*Far view of the cottage from the north east showing the full extent of the current fenced area with the former watercourse, not piped underground, in the foreground. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of room G2 looking towards the front door and the verandah beyond. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of Room G1 looking to the south and the kitchen beyond with the surviving 1850s stair and cupboard to the right of the door. Source: Author October 2010.*





*Detailed view of the front window in G1 showing the simple rustic casement and frame in the deep reveal. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of the narrow kitchen looking west to the 1990s laundry alcove and the shower and WC beyond. Source: Author October 2010.*



*View of Room 1.1 looking to the north. Source: Author October 2010.*

	<p><i>View of the south end of Room 1.1 showing the top of the 1850s stairs and the half landing window. Source: Author October 2010.</i></p>
	<p><i>View of Room 1.2 looking to the north and the front dormer. Source: Author October 2010.</i></p>

<p><b>Summary Statement of Significance</b></p>
<p>The Gardener's Cottage demonstrates exceptional historical significance at state level as the only surviving estate building at Greycliffe from the 19th C Estate. The cottage originally formed an intrinsic part of the operation of the Estate as accommodation for estate workers, including the gardener and possibly gatekeeper, and has a close association with the Estate's working garden. Under the Trust's and NPWS stewardship, the cottage has had a less prominent role in the public use of Nielsen Park as the focus of the recreational landscape moved to the beach. Its design (possibly by J F Hilly inspired by the work of John Claudius Loudon) reflects and is closely associated with the picturesque Gothic of Greycliffe House (an understanding of the association is presently obscured by the dense vegetation screen between the buildings).</p> <p>The cottage is an important picturesque element (an architectural folly) in the former Estate landscape despite its original prominence now diminished by the gradual increase in bushland in the Park. The additions to the original cottage constructed by the Trust in the 1910s have added interesting layers, demonstrating how the original small building had to be adapted and extended to remain useful to the workings of the Park.</p> <p>The cottage and its surrounds have the potential to reveal rare and important aspects about the 19th C Estate and its operations, not recorded in documentary evidence, including the location of the former south boundary fence, nearby outbuildings and the layout of the working garden. However, it is likely that few archaeological remains associated with the recreational landscape under the Trust are likely, as the focus for upgrade and construction moved nearer the beach and the headlands after the initial work to construct the south addition and the north verandah.</p>

<b>Significance</b>	Exceptional	High	Moderate	Low	Intrusive
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<b>Condition</b>	Good	Fair	Poor	Ruinous	Site Only
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<b>Archaeological Potential</b>	High for pre 1911	Moderate	Low for post 1911
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<b>Integrity</b>	High	Moderate	Low
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<b>Risk Assessment</b>		
<b>Structural</b>	Moderate	<b>Risk Assessment Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is some risk for some structural failure, particular associated with foundations (noting subsoil condition) and roof timbers.</li> <li>- Fire risk to the cottage arises from possible electrical fault and bushfire</li> <li>- Low wind loading risk due to protected location.</li> <li>- Low risk to visitors with current use as staff accommodation. Risk may increase if building open to public access without upgrades to structure and services. Some trip and fall hazards exist internally and with deteriorated paths and no ramps and handrails.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire</b>	Moderate	
<b>Wind Loading</b>	Low	
<b>Visitor risk &amp; safety</b>	Low	
<b>Other</b>		

<b>Management</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Additions and alterations (in accordance with Gradings recommendations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alterations to the 1850s cottage should be limited to retaining earlier fabric or minor upgrades.</li> <li>- Additions should be limited to the rear either on the current footprint or possibly as a connected but separate pavilion.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Uses</b>	
Short stay accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discontinues current use for staff but retains use as accommodation.</li> <li>- Substantial and potentially costly upgrade required to improve accommodation, services and address safety and access issues.</li> <li>- Poor carparking and access needs to be resolved.</li> <li>- Private outdoor area would be required.</li> <li>- Could copy the success of accommodation provided at Constables and Green Point Cottages.</li> <li>- Provides better public access and enjoyment of interior.</li> <li>- Provides independent funding source.</li> </ul>
Staff accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continues current use.</li> <li>- Upgrade required, but less upgrade required than for public use or accommodation.</li> <li>- Current unsightly car accommodation and access needs to be better resolved.</li> <li>- Some privacy screening would be advantageous to provide a</li> </ul>

	<p>private outdoor area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restricts public access and enjoyment of the interior of the asset.</li> <li>- Limits access to external funding sources such as accommodation income.</li> </ul>
Interpretation centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited upgrade required.</li> <li>- Good public access and interpretation provided.</li> <li>- Security measures and equal access would be required.</li> <li>- Little need for carparking and a private outdoor space.</li> <li>- Limits access to external funding sources such as accommodation income.</li> </ul>
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The building interior not suited to functions as the spaces are too small and restrictive. The garden could be used with house as backdrop or adjunct.</li> </ul>
Commercial or office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use is appropriate</li> <li>- Limited upgrade required.</li> </ul>

<b>Source of the Information</b>			
<b>Study/Report:</b> Nielsen Park Conservation Management Plan review			<b>Year:</b> 2011
<b>Item inspected by:</b> Ed Beebe Paul Davies Pty Ltd	<b>Form completed by:</b> Ed Beebe	<b>Date:</b> 8 January 2013	<b>Issue:</b> C
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forsite.EDAW. Nielsen Park Conservation Plan Stage 1, Landscape Analysis. 1992.</li> <li>- Ledingham, Hensby Oxley &amp; Ptnrs. Hydraulic Report of Nielsen Park. May 1991.</li> <li>- Schwager Brooks &amp; Ptnrs. Nielsen Park Historical Analysis. 1992</li> <li>- Cave J et al. Conservation Management Plan for The Gardener's Cottage at Nielsen Park Masters of Heritage Conservation 1996.</li> </ul>		

<b>Site Analysis Plan</b>
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<i>Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd, March 2011</i>
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Office of  
Environment  
& Heritage



NSW National Parks  
and Wildlife Service



## Nielsen Park CMP Review – Building Information Sheet

<b>Name</b>	Shark Beach Main Dressing Pavilion	<b>Location</b>	Nielsen Park
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<b>Current Use</b>	Dressing Pavilion	<b>Former Use</b>	Dressing Pavilion
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### Historical Summary

In 1905, the Harbour Foreshores Vigilance Committee was formed with the objective of securing foreshore land for public benefit. The Committee, and its spokesman W.A. Notting, Honorary Secretary, campaigned via press articles urging the government to acquire foreshore land around the harbour, particularly Vaucluse, for public parks (for example SMH 1 October 1908, p. 6 article “Our Foreshores” by W.A. Notting).

In 1909, the NSW government acceded to public pressure and resumed Vaucluse House and 28 acres. The Greycliffe Estate was not included in the first resumption. The public praised the resumption of part of the foreshore but pressed for the acquisition of Greycliffe. In 1911, the Greycliffe Estate was resumed. Nielsen Park was created in 1912, administered by the Nielsen Park Trust,

In late 1931, the Trust approached the Government Architect, Evan Smith, through the Director of Public Works, to prepare plans for a new dressing pavilion at Shark Beach in Nielsen Park. The choice for the siting of the pavilion proved to be a controversial issue. The initial location, recommended by the Government Architect, was immediately behind the promenade, on the crest of the hill. This position was described by the Government Architect as being both convenient to the beach and sufficiently elevated, to prevent overlooking into the dressing yards. A process of public consultation to finalise the siting of the pavilion, drew heavy criticism from various members of the Municipality, public



bodies as well as members of the Trust, with most of the respondents suggesting that the Pavilion be sited further back from the beach in order to protect the row of trees along the beachfront.

The final decision for the siting of the Pavilion was left to the Minister for Lands. The Minister recommended that the building be moved further back from the hill by about 30 to 40 feet, to nestle into the low lying area behind Notting Parade, a decision that was favourable with the majority of the Trust members.

During the Depression, relief workers were employed to carry out many of the Park improvements. As funding was derived from the Unemployment Relief Work scheme, the loan required all persons involved in the construction of the pavilion be taken from the unemployed ranks. A tender dated July 1932 for brickwork to the western portion of the Main Dressing Pavilion indicates that construction proceeded in sections, in response to the organisation of the unemployment relief work packages.

In October 1932, the Works Supervisor was able to report to the Trust that the construction of the Pavilion was complete. The official opening ceremony was held on the same day, in time for the new swimming season. Overall, although there was some initial criticism of the entrance fee, the construction of the Pavilion was regarded as successful, particularly in relation to its siting and access to the beach. Additional trees were planted around the Pavilion, to further screen the view from the beach and to replace those trees that had been lost as a result of construction.

The Main Dressing Pavilion functioned as the sole point of entry for patrons to the shark-netted section of the beach from the time of its opening. The central section of the beach was fenced off by the Nielsen Park Trust, and patrons who wished to swim there, entered through the Pavilion, paid an entry fee at the turnstiles and proceeded through the tunnel to the beach. The entry fee - which was one penny at that time - provided funding for the Nielsen Park Trust, and contributed to the repayment costs for the construction of the Pavilion. The foyer of the Pavilion was also a popular meeting place for patrons prior to entering the beach area

In 1935 a concrete apron was constructed by relief workers around the base of the Main Dressing Pavilion in an attempt to reduce the erosion which was occurring due to pedestrian traffic. At the same time, Notting Parade was resurfaced and the bypass road was reconstructed in August 1936. It is assumed that the avenue of Hills Figs, which define the edge of the Main Dressing Pavilion Precinct, were planted upon the completion of these works. The Hills Figs were planted to replace earlier Pines.

In 1944, a proposal was submitted to the Nielsen Park Trust to increase the accommodation of the Pavilion by infilling the low level pathways on the beach side of the building. This proposal reflected the continued popularity of the Park as a whole, and the increased demand for dressing facilities. The plans for these alterations, prepared by Samuel Lipson and Kaad, Architects, Sydney, included 60 new lockers each for the men and women, and required alterations to the exit courtyard and tunnel entry. These proposed alterations, however, were never undertaken, presumably due to the continuation of World War II.

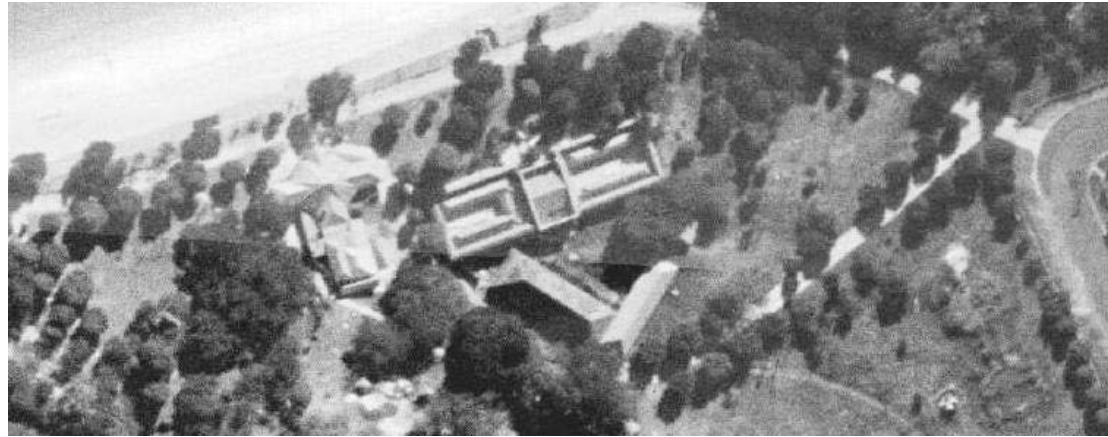
By the late 1940's, the Nielsen Park Trust was experiencing severe financial and managerial difficulties. In May 1950, Nielsen Park and Vacluse Park were combined and proclaimed a public park. The Trust attempted to maintain Nielsen Park much as it was during the 1930s. However, the remaining finances barely covered the ongoing maintenance of the structures such as the Main Dressing Pavilion. Nevertheless, the use of the park and its facilities by the public was still considerable during the 1950s. The decision to cancel the bus service from Central Railway station to Nielsen Park in 1959 reduced the patronage. The ferry service was discontinued in the early 1960s.

When the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) took over the management of the Park in the 1970s, substantial changes took place in the Main Dressing Pavilion Precinct. These were prompted by the NPWS decision to provide free entry to the beach area which necessitated the removal of the many elements. In 1975, the wire mesh fence which had enclosed the beach and the ticket machines and turnstiles were removed allowing free access to the whole beach for the first time since 1932. At the same time the tunnel and central area of the Pavilion, which had provided a direct link from the Pavilion to the beach for the previous 43 years, were boarded up. The reason for the closure of the tunnel appears to have been the appearance of cracks and minor movement in the concrete roof of the tunnel. The closure of the tunnel prompted public outcry from regular users of Park and residents of the local area. Also with the closure of the tunnel, it had become uneconomical to employ a locker attendant at the Pavilion and reports of theft and vandalism increased. The lockers and many of the cubicles within the Main Dressing Pavilion were removed in 1975.

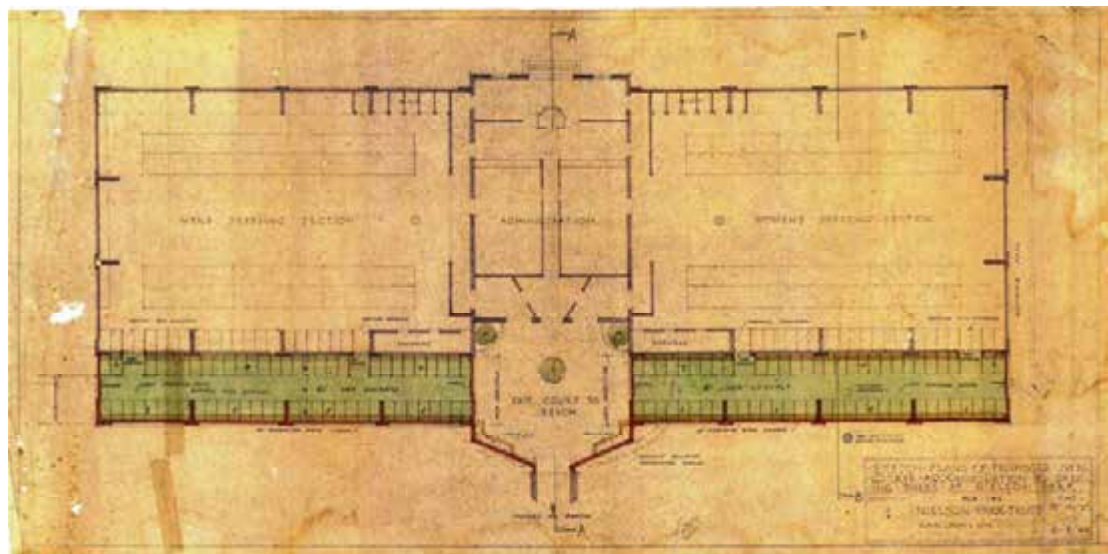
In 2002-2003 structural and restoration works were carried out within the Dressing Pavilion and in 2004 the tunnel running beneath Notting Parade linking the Pavilion with the beach was restored and re-opened.

*Summarised from Bennett L et al. Conservation Management Plan The Main Dressing Pavilion Nielsen Park. June 1996*

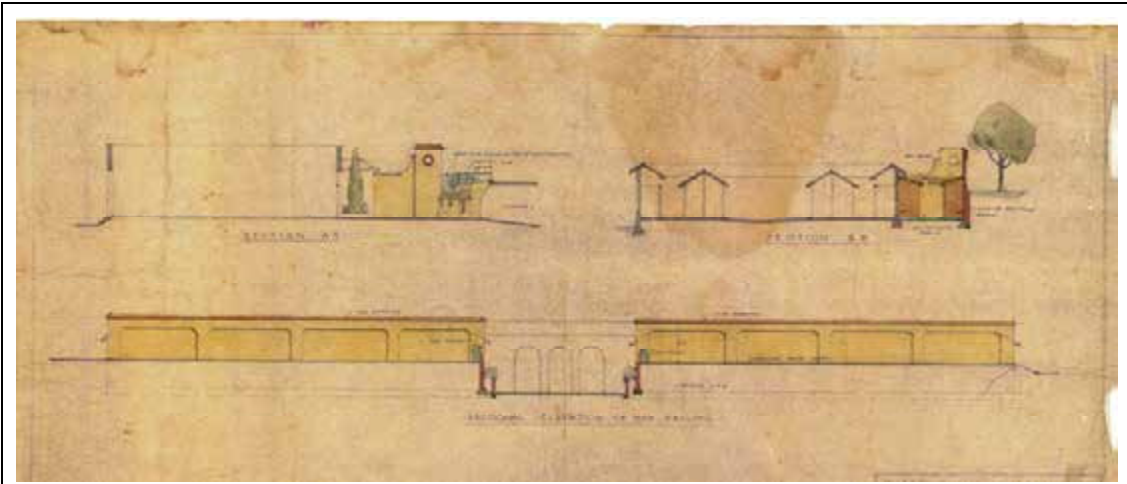
### Historical Images and plans



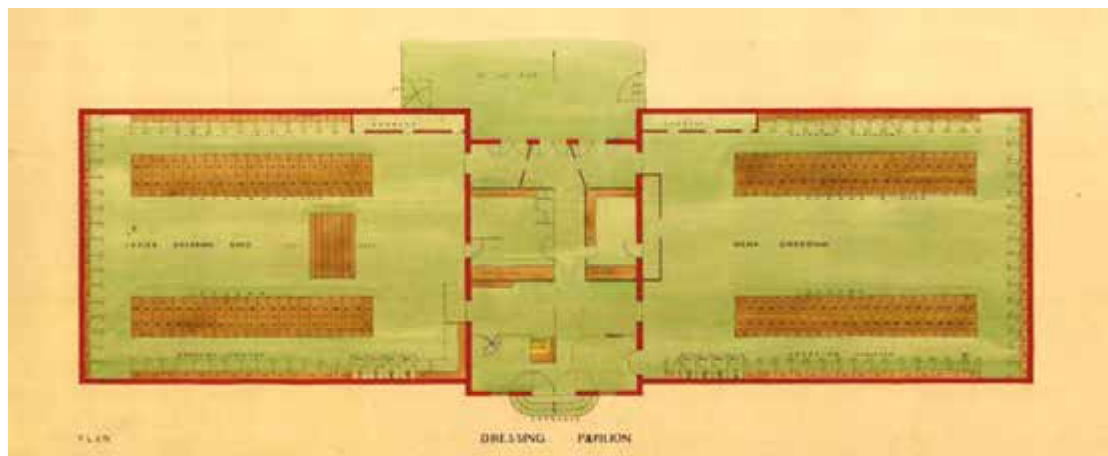
*Part of the 1943 aerial showing Dressing pavilion (centre). Source: [www.lands.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lands.nsw.gov.au):*



*Plan showing proposed additional lockers by Samuel Lipson and Kaad, Architects, Sydney 1944 also identifying the arrangement of the existing accommodation. Source: Archives, Parks and Wildlife Group, Greycliffe House:*



Sections and elevations showing proposed additional lockers by Samuel Lipson and Kaad, Architects, Sydney 1944 also identifying the arrangement of the existing accommodation. Source: Archives, Parks and Wildlife Group, Greycliffe House:



Measured Plan of the Pavilion by the Government Architect, August 1951. Source: Archives, Parks and Wildlife Group, Greycliffe House:



Measured Elevation of the Pavilion by the Government Architect, August 1951. Source: Archives, Parks and Wildlife Group, Greycliffe House:

## Description

The Pavilion is designed in a restrained Inter-War Mediterranean style, which was popular in the 1930s for public beach side structures including the Bondi and Balmoral Beach Pavilions. The building is sited in the low lying area behind the fore-dune of Shark Beach. It is screened by mature plantings from the water's edge and the central park area. The building consists of single storey compounds enclosed by masonry walls around a central entry, flanked on either side by open courtyards. The central area houses the former foyer, ticket and counter areas with large doors giving access from the park through the foyer to a sunken area in front of the tunnel which leads to Shark Beach. The flanking areas house the Women's and Men's dressing ringed by timber framed dressing alcoves and toilets. The building is floored with concrete. Originally the interiors of the dressing areas were fitted with timber changing lockers within free standing timber framed pavilions and against the perimeter walls. The lockers were removed but most of the roofs still stand. The central area accommodated the timber framed administration and money collection enclosures.

Externally, the building's presentation is austere. The external wall is constructed of cavity brick with a slurry rendered finish (a light wet roughcast mix with paint finish). The elevations are divided into recessed panels with shouldererd flat arches. The taller park entrance on the south projects and features a tall centre door flanked by double hung windows. Doors and windows only exist within the central area; there are no openings on the dressing courtyards' exterior walls. The brick walls support timber framed terracotta tiled roofs on the perimeter dressing areas with a parapeted central area. The centre area is roofed but the building's courtyards are open to the sky, drainage is through sloping floors which drain to sumps.

There are few external alterations to the building. However, the interior has been altered with the removal of the fences and turnstiles in the foyer and the dressing cubicles in the courtyards.

The repairs and conservation work in the early 2000s improved the condition of the building which is reasonable acknowledging the aggressive local conditions and its open air design

*Summarised from Bennett L et al. Conservation Management Plan The Main Dressing Pavilion Nielsen Park. June 1996*

**Photographs**






View of the park entrance to the Pavilion from the south. Source: Author January 2011.



Oblique view of the park entrance to the Pavilion showing the flanking walls. Source: Author January 2011



View of the entrance to the Pavilion from Shark Bay from the north. Source: Author January 2011.

	<p>View of the forecourt, the retaining wall and seat to the east of the tunnel to the beach. Source: Author January 2011.</p>
	<p>View from the north of the tunnel entrance from the beach. Source: Author January 2011</p>
	<p>Far view of the north west corner of the Pavilion showing the lowering of the building into the ground and the trees planted between the building and the beach (to the right). Source: Author January 2011.</p>



Far view of the Pavilion from the north east with Notting Parade separating the building from the beach. Source: Author January 2011.



View of the south part of the entry area looking to the north with the caged counter areas and the entrance to the beach in the distance. Source: Author January 2011.



The Men's changing area looking west. Source: Author January 2011.

	<p>The west end of the Men's changing area looking south. Source: Author January 2011.</p>
	<p>The Woman's changing area looking west. Source: Author January 2011.</p>
	<p>The woman's changing area looking north west. Source: Author January 2011.</p>

**Summary Statement of Significance**

The Dressing Pavilion is of state significance. The building along with Notting Parade, the memorial and the beach foreshore form a precinct of exceptional social significance for their close association the Harbour Foreshores Vigilance Committee and its spokesman W.A. Notting whose campaign in the early twentieth century secured open foreshore land for public benefit. The pavilion is of high historical significance for its association with the most popular period of recreational use in Nielsen Park – the inter-war period - and the desire of the Park Trust to provide commodious and up- to date facilities to encourage the general public to travel to the Park and enjoy its facilities.

The Dressing Pavilion is one of a small number of Inter-War period bathing pavilions in Sydney. These include:



- the Bondi Beach Pavilion built in 1929 to a design by Robertson & Marks architects – this is the largest beach pavilion in Sydney;
- the Bathers' Pavilion at Balmoral Beach built in the early 1920s by Mosman Council and then upgraded in 1929 to a grand Inter-war Classical style building
- the Brighton Le Sands Beach Pavilion.
- The Manly Dressing Pavilion, associated with harbour-side swimming (now Manly Ocean World)
- Three beach pavilions in the Cronulla area: at Shelley Beach (South Cronulla); Oak Park, Cronulla (1939); and Gunnamatta Park, Cronulla

While many of the other Pavilions in Sydney have had their original functions changed to varying extents, the Nielsen Park dressing pavilion remains almost unchanged and provides the same facilities as was originally intended

The building appears in the Park as a restrained and handsome walled enclosure, well executed in the inter-War Mediterranean style. Interestingly, unlike most of its contemporaries, the building is not prominent in the views from the beach. This reflects the original agreement to site it behind the promenade and keep the trees that lined the frontal dune. The sunken building with its paths, tunnel, steps, walls and garden beds provides a unique sense of space and formal entry to the beach through the beach's frontal dune. .

*Summarised and added to from Bennett L et al. Conservation Management Plan The Main Dressing Pavilion Nielsen Park. June 1996*

<b>Significance</b>	Exceptional	High	Moderate	Low	Intrusive
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<b>Condition</b>	Good	Fair	Poor	Ruinous	Site Only
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<b>Archaeological Potential</b>	High	Moderate	Low
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<b>Integrity</b>	High	Moderate	Low
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<b>Risk Assessment</b>		
<b>Structural</b>	Low	<b>Risk Assessment Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible structural risk due to deteriorated fabric</li> <li>- Possible fire risk to the building arises from possible electrical fault</li> <li>- Low wind loading risk due to protected location.</li> <li>- Some trip and fall hazards exist internally and with unmarked single steps and no ramps and handrails.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire</b>	Low	
<b>Wind Loading</b>	Low	
<b>Visitor risk &amp; safety</b>	Moderate	
<b>Other</b>		

<b>Management</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Additions and alterations (in	- Minor alterations are possible to facilitate on-going use provided

accordance with Gradings recommendations).	they do not impact on the use of the building as change rooms and the building retains its current overall form, extent and detail. - Additions are not appropriate.
<b>Potential Uses</b>	
Dressing Shed	- Supports significance and existing use and access. - Little upgrade required other than regular maintenance
Functions	- Could provide unique and secure areas for occasional low impact functions where equipment is brought in and taken away after. - Service access and delivery would need to be carefully managed. - Carparking may be inadequate for functions involving larger groups of people. - Some upgrade required to improve water and electrical services and address safety and access issues. - Other uses would need to ensure that the principal use as change rooms was not removed.
Retail/Commercial	- Potential to use central covered area for beach related retail, hire or commercial use provided access is maintained and significant fabric and layout is retained. This would be an appropriate reflection of the original function as a fee collection point.

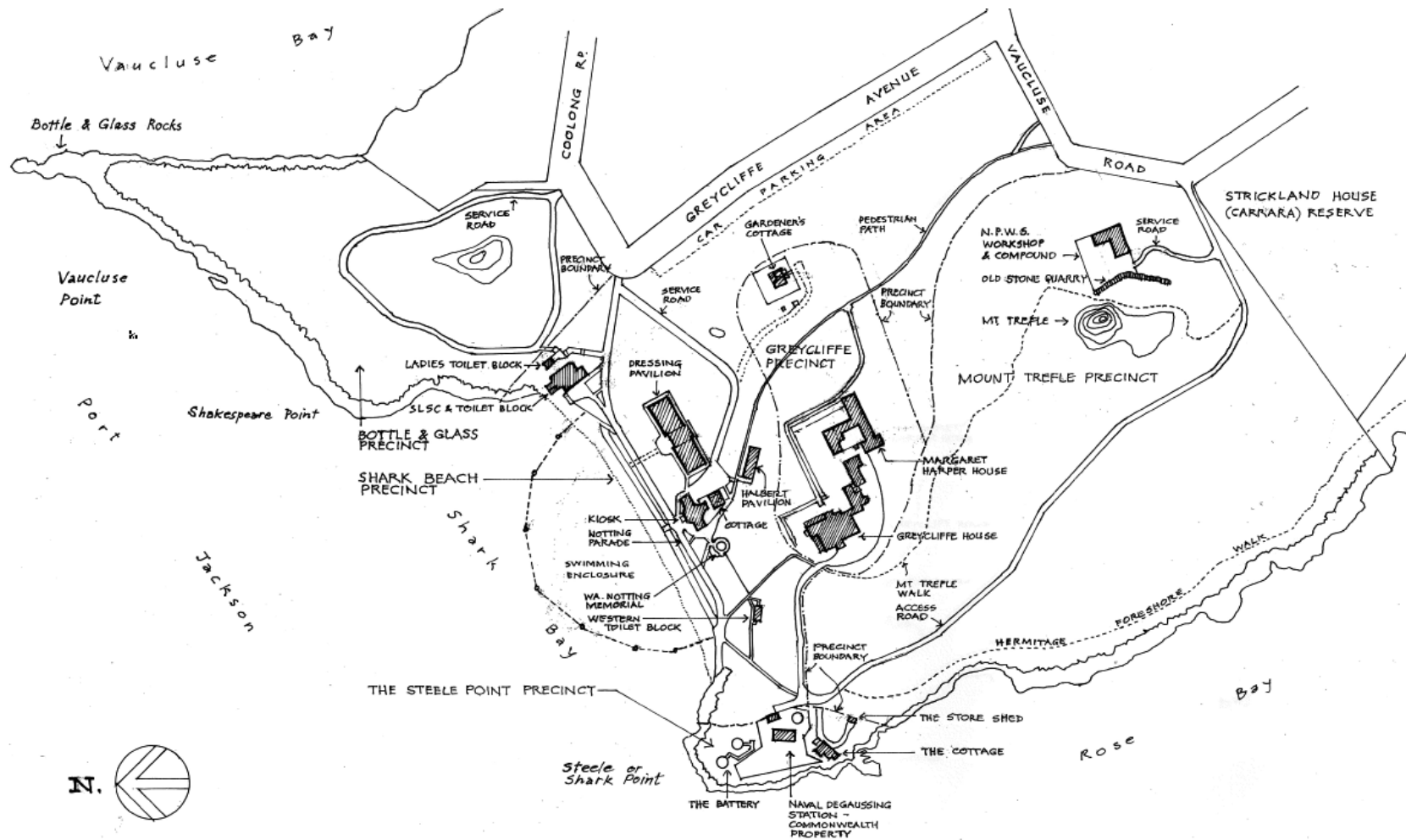
<b>Source of the Information</b>			
<b>Study/Report:</b> Nielsen Park Conservation Management Plan review			<b>Year:</b> 2011
<b>Item inspected by:</b> Ed Beebe Paul Davies Pty Ltd	<b>Form completed by:</b> Ed Beebe	<b>Date:</b> 8 January 2013	<b>Issue:</b> C
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accor Consultants. Plans and Specifications for new concrete floors. April 2001</li> <li>- Bennett L et al. Conservation Management Plan The Main Dressing Pavilion Nielsen Park. June 1996</li> <li>- Forsite.EDAW. Nielsen Park Conservation Plan Stage 1, Landscape Analysis. 1992.</li> <li>- Ledingham, Hensby Oxley &amp; Ptnrs. Hydraulic Report of Nielsen Park. May 1991.</li> <li>- Schwager Brooks &amp; Ptnrs. Nielsen Park Historical Analysis. 1992</li> </ul>		

**Site Analysis Plan *is this supposed to be included??***

*Ground and First Floors. Source: Paul Davies Pty Ltd, March 2011*

## 11.0 Appendix 2

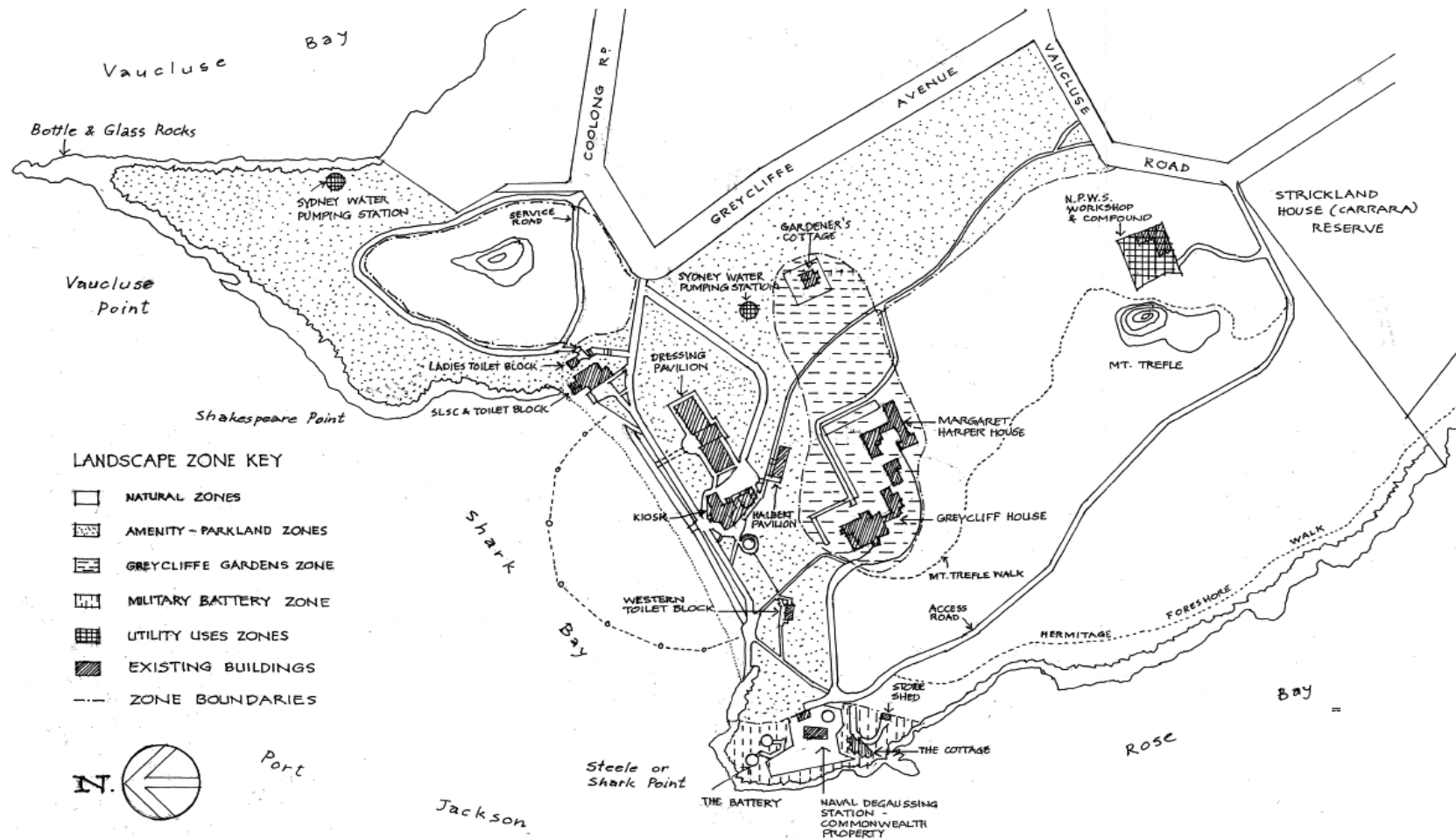
### 11.1 Plan of Precincts



*Nielsen Park Plan of Precincts from Sheedy D. 2004*

## 12.0 Appendix 3

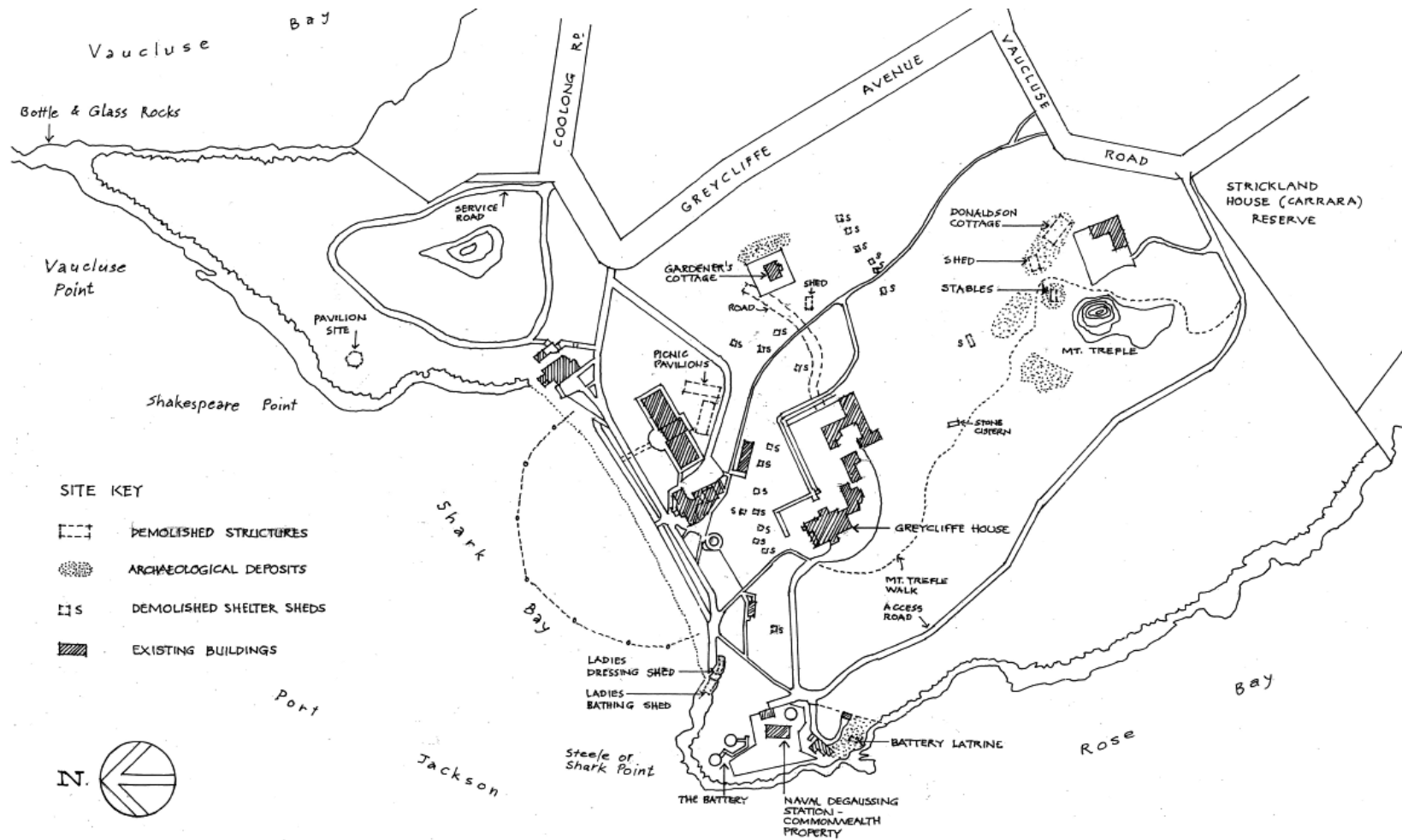
### 12.1 Landscape Management Zones



*Nielsen Park Landscape Management Zones from Sheedy D. 2004*

## 13.0 Appendix 4

### 13.1 Historical Archaeological Sites



*Nielsen Park Historical Archaeological Sites from Sheedy D. 2004*

## **14.0 Appendix 5**

### 14.1 Aboriginal Heritage Study

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HERITAGE MANAGEMENT  
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ARCHAEOLOGISTS & HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

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**AHMS**

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E: [Jamesw@arksolutions.com.au](mailto:Jamesw@arksolutions.com.au)

10<sup>th</sup> June. 2004

Robert Newton (Ranger)  
NPWS Harbour South Area  
PO BOX 461  
ROSE BAY, NSW, 2029.

**Re: Aboriginal Heritage Study for Nielsen Park CMP.**

Dear Mr Newton,

This letter report presents the results of a preliminary Aboriginal heritage study of Nielsen Park, Vaucluse, NSW. The study was commissioned by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) as part of a conservation management plan (CMP) for Nielsen Park.

**Objectives**

The objectives of the Aboriginal heritage study, as set out in the brief supplied by NPWS, were to:

1. Identify known Aboriginal sites within Nielsen Park; and
2. Assess the condition, integrity and significance of known Aboriginal sites within Nielsen Park.

The purpose of the study described in this report is to document the known Aboriginal heritage resource in Nielsen Park and provide NPWS with recommendations regarding on-going best-practice management and conservation of Aboriginal heritage sites under their care.

At present there are no proposals to develop or disturb Aboriginal sites within Nielsen Park. Accordingly, this report presents general recommendations for the future management of the Aboriginal sites to ensure that any future activities within the park comply with provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NP & W Act 1974) that protect Aboriginal heritage.

**Approach and Scope**

The study was undertaken in accordance the approach and scope of work set out below.

**a) Data Review**

Previous reports, surveys and studies in the locality were reviewed to determine the significance of Aboriginal sites within the study area. Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) search results and reports on previous Aboriginal heritage investigations at Nielsen Park were provided by NPWS for our review.



#### b) Aboriginal Community Consultation

NPWS undertook consultation with the local Aboriginal community regarding the CMP. The study area falls within the boundary of the *La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council* (LLALC). NPWS invited LLALC to participate in fieldwork and provide a written report to document the Aboriginal cultural significance of Nielsen Park and in particular, the cultural significance of known sites. LLALC were unable to participate in the fieldwork, however NPWS have indicated they will attempt to arrange a site visit by LLALC in the future. The views of the Aboriginal community regarding the cultural significance and on-going management of Aboriginal sites within Nielsen Park will be a matter for NPWS.

#### c) Field Investigation

Known Aboriginal sites within Nielsen Park were located and recorded for the purpose of assessing their condition, integrity and significance. The AHIMS database search results were used to locate the sites.

#### d) Letter Report

This report includes:

- A summary of the archaeological context of the study area and AHIMS search results, including a brief review of previous Aboriginal heritage studies within the park;
- Description and record of the field survey results;
- Assessment of the condition and integrity of known sites in Nielsen Park.
- An assessment of the significance of known sites in Nielsen Park. This assessment was made in accordance with NPWS guidelines; and
- Management options for Aboriginal sites in Nielsen Park.

Attachments to this report include a list of references cited (Attachment A) and plans showing the locations of Aboriginal sites in Nielsen Park (Attachment B).

#### **Aboriginal Historical Context**

The *Darug* people are the traditional owners of the Vaucluse area. The *Darug* are part of a language group that originally extended from the eastern suburbs of Sydney as far south as La Perouse, west as far as Bathurst and north as far as the mouth of the Hawkesbury River<sup>1</sup>. The *Darug* comprised a number of sub-groups often referred to as 'clans', based upon religious and/or totemic associations to country. Ethnohistoric sources indicate the clan that occupied the modern day Vaucluse area were the *Gadigal*<sup>2</sup> people. It is reported that the *Gadigal* occupied the south side of Sydney harbour from South Head to Cockle Bay<sup>3</sup>.

The traditional life of the *Darug* was broken through the course of the early 19th century. The impact of smallpox and influenza decimated the Aboriginal population, with individual epidemics killing large numbers of people. Early white settlement of traditional hunting lands deprived Aboriginal groups of sources of food and access to camping and ceremonial sites. This forced individuals to either relocate into the

<sup>1</sup>Eades, D.K. 1976; and see also Tindale's Tribal Boundaries Map:  
([www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/tindale/HDMS/tindaletribes/daruk.htm](http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/tindale/HDMS/tindaletribes/daruk.htm))

<sup>2</sup>Attenbrow 2002: 23-25

<sup>3</sup>ibid

potentially hostile lands of neighbouring Aboriginal groups, partially integrate into colonial society as fringe dwellers or to resist. Resistance by Aboriginal groups was often met with retaliatory action by white settlers and the colonial administration. A combination of these factors led to the demise of traditional lifestyles and a decrease in the Aboriginal population.

By studying accounts of early settlers, we can reconstruct aspects of the *Darug* lifestyle. The subsistence and economy of Aboriginal groups depended largely on the environment in which they lived. While coastal groups exploited marine and estuarine resources, hinterland groups relied on freshwater and terrestrial animals and plants. A distinction between the two lifestyles is clearly made in early European accounts. During a trip along the Hawkesbury-Nepean during 1791, Watkin Tench wrote that:

*'[hinterland people] depend but little on fish, as the river yields only mullets, and that their principal support is derived from small animals which they kill, and some roots (a species of wild yam chiefly) which they dig out of the earth'.*

In contrast, Collins wrote that for coastal people:

*'Fish is their chief support...the woods, exclusive of the animals which they occasionally find in their neighbourhood, afford them but little sustenance; a few berries, the yam and fern root, the flowers of the different Banksia, and at times some honey, make up the whole vegetable catalogue'*

Tench also noted the importance of marine foods in the economy of coastal groups. According to Tench, the task of fishing was divided between husband and wife, the woman using a hook and line and the man using a fish gig (spear)<sup>4</sup>. Bark canoes were often used by both men and women for fishing and fires were commonly placed in the middle of these canoes. When fish were scarce or the weather was foul, coastal groups turned their attention to gathering shellfish, hunting reptiles and small animals, digging fern roots, or gathering berries<sup>5</sup>.

Although early observations have provided much useful information about Aboriginal society at contact, archaeological investigations have shown clear deficiencies. Archaeological excavations on the NSW coast have clearly shown that coastal people exploited a wide range of hinterland terrestrial resources, which sits in contradiction to early records that coastal people were almost exclusively 'fishers' and inland people were 'hunters'. The contradiction is probably accounted for by the visibility of fishing and gathering activities on and near the water as opposed to the relative invisibility of hunting and foraging activities in the hinterland.

From the historical record it is clear that quite large populations were supported along the coast. One such account comes from Tench and is worth quoting in full:

*"on the north west arm of Botany Bay stands a village which contains more than a dozen houses and perhaps five times that number of people .....Governor Phillip, when on an excursion between the head of the harbour and that of Botany Bay, once fell in with a party which consisted of more than 300..."<sup>6</sup>.*

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<sup>4</sup>Tench, W 1996: pp.258-260

<sup>5</sup>Ibid

<sup>6</sup>Tench, W. 1996: 58

Aboriginal groups living in the Hawkesbury sandstone region made extensive use of the natural rock overhangs and caverns that are characteristic of the area. George Barrington observed that *"Those who build bark huts are very few compared to the whole. Generally speaking, they prefer the ready made habitations they find in the rocks"*.

Tench described how native huts were constructed by laying pieces of bark together in the form of an oven. The end result consisted of a low shelter, which was opened at one end and sufficient to accommodate one person lying down<sup>7</sup>. Tench<sup>8</sup> goes on to conclude that *"there is reason, however, to believe that they depend less on them (huts) for shelter than on the caverns with which the rocks abound"*.

Plant management practices that bear remarkable similarity to those reported in northern Australia were also conducted in the Sydney area. For instance, there is good evidence that the *Darug* practiced fire-stick farming in and around Sydney. When the first fleet arrived in Sydney, Captain John Hunter found an environment where:

*"the trees stand very wide of one another, and have no underwood; in short the woods ... resemble a deer park, as much as if they had been intended for such a purpose"* .

This is the classic result of Aboriginal firing of the landscape. Ethnographic evidence from Northern Australia suggests that the systematic burning of the landscape was carried out for a variety of reasons. 'Fire-stick farming' opened up access to land and created pockets of early succession vegetation that increased the amount of important plant foods. Early regrowth vegetation, particularly grasses, attracted animals, which in turn made them easier to hunt. Aboriginal firing of the landscape was an important tool in manipulating the environment to increase food sources.

Plant management was not just restricted to the manipulation of the environment though. Plant processing also figured prominently and enabled the *Darug* and other groups to broaden their range of food sources. Hunter provides an interesting account of trying to eat a poisonous yam (probably *Dioscorea bulbifera*) and getting violently sick. Hunter had seen Aborigines digging this same yam and concluded, *"They no doubt have some way of preparing these roots, before they can eat them"*.

According to George Washington Walker's journal of 1836, the Illawarra Aborigines processed *Zamia*. Walker recorded that the Aborigines:

*"either roast them, and pound them into a paste, steeping them in water to get rid of their acrid and hurtful properties, or get rid of these by longer period of steeping in water , so as to render them fit to be eaten in a raw state"*<sup>9</sup> .

Such plant management and processing practices were an important part of the economies of Aboriginal groups.

### **Regional Archaeological Context**

For the purposes of determining settlement and site location patterns, archaeologists examine regional and local trends in the distribution of known sites in relation to environment and topography. This provides evidence about economic and social

<sup>7</sup> Tench, W. 1996: .53

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Organ, M. 1990: 208

systems in the past and also assists archaeologists in predicting likely site types and locations in any given area.

In terms of regional archaeology, the study area falls within the Sydney Basin. Aboriginal occupation in the area dates back well into the Pleistocene period. This evidence comes from C14 dates retrieved from excavated sites such as Cranebrook Terrace (41,700 years before present) and Shaw's Creek K2 (14,700 years before present). Both of these sites are located near Penrith in western Sydney. The dating of Cranebrook Terrace is currently under review, so at this time Shaw's Creek is considered as the oldest reliable dating of Aboriginal occupation in the Sydney region<sup>10</sup>.

The vast majority of dated sites in the Sydney region are less than 5,000 years old (35 out of a total of 48 dated sites). It has been argued that this is a result of increased populations and 'intensification', during this period. The prevalence of sites dating to the last 5000 years may also be a result of the last significant rise in sea level, approximately 6000 years ago. The sea level rise would have submerged many of the older sites along the coastal fringe.

The archaeology of the Sydney region has been well documented through a large number of academic, amateur and impact assessment investigations over the past 30 years. Approximately 4,300 sites have been recorded and registered with the NPWS Sites Register for Sydney, reflecting both the wealth of archaeology in the region and the number of archaeological investigations undertaken.

The dominant site types in the Sydney region (in the 15 - 20 % frequency range) are rock shelters with midden deposit, rock shelters with art, rock art engravings and open artefact scatters<sup>11</sup>. Site types in the 5 - 15 % range, include rock shelters with artefacts, grinding grooves and open middens<sup>12</sup>.

The distribution, density and size of site types is largely dependent on environmental context. For instance, middens are found in close proximity to marine, estuarine and less often, freshwater bodies. Rock shelters are only found in areas of exposed sandstone escarpment and grinding grooves are found in areas of exposed flat beds of sandstone, particularly along creek lines.

A study of the regional archaeology of the Cumberland Plain by Dr Jim Kohen made a number of findings about site location patterns in western Sydney. The study demonstrated that proximity to water was an important factor in site patterning. Kohen showed that 65 % of open artefact scatter sites were located within 100 metres of permanent fresh water<sup>13</sup>. Only 8 % of sites were found more than 500 metres away from permanent fresh water. In short, open artefact scatters are larger, more complex and more densely clustered along permanent creek and river lines. Kohen's study also found that Silcrete (51 %) and Chert (34 %) are the most common raw materials used to manufacture stone artefacts<sup>14</sup>. Other raw materials include quartz, basalt, tuff and quartzite.

A consideration of sub-surface artefact scatters is also relevant because of the potential for areas with no surface evidence to contain buried sub-surface deposits. A 1997 study of the Cumberland Plain by McDonald<sup>15</sup> found that:

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<sup>10</sup> Attenbrow 2002: 20-21

<sup>11</sup> Attenbrow 2002: 49

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

<sup>13</sup> Kohen 1986: 229-275

<sup>14</sup> Kohen 1986: 280-281

<sup>15</sup> McDonald 1997

- 17 out of 61 excavated sites had no surface artefacts prior to excavation;
- the ratio of recorded surface to excavated material was 1:25; and
- none of the excavated sites could be properly characterised on the basis of surface evidence. In short, surface evidence (or the absence of surface evidence) does not necessarily indicate the potential, nature or density of sub-surface material.

The results of McDonald's study clearly highlight the limitations of surface survey in identifying archaeological deposits. The study also shows the importance of test excavation in establishing the nature and density of archaeological material on the Cumberland Plain.

Aboriginal stone artefacts are an important source of archaeological information because stone is preserved for long periods of time whereas organic materials such as bone, shell, wood and plant fibres decay. Stone artefacts provide valuable information about technology, economy, cultural change through time and settlement patterning. Stone has also been used for 'relative' dating of sites where direct methods such as Carbon dating cannot be applied. Based on direct dating of excavated sequences, an Eastern Regional Sequence has been developed and refined over the last 50 years. The Eastern Regional Sequence phases are as follows:

- Capertian – is distinguished by large uniface pebble tools, core tools, horsehoof cores, scrapers and hammerstones. Backed artefacts occasionally present. Generally dates to before 5,000 years before present (BP).
- Early Bondaian – Aspects of the Capertian assemblage continue, but backed artefacts and ground-edged artefacts increase. Artefacts during this period were predominantly made from fine-grained silicious stone such as silcrete and tuff. Generally dated from 5,000 BP to 2,800 BP.
- Middle Bondaian – Characterised by backed artefacts, particularly Bondi Points and ground-edged artefacts. Artefacts made from silicious materials, however quartz becomes more frequent. Generally dated from 2,800 BP to 1,600 BP.
- Late Bondaian – characterised by bipolar technology, elouras, ground-edged artefacts, bone and shell artefacts. Bondi points are virtually absent and artefacts are predominantly made from Quartz. Generally dated from 1,600 BP to contact.

Aboriginal art sites in the form of rock engravings, paintings, drawings and stencils on sandstone are found throughout the Sydney basin, particularly within Hawkesbury sandstone areas. The Aboriginal Sites Register shows that images have been recorded on approximately 840 open rock platforms and 875 rockshelters in the Sydney region<sup>16</sup>. On rock platforms, only engraved images are found. Within rockshelter sites, dry pigment drawings, paintings and engravings have been found. Pigment images were made with black charcoal, white pipeclay, red ochre or yellow ochre. Pigments were mixed with combinations of fat, ashes and blood to create a durable medium<sup>17</sup>. Engraved and pigment images in the Sydney region are predominantly from the 'Simple Figurative' style, which are typically outlined or infilled naturalistic depictions of animals, people, weapons, equipment and mythical figures<sup>18</sup>. Although the Aboriginal artwork has not been directly dated, recent comparative

<sup>16</sup>Attenbrow 2002: 146

<sup>17</sup>Campbell in Attenbrow 2002: 147

<sup>18</sup>Attenbrow 2002: 147

studies suggest that the 'Simple Figurative' style probably dates to the last 5,000 years<sup>19</sup>.

### **Local Archaeological Context**

A number of archaeological surveys have been undertaken in and adjacent to Nielsen Park during the last 20 years. A summary of these studies is provided below to provide a local archaeological context to the current investigation.

- **Tessa Corkhill 1990** - *Survey for Aboriginal Sites at Strickland House, Vacluse*<sup>20</sup>. Corkhill undertook a survey of 5 hectares of land comprising the Strickland House estate, just south of Nielsen Park. No new sites were found, however one previously recorded midden site was located and assessed. Corkhill's report recommended conservation of the site within the Hermitage Foreshore Reserve.
- **Elizabeth Rich 1983 & 1984** – *Hermitage Foreshore Reserve – Survey and Test Excavation of a Midden*<sup>21</sup>. Rich undertook a survey and limited test excavation within the Hermitage Foreshore Reserve. During a survey in December 1983 for a proposed walkway, Rich found 3 middens, axe grinding grooves and a potential archaeological deposit. An additional midden was found along the alignment of a proposed fence. In 1984 Rich carried out limited test excavation at the site which found a cultural sequence approx 600 mm thick and containing a variety of rock platform shell fish species.
- **Attenbrow 1992** – *Port Jackson Archaeological Project Stage II*<sup>22</sup>. As part of the Port Jackson Archaeological Project, Attenbrow carried out test excavation at two sites within Nielsen Park (45-6-1045 'Hydrofoil Cave' and 45-6-0560 'Mt Trefle Cave').

A total of six 50cm by 50cm squares were excavated within deposits at Mt Trefle Cave. Deposits ranged between 150 mm to 700 mm deep to natural sandstone bedrock. Stone artefacts, bone and shell artefacts, faunal remains, charcoal and ochre were recovered. Two bone unipoint artefacts and six pieces of worked shell (scrapers) were found. Stone artefacts were predominantly made from quartz with forms characteristic of the late Bondaian period (the last 1,600 years). A total of 48 species of shellfish were identified, the dominant species being hairy mussel, black nerita and oyster. Carbon dates on charcoal and shell recovered during excavation indicated early occupation approximately 1,200 years ago.

One square metre was excavated within deposits at Hydrofoil Cave, a small rockshelter on Bottle and Glass Point. Deposits were approximately 800 mm deep. Faunal remains, shell artefacts, stone artefacts and charcoal from an Aboriginal hearth were recovered. A fish hook file and 2 fish hooks were found, but very few stone artefacts. The deposits were highly disturbed by modern visitation and use. The dominant shell fish species represented were black nerita, limpet, heavy turban and hairy mussel. A shell sample was submitted for carbon dating, however the results had not been received at the time of writing.

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<sup>19</sup> Stanbury & Clegg 1990

<sup>20</sup> Corkhill 1990

<sup>21</sup> Rich 1983; Rich 1984

<sup>22</sup> Attenbrow 1992

### **AHIMS Site Register Search**

A search of the DEC *Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System* (AHIMS) for sites within Nielsen Park, returned a total of 14 sites. Site types and frequencies are as follows:

- Rock Shelter with Midden – 4
- Midden – 3
- Rock Shelter with Art – 3
- Rock Shelter with Deposit – 2
- Axe Grinding Groove / Rock Engraving – 1
- Rock Shelter with Art & Midden – 1

The AHIMS search results show a predominance of middens and a variety of rock shelter sites. Site patterning in Nielsen Park reflects the topographic, geological and environmental context of the area. Rock engravings, axe grinding grooves and rock shelters are all found in areas of sandstone outcropping. Midden sites are found in greatest number on the margins of the estuary.

### **Predictive Modelling**



The study area is located on a peninsula extending into the Sydney Harbour estuary. Based on local site patterning, areas on the margin of estuarine resource zones have a high potential for archaeological sites and objects because they were favourable locations for Aboriginal occupation and use. Areas that were also adjacent to sources of fresh water, such as the former drainage line that ran across the park emptying into the harbour at Shark Beach Bay, were particularly favourable locations.

The degree of archaeological potential is also affected by past land use history, landscape modification and erosion. In particular, areas further inland and away from park foreshore currently visited and used for public recreation, are likely to have undisturbed rockshelters, middens, open artefact scatters, art sites (including engravings) and grinding grooves. Foreshore areas that are heavily visited and used by the public are likely to include disturbed midden, art and rockshelter sites.

### **Results**

A survey of recorded sites was carried out on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004 by archaeologist Jim Wheeler and NPWS Ranger Robert Newton. The survey located six sites, comprising ten registered site numbers. Three sites could not be located due to inaccurate AMG coordinates on the site cards (45-6-2295, 45-6-2352, 45-6-1621).

The following section presents a summary of site description, condition, integrity, significance and management options in table format for each site. Plans of the study area showing site locations are included in Attachment B.

<b>Site Name:</b> Shark Beach Bay 1	<b>AHIMS #:</b> 45-6-1676 <b>Other AHIMS #:</b>
<b>Site Type(s):</b> Rock Shelter with Art	
<b>Site Location:</b> North-east end of Shark Beach, 3 metres north of boatshed. Site is a small rock cavity at the base of sandstone escarpment.	
<b>AHIMS Site Card Details:</b> The site was recorded by Martin Smith on 24/6/1985. Additional information was provided by William Newell on 11/9/1986. The site cards report two red ochre positive hand stencils in remarkably good condition. Charcoal lines and 'red marks' adjacent to the hand stencils are also noted.	
<p><b>Site Description:</b> The site is a small cavity in the base of sandstone escarpment at the north-eastern end of Shark Beach (<i>photo to left shows site location</i>).</p> <p>Two red ochre positive hand stencils are located on the rear wall of the stone cavity (<i>photo below right shows hand stencils</i>). The hands (both left and right) are approximately 15 cm wide and 14 cm long. No archaeological deposits are present within the site. The cavity floor is sandstone.</p>	
<p><b>Site Condition:</b> The site is in a poor condition. The stencils are quite faded, with the right hand almost impossible to distinguish from natural rock. It is clear the stencils have significantly deteriorated since the original site recordings in the mid 1980's.</p> <p>A combination of water dripping onto the art panel through cracks in the sandstone and the effects of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, have resulted in fading of the stencils.</p>	
<b>Site Significance:</b> The Aboriginal art at Shark Bay Beach 1 has scientific and public significance at a local level. The site is likely to have some Aboriginal cultural significance. The site is a locally rare survival of Aboriginal hand stencil art, however the poor condition of the art has affected site integrity. The site has some potential to demonstrate aspects of Aboriginal art to the public, however because the stencils are very faint, they are a poor representative example of stencil art. The size of the hands indicates the stencils may have been produced by children and therefore may have Aboriginal cultural significance in this regard.	
<b>Site Management:</b> The rate of deterioration since their original recording in the mid-1980's indicates the stencils will continue to fade. Practical measures to prevent deterioration of the art are likely to be cost prohibitive and unwarranted given the local significance of the art and the extent of current deterioration. Professional archival photographic recording of the art before any further deterioration occurs is probably the best management. As there are no indications of graffiti or damage caused by public visitation, no protective measures are warranted.	





<b>Site Name:</b> Shark Bay Shelter	<b>AHIMS #:</b> 45-6-1681 <b>Other AHIMS #:</b> 45-6-1609
<b>Site Type(s):</b> Rock Shelter with Midden and Art	
<b>Site Location:</b> Above north-east end of Shark Beach on an upper terrace of the sandstone escarpment overlooking the beach. Access to site is from a walking track above the escarpment. The site is a small rock overhang containing disturbed midden deposits.	
<b>AHIMS Site Card Details:</b> The site was recorded by Martin Smith on 26/6/1985. The site is probably the same as AHIMS # 45-6-1609 – no site card available or recorder's details. Additional information was provided by William Newell on 26 / 8 / 86. The site card reports a white ochre hand stencil and disturbed midden deposit on shelter floor. Condition of art and midden is described as poor.	
<p><b>Site Description:</b> The site is a small sandstone overhang on an upper terrace of a sandstone escarpment at the north-eastern end of Shark Beach (<i>photo to left shows site location</i>). The overhang is approximately 6.6 m long, 1.4 m high and 2.6 m wide. The site is approximately 15 m above sea level.</p> <p>One white ochre negative hand stencil is located on the rear wall of the shelter (<i>photo below right shows hand stencil</i>). Only one left hand is present, no other art was identified.</p> <p>A thin residual midden deposit covers the shelter floor. The deposit contains the remains of a variety of shellfish species, dominated by rock oyster, mud whelk and cockle. Charcoal and pieces of quartz (probable stone artefacts) are also included within the deposit.</p>	
<p><b>Site Condition:</b> The site is in a very poor condition. The stencil is faint and partially covered by modern graffiti (white paint). As a result it is difficult to distinguish the art from natural stone.</p> <p>The combined effects of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, recent campfires and graffiti have damaged the art.</p> <p>Midden deposits within the rock shelter are highly disturbed by modern public visitation. Modern glass and rubbish litters the shelter and has been mixed with Aboriginal deposits. The extant Aboriginal deposits comprise a disturbed residue of the former midden.</p>	
<b>Site Significance:</b> The Aboriginal art at Shark Bay Shelter has scientific and public significance at a local level. The site is likely to have some Aboriginal cultural significance. The site is a locally rare survival of Aboriginal hand stencil art, however the poor condition of the art has affected the site integrity. The site has some potential to demonstrate aspects of Aboriginal art to the public, however because the stencil is faint, it is considered a poor representative example of stencil art.	



The midden deposit has a low level of scientific and public significance because it is highly disturbed. The integrity of the deposit has been affected by modern disturbance and it is considered unlikely the site contains in-situ Aboriginal cultural material. As a result the site has little or no archaeological research potential. The site has a low level of rarity. The midden deposits may have some cultural significance to the Aboriginal community as evidence of a former Aboriginal camping site near areas of early European settlement.

**Site Management:** It is likely that the stencil art will continue to fade, and may be further damaged by graffiti and fires. Practical measures to prevent deterioration of the art are likely to be cost prohibitive and unwarranted given the local significance of the art and the extent of current deterioration. Professional archival photographic recording of the art before any further deterioration occurs is probably the best management.



Heavy public visitation and use of the site is likely to continue to damage the art and midden deposits. Due to the assessed low significance of midden deposits within the site, no active protective measures such as fencing are warranted. Passive barriers such as vegetation screening above the entrance to the site may be considered, although they are unlikely to completely stop public visitation and use.



<b>Site Name:</b> Vaucluse Midden	<b>AHIMS #:</b> 45-6-1524 <b>Other AHIMS #:</b> 45-6-1044, 45-6-1045
<b>Site Type(s):</b> Midden	
<b>Site Location:</b> Bottle and Glass Point.	
<b>AHIMS Site Card Details:</b> Midden deposits have been recorded across Bottle and Glass Point by Newell (1986) and Brookhouse (1985). The site cards report midden deposits exposed on walking tracks, areas of erosion and exposed shoreline. These midden exposures have been recorded as separate sites. Attenbrow (1990) excavated a small disturbed rock shelter on escarpment overlooking Vaucluse Bay.	
<p><b>Site Description:</b> Residual midden deposits are scattered in patches across Bottle and Glass Point. <i>(photo to left shows site location).</i></p> <p>The midden deposits form a more or less continuous site across the point and southern side of the point in areas where the land slopes gradually to the shoreline and original soils have been retained.</p>	
<p><b>Site Condition:</b> The site is in a fairly poor condition. Patches of residual midden are present within areas of original topsoil <i>(photo to left shows exposure of original soil).</i> In areas where original soils have been removed through the process of erosion and soil disturbance, original midden deposits have either been removed or dispersed.</p> <p>Midden deposits across the point have been subject to various levels of disturbance caused by the processes described above. As a result, the condition and integrity of deposit varies across the site. In general, the midden comprises thin residual deposits.</p>	
<p><b>Site Significance:</b> The midden deposit has a moderate level of scientific and public significance at a local level. The integrity of the deposit has been affected by modern disturbance and erosion. Areas where deposits have been preserved may have some archaeological research potential, however any intact deposits are likely to be thin and of low density. The site has a low level of rarity as midden deposits are found in foreshore contexts in many places on Sydney Harbour.</p> <p>The midden deposits may have some cultural significance to the Aboriginal community as evidence of a former Aboriginal camping site near a place of early European settlement.</p>	

**Site Management:** Heavy public visitation and use of the site is likely to continue to disturb midden deposits, which in turn may cause erosion of soils. Because the site covers the entire point, no active protective measures such as fencing are practical, or warranted given the moderate local significance of the site.

<b>Site Name:</b> Shark Beach	<b>AHIMS #:</b> 45-6-1521 <b>Other AHIMS #:</b> n/a
<b>Site Type(s):</b> Shelter / Midden	
<b>Site Location:</b> Steel Point.	
<b>AHIMS Site Card Details:</b> Midden deposit and shelter recorded by Brookhouse (August, 1985). The site card reports the midden was generally in good condition with some surface disturbance caused by pedestrian traffic and graffiti on the shelter wall.	
<p><b>Site Description:</b> Large north-east facing shelter on Steel Point approx. 3m above waterline, located 30m north-west of western end of Shark Beach. Access is along shoreline. <i>(photo to left shows site location).</i></p> <p>The shelter is 10-15m long, 6m wide and 6m high. The deposit may be more than 20cm thick in patches across the shelter floor. Surface evidence comprises a variety of rock platform shellfish species within a dark midden soil matrix.</p>	
<p><b>Site Condition:</b> The midden deposit is disturbed and badly eroded toward the rock face, due to pedestrian activity (public visitation &amp; fishermen). No Aboriginal art was found on the shelter wall, however, a large amount of modern graffiti was observed. <i>(photo to left shows deposit)</i></p> <p>Although pedestrian traffic has disturbed midden deposits, particularly toward the rock face, the deposits are likely to be relatively thick (approx 20cm). Further away from the rock face, deposits are relatively undisturbed. As a result, the condition and integrity of deposit varies across the site. In general, the midden comprises relatively deep, dense and undisturbed deposits.</p>	
<p><b>Site Significance:</b> The midden deposit has a moderate - high level of scientific and public significance at a local level. The integrity of the deposit has not been significantly affected by modern disturbance and erosion. Areas away from the rock face, where a complete profile of deposits has been preserved, have archaeological research potential. Here deposits are likely to be dense, intact and stratified. Cultural material within the deposits may include shell fish remains, bone, stone artefacts and former Aboriginal hearths. The site has local rarity for a well preserved sequence of midden deposits adjacent to Sydney Harbour foreshore.</p>	
<p>The midden deposits may have cultural significance to the Aboriginal community as evidence of a former large Aboriginal camping site near a place of early European settlement.</p>	

**Site Management:** Heavy public visitation and pedestrian traffic across the site is likely to continue to disturb midden deposits, which in turn may cause erosion of soils. Because the site is used as a thoroughfare for access to Steel Point, it is unlikely that protective measures would completely prevent public use of the site (especially given the large size of the site). NPWS may consider placing a separation fabric (such as geotextile) over the exposed deposits along the foot track through the site and depositing a neutral pH medium (such as acid-free mulch or woodchips) on top of the fabric. This would minimise disturbance and on-going erosion caused to deposits along the foot track.

<b>Site Name:</b> Mt Trefle 2	<b>AHIMS #:</b> 45 6 2089 <b>Other AHIMS #:</b> n/a
<b>Site Type(s):</b> Shelter / Midden	
<b>Site Location:</b> Mount Trefle.	
<b>AHIMS Site Card Details:</b> Site was recorded by Guider (April 1990). The site card reports a small rock shelter facing west with a thin shell midden across the shelter floor in fair condition. Guider noted the proximity to the adjacent Mt Trefle Cave, a larger shelter site approx 20 metres to the north.	
<p><b>Site Description:</b> Small west-facing rock-overhang on upper escarpment of Mt Trefle. The site is located above a clearing adjacent to the Nielsen Park access road. <i>(photo to left shows site location).</i></p> <p>Rock shelter is 7.5m long, 1.5m deep and 1.36m high. No shell midden or Aboriginal objects were observed on current ground within the rock overhang. No art was observed on the wall. The potential for archaeological deposit below current ground is very low given the absence of archaeological evidence within exposed surface soils.</p>	
<p><b>Site Condition:</b> There is no evidence of shell midden, Aboriginal objects or sub-surface deposits. Soil erosion may have removed midden material recorded by Guider, however, no evidence of recent erosion or disturbance caused by public visitation and use was noted <i>(photo to left shows shelter floor)</i></p>	
<b>Site Significance:</b> As no Aboriginal objects or midden were found within exposed soils, at present the site has no scientific or public significance. As there is a very low potential for sub-surface deposits, the site has very low scientific / public significance in this regard.	
<b>Site Management:</b> There was no evidence of recent erosion or disturbance caused by public visitation and use. This site should be re-registered as a 'Potential Archaeological Deposit' as currently there is no material evidence that the rock overhang is an Aboriginal site. No further action is necessary.	

<b>Site Name:</b> Mt Trefle Cave	<b>AHIMS #:</b> 45 6 0560 <b>Other AHIMS #:</b> 45 6 1520
<b>Site Type(s):</b> Shelter / Midden	
<b>Site Location:</b> Mt Trefle.	
<b>AHIMS Site Card Details:</b> Site recorded by Rich & Stanley (May 1984), Newell (September 1986), Attenbrow (September 1989) and Guider (April, 1990). The site cards report a rock shelter on western side of Mt Trefle with midden deposit and art. The site cards report deposits in good condition. Attenbrow (1990) undertook test excavation at the site as part of the Port Jackson Archaeological Project.	
<p><b>Site Description:</b> Large west-facing shelter approx. 20 m north of Mt Trefle 2. The shelter is approx 7m long, 3.5m wide and 1.5m high. <i>(photo to left shows site location).</i></p> <p>The shelter includes a relatively dense shell midden deposit on the shelter floor including a variety of shell fish species incl: rock oyster, turban, hairy mussel, limpet and nerita. Guider also observed fish vertebra and a quartz flake.</p> <p>In 1990, Attenbrow excavated six 50cm by 50cm squares into deposits at the site. Deposits ranged between 150 mm to 700 mm deep to natural sandstone bedrock. Stone artefacts, bone and shell artefacts, faunal remains, charcoal and ochre were recovered. Two bone unipoint artefacts and six pieces of worked shell (scrapers) were found. Stone artefacts were predominantly made from quartz with forms characteristic of the late Bondaian period (the last 1,600 years). A total of 48 species of shellfish were identified, the dominant species being hairy mussel, black nerita and oyster. Carbon dates on charcoal and shell recovered during excavation indicated early occupation approximately 1,200 years ago.</p> <p>Guider reported two white hand stencils on the shelter wall. During the current investigation, the stencils were almost impossible to discern in natural daylight.</p>	
<p><b>Site Condition:</b> The deposit consists of a slightly disturbed sandy midden 15 cm – 70 cm deep and fairly intact.</p> <p>Two hand stencils were recorded on shelter wall are almost entirely faded. <i>(photo to left shows shelter wall and deposit)</i></p> <p>Only minimal evidence of recent erosion / disturbance caused by public visitation and use was noted.</p> <p>The midden deposit is relatively thick (15 – 70 cm). Deposits are relatively undisturbed. The midden comprises relatively deep, dense and relatively undisturbed deposits.</p>	



**Site Significance:** The midden deposit has a moderate - high level of scientific and public significance at a local level. The integrity of the deposit has not been significantly affected by modern disturbance and erosion. Attenbrow's excavations demonstrated intact deposits across the shelter have archaeological research potential. Deposits were dense, and included well-preserved shell and bone artefacts. Cultural material within the deposits includes shell fish remains, bone, stone artefacts and former Aboriginal hearths. The site has local rarity for a well preserved sequence of midden deposits that have not been subject to the high level of modern disturbance seen at other sites in Nielsen Park.

The midden deposits may have cultural significance to the Aboriginal community as evidence of a former large Aboriginal camping site near a place of early European settlement.

**Site Management:** There is no evidence of recent modern visitation and use. Because the site is located high on the escarpment and away from walking tracks and roads, it is likely that future visitation and use will be minimal. Therefore it is unlikely that the site will be affected in the near future. No protective measures are required at present. Bush regeneration within and adjacent to the site should ensure that deposits within the site are not disturbed and adjacent vegetation should be retained to avoid erosion that might be caused by removal of vegetation. No further management actions are required at present, however, NPWS should continue to monitor the condition of the site.

## **General Management Recommendations**

At present there are no proposals for development or works that would impact the sites investigated during this study. As discussed in the sites summaries above, some of the sites have been disturbed and damaged by modern visitation and use of Nielsen Park. Damage is likely to continue as a result of ongoing use and visitation. The sites summaries above provide management options for NPWS to consider for each site. It should be noted that the Aboriginal sites at Nielsen Park are protected by *Section 90* of the *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974*. Under *Section 90*, it is an offence to destroy, deface or disturb Aboriginal sites without the permission of the Director-General of DEC. General recommendations for management of Aboriginal heritage are set-out below.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based upon:

- the legal requirements of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act of 1974 (as amended 2001)*; in conjunction with
- the results of the archaeological investigation documented in this letter report.

It is recommended that:

- 1) NPWS should consider the management options presented in the sites summaries above. The management options would minimise ongoing impact to Aboriginal sites in Nielsen Park caused by public visitation and use;
- 2) If any development or works are proposed that will involve excavation work below current ground at any of the Aboriginal sites in Nielsen Park, a suitably qualified archaeologist should be engaged to prepare an *Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessment* in partnership with the *La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council*. A *Section 90 Heritage Impact Permit* would be required from DEC before development or works could proceed; and
- 3) NPWS should provide the *La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council* with a copy of this report. They should be consulted regarding the recommendations and given the opportunity to provide input into the future management and public interpretation of Aboriginal sites in Nielsen Park.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss the report or our recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Wheeler.

(Archaeologist).

## **Attachment A - List of References**

Attenbrow, V. (1992) *Port Jackson Archaeological Project – Stage II*. Report prepared for the Australian Museum and AIATSIS.

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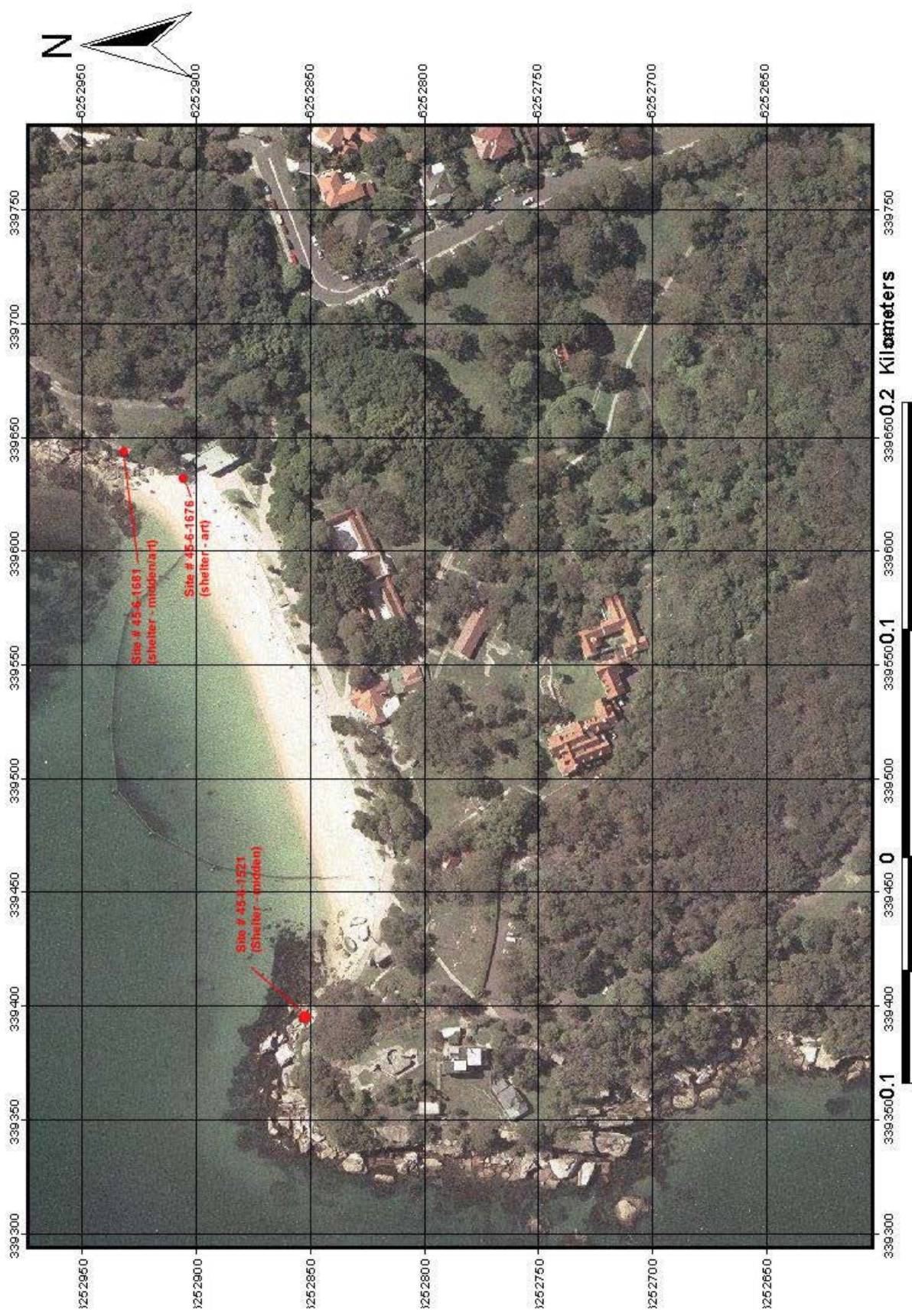
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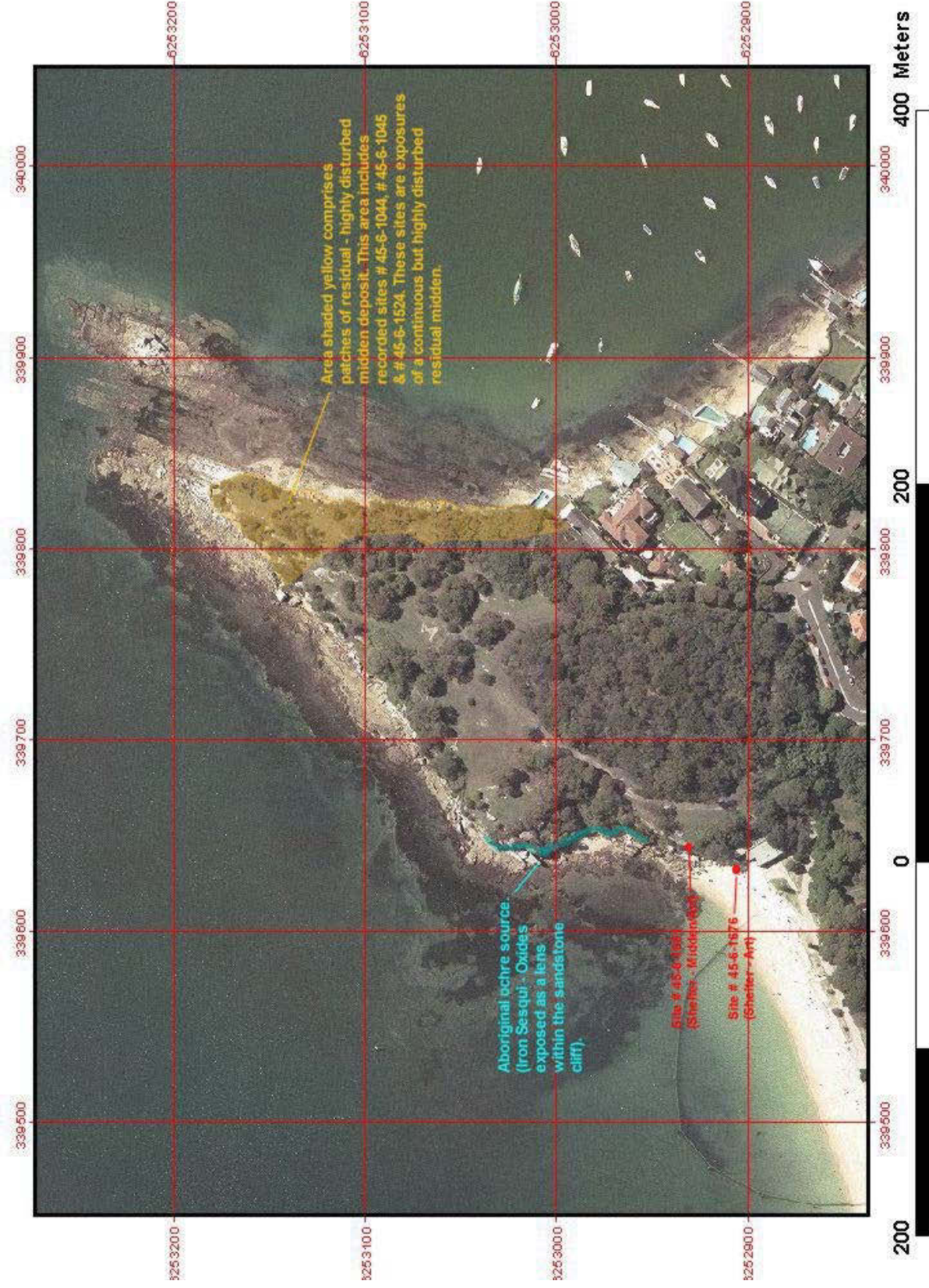
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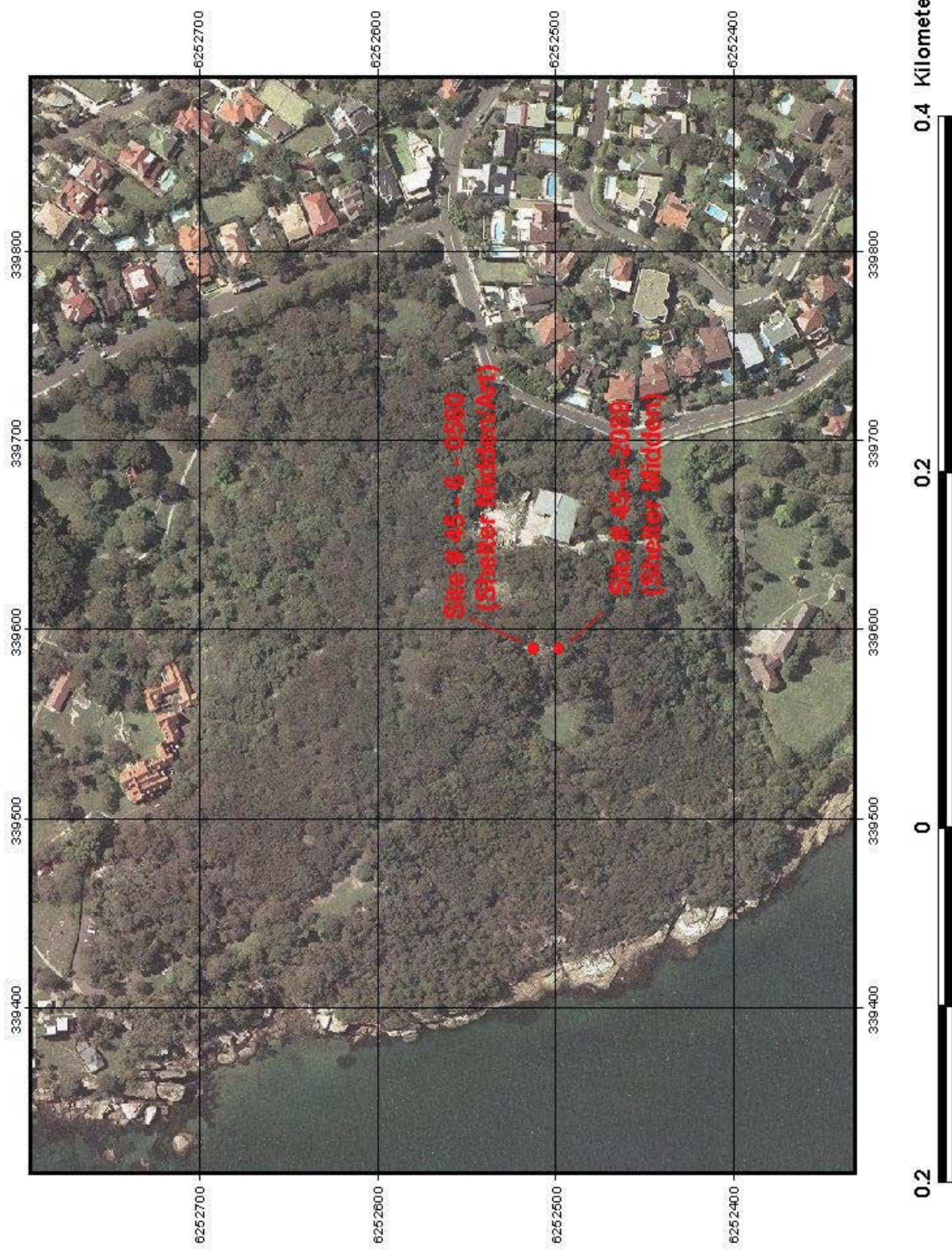
**Attachment B - Plans of Nielsen Park Showing Aboriginal Site Locations**



**Plan 1 – Shark Bay Beach**



Plan 2 – Bottle and Glass Point



Plan 3 – Mt Trefle