



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The former Defence lands at Middle Head, Georges Head, Georges Heights and Chowder Bay comprising the lands now administered by the Commonwealth Government (HMAS Penguin and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust) and the NSW State Government (Sydney Harbour National Park) contain the best and largest collection of military structures and landscapes spanning the greatest period of time concentrated on one site in Australia; ranging from one of the earliest surviving structures in Australia (the 1802 fort), nineteenth century military fortifications, barracks and stores, one of the world's few remaining World War I hutted hospitals (the World War I hospital buildings at Headquarters Training Command site at Upper Georges Heights) to the World War 2 buildings at Middle Head, Georges Heights and HMAS Penguin.

The site also contains one of the few remaining relatively intact interwar golf club houses and the physical evidence of Australia's only training institution established to train administrators and officers for Australia's overseas territories.

The long military occupation of the site has meant that the site has been protected from urban development and is an important component of the landscaped nature of the major headlands of Sydney Harbour.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE STUDY SITE

(Refer to Figures ES 1 and ES 2 in this Executive Summary)

The study site is significant as an important element in the entire former military reserve and defence lands at Middle Head, Georges Heights and Chowder Bay. The study site contains building complexes constructed in the early days of World War 2 in the Pacific which are tangible reminders of the type, range and standard of buildings required to mount a defence of Australia in wartime. They also demonstrate the long association of the site with the training of defence personnel and the long-time use of the site for military purposes which has had the effect of preventing major urban development of the headland and its preservation as part of the landscaped nature of the major headlands of Sydney Harbour.

Of particular significance is the physical remains of the occupation of the former Signals Camp huts by the Australian School of Pacific Administration for approximately 50 years from 1947.

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DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The significance of the site and the building complexes is such that, with very few exceptions, all the buildings should be retained, adaptively re-used with minimal interference in the fabric of the buildings and landscape and interpreted with appropriate signage. Original World War 2 buildings should not be demolished but be adaptively re-used for uses compatible with their original and community uses.
2. The building complexes built rapidly during the war, namely the School of Military Engineering (1941) and the Signals Camp (1941) should be recognised as rare, significant military complexes at a national level.
3. The cleared nature of the landscape should be recognised as an important cultural relic of the military and golf course occupation of the site dating from the early nineteenth century.
4. The military road network should be recognised as being of cultural importance at a national level in illustrating part of the development of defence technology in Australia.
5. The 1924 Mosman Golf Club club house and remnant cleared area of part of the former golf course should be recognised as being a rare example of an interwar golf club at a national level and the open nature of the area reinforced by removal of later trees which obscure the club house, the tees and final green.
6. The post-World War 2 modifications and additions to the Signals Camp to accommodate the Australian School of Pacific Administration should be recognised as being of national significance as a physical testimony to a unique Australian institution. Major sections of these structures (eg the Library, canteen, etc) which demonstrate the use of the complex by ASOPA should not be demolished but modifications and additions of a less significant nature could be demolished if such demolitions did not lessen the cultural significance of the complex as a whole.
7. Car parking areas should be limited to those areas which were used historically for that purpose and no additional car park areas should be constructed. Refer to the detailed diagram of proposed car park locations.
8. Remove the bus turning circle from the north side of Middle Head Road and relocate it to be incorporated in the proposed car park on the south side of Middle Head Road if the bus route is not extended through to terminate at Chowder Bay. If the bus route is altered to terminate at Chowder bay the redesign of the intersection of Middle Head Road and Chowder Bay Road should not destroy the ability to interpret the remnant of the original road in that location.