

2. INTRODUCTION

The Red Hill and Golden Grove Parks Plan of Management takes a "values-based" approach as outlined in "Succeeding with Plans of Management - A Guide to the Local Government Act and Crown Lands Act" (DLWC & Mandis Roberts, 1996). The Plan consists of six main parts which are identified below:

Introduction

The introduction provides an area description. It includes details of the history of the land, current land use and ownership details.

The Development Process

The Development Process describes the Legislative and Statutory Requirements, explains the history of the project, the series of objectives to be addressed in the future management of the parks, and the process and community consultation methodology used.

Site Analysis

Includes a summary of the background studies and their key findings.

Basis for Management

This includes the vision for the area, the community values, the significance of the values, the role of the area, desired outcomes, and guiding management principles.

Community Issues

This identifies and prioritises the main issues for the two parks identified by the community during the consultation process.

Action Plan

The Action Plan is a working part of the Plan of Management and will be updated on a regular basis by Council. It takes the management strategies, identifies how these will be achieved and explains the measures that Council will use to assess whether the objective has been achieved (Means of Assessment). It also recommends priorities for each action.

Landscape Concept Plan

Includes a description of the Landscape Concept Plan and the scope of works.

2.1 Area Description

2.1.1 Regional Context

The location of the site is within the Sydney Suburb of Beacon Hill, as indicated in Figure Two. The parcels of community land covered by this Plan of Management include the areas commonly called "Red Hill" and "Golden Grove". These areas are linked and are centrally located within the Warringah Local Government Area.

The area is located approximately eighteen kilometres North of Sydney near the Eastern edge of the Hornsby Plateau. Dee Why Lagoon and the coast are approximately four kilometres to the East.

2.1.2 Site Context

The area has the potential to provide regional open space linkages within the urban setting. Garigal National Park is located 800 metres to the North, and Narrabeen Lagoon 2.5 kilometres to the North East. The Red Hill land area is approximately seven hectares and the Golden Grove area is approximately ten hectares. They provide a bushland setting to many surrounding residences and critical skyline protection to some remaining areas. The Red Hill Park site is a plateau with 360° views and is the highest point in Warringah, being higher than Governor Phillip Lookout to the South East.

Figure Three identifies the site area. With the exception of one area, the land parcels included within the site area are the result of the Landcom development and are designated as “community land”. The other parcel of land is currently designated as “Crown Roads” and it is proposed to have this area under the Care, Control and Management of Council. The Landcom subdivision called for the development of local parks and originally identified a possible location for a playing field on the top of Red Hill, one of the highest individual locations in the whole of the North Shore region. This site was flattened and filled with surplus crushed sandstone from the ongoing subdivision works. As a consequence of community consultation the playing field idea was abandoned with the intended use of this area shown in the Landscape Concept Plan.

The main elements of the Landscape Concept Plan are:

- Restoration of the Red Hill area;
- Bush regeneration;
- Links between the two parks;
- Safety of sedimentation ponds; and
- Boardwalks over South Creek and along the Golden Grove Valley Trail.

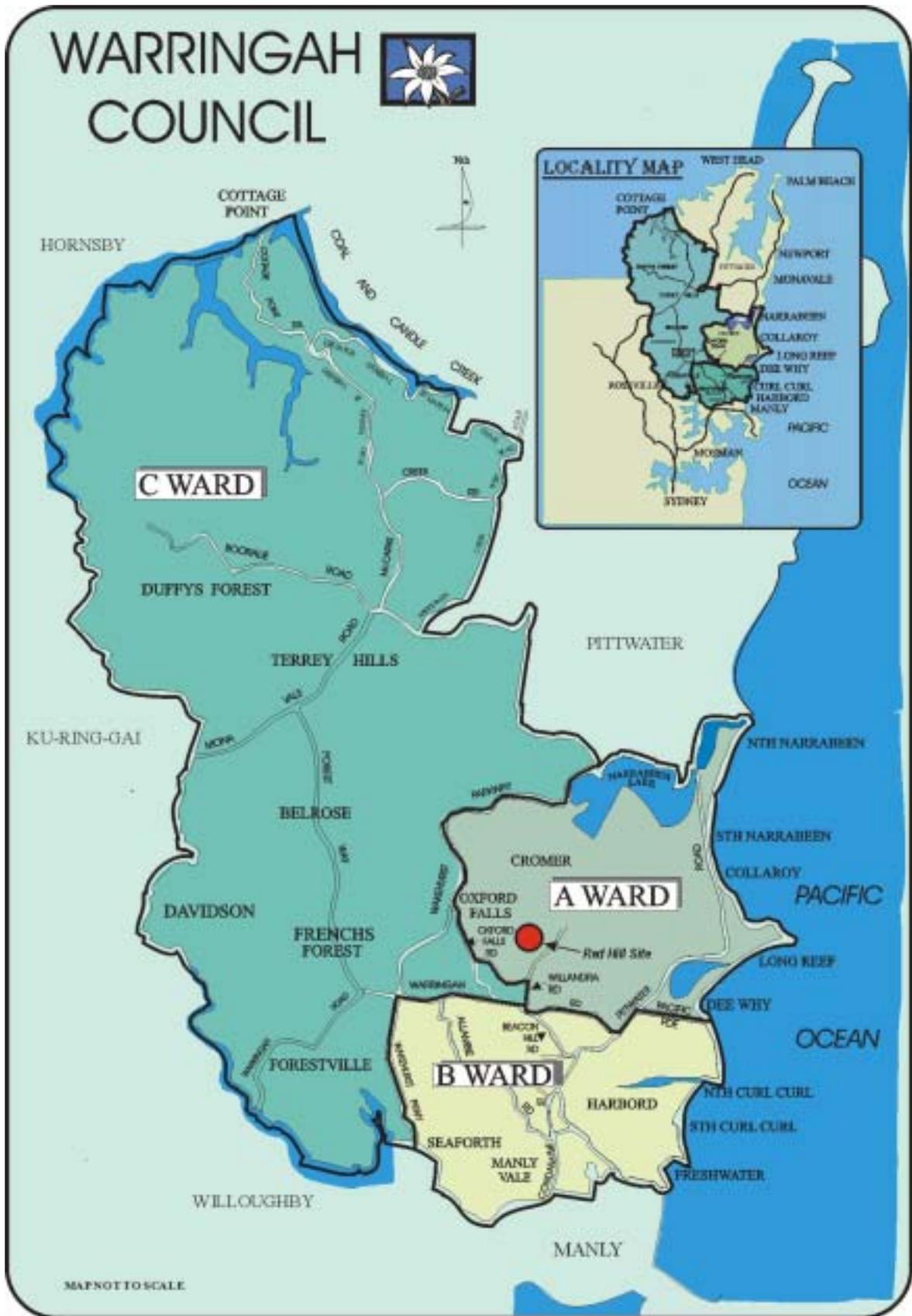


Figure 2 Location of Red Hill within a Regional Context

2.2 Background Information

In 1998 Kiah Environmental Designers, in conjunction with Warringah Council, undertook the preparation of a Plan of Management and concept designs for the community land at Red Hill, Beacon Hill. The areas are best described under the two geographic entities:

- Red Hill Park - sited on the top of a hill this area has been severely modified by quarrying in the past and filling in more recent times. Landcom used the area as a fill site during its subdivision development and the area now needs to be restored; only the Western and Southern slopes are largely undisturbed. Vehicle tracks and drainage installations traverse the area. The Eastern slope down to housing and Lady Penrhyn Drive has also been modified.
- Golden Grove Park – is located along the Southern boundary of the Landcom subdivision development, generally bound by South Creek to the South, and sandstone escarpments to the North. The area is predominantly weed free remnant indigenous bushland, however there are many tracks throughout the area and some weed infestation does occur, predominantly along South Creek corridor. The native vegetation is mature yet some areas have been affected by fire.

A previous Geographic Plan of Management covering the South Creek Corridor was prepared by “Cloustone” in 1996 for Dee Why Valley and South Creek Open Space Corridor. The plan covered the area known as Golden Grove Park, yet being a Geographic Plan it did not refer in sufficient site detail to the Golden Grove site, nor did it cover Red Hill Park.

The Landscape Concept Plan has been developed concurrently with this Plan of Management. The plan is shown in Figure One, stage one of the works is planned to commence in 2000.

2.3 Land Status and Ownership

The Red Hill area is zoned ‘Open Space Reservation’ and the Golden Grove area is zoned ‘Public Open Space’ within the draft Local Environment Plan (LEP), 1999. Lot PT7 20843, also included within the site area, is designated as Crown Roads. Surrounding land parcels are owned either privately, by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) or the Crown. Figure Three identifies the status and ownership of the adjoining land parcels.

The open space reserves link East and West, along the South Creek alignment to the South, and North to the Garigal National Park.

2.4 History of the Site

2.4.1 European History

The site of Red Hill and the higher parts of Golden Grove have tremendous views. This hill was discovered in 1788 with the arrival in Port Jackson of the first Governor, Captain Arthur Phillip, R.N. (McDonald, year unknown). However, please note that further investigations carried out by Shelagh and George Champion (1989) have found no evidence to support this claim.

Beacons were lit on the hill to send messages to the Governor at Parramatta via Pennant Hills, hence the name Beacon Hill. The name “Beacon Hill” was given to the Lands Department in 1881 while the survey of the Beacon Hill Road from Brookvale was carried out by a surveyor in May, 1887 (McDonald, year unknown).

The early explorers noted the area's unique wildflowers:

“Beacon Hill was a wonderful place for wild flowers, Epacris, Bottlebrushes, Correas, Boronia and many other species.” (pg 4, Wheeler, year unknown).

The first visit by the Governor to this area took three days due to the swamps and lagoons which they met (McDonald, year unknown). Figure Four illustrates George Caley’s “Journey to the Sea” dated 1805, which indicates South Creek and Oxford Falls to the North. The site falls just South of Oxford Falls, and is in a key location in terms of early exploration of the region. Caley was the first explorer to note the Falls. He saw Middle, Deep and South Creeks and *“...on his return crossed a valley in which there was fine trail of water forming an immense number of cascades”* (pg 81 McFarlane, 1989).

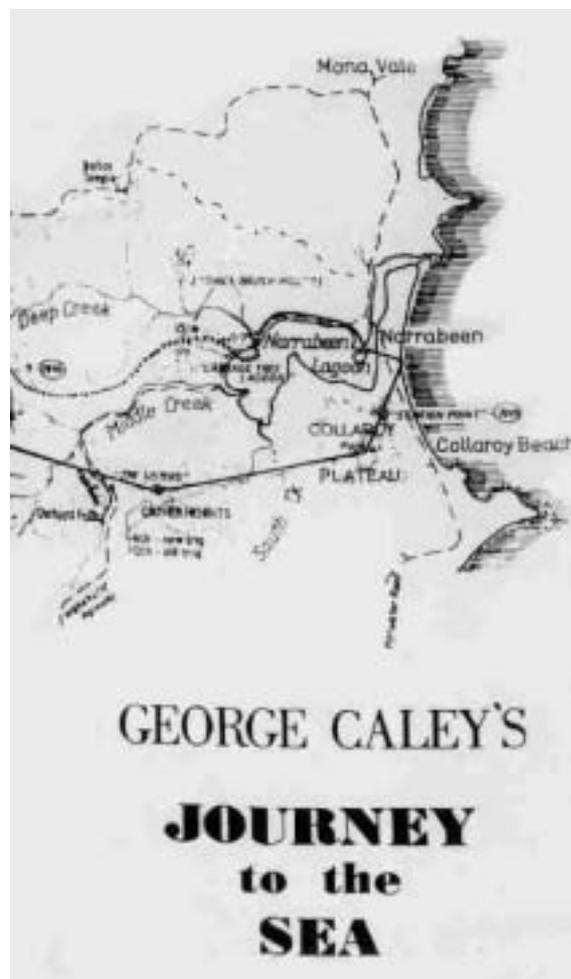


Figure 4 - George Caley’s “Journey to the Sea” (Webb, 1989).

Around 1815, James Meehan described the high points above Long Reef and Dee Why as being in a direct link with the Falls, as *“...all very rocky, scrubby and bad”* (pg 81, McFarlane 1989). Settlement proceeded in the West, South and East, ignoring the sandstone ridges in the Falls region (McFarlane 1989).

There are no accounts of bushrangers in the locality, and the earliest Europeans to occupy land may have been the timber cutters who exploited the area in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Beacon Hill Estate was advertised for sale in 1912, and the Eastern side of the hill was leased for brickmaking (McDonald, year unknown). Red Hill and Beacon Hill, a kilometre to the South East, were quarried since possibly as early as the 1880s for clay and shale for brickmaking and for kaolin, a white clay used for porcelain manufacture (Bruce 1988).

This area of Warringah was first surveyed in 1857. Early use of the land along South Creek included orchards, dairying and poultry farming. Farm allotments were established at the turn of the century, and in the 1930s some of the larger blocks were subdivided, the population then began to increase. The subject area remained as bushland until the early 1990s when the Landcom development commenced.

2.4.2 Aboriginal History

At the time of the arrival of the first fleet at Port Jackson, Aborigines occupying the area on the Northern side of Port Jackson and East of the Lane Cove River extending along the coast and North beyond Broken Bay were a large tribal grouping identified as Kuring-gai speakers. The people who lived in the Manly Warringah area can therefore be known as belonging to the Kuring-gai tribe. Kohen (pg3, 1989) states that, “like many other Aboriginal people in South Eastern Australia, these people call themselves *kuri* [*koori*] – Kuring-gai being the possessive form of the word *koori*, literally meaning ‘belonging to the Aborigines’”.



Figure 5 – Aboriginal tribes of Sydney (Bruce J.B. 1988)

Within the large linguistic grouping were smaller bands or groups of families, numbering between 25 and 120, but mostly about 50-60 people, who generally hunted and foraged within local areas. One such band was the *Cammeragal*, after whom the suburb of

Cammeray is named (Hunter 1793, Phillip 1738-1814), another was the *Terramerragal*, after which Turrumurra was named, and the *Carigal* lived at West Head. The area inside North Head, at Collins Cove, was known as *Kayimai*, and the people there were probably referred to by that name, but the Manly area on the coast was known as *canna*, and a band called *cannalgal* seems to have come from this region (Kohen and Lampert 1987).

2.4.3 History of the Red Hill Development or Subdivision

The rezoning proposals for the Red Hill area were first made in May, 1980. Five hundred residents attended the rally on 15 October 1989 to voice their opposition to the proposed development and to agree that the “*whole of the natural Red Hill bushland should be preserved in its present state*” (Red Hill Preservation Society, 1990).

The Red Hill Preservation Society, formed in the late 1970’s, wanted to designate the area as National Park. They were also concerned that the Southern escarpment, which is visible from the high school, would be devastated, with the loss of at least 50,000 mature trees (Red Hill Preservation Society, 1989).

There were claims that the development would cause siltation of Narrabeen Lagoon and an increase in pesticides, fertilisers and other chemicals. The Narrabeen Lagoon Committee expressed concern that the development would reduce South Creeks Buffer to only a few metres. South Creek is known for its susceptibility to flash flooding, with creek heights reaching potentially dangerous levels.

However, the developers argued that there was pressure to release land for executive residences with ocean views, and this site was one of the few remaining opportunities in the area.

2.4.3.1 Other Issues

Other issues relating to the proposed Landcom development raised by the community were:

- Transport facilities were considered inadequate to cope with the increase in population.
- Aboriginal sites were likely to be threatened.
- The Beacon Hill High School students wrote letters of complaint indicating a lot of opposition from this age group to the proposed development.
- Children's safety in walking to school, traffic congestion, greenhouse effects, wildlife disturbance, destruction of flora and fauna, and lack of recreational reserve and parkland were issues frequently voiced against the development.
- The Red Hill development created a great deal of antagonism in the Beacon Hill Community. The division between the new and previous residents is still apparent today. This sentiment was repeatedly expressed throughout the community consultation meetings and workshops.

This issue is addressed in the Community Values section of this Plan of Management, and is key to the proposals presented.