



22 February 2008

Mr Michael Woodland
The Director
Urban Assessments
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2001

Dear Mr Woodland,

CALLAN PARK DRAFT LAND USE PLAN PSA 7615 NOVEMBER 2007 ("THE PLAN")

The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) has had a long-standing interest in Callan Park, to ensure its ongoing conservation for future generations of Australians. The Trust has had an opportunity to review the Plan and wishes to put forward the following comments for consideration.

Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002

We note that the Plan is inconsistent with the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* and cannot be legally implemented under the legislation.

The legislation, which originated as a Private Member's Bill introduced by the local Member of Parliament, Ms Sandra Nori, was enacted in response to community concern raised by the release of the NSW Government's Callan Park Masterplan in 2002.

The government sought to assure the community of New South Wales that Callan Park would be secure from future encroachment. Ms Nori's announcement at her press conference at Callan Park on Sunday, 20 October, 2002 was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* the following day:

"It means that the whole site, including the buildings that are there now and the open space, the gardens, foreshore, will be entrenched in public ownership forever," she said. "Residential of any kind, public or private is ruled out."

The *Callan Park Act's* stated objective is "to preserve the public ownership of Callan Park; to protect its current features and restrict its future use; and for other purposes" and is regarded by the community state-wide as legislation that would save the site from development forever, as Ms Nori had announced.

The heritage significance of Callan Park cannot be overstated.

The Statement of Conservation Policy in the *Rozelle Hospital Conservation Management Plan*, Vol 1, January 2002, ("CMP") stated that "The overall purpose of these Conservation Policies is to preserve and enhance the cultural significance of the whole site – its buildings and its associated cultural landscape" (p127). Callan Park's "landscaped spaces and landmark buildings have contributed visually and socially to the local area for over 100 years. ... The site as a whole has very high levels of social significance and has special associations for the local and broader community both as an open space resource and for its cultural and aesthetic value." (p101)

We therefore find it a matter of concern that a Plan has been advertised which has no legal status and that the Government expects the community to comment upon such a plan. There is no legislative protection for the proper consideration of the community's submissions and comments under this ad hoc process.

NON BINDING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ("THE MOU")

The MOU between the University, the Minister for Planning ("the Minister") and the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority ("SHFA") states that "the University seeks to expand its current activities on the Callan Park site" and this was to be explored "within the context of the Callan Park Act 2002" and signatories acknowledged the proposed lease must "recognize and clearly articulate the University's right to use and develop the site in accordance with The University of Sydney Act 1989 and the Callan Park Act 2002".¹

The MOU is referred to in the Plan as a decision informing the land's future use. It is our understanding however that the Government has advice that the MOU cannot be enforced as it is contrary to the Act.

The Plan states that it responds to and concurs with the objectives of the *Callan Park Act* (Land Use Plan, 1.6) but also inconsistently says that one of the most important objectives, that which ensures the preservation of the areas of open space that were in existence immediately before the commencement of the Act, and that extend to and include the foreshore of Iron Cove on the Parramatta River (s. 4(b)), requires amendment.

The Plan therefore cannot, as suggested in the Introduction, "provide[s] the framework guiding the ongoing management and possible future uses of Callan Park" as it has no legal status as it currently stands.²

The MOU designated a predetermined outcome which afforded the community no opportunity for discussion of alternative uses for Callan Park.

PROPOSED USES OF CALLAN PARK

It is of paramount importance that the integrity of Callan Park as a single area is preserved.

The absence of detail and integrated and long term management plans of the whole site; plans for the restoration and maintenance of heritage landscapes and buildings; contemporary traffic, transport and contamination reports, and plans relating to the development proposed by the University of Sydney makes extensive comment impossible.

¹ MOU, Background B and 4.6 (a)

² LUP, 1.1, p1

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

The Trust supports the continued presence of the University's Sydney College of the Arts campus within the Kirkbride complex.

We would ask why the proposal is going ahead with the support of the Government when to our knowledge the University has not been required to produce a Business Plan for the viability of this proposal.

The University has indicated approximately 700 students will reside at Callan Park, this will impact upon the historic cultural landscape and the local community.

The University has also made a "commitment to funding the significant refurbishment and maintenance works required to protect the Heritage buildings".³ As yet the University has provided no plans for the site, its program of maintenance and restoration work or any time limit provided within which it will undertake these works.

NSW HEALTH – NGO PRECINCT 4 AT BROUGHTON HALL

Urgent conservation work is required to buildings and gardens within the NGO Precinct. We would ask what are the plans of NSW Health for these conservation works, are funds allocated for this work and when will these projects be undertaken?

The Trust understands that this area of the site will be managed by NSW Health and occupied by a mix of NGOs. There is an absence of detailed information about the ways in which the NGO's will utilize this precinct.

There are no detailed plans indicating how the landscape and gardens will be secured and maintained. The gardens of Broughton Hall form one of the most sensitive parts of the site. The Trust is greatly concerned about the potential adverse impact of a community of different NGO users on the gardens of Broughton Hall and the lack of a landscape management plan for management and maintenance of the gardens.

There is also an absence of information about the restoration of Broughton Hall, the original estate house fronting the corner of Wharf Road and Church Street, Lilyfield. The Trust is also concerned about the future of this building and asks what plans NSW Health has in place to undertake its conservation and restoration.

VIEWS & VISUAL CHARACTER

Views into, through and across the site are significant. The CMP's recommendations for the removal of buildings in the central area of the site to facilitate view lines which reinforce the historical links between Broughton Hall and Garry Owen are contradicted by the potential construction of University buildings. Such construction could impact the ability to interpret the Garry Owen house and its curtilage.

The entire Kirkbride complex is of significance and should dominate the landscape as viewed from within and beyond the site boundaries. It is imperative that the entire Kirkbride complex, not only the Water Tower, has prominence when viewed from the Harbour and the locality.

The Plan is also inconsistent with the CMP approved by the Heritage Office of NSW, which set out details of zoning for development. For example, Zone 5 in the CMP has significant views which the CMP states should be conserved and reinstated and the CMP recommends for this zone: "Maintain an open character with scattered groups of trees" and "Any new development should be screened to allow landscape to dominate". However, in Plan 3 (as displayed at the Workshop on 28 October 2007 but absent from the LUP) the University proposed constructing approximately a dozen 3-4 storey buildings in this area.

³ Appendix C: Social and Economic Assessment, p6

NATURAL WATERCOURSE – BROUGHTON HALL TO IRON COVE

The Plan addresses the principle of reinstating the watercourse from Broughton Hall to Iron Cove. The existing channel, formed with sandstone blocks, was constructed earlier in the twentieth century, reflecting the work of Sydney Evan Jones who utilized the landscape as part of patient therapy and it is said that patients were engaged in this work during the depression of the 1930s. The watercourse successfully contains significant volumes of water delivered in Sydney's sudden downpours and during drought remains picturesque.

CONTAMINATION

The Trust notes sample analysis undertaken in 2002 "was inadequate to allow even a preliminary understanding of the presence of contamination"⁴ and "remediation of the major filled areas could represent a significant constraint to redevelopment of the Site".⁵

COHERENT CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND IDENTITY

Callan Park is a unified site and should remain a coherent cultural landscape as a whole. The division of the site into precincts with the potential for different management, for example, parking, will destroy the site.

It is a spurious argument that increased built form on the site is acceptable as it will integrate into the local residential areas. This has no relationship to the cultural significance of the site as a whole.

Its identity is as an open landscape dominated by the nineteenth century sandstone buildings of Callan Park and the lush vegetation of the Broughton Hall estate.

According to the Social and Economic Assessment, "The University and its prestigious image will create a strong positive identity for the locality".⁶ Callan Park already has a strong, unique and historical identity: an identity scored by its reputation as a site of opprobrium and horror as well as a site for asylum and care – and for residents of metropolitan Sydney who value its open spaces, sunny banks and quiet corners as a site of refuge and respite from contemporary life.

The shared responsibility and benefit of places such as Callan Park that are unique in Australia's history are discussed by Helen Gilbert in her paper on 'Contested Public Lands':

When the National Trust launched its 1999 Endangered Places List it called on the federal and state governments to stop selling off public land and included numerous sites such as ... Callan Park ... At the launch, a communiqué from some of Australia's 'Living National Treasures' stated:

"Australia has a rich, diverse and unique history that must be conserved and celebrated. Places give structure to that history and ... are symbols that give us a sense of ourselves. All Australian's share in the responsibility and the benefits of protecting our most precious places."⁷

⁴ Appendix E: Contamination Report, p10

⁵ Appendix E: Contamination Report, p13

⁶ Appendix C: Social and Economic Impact, p9

⁷ Helen Gilbert, *Contested Public Lands: Values, Power and Public Process in Government Asset Disposal Programs – a Summary*, Paper presented at the PRRES Conference, Brisbane, 20-22 January 2003, p13 – quoting Sutherland, K., Endangered places and 'cultural vandalism', *Reflections*, The National Trust Quarterly, October-January 2000

The social value of Callan Park is articulated by the community in telephone polls, surveys and rallies. The local community is very conscious of the benefits of having this 61 hectare de facto parkland in its densely urbanized municipality and continues to resist government efforts to diminish Callan Park. The social value of Callan Park should be further investigated and those findings incorporated into any future planning for Callan Park.

COMMUNITY REFERENCE PANEL ("THE PANEL")

The Trust Members of the Panel were appointed by the Minister and the Member for Balmain, Ms Verity Firth, nominated five community representatives. Ten members of the twenty-six member Panel were local residents.

There was no opportunity for other members of the community to nominate themselves to the Panel and inadequate opportunity for participation in community discussion about the proposal (other than at two Workshops at Rozelle Hospital and Leichhardt Town Hall).

Callan Park is a site and issue of State and National significance. It is therefore an opportunity missed when the offer made by a health professional and academic (and a former staff member of Broughton Hall Psychiatric Clinic who now resides in regional New South Wales) to travel to Sydney to participate in the Panel was declined. Nor were there opportunities for community members to nominate to participate in the Panel.

Restrictions on Panel membership and the potential limitation of wide debate are regrettable and outside best practice principles for community consultation (as advocated in *Ideas for Community Consultation, a discussion on principles and procedures for making consultation work*, Dr Lyn Carson and Dr Katharine Gelber, DUAP, 2001).

SUMMARY

Callan Park is unique in the state. It is one of a series of asylum sites along the Parramatta River (all of which have closed) and part of a network of asylums with state and international associations.

As attitudes to psychiatric illness and medical practice and philosophy in the care of psychiatric patients have changed in the last half century the site has been declared redundant by NSW Health. In that same time the demographics of the community in the immediate vicinity has changed. However that community overwhelmingly supports the retention of psychiatric services at Callan Park and has so petitioned the NSW Government.

The Trust notes the LUP records the community's "strong view that a mental health focus should be retained at Callan Park".⁸

The cost of relocating psychiatric services from Rozelle Hospital to Concord Hospital is \$23.2 million.⁹ This was the cost of completely rebuilding the psychiatric hospital in 1996, when (at that time) renovating Rozelle Hospital to accommodate rehabilitation, intensive and extended care for psychiatric patients was estimated to cost less than \$2 million.¹⁰

The National Trust supports the Callan Park Act which permits the provision of health facilities, limits development and construction at Callan Park and ensures "the preservation of the areas of open space at Callan Park that were in existence immediately before the commencement of this Act".¹¹

⁸ LUP, p34

⁹ *NSW: A New Direction in Mental Health*, NSW Department of Health, 2006, p2

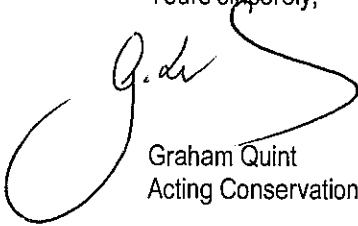
¹⁰ Rozelle Hospital, Asset Management Strategy, Infrastructure Partnerships, NSW Department of Public Works, 15 February 1996

¹¹ Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002, 4 (b)

To facilitate discussion about the future of Callan Park, the Trust recommends the preparation of an audit of the condition of buildings and landscapes of Callan Park, as well as the development of a schedule of essential, medium and long term repairs and maintenance of these elements to enable accurate costing and future allocation of resources at Callan Park.

The National Trust supports a continuation of a non-acute hospital for psychiatric care for NSW at Callan Park, utilizing existing buildings. Findings of NSW Health's literature review published in 2005 assert the beneficial effects of renovated wards and gardens for patients at psychiatric institutions, their staff and visitors.¹² This would continue its historical use and maintain the site as a whole. It would allow continued access to the site for passive and active recreation by the community of New South Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Quint', written over a large, stylized, looped flourish that extends to the left and then curves back to the right.

Graham Quint
Acting Conservation Director

¹² *The effect of the built and natural environment of Mental Health Units on mental health outcomes and the quality of life of the patients, the staff and the visitors*, NSW Department of Health, 2005