



14/11/2024

Heritage Council of NSW
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<https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ballast-reserve>

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (AILA)

SUBMISSION

Landscape Heritage Place: Ballast Point Park

Also referred to as: Walama (to return); Perkins Point; Menevia Homestead Archaeological Site; Former Caltex Site; Former Texaco Site; Petrol Refinery; Industrial Archaeological Site

Local government Area: Inner West Council

Aboriginal Land Council: Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (Metro LALC)

Land parcels: Lot 1 DP 115939.

Coordinates: Lat: -33.852268 Long: 151.189098

Address: Ballast Point Road, Birchgrove 2041.

Contacts: Sarah Hawkins, Senior Heritage Officer, Heritage NSW, T: 02 9228 6237.

Links to AILA Landscape Heritage Study (2018):

AILA *Landscape Heritage Report* Volumes 1 & 2: [https://aila.org.au/common/Uploaded files/_AILA/Resourcelibrary/Landscape Heritage Report Volume 1-2.pdf](https://aila.org.au/common/Uploaded_files/_AILA/Resourcelibrary/Landscape_Heritage_Report_Volume_1-2.pdf)

AILA Nominations Volume 3. Ballast Point Park - nomination 06

PREFACE

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture.

Landscape Architects plan, design and manage natural and built environments, applying aesthetic and scientific principles to address ecological sustainability, quality and health of landscapes, collective memory, heritage and culture, and territorial justice. By leading and coordinating other



*disciplines, landscape architects deal with the interactions between natural and cultural ecosystems, such as adaptation and mitigation related to climate change and the stability of ecosystems, socio-economic improvements, and community health and welfare to create places that anticipate social and economic well-being.*¹

AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. We provide our members with training, recognition, and a community of practice to share knowledge, ideas, and action. With our members, we anticipate and develop a leading position on issues of concern in landscape architecture. Alongside government and allied professions, we work to improve the design and planning of the natural and built environment.

In operation since 1966, AILA represents over 3,500 landscape architects and promotes excellence in planning, design and management for life outdoors. Committed to designing and creating better spaces in Australia, landscape architects have the skills and expertise to improve the nation's liveability through a unique approach to planning issues via innovative integrated solutions. In doing so, landscape architects contribute towards better environmental, social and economic outcomes for all Australians.

This AILA submission is made by the AILA NSW Advocacy Committee. The work of landscape architects is recognised for creating liveable cities, respecting culture and sustainable design outcomes for everyone, our members help shape many projects across Australia, creating vibrant community spaces for all.

STATEMENT

*The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) **SUPPORTS** the intention to list Ballast Point Park on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR), and all remaining seven nominations recognised in the AILA Landscape Heritage Study 2018. AILA is **CONCERNED** that deterioration is occurring from delays in heritage nomination status progression.*

AILA welcomes a discussion with Heritage NSW, together with other stakeholders, about the proposed listing: the adoption of the full Heritage Curtilage; a 'whole of landscape' conservation planning strategy for the precinct; and a vision for the SHR protection of Sydney Harbour's green open spaces and waters.

¹ International Federation of Landscape Architects – definition iflaworld.com/the-profession



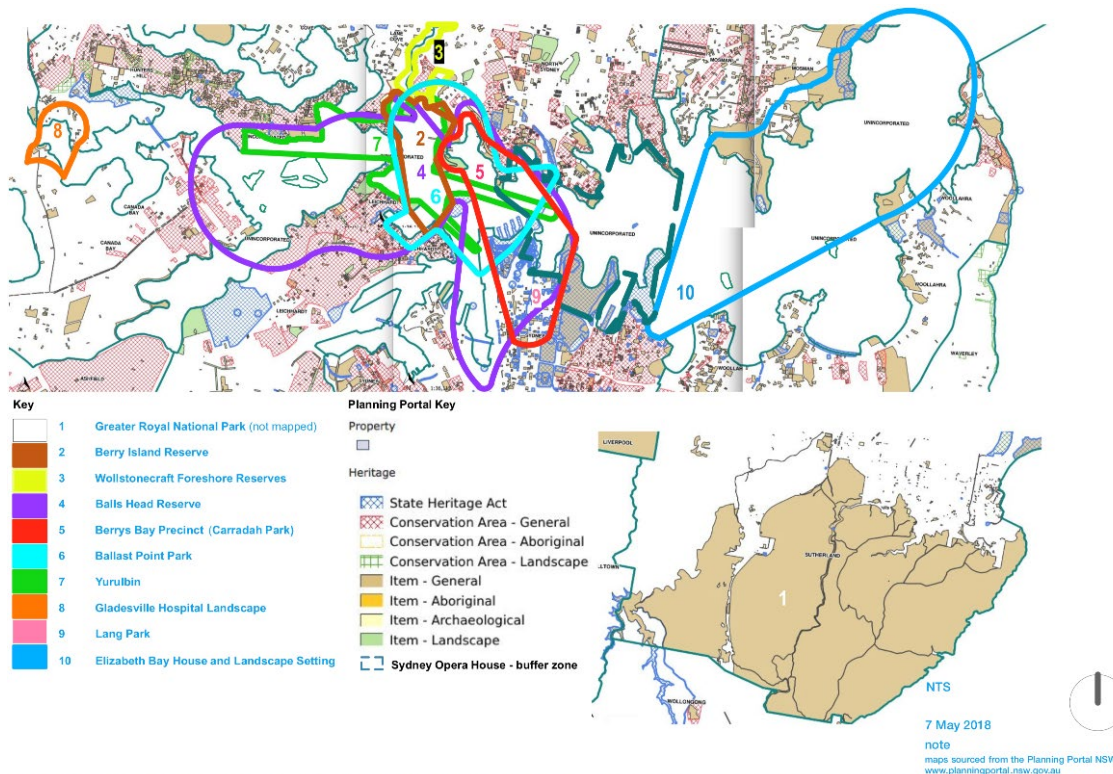
BACKGROUND

In 2019, the achievements of the AILA Landscape Heritage study were recognised by the ‘AILA National President’s Award’, the AILA NSW ‘Award of Excellence’ and the ‘National Trust Heritage Award for Landscape Conservation.’ Described as ‘ambitious’, it introduced the ‘Landscape Lens’ framework to identify and conserve significant heritage landscapes. Notably, it proposed the visionary strategy known as the ‘Green Necklace of Sydney Harbour.’

In 2023, Badangi became the first listing accomplished from the study. Embracing two nominations, it demonstrates the study’s ambitions and strategies: ‘a whole of landscape approach’; and the principle that cultural landscapes extend beyond cadastral (or lot) boundaries.

On 22 August, Heritage NSW advised AILA of its intention to list Ballast Point Park, one of ten SHR nominations from the inaugural AILA study.

As part of the Green Necklace, the listing of the *Ballast Point Park* offers a profound opportunity. To recognise the peninsula as one landscape, with a listing that encompasses all its significant natural, cultural and historical values, and visual and spatial qualities. See **Figure 1 and 2 from the study.**



SYDNEY HARBOUR • SHR NOMINATIONS AILA NSW: VISUAL CATCHMENTS

FIGURE 1: VISUAL CATCHMENTS: NO: 6, BALLAST POINT PARK’S CATCHMENT IS EXTENSIVE

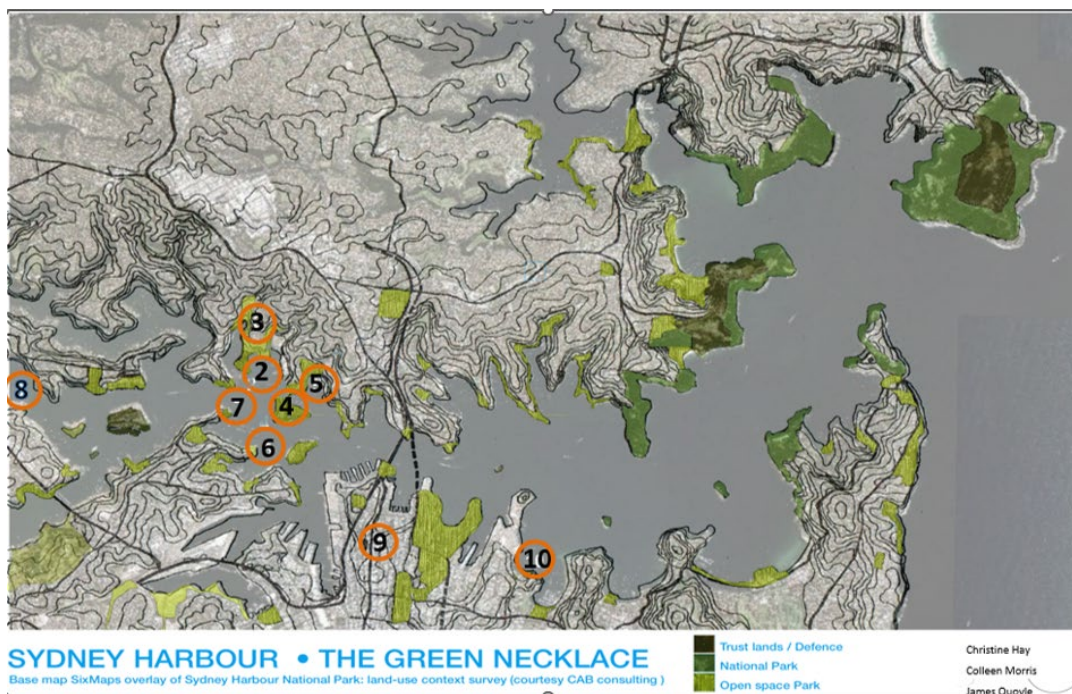


FIGURE 2: THE GREEN NECKLACE: BALLAST POINT IS NO: 6 (REFER FIGURE 1 FOR KEY TO NUMBERS)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The AILA nomination provided was comprehensive and underpinned by the Landscape Lens philosophy of the study. We note several changes in the draft listing from the nomination and advise the following:

1. Engage with First Nations Groups: AILA strongly recommends engagement with local First National stakeholder groups. About how their views or suggestions about naming and story can be incorporated into the listing process. *Walama* meaning ‘to return’ is now added to the park’s name to acknowledge ‘the site’s long indigenous connections.’ Aboriginal place names elevate heritage listings and give powerful resonance, as it did with Badangi.
2. Expand Visual Catchment: Adopt the largest visual catchment² illustrated in the Ballast Point Park nomination shown in **Figure 3**. Instead of the smallest proposed boundary for the precinct, AILA strongly advocates for a large precinct curtilage.

² As defined by the study (p 22) a visual catchment is the full visible extent of area or landscape, that can be observed from one, or multiple vantage points, usually from a catchment highpoint or ridgeline, intrinsic to the significance of a place.



FIGURE 3: THE LARGEST HERITAGE CURTILAGE IS RECOMMENDED (BALLAST POINT PARK NOMINATION)

3. Combine precincts for **One Cultural Landscape**: The AILA recommended large visual catchment (Recommendation 2) forms a vital component of the overall (one) cultural landscape of Sydney Harbour. An exciting possibility exists with the heritage boundary. As illustrated diagrammatically in **Figure 4**, an expanded Ballast Point Park SHR curtilage (blue circle) with Yurulbin (green circle) and Me-mel Goat Island, incorporating Iloura (maroon circle); together with an expanded Badangi SHR heritage curtilage (black circle), Berrys Bay Precinct (purple circle) and expanded Brett Whiteley House and Visual SHR Curtilage (red circle), offer an extraordinary opportunity to realise the vision of the Green Necklace.

This strategic approach unifies key cultural landscapes, protecting western harbour foreshores and waterways. It embraces and celebrates natural heritage, First Nation culture, and harbourside stories of agricultural trade, maritime, defence and working harbour histories. Importantly, the combined precincts strengthen the space for truth-telling about First Contact when at the epicentre of British invasion.

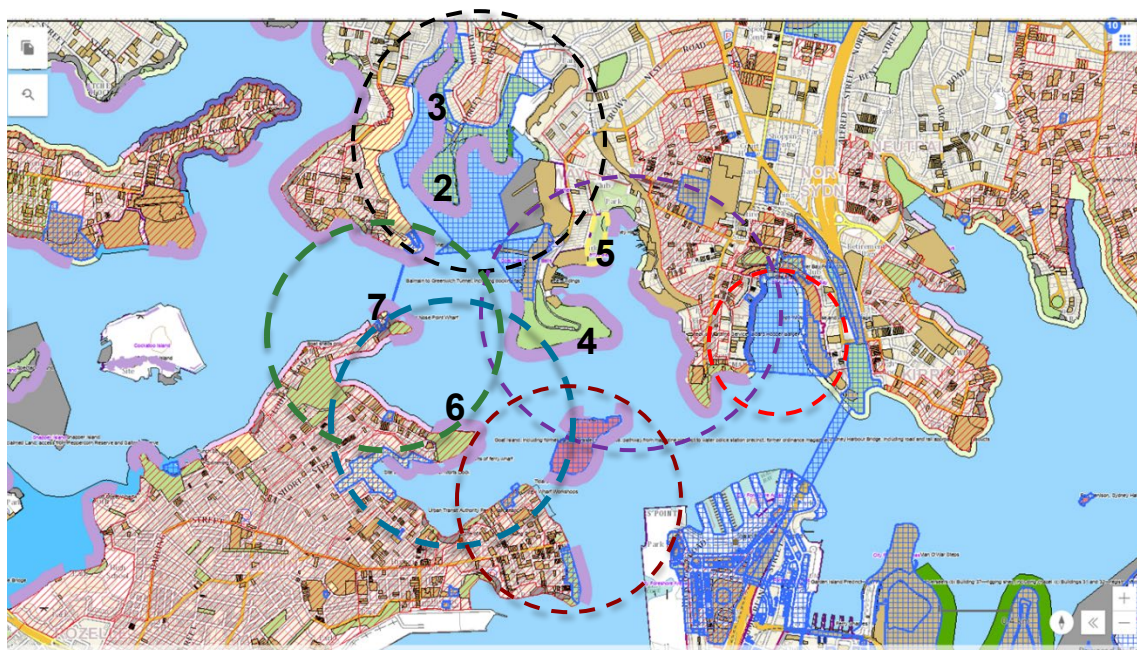


FIGURE 4: DIAGRAMMATIC PROPOSAL TO CONNECT HERITAGE CURTILAGES FOR THE EXPANDED HERITAGE PROTECTION OF THE WESTERN SHORES OF SYDNEY HARBOUR (REFER FIGURE 1 FOR KEY TO NUMBERS).

4. Protection of Sydney Harbour: **AILA’s vision and recommendation is the overall connection of heritage curtilages across the harbour’s foreshores and waterways.** This would achieve the linking of the Green Necklace and heritage protection of the western (inner harbour) and eastern harbour (outer harbour). This approach, the connection of adjacent SHR heritage curtilages, forms a model for future harbour listings.
5. Amendments to the Statement of Significance (SoS) and Assessment of Significance (AoS): AILA recommends:
 - a. The undue emphasis on green bans be removed in the assessment. Although Tom Uren and Jack Munday were associated, there is no evidence to suggest green bans were applied to the place. The historical outline in the proposed listing does not support these values. As green bans were not applied to Ballast Point they should not form part of its significance values.
 - b. Values from the nomination’s SoS and AoS be reinstated including the initial exceptional aesthetic value. Add acknowledgment of its importance as a place of deep-time history and First Nations culture.
6. Amendments to the historical outline, description or references: AILA recommends,
 - a. reinstatement of the Aboriginal discussion from the history in the nomination.



- b. Add AILA citations of the material used from the nomination or study
 - c. For some inner harbour AILA listings, the role of Nigel Ashton and Lindsay Robertson representing the State Planning Authority of New South Wales (SPA) and their inspired influence in the establishment of public parkland within the Inner Harbour on post-industrial land needs emphasis (AILA study 5.4.18 p.80). Ashton’s vision for the identification of potential harbourside parklands such as Ballast Point needs research. As does Lindsay Robertson’s role, as the first landscape architect appointed by the SPA and influence on the purchase of many properties in 1968 including Ballast Point. The revival of inner-city residential areas provides context for these actions.
 - d. For AILA harbour listings, develop context about the harbour’s spatially contained landscape character. Reference the spaces illustrated in **Figure 9** p.50 from the AILA study – Map of Port Jackson’s drainage catchment harbour and riverine spaces by Craig Burton.
 - e. Placing the AILA heritage study in the Heritage NSW library and citing it correctly (in the listing).
7. Me-mel Goat island is an important place in the western harbour. The relationship of the harbour nominations to Me-mel was a fundamental consideration in the AILA Landscape Heritage study. Do the changes proposed <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/me-mel> to the place offer possibilities for the proposed listing (s) to acknowledge and connect to its First nations values.
 8. AILA requests that HNSW collaborate with the specific nominator for each AILA listing. And that opportunities for AILA’s involvement in workshops, meetings and site visits as a stakeholder be accommodated.
 9. Comments above demonstrate that the AILA inner harbour listings including Ballast Point Park, presents rare landscape heritage planning opportunities. A serial or group listing (enabling the listing of items that of themselves may fall short) using a world heritage approach for the protection of the harbour’s invaluable green open spaces, landforms, visual and spatial qualities, and waterways. Embracing these AILA harbour listings not only protects the unique landscape character of Sydney’s harbour but continues a legacy of green spaces and cultural landscape conservation for generations to come.



CONCLUSION

AILA welcomes the opportunity to discuss the progress of the Ballast Point Park listing and the remaining AILA Landscape Heritage nominations. AILA and Heritage NSW have collaboratively invested time and energy into protecting significant landscape heritage, as Badangi has well demonstrated. Collaboration and connection with other stakeholders such as Inner West Council, and meaningful First Nations engagement will ensure a magnificent landscape heritage outcome for the harbour and the people of NSW.

Sincerely yours,

David Moir

AILA NSW President