

GUIDELINES FOR LIMITED DEVELOPMENT OF WOLLONGONG HARBOUR



Prepared for
Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA) of NSW

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**Land & Property
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BACKGROUND

The Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA) is proposing limited development of Wollongong Harbour to increase the tourism and recreational potential of the site and provide interpretation of the wealth of history associated with the site. The development would also establish a long term funding stream to maintain the heritage assets of the harbour. To better understand the position of the local community the Minister for Lands established the Wollongong Harbour Consultative Committee in 2008. The committee included a cross section of the Wollongong community who were selected to look at the potential for limited development in the precinct. The Consultative Committees findings have informed this report.

Early in 2010 the Heritage Council of NSW put on public exhibition a proposal to list the Wollongong Harbour precinct on the State Heritage Register. The proposal was strongly supported (including by LPMA) and the precinct has now been added to the list of items of state significance. The listing gives a special status to the harbour and makes the Heritage Council a joint approval body for any new works within the precinct. The Heritage Council in determining the state listing also acknowledged that limited sympathetic development could occur on the site.

To coincide with the exhibition for state listing LPMA exhibited a draft "Guidelines for Limited Development of Wollongong Harbour". A series of options were presented for development on 5 sites labelled A, B, C, D and E. A number of submissions were received with some being supportive and some being against. A number of submissions incorrectly assumed that unsympathetic development might occur across the whole site. This was never intended and LPMA have gone to great lengths to work with the Heritage Council to ensure that any potential development will fit within the heritage constraints applying to the site and can be approved by the Heritage Council.

The Heritage Council clearly supports the concept of the harbour as a living and evolving place. With state listing it is normal to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) or a Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) to determine detailed significance of individual items and to understand the complex layering of the site as it was developed over time. A CMS has now been prepared by Heritage Architect Jean Rice. This work has provided significantly more information about the site and the way it was used over a 200 year period. The CMS found that there was a continuous series of large shed like buildings constructed on various sites around the harbour.

A special section of the CMS (8.2) is an analysis of past building forms. This leads to recommendations for new buildings to generally follow the typology of building forms that have evolved over time in the precinct. There are however some exceptions particularly where sites are cut into the hill that adjoins Belmore Basin where a different form may be appropriate. The CMS defines the existing Co-op building as being intrusive due to its height, mass, style and location. There are however ways to modify the building to make it less intrusive.

The CMS should be read in conjunction with these limited development guidelines particularly section 6.4 Future Development and Use and section 8.2 Analysis of Past Building Forms. Following a year of detailed discussions with the Heritage Council and heritage experts the options included in the exhibited version of these guidelines have now been narrowed down to a single set of guidelines for each site. Sites A, B, C, D and E, now have a clear set of design guidelines that is compatible with the CMS and in the spirit of the Heritage Council's resolution about sympathetic development.

The attached diagram identifies the locations of sites A, B, C, D and E.



DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

A. DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS FOR SITE A

Site A is the area around the existing Co-op building including the carpark to the west.

A.01 The existing Co-op building should be modified to reduce its intrusive nature at an appropriate time. This may mean reducing the height and bulk of the building, improving public access around the building from the waterfront and looking at colour schemes and external detailing. These are matters between the tenant and LPMA.

A.02 A new building could be constructed to the west of the Co-op in the existing car park.

A.03 The building should be sited to enable a single width road to be located on the southern side of the car park without impacting on the existing trees.

A.04 The building should generally fit within a site envelope of 40m X 12m.

A.05 The building should be a reasonable distance back from the seawall to maintain a clear public promenade. A setback of at least 10m is advisable.

A.06 The building should read as a simple shed form or as a series of shed forms with gable roofs (see CMS 8.2).

A.07 The building should read as having a large single story scale but may have a mezzanine level within or an upper level.

A.08 The building should be recessive in colour and have a robust nautical character.

A.09 Uses should relate to the maritime precinct with activities that could include boating, fishing, whale watching, recreational food and drink.

A.10 The building could include an interpretation area to explain the history of the site.

B. DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS FOR SITE B

Site B is the V shaped site at the east of Belmore Basin. The site connects the lower level of Belmore Basin with the roadway on top of the cutting.

B.01 A building on this site could connect the two levels on the site.

As the upper level is likely to have the main parking for the precinct in nearby areas there is an opportunity for visitors to arrive through this building.

B.02 A new building could be constructed on the current car parking / storage area and could be cut into the bank. The building could be V shaped to relate to the site or a simple rectangle.

B.03 The building should generally fit within an envelope of 50m X 12m (adapted if in a V shape).

B.04 The building should not get too close to the seawall of Belmore Basin and should be set back some 10m.

B.05 The building should have a strong masonry base to relate to the earth bank. Walls above this can be lightweight materials.

B.06 The building can be 2 storeys high but should read as a unified shed-like element or be a height that joins the upper and lower levels and reads as part of the landscape.

B.07 The roof may need to be relatively flat to ensure that views to the lighthouse are not impacted.

B.08 The building should be recessive in colour and have a robust nautical character or read as part of the hillside.

B.09 Uses should relate to the maritime precinct with activities related to boating, fishing, diving, whale watching, authentic tourism retail, recreational food and drink.

B.10 The building could include an interpretation area to explain the history of the site.

C. DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS FOR SITE C

Site C is the Central Pier precinct to the north of Belmore Basin. It currently contains a number of sheds and boats stored on land.

C.01 This site can accommodate a number of buildings that relate to maritime industries. The suite of buildings should have an informal composition.

C.02 Buildings must not encroach on the existing slipway to the east. They should be set back at least 20m from Belmore Basin and not intrude into the existing bitumen area on the west.

C.03 On the north it is likely that a timber boardwalk would give better access to the sandy beach.

C.04 Buildings should only cover about 50% of the site giving a total buildable site area of around 1,500 sqm.

C.05 Buildings should read as a simple shed form with pitched, hipped or gabled roofs (see CMS 8.2).

C.06 Buildings should read as a large single story scale but may have a mezzanine within or upper level.

C.07 The buildings should be recessive in colour and have a robust nautical character.

C.08 Uses should relate to maritime activities including boating, fishing, diving, whale watching, boat building, boat repairs, authentic tourism retail, recreational food and drink.

C.09 One of the buildings could contain an interpretation centre to explain the history of the site.

D. DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS FOR SITE D

Site D is along the roadway on the south of Belmore Basin adjacent to the cliff face. The large structures that loaded coal onto boats were located here along the cliff face and these could be represented by new structures.

D.01 Vehicles will need to pass along the road to service boats so there is limited space for development.

D.02 A number (max 4) of kiosks or sites for temporary use could be located close to the cliff face.

D.03 Kiosks should be no bigger than 12 sqm each.

D.04 Kiosks could have a higher level above the cliff face (similar to the original structures).

D.05 The design of the structures must be very simple with recessive colours.

D.06 The kiosks/ structures should have maritime or recreation related uses.

D.07 The kiosks/ structures could also be interpretation centres particularly in relation to the original coal loading structures.

E. DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS FOR SITE E

Site E is the northern bay contained by the northern breakwater.

E.01 There is a potential to restructure the moorings in this area to provide fixed moorings to enable more capacity for boat moorings. This may require a small jetty nearby to provide small boat access or this could be provided from site B.