

THE FORMER PORT KEMBLA SCHOOL

114-126 MILITARY ROAD,
PORT KEMBLA NSW

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



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Prepared for:

MMJ Real Estate

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Frontispiece Children in the playground and Port Kembla Primary School 1982

Source: Wollongong City Library P23692 (Fairfax Collection)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE BRIEF

The following report has been prepared to provide a Heritage Interpretation Management Strategy in connection with the proposed redevelopment of the former Port Kembla Public School at 114-126 Military Road, Port Kembla, NSW. The report has been prepared on behalf of MMJ Real Estate.

The former school buildings have been demolished and are to be redeveloped for a medium density, residential development.

1.2 BACKGROUND

A Planning Proposal for the redevelopment of the site has been considered by Wollongong City Council. Note 4 of Council's business paper for the proposal dated 10th May 2021 required:

4. The applicant prepare a Heritage Interpretation Management Strategy which is to comprise of the following and will inform the design guidelines of the site, and which is to be exhibited with the draft Planning Proposal –

I Key views and site lines into and out of the site;

II Historic built form locations and building siting, access points etc;

III Social History of the site and the significance of past debates over conflicts with adjacent industrial development and the school and school activism in this space which eventually led to the relocation of the school;

IV The role of the school in providing education to the local Aboriginal community;

V Appropriate means for providing on site interpretation and recognition of historic significance of the site; and

VI Consideration of any special Aboriginal Cultural Significance, and/or archaeological significance attached to the site.

This Strategy has been prepared in response to the Condition.

1.3 LIMITATIONS AND TERMS

The terms *fabric, conservation, maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation, compatible use and cultural significance* used in this report are as defined in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter.

No further primary research was carried out for this report.

1.4 OTHER REPORTS

A Historical Heritage Assessment has been prepared the place:

Biosis, Lot 1 Military Road, Port Kembla, Historical Heritage Assessment, dated March 2018 (HHA)

1.5 OTHER REPORTS

An urban Design Analysis has prepared for the site:

Studio GL, *Former Port Kembla Primary School Site, Urban Design Analysis Report*, dated May 2021 (UDR)

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This report was prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Office *Interpreting Heritage Places and items Guidelines* (2005) and the guidelines in the *Heritage Information Series Heritage Interpretation Policy* (2005).

The philosophy adopted is that guided by the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 2013.

1.7 AUTHORS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared by John Oultram of John Oultram Heritage & Design, unless otherwise noted. John Oultram Heritage & Design was established in 1998 and is on the NSW Heritage Office list of heritage consultants.

1.8 THE STUDY AREA

The study area is Lot 1 in DP 811699 at Port Kembla, Parish of Kembla County of Camden (Figures 1.1A and 1.1B).

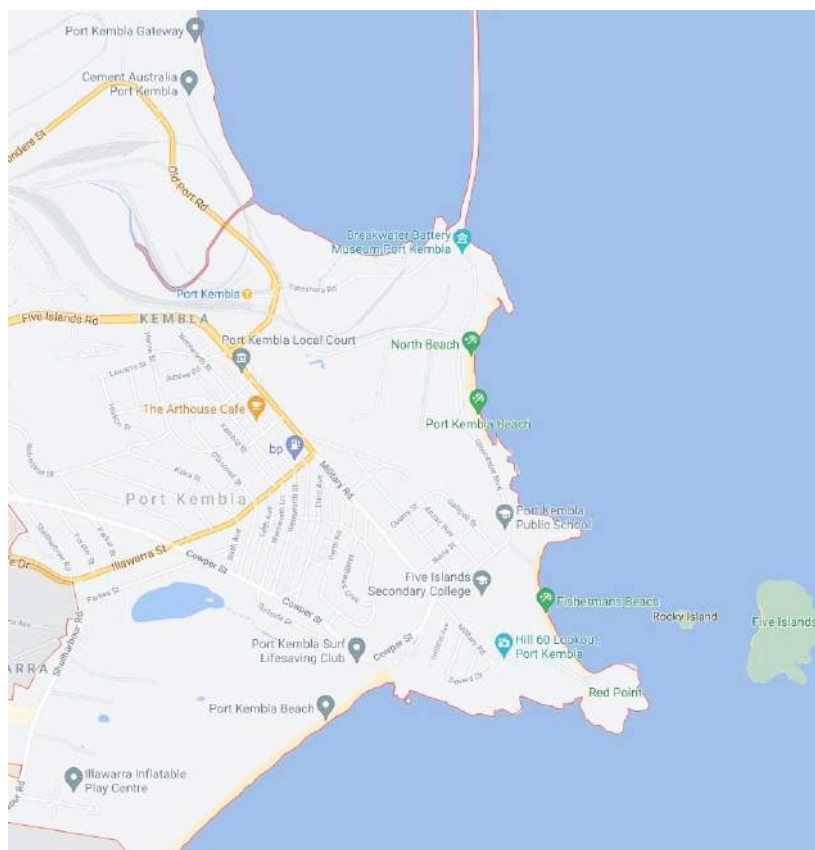


Figure 1.1 Location Plan

Source: Google Maps

The site is to the southeast of the Port Kembla township and is bounded by Military Road, Marne Street, Reservoir Street and Electrolytic Street.



Figure 1.1 The study area

Source: Six Maps

2.0 INTERPRETATION

2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERPRETATION POLICY

Interpretation of a place can play an important role in understanding the historical and physical development of the place. The interpretation can inform the public and specialists alike and allow the place to be understood and change to be readable.

Interpretation is not limited to descriptive plaques but can be represented in the methods used to make changes to allow that change to be readable. Interpretation can also include representation of previous forms, or layouts, with modern materials (e.g. footings). It can also include simply leaving material in place even if it has been modified. In this instance the former school buildings have been demolished and any remains would in the form of archaeological remains (e.g. footings) though there are some surface materials visible (concrete and asphalt hardstands, brick retaining walls and paths).

Interpretation is based on the known history of a place and the assessment of significance of the place and its elements. This assessment is contained in the HHA prepared for the site. The focus of interpretation is usually based on the more significant events or elements at the place, but can also reflect the more mundane roles of a place as the collective memory of a place is based on both important and insignificant events.

The built methods for interpretation can be quite subtle, or more pronounced, depending on the required readability or significance of the element being altered. The work may involve *conservation restoration*, or *reconstruction*¹ to maintain a place or return it to a known, previous state. Decisions as to this work should be guided by the heritage studies that have been prepared and the relative significance of the elements.

This process is well illustrated in the *Illustrated Burra Charter*² that gives a good background as to why the process is important and the methods for achieving it. These methods can be quite subtle, or more pronounced, depending on the required readability or significance of the element being altered.

The following themes have been selected for interpretation:

- Aboriginal Occupation and Settlement
- Post European Historical Development including:
 - Development of Port Kembla
 - Development of the former Port Kembla Primary School

¹ As defined in the *ICOMOS Burra Charter* 1999

² Marquie-Kyle, Peter & Meredith Walker 1992

3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 PREAMBLE

The history of the study area was outlined in Section 3.0 of the HHA and a summary of the development of the place is noted below.

3.2 ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION

The earliest undisputed radiocarbon date from the region comes from a rockshelter site on the western side of the Nepean known as Shaws Creek K2 which has been dated to 14,700 years before present (BP). This site is over 50 km north from the study area along the Nepean River. To the south, along the coast just north of Shellharbour, the site of Bass Point has been dated at 17,101 +/- 750 BP.

Our knowledge of the social organisation of Aboriginal people prior to European contact is, to a large extent, reliant on documents written by European people. Such documents are affected by the inherent bias of these authors. They can, however, be used in conjunction with archaeological information in order to gain a picture of Aboriginal life in the region.

The study area is recognised as being within the traditional lands of the Wodi Wodi tribal group, which extended from around Stanwell Park to the Shoalhaven River, and inland to Picton, Moss Vale and Marulan. The Wodi Wodi spoke the Dharawal language. However Dharawal (Tharwal) was not a word they had heard of or used themselves. Many of the town and place names of the Illawarra are derived from the Dharawal language.

One significant area in the Port Kembla locality was Hill 60, the land had always been occupied by the local Aboriginal community. In 1909 the land was acquired by the Commonwealth under the *Lands Acquisition Act 1906* for defence purposes at Port Kembla, however once acquired little was done and as such it was continued to be occupied by the local Aboriginal people who had maintained a connection to the land for thousands of years.

3.3 ILLAWARRA

3.3.1 Early Settlement

From the deck of the Endeavour, Lieutenant James Cook first sighted the locality of Port Kembla on 27 April 1770 and named the peninsula Red Point after the colour of the sands and what would become Mount Keira, formally known as Hat Hill. It was not until 1796 that Matthew Flinders, George Bass and a crewman named Martin in the Tom Thumb set foot in the district.

The study area is situated within the grant made to David Allan on 24 January 1817 and consisted of 2,200 acres which was situated at Five Islands and included Red Point. The grant became known as "*Illawarra Farm*" and David Allan built a comfortable cottage on this property, but by June 1822 Allan departed the colony and the whole 2,200 was advertised for lease including the cottage and offices. An area of 200 acres had been cleared and it was subdivided into paddocks. Richard Jones purchased the whole 2,200 acres of Illawarra Farm on the 31 October 1827 for the sum of £1,617.18

Eventually, Illawarra Farm was purchased by William Charles Wentworth on 31 July 1828 for £1,700 who renamed the property Five Islands Estate. During this time Five Islands Estate was mainly comprised of agricultural leases, the study area was located within a part of the estate known as "Cotton Tree Flat". William Charles Wentworth died on 20 March 1872 leaving his Five Islands Estate to his son Darcy Bland Wentworth. There is no indication of any structures or historical features within the study area during this time.

3.3.2 Industrial Developments at Port Kembla

Darcy Bland Wentworth leased 30 acres to Mount Kembla Coal and Oil Company on 1 July 1882. In 1883 the company completed a coal loading jetty and railway from the port to its mine at Mount Kembla. In 1887 the Wollongong-based Southern Coal Company constructed its jetty, which shipped coal from its mines at Mount Keira, Mount Pleasant Corimal and South Bulli.

The Mount Kembla Company's jetty comprised a total of four houses, a store and the school with a similar number of houses associated with the Southern Coal Company's jetty.

The *Port Kembla Harbour Act 1898* changed this situation as a deep-water harbour was planned for Port Kembla. In 1900, the Public Works Department opened a quarry, built a railway between the quarry and the site of the eastern breakwater, and began reclamation work on swampy land around the harbour. The quarry, which borders the northern boundary of the study area but was exhausted by 1906 with operations moving elsewhere.

In 1908 saw the establishment of a new copper smelter at Port Kembla by the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company of Australia Ltd (ER&S). ER&S employed around 300 to 350 men whilst significantly boosting the labour market and enabled the town of Port Kembla to be established.

The configuration of Port Kembla in 1911 is shown in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1 The configuration of Port Kembla and the proposed harbor works at Port Kembla

Source: HHA p. 22

The study area is located within the land resumed as part of the harbour works. No development can be attributed to the study area during this time. The adjacent land was subject to subdivision in 1913 as part of the second subdivision of the Five Islands Estate. With the subdivision of Five Islands Estate came an influx of new buildings, one of these was the first St Stephens Anglican Church which was initially built in 1903 of a simple weatherboard structure, however this was replaced by the current church which was built in 1924-1925. The former Fire Station built c.1920 and opened in 1928.

3.3.3 Early Schooling in Port Kembla

On 1 March 1890 an application was made for the establishment of a Public School at Port Kembla as there were approximately 25 children in the neighbourhood who required educational facilities.

The application was approved and the school came into operation in July 1890. The school was opened in a small cottage or iron building rented from the Mount Kembla Coal Company near No. 3 jetty of Port Kembla Harbour. By March 1892, there were 16 students enrolled at Port Kembla with an average attendance of 13. At this time Berkeley had 16 students enrolled with an average attendance of 10. From 1892 Port Kembla and Berkeley Public Schools became half-time schools. The Department had implemented half-time schools since 1867 in order to provide an alternative to closure where two schools with low enrolments were close enough together to consolidate teaching resources.

This arrangement persisted until 1901. The location of school in relation to the study area can be seen in Figure 2.2.



Figure 2.2 1909 survey of Port Kembla showing the configuration of late nineteenth century buildings including the 1890 – 1901 school in relation to the study area (identified in red)

Source: HHA p. 23

3.3.4 First Port Kembla Public School

Following the resumption of the land for the Port Kembla Harbour which increased the local workforce school enrolments dramatically increased. In 1901, tenders were called for the erection of a Public School at Port Kembla on a site to the northwest of the study area. The schoolhouse was described as:

*"The building will be a wooden structure, and the size of the school room 36 feet by 21 feet, affording floor space for 94 pupils. No school house ever before was erected in the district that was more needed than this, as teachers, pupils, and parents can testify by latte experience."*³²

The school was opened on 9 July 1902 and was described as being:

"...situated on a nice hill overlooking the waters of the bay. The building is a wooden one, capable of accommodating some 90 pupils, and the playground is ample."

An additional row was added in 1903 to accommodate further pupils.

The construction of the deep-water harbour and the continued development of the coal mining industry led to the development of secondary industries in Port Kembla. In 1907 the Public Works department opted to sell 50 acres of resumed land and construct Military Road on the western boundary of this property.

These proposed works encompassed the Port Kembla Public School and as a result, the Department of Education were required to seek an alternative location. This presented a number of difficulties as the current school was located close to the workers camp associated with the harbour works and an alternative location for this camp had not been determined. By 1908 the Department of Public works had determined that the camp should be located in the north of the resumed area and the school was provided with a corresponding location close to the proposed camp location.

The school closed on 4 February 1908 and the school buildings were dismantled and relocated to their new location. Unfortunately the camp ended up not being relocated to the anticipated location that left the school over one kilometre from the town. The majority of students as a result had to cross a railway line and Salty Creek (formerly known as Salt Water Creek) to get to the school. Salt Water Creek was subject to repeated flooding which often left it with over two foot of water over the crossing.

This resulted in a great level of concern by local parents and locals. Criticism was levelled at the Department of Education over the selection of the new site, with claims that an alternative site closer to the township of Port Kembla should have been selected. The Port Kembla Progress Association was formed in 1908 and began to actively lobby the Public Instruction Department for a new school. By 1911 the school had an enrolment of around 120 which rose to 155 by 1914. A portable room had to be erected and a class had to be taken in a rented room in the town, however the school remained overcrowded. Whilst a commitment was given in 1915 by the Minister for Education to erect a new public school in the township of Port Kembla and despite intense local pressure no school was forthcoming until 1916.

The Department of Education issued a call for tenders on 22 September 1916 for the erection of a new school building at Port Kembla. The school was described as:

*"The school is erected on an elevated site containing an area of two acres, just above the electrolytic works. It is of two storey, constructed of brick, with pick dressing, and contains six class rooms 24 feet and 22 feet,, head master's room 12 x 12, cloak rooms 12 x 12, store room 8 x 12, concrete stairs and floors. The class rooms on each floor are divided by folding partitions, while special attention has been given to ventilation and light The roof is of asbestos slate. Verandahs and balconies surround the building, being enclosed with ornamental wire. First class lavatory accommodation has also been provided, and the grounds are enclosed with lawn wire fencing. The contract price, with extras, will be about £4,700."*⁴⁴

The enrolment at this time was over 200 and the first headmaster was Mr. James Henry. Attendance at the school increased and it became necessary to provide two portable classrooms to accommodate the students. It was not until April 1929 that the portable classroom was installed, furthermore it was not until July 1931 that the extensions were ready.

The extensions to the Public School, plus renovation works were done by the Education Departments own building staff at a cost of £5,500.45 A two storey extension was added in 1931 which increased the number of classrooms from six to 10. In addition to the classrooms a new porch verandah and extensions, two bathrooms, store, and fireproof staircase and additions to the outbuildings were completed. As such the double portable classroom was taken away.

The enrolment at the Public School had increased to around 460 pupils by 1934 with an increase to 480 by May of the same year. This led the Parents and Citizens Association to ask the Department to increase the school site by buying the two lots adjoining the school between Military and Reservoir Street. This area, as previously discussed had been subdivided and auctioned by the Department of Public Works in 1916. The land inspector was eager to acquire the land for the school but was over-ruled on the grounds that three acres was ample.

The Department came to acquire all 14 allotments within the block. The purchases and resumptions were undertaken during 1935- 36.

Expansion of the Port Kembla Public School continued into 1939 with the discussion to erect an infant's building to accommodate the 600 enrolled children. A double portable classroom had been erected in 1937 to solve the overcrowding issues, while waiting for the new building to be built.

The delay of construction was due to the outbreak of WWII in 1941, Port Kembla was evacuated and enrolment fell to 382. By 1943 most of the evacuees returned and the accommodation issue increased and remained a problems until 1947 when a double portable classroom arrived.

The school underwent further improvements in 1949:

The concreting of a wide area entirely around the school is progressing steadily. When this is completed there will be assembly space for the three departments. It is hoped to terrace the rest of the grounds and put them under grass. This should be most effective, especially when the unsightly portable rooms are removed. However, the headmaster Mt Reilly believe that even when the new infants' school is built, the portables will still be necessary, so rapidly is the enrolment increasing.

Already it has been necessary to resume, as playing area the ground occupied by a nearby cottage, as well as another allotment. 48

The long awaited construction of the new infant's building was underway during 1953 and was near completion:

The new building for the Infants' Department for the Port Kembla Public School is progressing so satisfactorily it is hoped to enter into occupation after the May vacation.

This will release the whole downstairs floor of the present building to the Boy's Department. in the grounds of the new school a most up-to-date Oslo-lunch-cutting room, fully equipped, will be provided.

Part of this room will be furnished with tables and chairs, where the children may eat their lunches.

The Infants' Department was finally opened in November 1953. It was a two-storey structure with 11 rooms and a hall. A canteen and shelter also opened.

The 1948-51 aerial shows the original school building (building 1), and the brick shop, building 2 as outlined in the 1935 plan. Building 3 could be that of the various portable buildings that occupied the study area throughout the occupation period of the Port Kembla Public School. Building 4 as depicted in the 1935 plan and Plate 2 could be that of the GI shed.

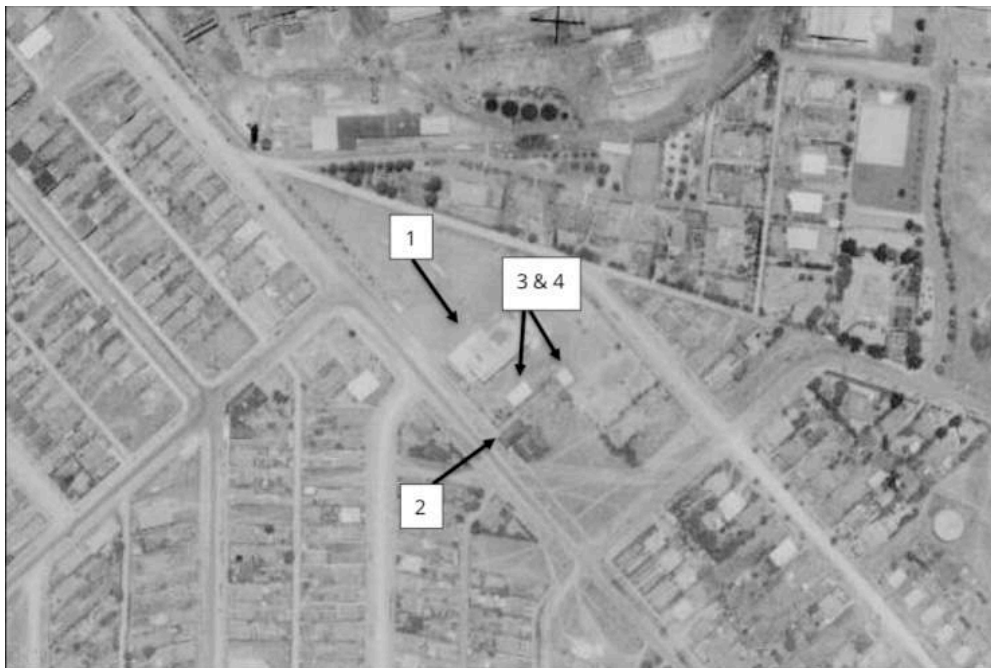


Figure 2.3 Aerial view of the subject site 1948-1951

Source: HHA p. 33

The 1961 aerial shows the original Public School building (building 1), the Infants' Building (building 8) and the associated outbuildings (buildings, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13). It can be seen that one of the possible portable buildings is still occupying the same space as in the 1948-51 aerial.

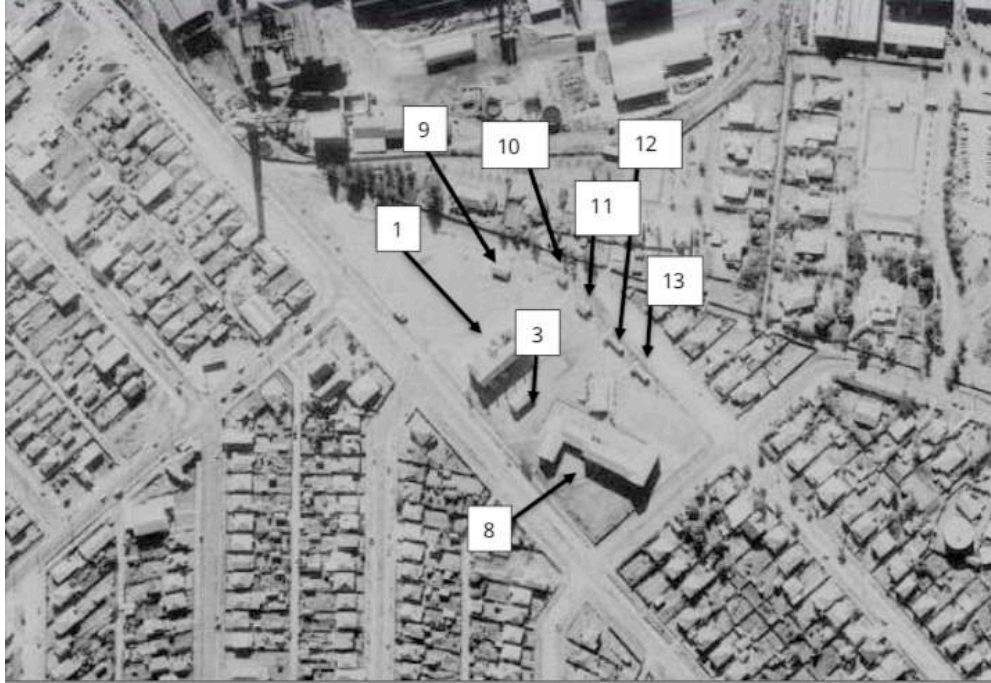


Figure 2.4 Aerial view of the subject site 1961

Source: HHA p. 34

The neighbouring ER and S Co., having changed their name to "Southern Copper Limited", closed the plant in January 1995. However, in December of 1996 the NSW Government decided to grant a Japanese consortium a licence to reopen the copper smelter. The plan to reopen the smelter in 1999 caused frustration in the community due to the unsafe levels of lead and arsenic in the soils found in the school's ground.

In March 1997, after years of complaining about the health fears of the neighbouring smelter, the Premier, Mr Carr agreed to remove the children declaring that the Government:

Maintains its views that environmental conditions imposed on the development are stringent and will be met...the education of children would have been disrupted by the ongoing concern among parents and teachers about the school's existing location

The new school was built for 240 students on a former warehouse site on Gloucester Boulevard. This saw the closure of the Port Kembla Public School in 1999 although; the new school was not opened until March 2000. The former Port Kembla Public School was later bought by Port Kembla Copper in 2001.

The abandoned school building burned down in January of 2013. Later that month, the remains of the school were demolished.

4.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The HHA contained an assessment and statement of significance:

4.1 PORT KEMBLA SCHOOL

The site of the Port Kembla Public School is of significance for the local area for historical, associative and social community reasons. Although the study area no longer contains the school buildings it is still has historical significance as a site of education of the children of the Port Kembla region since 1916 and its association with James Henry who was notable as a headmaster in the locality The study area is also of importance for the local community for social reasons due to its 80 year history as a school where the majority of local residents would have attended.

*The item is considered to be significant at a **local** level.*

HHA p. 50

5.0 SITE INSPECTION AND VIEWS

5.1 SITE

An inspection of the site was carried out by John Oultram in June 2021.

The former Port Kembla School Site is a trapezoidal site bounded by Military Road, Marne Street, Reservoir Street and Electrolytic Street. The site is relatively level at the upper section to the southeast but falls gradually to the northwest and north with series of embankments and retaining walls. The site falls more steeply to the northwest corner where there is a lower section with embankments to the adjoining streets.

The site has been largely cleared but there are remnant boundary walls, concrete and brick paths, concrete and asphalt hardstands, steps and retaining walls. Some brick footings are also visible.

The site is open to the southwest and laid to lawn with some perimeter plantings and a line of trees to the centre. The lower section has more plantings including shrubs and a line of Pine trees to Military Road.

There are extensive views from the site to the south, north and west.



Figure 5.1 Upper site area



Figure 5.2 Central site area



Figure 5.3 Central site area



Figure 5.4 Lower site area



Figure 5.5 Views to the site from Military Road and Hill 60

6.0 INTERPRETATION POLICY

6.1.1 Preamble

The place is most closely associated with the development of the Port Kembla Primary School and this will be the focus of the interpretation along with the Aboriginal occupation of the place.

It is axiomatic that the cultural significance of a place is largely embodied in its fabric but this has been mostly removed apart from some footings, pathways, hardstands, retaining walls and steps.

6.2 INTERPRETATION POLICY

6.2.1 Scope

From the above it is possible to develop policies for the interpretation of the place in regard to the:

- Aboriginal Occupation and Settlement
- Post European Historical Development including:
 - Development of Port Kembla
 - Education in Port Kembla
 - Development of the former Port Kembla Primary School

Interpretation will be in the form of introduced devices like display panels but will also be reflected in the design of the works in a area set aside for interpretation.

6.3 FORM OF THE INTERPRETATION

The interpretation will be in the form of:

6.3.1 Retention of Landscape

- Retention of mature trees

6.3.2 Demolished Structures

- Introduced devices
- Footing markings of main school building in public areas

6.3.3 Introduced Devices

The term *introduced devices* refers to features, sculptures plaques and the like that may demonstrate, describe or reflect an important aspect of the site.

The interpretation will take the form of:

- Layout to reflect both Aboriginal and Educational themes
- Artwork/structures to allow interpretation of Aboriginal themes
- Interpretation panels at the selected interpretation area and at the new development

The themes and information for the interpretation are identified in Appendix A.

6.4 LOCATION AND METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

An area to the northwest of the site is to be dedicated to RE2 Zone Public Recreation.

The area has expansive views to the east, north and west including to the harbour, foreshore, the former copper refinery, the steel works and the Illawarra escarpment.



Figure 6.1 Site plan showing the proposed development – interpretation will be carried out in the green area at the corner of Electrolytic Street and Military Road

Source: Client



Figure 6.2 View to the area selected for interpretation



View to the east



View to the north

Figure 6.3 Views from the interpretation area

The area can be landscaped with built structures reflecting the development of the site with the following interpretive elements suggested:

Aboriginal Themes	Yarning circle
	Totem poles with Aboriginal images and place names in the direction of views
	Indigenous plantings
	Introduces plaques
Development Port Kembla	Introduces plaques
	View references to the industrial development
Port Kembla Public School	Introduces plaques at the interpretation area and on the new building close to the former school
	Play equipment
	Ground material using salvaged brickwork from the school site
	Footing lines in public areas to show the location of the main school building
	Retention of mature trees



Figure 6.4 Totems on the Kiama coastal path

Source: Alamy



Figure 6.5 Approximate location of the former school on proposed footprint

Recent work at the Western Sydney University gives some design ideas as to the treatment of the area.

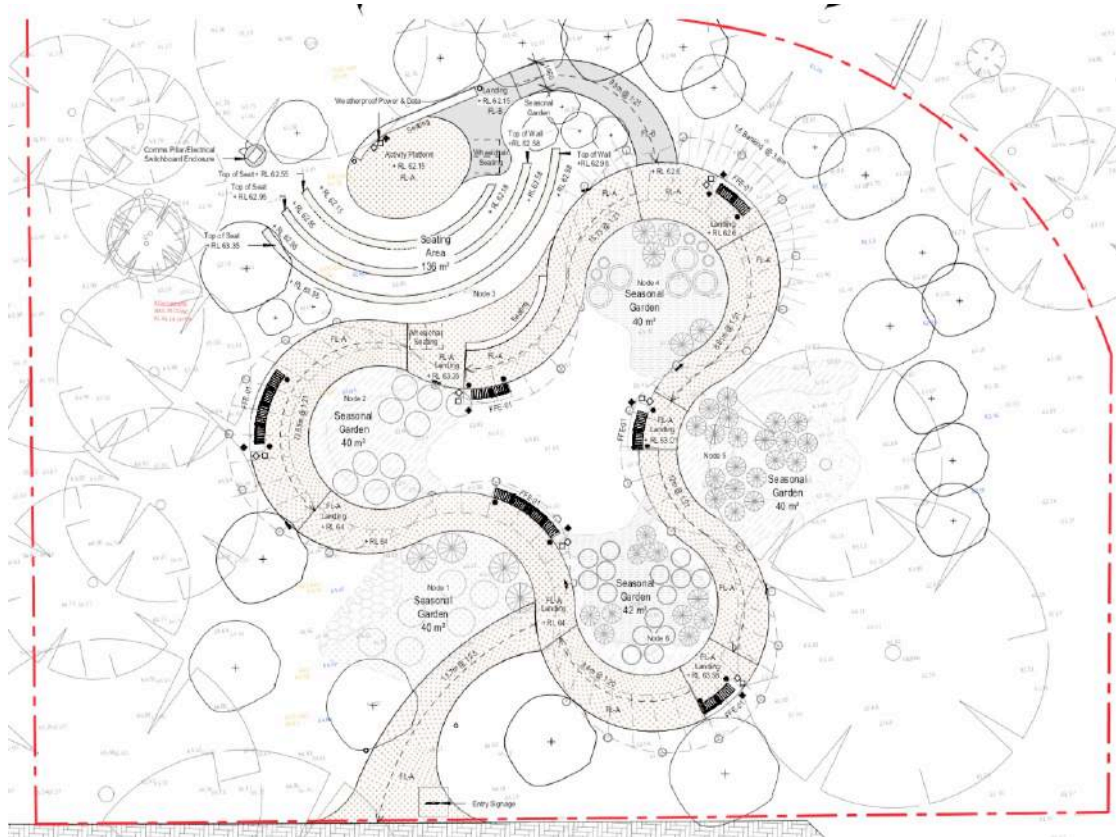
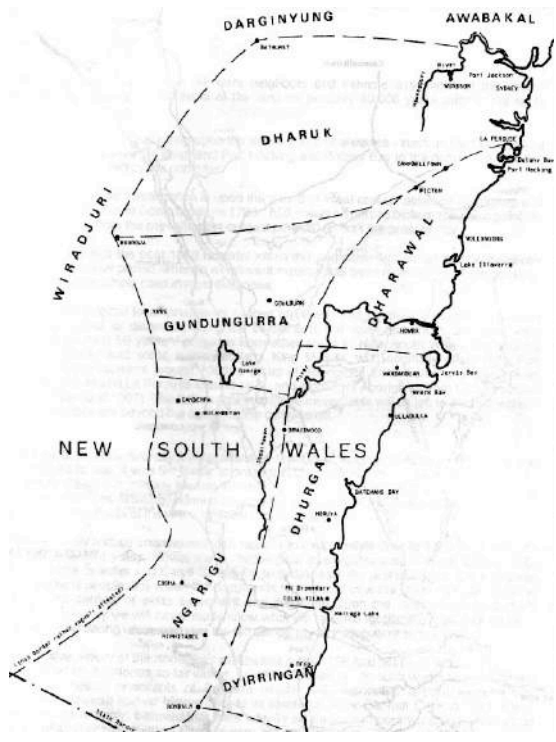


Figure 6.6 Proposed First Peoples Walk at Western Sydney University

Source: Kaunitz Yeung Architecture

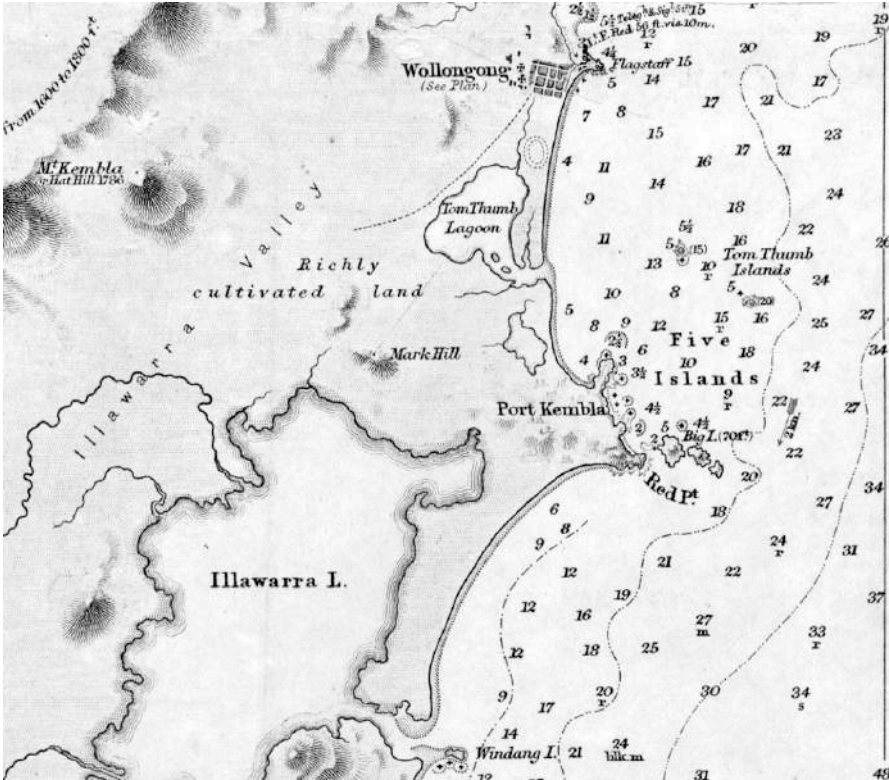
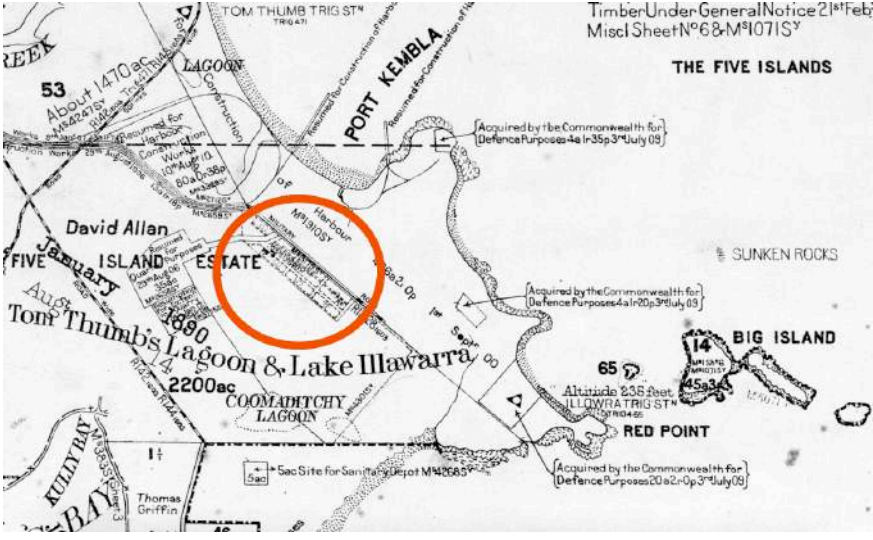
7.0 APPENDIX A - INTERPRETATION DEVICES AND THEMES

7.1 A1 ABORIGINAL THEMES

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	ABORIGINAL THEMES
ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION	Introduces Devices
BUILT	Aboriginal poles marked for views to surrounding area with Aboriginal symbols and place names
TEXT	<p>Knowledge of the social organisation of Aboriginal people prior to European contact is, to a large extent, reliant on documents written by European people.</p> <p>The study area is recognised as being within the traditional lands of the Wodi Wodi tribal group who are a part of the Dharawal Nation, which extended from around Stanwell Park to the Shoalhaven River, and inland to Picton, Moss Vale and Marulan.</p> <p>The Wodi Wodi spoke the Dharawal language. However Dharawal (Tharwal) was not a word they had heard of or used themselves. Many of the town and place names of the Illawarra are derived from the Dharawal language.</p> <p>Dharawal people are distinguished as fresh water, bitter water or salt water people depending on whether they occupied the coastal regions, the swamps, or the plateaus and inland river valleys.</p> <p>Traditional stories tell of their arrival at the mouth of Lake Illawarra in canoes. They brought the dharawal (cabbage tree palm) with them from the north and are given their name from this sacred tree</p>
IMAGE	
SOURCE	Kiama Library Aboriginal Nations Map

7.2 A2 DEVELOPMENT PORT KEMBLA

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
DEVELOPMENT OF PORT KEMBLA	Introduces Devices
TEXT	<p>From the deck of the Endeavour, Lieutenant James Cook first sighted the locality of Port Kembla on 27 April 1770 and named the peninsula Red Point after the colour of the sands and what would become Mount Keira, formally known as Hat Hill. It was not until 1796 that Matthew Flinders, George Bass and a crewman named Martin in the Tom Thumb set foot in the district.</p> <p>The development of Port Kembla is inextricably linked with coal mines, iron, steel, copper and shipping.</p> <p>The greater part of Port Kembla, is located within the 2,200 acres (890 ha.) formally granted to David Allan by Governor Macquarie in 1817. The land at Illawarra was named Illawarra Farm that by 1827 Illawarra Farm was owned by William Charles Wentworth. Over the remaining decades of the nineteenth century Allan's land at Port Kembla was owned by WC Wentworth and his family.</p> <p>The sea frontage north of Red Point provided a sheltered port, which was developed initially by local mining companies. The first to do so was the Mount Kembla Coal and Oil Company, which was formed in 1878 to mine coal at Mount Kembla. Between 1880 and 1883 the Company completed a railway to and a jetty at Port Kembla. In 1887 the Southern Oil Company had built another commercial jetty at Port Kembla.</p> <p>In 1898 the NSW government decided to build a deep water port, and in 1900 work commenced on building the first breakwater that was completed in 1908. The coal jetty, known as No 1 Jetty, was completed in 1915. The local coal mines closed the small sea jetties, and shifted to rail transport of coal to Port Kembla. Work commenced on the northern breakwater in 1912, and this was completed in 1925.</p> <p>The <i>Port Kembla Harbour Act</i> provided for the resumption of land necessary for the harbour works, and an area of 496 1/2 acres (201 ha) was acquired in 1900 from the Wentworth family. This resumed area was east of Military Road.</p> <p>On completion of the first breakwater in 1908 the resumed area east of Military Road evidently was surplus to government requirement and was sold. The first development in this area came with the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Co (ERS), which was founded at Port Kembla in December 1908, and commenced smelting copper ore in 1909.</p> <p>Following opening of the port facility the Wentworth family subdivided a portion of its estate west of Military Road to form a town centre. This land release, sold as the 1st Subdivision of the Five Islands Estate in June 1909.</p> <p>Some of the very earliest developments at Port Kembla were located outside the 1909 land release including the public school that commenced in 1890, the first post office agency that opened in 1901 and the first church, St Stephen's (from about 1902). Over the 1910s Wentworth Street developed into the commercial centre for Port Kembla and included licensed hotels including the Great Eastern Hotel (1912) and the Port Kembla Hotel (1917). 1915 saw the opening of the Empire Hall on the former site of the former Whiteway Theatre.</p>

IMAGE	
	Detail from the Admiralty survey of the east coast of Australia (NSW Sheet III) completed in 1867 and corrected in 1873
Source	National Library of Australia (obj-230056569)
IMAGE	
	Detail from the NSW Department of Lands map of Parish of Wollongong (Co. Camden) dated 1915 showing the areas resumed by the government from 1900 for harbour works. Also shown is the private township subdivision (Wentworth Street)
Source	National Library of Australia (obj-233990061)

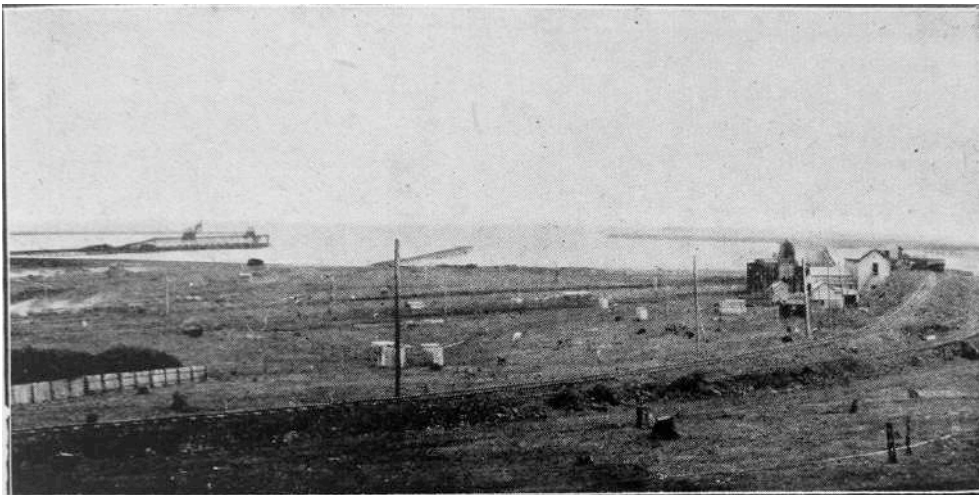

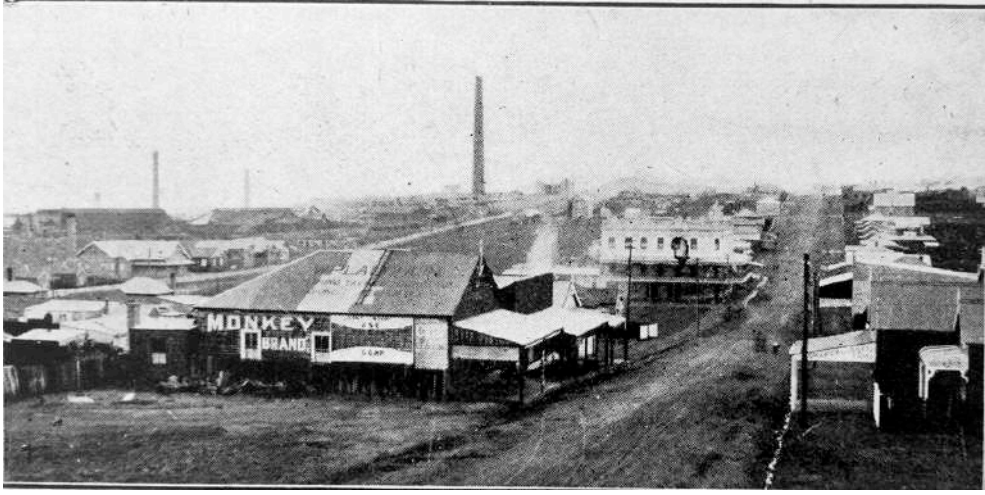

<p>IMAGE</p>	
<p>Source</p>	<p>Looking from the Great Eastern Hotel (later Steelworks) toward the harbour at Port Kembla in 1919 Port Kembla the lake suburb, Lake Illawarra, Henry F Halloran & Co, 1919</p>
<p>IMAGE</p>	

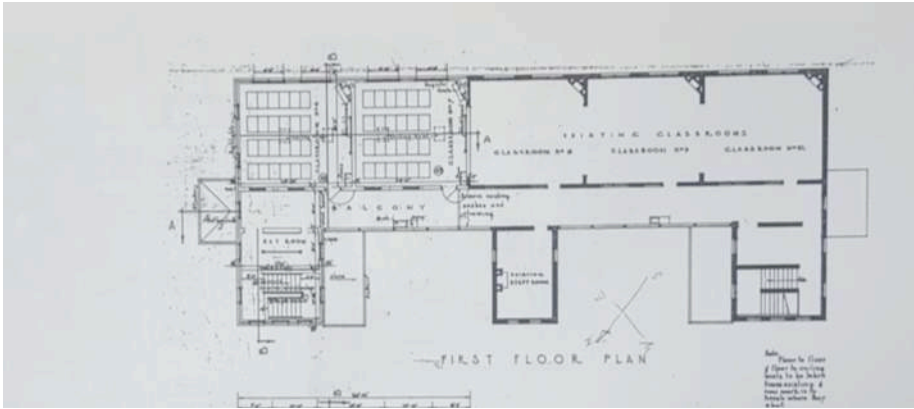
IMAGE	
	<p>Looking toward the harbour. The rising ground of the northern length of Wentworth Street in this photograph was characterised by vacant allotments and a handful of commercial developments. Not dated, but late 1910s</p>
Source	<p>Wollongong City Library (P02/268)</p>
IMAGE	
	<p>Wentworth Street in 1919. At right is the Empire Hall</p>
Source	<p>Henry F Hallaron & Co., <i>Port Kembla the lake suburb</i>, John Sands, 1919</p>

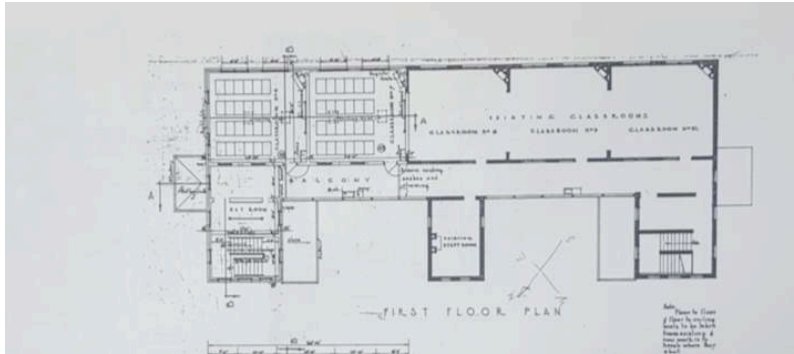
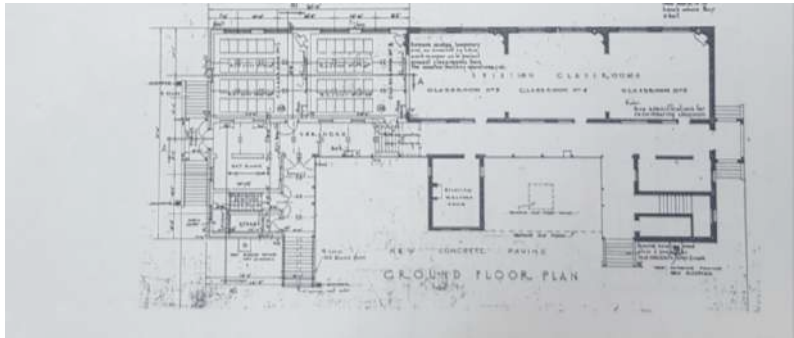
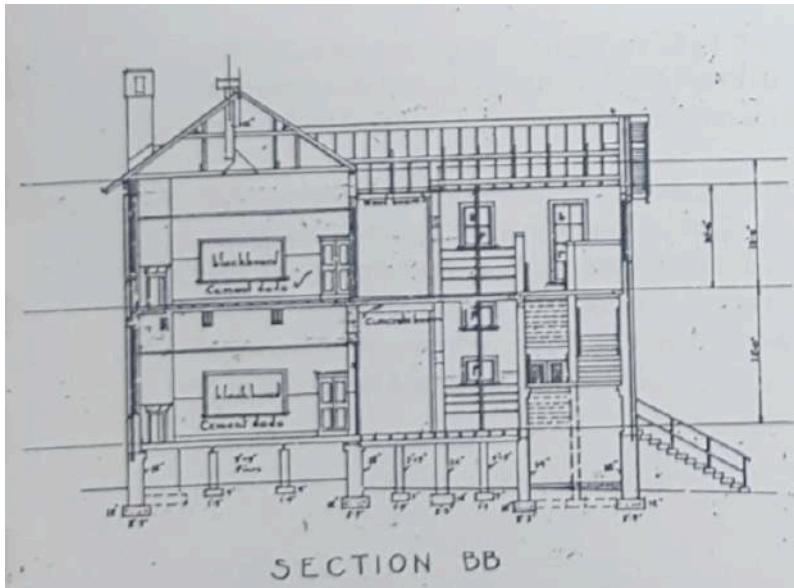
7.3 A3 EDUCATION IN PORT KEMBLA

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
EDUCATION IN PORT KEMBLA	Introduces Devices
TEXT	<p>On 1 March 1890 an application was made for the establishment of a Public School at Port Kembla as there were approximately 25 children in the neighbourhood who required educational facilities.</p> <p>The application was approved and the school came into operation in July 1890. The school was opened in a small cottage or iron building rented from the Mount Kembla Coal Company near No. 3 jetty of Port Kembla Harbour. By March 1892, there were 16 students enrolled at Port Kembla with an average attendance of 13.</p>




INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
DEVELOPMENT OF PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
THE FIRST SCHOOLS	
TEXT	<p>The study area is located within the land resumed as part of the harbour works.</p> <p>In 1901, tenders were called for the erection of a Public School at Port Kembla on a site to the north-west of the study area. The school house was described as:</p> <p><i>"The building will be a wooden structure, and the size of the school room 36 feet by 21 feet, affording floor space for 94 pupils. No school house ever before was erected in the district that was more needed than this, as teachers, pupils, and parents can testify by latte experience."</i>³²</p> <p>The school was opened on 9 July 1902 and was described as being:</p> <p><i>"...situated on a nice hill overlooking the waters of the bay. The building is a wooden one, capable of accommodating some 90 pupils, and the playground is ample."</i></p> <p>An additional row was added in 1903 to accommodate further pupils.</p> <p>Works for the deep-water harbour and the continued development of the coal mining industry led to the Department of Education were required to seek an alternative location. The school closed in February 1908 and the school buildings were dismantled and relocated to a new location though this proved unsatisfactory being a kilometre from the township.</p> <p>The Port Kembla Progress Association was formed in 1908 and began to actively lobby the Public Instruction Department for a new school. By 1911 the school had an enrolment of around 120 which rose to 155 by 1914 and the school became overcrowded. The Minister for Education committed to erect a new public school at Port Kembla that arrived 1916.</p>
IMAGE	
	The first Port Kembla Public School
Source	South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus, 21 December p. 5

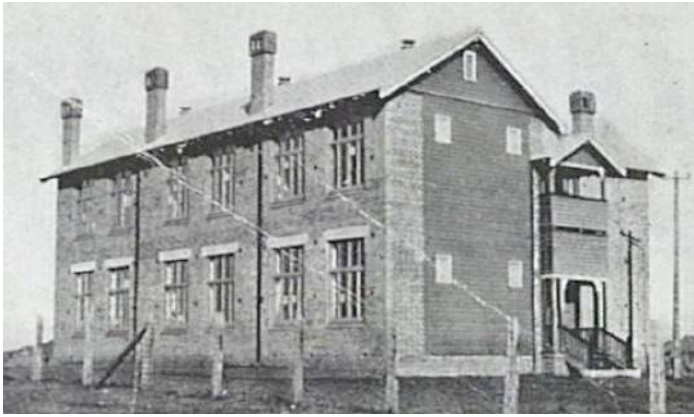

7.4 A4 PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL



INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
DEVELOPMENT OF PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	
TEXT	<p>The Department of Education issued a call for tenders on 22 September 1916 for the erection of a new school building at Port Kembla. The school was described as:</p> <p><i>"The school is erected on an elevated site containing an area of two acres, just above the electrolytic works. It is of two storey, constructed of brick, with pick dressing, and contains six class rooms 24 feet and 22 feet,, head master's room 12 x 12, cloak rooms 12 x 12, store room 8 x 12, concrete stairs and floors. The class rooms on each floor are divided by folding partitions, while special attention has been given to ventilation and light The roof is of asbestos slate. Verandahs and balconies surround the building, being enclosed with ornamental wire. First class lavatory accommodation has also been provided, and the grounds are enclosed with lawn wire fencing. The contract price, with extras, will be about £4,700."</i>⁴⁴</p> <p>The enrolment at this time was over 200 and the first headmaster was Mr. James Henry. Attendance at the school increased and a two storey extension was added in July 1931.</p>
IMAGE	 <p>The image is a detailed architectural floor plan of the first floor of a school extension. The plan shows a large rectangular building with several rooms. On the left side, there are three classrooms labeled 'CLASSROOM 24', 'CLASSROOM 22', and 'CLASSROOM 20'. To the right of these is a larger room labeled 'EXISTING CLASSROOMS'. Below the classrooms, there is a 'HEAD MASTER'S ROOM', 'CLOAK ROOMS', and a 'STORE ROOM'. A 'VERANDAH' runs along the bottom of the building. The plan also shows a 'BALCONY' and a 'STAIRS' area. The title 'FIRST FLOOR PLAN' is centered at the bottom. A scale bar is located at the bottom left, and a north arrow is at the bottom right. A small note in the bottom right corner reads: 'Notes: Figures in Parenthesis show approximate measurements of some of the rooms. Plans are based on actual measurements.' </p>
	1931 Flor plans for the school extension
Source	NSW Public Works



INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
IMAGE	 <p>A detailed architectural ground floor plan for a school extension. The plan shows a large rectangular building with multiple rooms labeled 'CLASSROOMS' and 'STUDY'. There are also areas labeled 'HALL' and 'CORRIDOR'. The plan includes a north arrow and a scale bar. The title 'FIRST FLOOR PLAN' is centered at the bottom.</p>
	1931 Ground floor plan for the school extension
Source	NSW Public Works
IMAGE	 <p>A detailed architectural first floor plan for a school extension. The plan shows a large rectangular building with multiple rooms labeled 'CLASSROOMS' and 'STUDY'. There are also areas labeled 'HALL' and 'CORRIDOR'. The plan includes a north arrow and a scale bar. The title 'GROUND FLOOR PLAN' is centered at the bottom.</p>
	1931 First floor plan for the school extension
Source	NSW Public Works
IMAGE	 <p>A detailed architectural section drawing of a school extension. The drawing shows a cross-section of the building, revealing the internal structure, including rooms, corridors, and a staircase. The title 'SECTION BB' is centered at the bottom.</p>
	1931 Section for the school extension
Source	NSW Public Works

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
DEVELOPMENT OF PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	
TEXT	<p>The enrolment at the Public School had increased to around 460 pupils by 1934 with an increase to 480 by May of the same year. This led the Parents and Citizens Association to ask the Department to increase the school site by buying the two lots adjoining the school between Military and Reservoir Street.</p> <p>The Department came to acquire all 14 allotments within the block during 1935-1936.</p> <p>Expansion of the Port Kembla Public School continued into 1939 with aims to erect an infant's building to accommodate the 600 enrolled children.</p> <p>The school underwent further improvements in 1949:</p> <p><i>The concreting of a wide area entirely around the school is progressing steadily. When this is completed there will be assembly space for the three departments. It is hoped to terrace the rest of the grounds and put them under grass. This should be most effective, especially when the unsightly portable rooms are removed. However, the headmaster Mt Reilly believe that even when the new infants' school is built, the portables will still be necessary, so rapidly is the enrolment increasing.</i></p> <p><i>Already it has been necessary to resume, as playing area the ground occupied by a nearby cottage, as well as another allotment. 48</i></p> <p>The long awaited construction of the new infant's building was underway during 1953.</p> <p><i>The new building for the Infants' Department for the Port Kembla Public School is progressing so satisfactorily it is hoped to enter into occupation after the May vacation.</i></p> <p><i>This will release the whole downstairs floor of the present building to the Boy's Department. in the grounds of the new school a most up-to-date Oslo-lunch-cutting room, fully equipped, will be provided.</i></p> <p><i>Part of this room will be furnished with tables and chairs, where the children may eat their lunches.</i></p> <p>In March 1997, after years of complaining about the health fears of the neighbouring smelter, the Premier, Mr Carr agreed to remove the children declaring that the Government:</p> <p><i>Maintains its views that environmental conditions imposed on the development are stringent and will be met...the education of children would have been disrupted by the ongoing concern among parents and teachers about the school's existing location</i></p> <p>The new school was built for 240 students in Gloucester Boulevard. The Port Kembla Public School in 1999 and the abandoned school building burned down in January of 2013. Later that month, the remains of the school were demolished.</p>

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
IMAGE	
	Port Kembla Public School
Source	Wollongong City Library P09/P09043
IMAGE	
	Port Kembla Public School 1917
Source	Wollongong City Library (Illawarra Mercury Collection) P24446
IMAGE	
	Port Kembla Public School 1917
Source	Wollongong City Library (Illawarra Mercury Collection) P24445

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
IMAGE	
	Port Kembla Public School 1919
Source	Wollongong City Library P13/P13348
IMAGE	
	Port Kembla Public School 1994
Source	Wollongong City Library P09/P09042

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
PUPILS OF PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
IMAGE	
	Pupils at Port Kembla Public School 1937
Source	Wollongong City Library P15/P15215
IMAGE	
	Pupils at Port Kembla Public School 1941
Source	Wollongong City Library P15/P15214

INTERPRETATION	
THEME	REPRESENTATION
PUPILS OF PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL	Introduces Devices
IMAGE	
	Pupils at Port Kembla Public School 1958
Source	Wollongong City Library P24228
IMAGE	
	Pupils at Port Kembla Public School 1973
Source	Wollongong City Library P18/P18153