

## **CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Dawn Fraser Baths, Balmain

August 2018



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**DAWN FRASER BATHS, BALMAIN**

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# 1.0

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 REPORT OVERVIEW

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Dawn Fraser Baths in Balmain, has been prepared for the Inner West Council, to accompany a development application for the site that would rebuild the Southern Pavilion and alter the Entry Building to address major structural issues, projected sea level rise and code non-compliance. The main proposed changes are:

- Raise the southern boardwalk and ground floor levels by approximately 1.25 metres with a suspended slab and sandstone sea wall;
- Demolish and reconstruct the Southern Pavilion, at higher level using salvaged material as feasible;
- Sympathetically alter the Entry Building for the raised ground level; and
- Reconstruct the first floor balcony at a consistent height, generally matching the 1900 design.

### 1.2 REPORT OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this CMP is to develop strategies and guidelines prior to any future upgrading of the existing heritage buildings and the site for continued use. It establishes the heritage significance of the property, identifies the original features and surviving fabric, and recommends appropriate policies to conserve these in any future plans to upgrade the building.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

This CMP has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines contained in *The Conservation Management Plan*, by James Semple Kerr, and *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, 2013, also known by its more common title *The Burra Charter*. The *Burra Charter* 2013 and *The Australian Natural Heritage Charter* 2002 both provide definitions, principles and processes, for the conservation of items of cultural significance.



**Figure 1.1**  
Location map showing the subject site marked with a red circle  
Source: NSW LPI SIX Maps Website



**Figure 1.2**  
Aerial photograph showing the subject site marked with a red circle  
Source: NSW LPI SIX Maps Website



This CMP also follows guidelines set out in the *NSW Heritage Manual*. The aim of these documents is to assist with the identification of items of heritage significance. This assessment assists in providing guidance on substance, structure and methodology for the writing of effective conservation management plans.

This CMP is divided into sections, dealing with the history of the Baths and its immediate area, the physical description of its structures, the assessment of its significance, and options for ongoing use including constraints and opportunities.

## 1.4 SITE IDENTIFICATION

The subject site is located in the Parramatta River on the shores of Balmain. The Baths are surrounded by Elkington Park on its western and southern and the Fitzroy Avenue Park to the east. The nearest street, accessed from the site via a staircase up a steep slope to the south, is Fitzroy Avenue. It is described by NSW Land and Property Information (LPI) as Lot 1, DP 179092.

The subject site has been known by a number of names over its lifespan, including the White Horse Point Baths, The Elkington Park Baths, The Municipal Baths, The Balmain Corporation Baths, The Dawn Fraser Baths and The Dawn Fraser Pool. This report identifies the site as the Dawn Fraser Baths.

## 1.5 REPORT LIMITATIONS

While this report is limited to the investigation of European cultural heritage values, GBA Heritage recognises that for over forty thousand years or more Aboriginal people occupied the land that was later to be claimed as a European settlement.

The conservation policies provided in this report have been developed in the context of the current operational and physical circumstances of the Dawn Fraser Baths but absent the findings of a Masterplan for Elkington Park, which is currently being prepared. The Masterplan should take into consideration the findings of this report. This report should be updated to reflect the recommendations of the Elkington Park Masterplan, following its completion.

Recommendations have been made on the basis of documentary evidence viewed and inspection of the existing fabric.

Archaeological assessment of the subject site is outside the scope of this *CMP*.

## 1.6 AUTHORSHIP

This report has been prepared by Dr Cameron Hartnell, Heritage Consultant, of GBA Heritage and has been reviewed by the Director, Graham Brooks. Unless otherwise noted, all of the photographs and drawings in this report are by GBA Heritage.

## 1.7 DOCUMENTARY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Primary and secondary documentary material utilised in the preparation of this *CMP* has been sourced from the State Library of New South Wales, the National Library of Australia, Inner West Council Library and Council files, Sydney Water Archives, and NSW Land Registry Services.

The following reports and documents were among those primarily consulted for the preparation of this report, although a range of other secondary and primary sources were also used for contextual material and evaluation, as referenced throughout the report:

- Hamill, Alex and Ken Knight, *1884-1984, Celebrating a Centenary - Balmain Swimming Club*, Balmain, Balmain Swimming Club, 1984.
- NBRSP+Partners, *Caretaker's Cottage, Elkington Park: Conservation Management Plan*, Milsons Point, 2015.
- Schwager Brooks and Partners, *Dawn Fraser Pool Balmain: Conservation Plan*, Sydney 1993.
- National Library of Australia, *Trove*, Historic NSW Newspapers.
- Council files.

## 1.8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GBA Heritage acknowledges the kind assistance provided by Alan Reed and Peter Gainsford of Inner West Council in sourcing Council documents on the history and operations of the Baths. We would like to thank Elliot Nolan, curatorial consultant for the Dawn Fraser Baths Archives, for his assistance in our historical research. We recognise the important contribution made by Peter Hickey, architect, in the conservation and progressive upgrading of the Baths since 1992.

## 1.9 COPYRIGHT

Copyright of this report remains with the author, GBA Heritage.

# 2.0

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY

### 2.1 BACKGROUND 1788-1882

Bathing has been practised throughout the centuries by many civilisations for reasons of cleanliness, religious rituals, health, social pastime and recreation.

Saltwater bathing, initially in the enclosed reaches of Sydney Harbour, has been popular since the early decades of the colonial settlement. This activity reflected European attitudes and, during the 19th century, was increasingly advocated as a treatment for various ailments. The general treatment focussed on immersion rather than active and enjoyable movement.

In the colony, the climate and natural attraction of the waterways encouraged a more general acceptance of bathing for recreational purposes. There were many sandy beaches around Port Jackson where casual swimming could be enjoyed in relative safety and privacy. Fear of sharks, the unknown dangers of the new environment and general social attitudes, however, restricted the popularity of swimming for at least the early decades of the 19th century.

Between 1820 and 1850 bathing for ordinary people was formalised with the establishment of tidal, salt water public baths. The first public baths were built in the Domain, on Woolloomooloo Bay, by order of Governor Darling, in 1826. Contemporary reports described them as follows:

*The most popular bathing spot became the Fig Tree located in Woolloomooloo Bay used also by the Geebung Aboriginal Tribe.*

In the early colonial period exposure of the human body was considered to be immoral. Even into the end of the 19th century, it was still considered improper for men and women to bath in the same pool at the same time. This led to the construction of separate pools or the strict segregation of bathing times. Pools were generally surrounded by high fences or walls to ensure privacy for those who were swimming.

There were many outcries about indecent bathing in and around the bays of the Harbour. In 1833 a ban was introduced on daylight swimming at public beaches. Bathing was permitted prior to 6.00am and after 8.00pm. Water Police were instructed to arrest those breaking the law.

After 1850 the increasing popularity of recreational bathing led to a growing demand for the construction of public baths. Gradually a series of bathing structures evolved around Sydney Harbour to provide for public hygiene, social contact and protection from sharks and stingrays.

By 1853, the Surveyor-General's map of Sydney Harbour showed four pools in Woolloomooloo Bay. These were the original Fig Tree Public Baths, a Gentleman's Baths and two Ladies Baths. There was also the Governor's Bath House, established in Farm Cove. Despite the segregation and other social conventions, the enclosed baths provided greater freedom for swimming than did the open beaches with their rigid curfews.

The earliest recorded privately constructed harbour side pool was erected in 1856 by a Mr Freez, at Kirribilli House.

By 1846 swimming had become popular as a competitive sport and swimming competitions were introduced. These gave an added impetus to the public acceptance of the activity.

Eventually swimming classes became popular. In 1882 the *Australasian Sketcher* published of Professor Cavill's Ladies Swimming Class, at Lavender Bay. The three sketches illustrate the professor teaching swimming, the dressing rooms and the 12ft dive.



**Figure 2.1**  
Professor Cavill's Ladies Swimming Class, 1882  
Source: Trove, 'The Australasian Sketcher'

## 2.2 CONSTRUCTION OF THE WHITE HORSE POINT BATHS (1877-1882)

As Sydney expanded westward the pressure for more accessible public baths in the upper reaches of the Harbour intensified. By the late 1870s there were two swimming clubs operating in the Balmain area, the Balmain East Club and the Gladstone Club. Swimming was taking place in Mort's Dock, when that facility was not being used for ship repairs.

The Balmain Council Minutes for Tuesday 11 December 1877 record a request for Council to secure 4 acres of land from the estate of the late E W Cameron:

*Near White Horse Point for the erection of Public Baths*

Initial progress was slow but by 26 November 1878 the following minute was recorded.

*This Council, viewing with satisfaction the rapidly increasing population settling at the Western and Northern portions of the Borough, and the daily increasing urgency that exists for bathing accommodation, resolves to erect a public bath of such style and capacity suitable for the requirements of the locality...*

The decision by Council was backed by a deputation of residents and a petition. The land for the Baths and Recreation Grounds was finally acquired by 11 May 1881.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to construct the first Baths on this site was based on the following:

1. The popularity of recreational bathing.
2. The demand by the local swimming fraternity for immediate and suitable bathing accommodation.
3. The demand by the local swimming clubs for a formal, enclosed, local swimming baths. The established swimming clubs in Balmain were the impetus for the construction of the first Baths on this site.
4. The increasing population of the suburb of Balmain, especially in the environs surrounding White Horse Point.

<sup>1</sup> NBRSP+Partners *Caretakers Cottage CMP*, 2015. NSW LRS Volume 485 Folio 87 and Volume 540 Folio 76.



5. The suitability of the position and the location in a protected bay on the harbour foreshore. The decision to erect the Baths was an integral part of the Council's plan to secure waterside property (White Horse Point) as important Recreation Grounds of Balmain.
6. The very strong intentions of the Council to erect a public baths within the Municipality, their commitment "*to erect a public bath of such style and capacity suitable to the requirements of the locality.*"
7. The support and pressure by local residents for the erection of a Baths.

On 14 September 1880, the Minutes record

*That the Committee of Works be requested to bring up plans and estimates for the erection of two public baths, one for the ladies and the other for gentlemen, at suitable positions at White Horse Reserve.*

Attempts appear to have been made to expand the area available for swimming. On 16 December 1880 Mr F R Robinson wrote to the aldermen drawing their attention to:

*The importance of securing and adding to the White Horse Point Reserve that other most desirable piece of the Cameron Estate, including that secluded little bay, that sanitary spot, so admirably located for a bathing place, without which the reserve is deprived of some of its most sanitary and advantageous features.*

It is not known if the additional land was purchased, or what happened to the proposal for two separate baths, since only one enclosure was erected in the secluded bay to the east of White Horse Point.

Tenders for the new Baths were received on 27 September 1881. The Baths Committee recommended that by Mr James Reynolds for acceptance and work commenced immediately. By 25 October Alderman Hancock reported that:

*The Baths are in course of erection including the ladies baths.*

Although there is no record of the actual opening, Council Minutes of 31 January 1882 indicated that the Baths were completed and in use.

## 2.3 THE 1882 BATHS (1882-1887)

On completion of the facility in 1882, Balmain Council established a series of Regulations for the use of the Pool.<sup>2</sup> These included:

1. *The Baths and premises shall be kept open for the use of males from day break until dark except...on every lawful day and on Sabbath, Good Friday and Christmas Day from daybreak until 9 o'clock in the morning only...*
5. *Each bather shall have the sole use for the time of one of the compartments provided for the purpose.*
6. *The Baths shall be opened exclusively for Ladies on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 12 o'clock in the morning and 2 to 4 o'clock in the afternoon and on Wednesday from 6 to 9 o'clock in the morning.*

Clearly the description of separate baths was misleading.

On 11 September 1883 Mr J A Ferguson was chosen as the first Lessee of the Baths from the Council. The Wednesday bathing time for ladies was abolished, leaving them only two days on which to bathe.

On 6 November 1883 the Baths were renamed the Elkington Park Bath, after a former Mayor (1880), Alderman Elkington, who was instrumental in acquiring the land from the Cameron Estate. Council also commonly referred to the Baths as the Balmain Corporation Baths.

A number of documentary sources give some insight into the original Baths. The leasees, the Fergusons, posted a thank you to the Balmain Public in the local newspaper, for their support in the last season.<sup>3</sup> The note added:

*[The Baths] are now superior to any in the Colony...They have a beautiful sandy bottom, there are spring boards, shower baths and every accommodation connected with the Baths, namely tea, coffee and refreshment rooms ...*

*The proprietor has expended over £300 in improving the Baths this season...*

*Ladies and Gentlemen using these Baths may rely on civility, attention and cleanliness.*

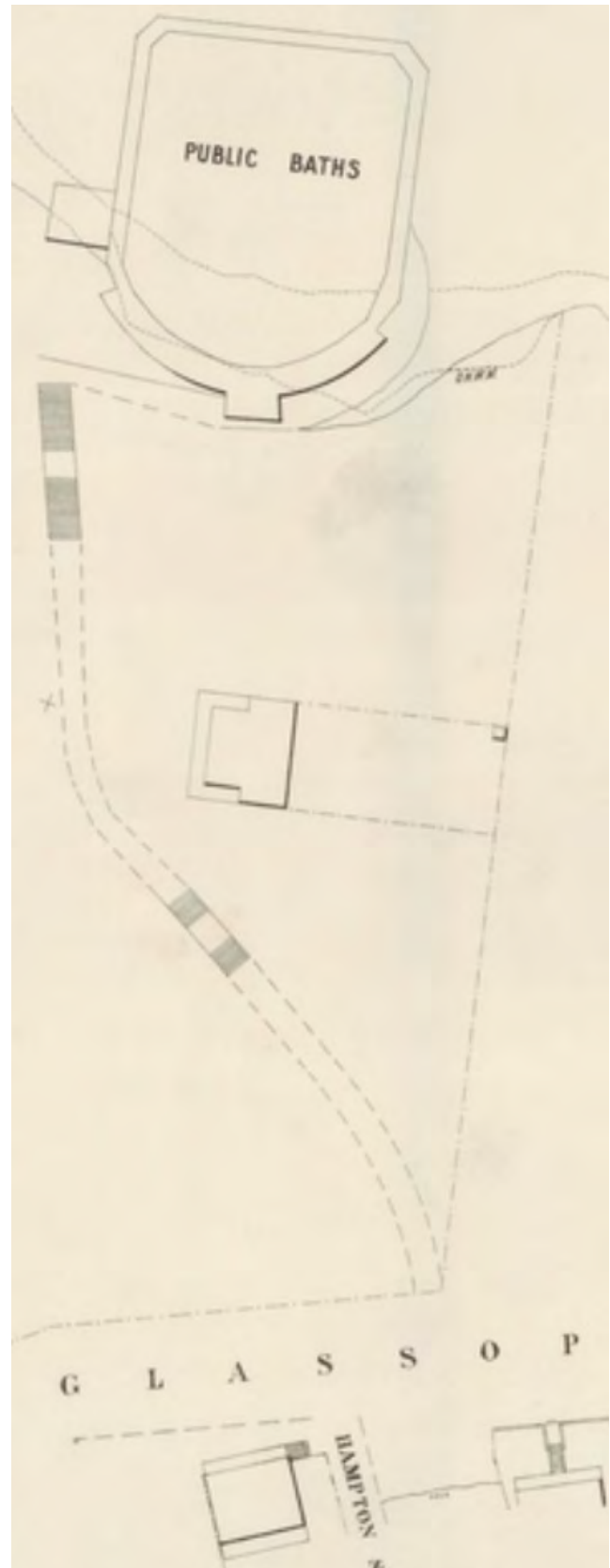
<sup>2</sup> Schwager Brooks and Partners, 1993 Conservation Plan.

<sup>3</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, "Balmain Corporation Baths, White Horse Point," Saturday 15 November 1884, 3.

The *Evening News* described the Baths in greater detail in 1883, as follows:<sup>4</sup>

*The baths, which have only been recently finished, have a water frontage of upwards of 10,000 square feet, and range in depth from 2ft 6in to 16ft at high water, possessing also the advantage of a sloping sandy bottom, without a stone, scarcely a pebble in the entire area. Owing to the position of the baths, at the foot of the reserve which rises rather suddenly from the water's edge, it was found necessary to cover them in completely, and this has been done in a way which is at once substantial, workmanlike and ornamental. Complete privacy is thus secured to the bathers, for whom also every accommodation is provided, including dressing rooms, towels, &c., while a beautiful fresh water shower is provided, the water being obtained from a spring which Mr. Blackwell discovered on the reserve, and intercepted by means of concrete tanks. The iron work and the timber for the new building were supplied by Messrs. Bennett and Speechley, of Kent-street, Sydney, and Mr. George Laugley, jun., of Balmain, respectively. The baths are largely patronised already. Mr. J. A. Ferguson, an old salt, is the lessee, and he is assisted by his wife, who attends on days set apart for ladies. Refreshments are provided, and every convenience may be found at the baths for those who patronise them.*

Newspaper accounts suggest the facility catered well for its customers with a variety of refreshments and activities. The refreshments included ginger beer<sup>5</sup> and coffee from a small coffee stall installed by Mr Ferguson.<sup>6</sup> Bathing drawers and dresses were available for sale or hire, towels available in the dressing rooms, and pleasure boats could be hired from a boat shed constructed by the lessee.



**Figure 2.2**

c.1888 map showing the 1882 layout of the Elkhington Park Baths (now Dawn Fraser Baths) and part of Elkhington Park. Note the path and stairs leading from the baths, past the caretaker's cottage to Glassop Street

Source: SLNSW, Detail Series, Balmain, Sheet 27, M Ser 4 811.17/1

4 Trove, *Evening News*, "Balmain Swimming Baths", Monday 17 December 1883, 3.

5 Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, "Observations", Saturday 22 October 1887, p1.

6 Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, 7 September 1889, "Balmain Borough Council", p8.

The roof was by far the most prominent characteristic of the original Baths. It was essentially a timber screen supported well above the pool by what appears to be a timber and metal truss on large timber posts set inside the pool area. It was a very large structure that covered the entire facility and would have been prominent in the surrounding landscape. The roof did not protect bathers from the weather but did allow in fresh air and sunlight. Most importantly for the period, the roof prevented onlookers any views into the interior, in keeping with the Victorian-era's strict codes of behaviour and dress that protected the modesty and privacy of bathers. The floating bath in East Balmain, constructed in c.1908, also provided enclosing walls and privacy screens but not to the scale of the subject Baths.

A c.1888 survey plan shows the outline of the original Baths but does not show its roof. The survey is valuable for it also confirms that the Caretakers Cottage, enclosed yard and the steps leading down to the Baths, from the south and the south east, date from the initial period. The Cottage has survived relatively intact, as has the alignment of the steps and pathway.

The c.1888 survey plan also shows a small rectangular structure on the outside side of the curved southern wall, which may have been constructed with the original Baths. Its purpose is not known but it may be associated with the entrance and/or the c.1882 coffee house. However, the feature is important in the history of the facility because its footprint is generally imitated by the 1926 Entry Building, which stands today. Unusually, this possible entrance structure is not shown on a c.1882-88 sketch of the Baths, which appears to show an entrance at its south-eastern corner connected to a path leading behind the Baths. The reason for this discrepancy is not clear but it may be that the sketch provided an 'artistic impression' rather than a detailed depiction of the Baths.



**Figure 2.3**

Portion of an undated sketch image showing the Elkington Park Baths, presumed to date between 1882-1888. The roof then covered the entire facility to protect the privacy of the bathers. Note the pathway that runs along its rear, which may be an inaccuracy  
Source: Inner West Council Library, 'A Walk in Balmain'

While the facility was initially praised, it was not without its limitations. The single pool limited swimming times for men and women and the timber plank walkway encircling the pool was apparently "miserably narrow".<sup>7</sup> The Baths were also not large enough for the local swimming club, which had adopted them soon after construction. In 1887, local businessman and former Mayor, Mr John Booth, offered the club his 700 feet water frontage adjacent the Baths (east) at low rent for construction of a separate swimming facility but the club did not proceed with the offer.<sup>8</sup> It was not long before Council was persuaded to expand the existing Baths.

<sup>7</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, "Elkington Park Baths", Saturday 23 June 1888, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Hamill and Knight (1984).



## 2.4 THE 1888 BATHS: EXPANSION EAST (1887 - 1898)

In 1887, the Balmain Swimming Club requested that Balmain Council expand the Baths,<sup>9</sup> probably because the small facility constrained the sports activities available and limited the Club's potential. The club's captain told Council that an expanded pool would allow the swimming sports of the Centennial Sports Committee to be brought to Balmain.<sup>10</sup>

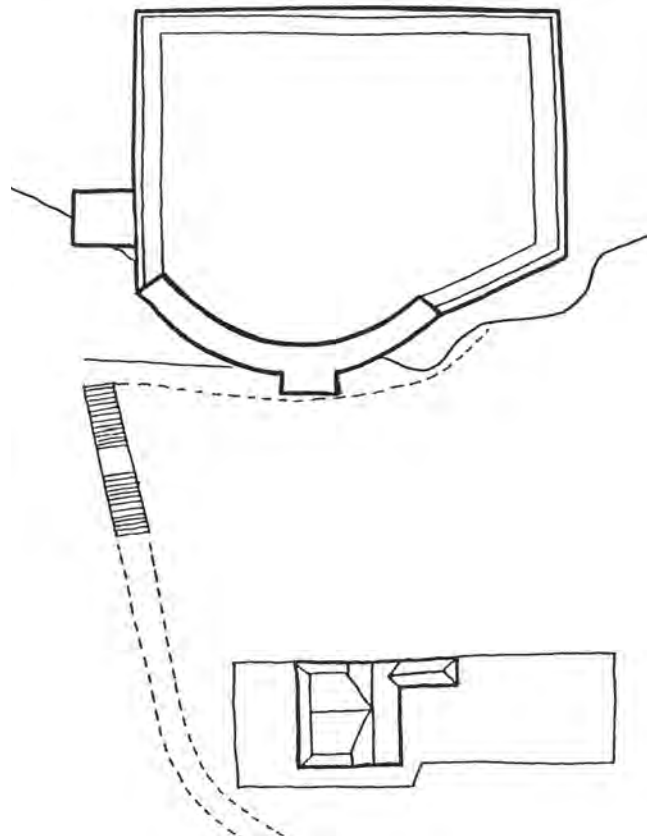
The suggestion was referred to Council's Baths Committee, who viewed it favourably. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that the Committee recommended an extension 30 yards eastward<sup>11</sup> but it appears that a smaller extension was eventually settled on.

The Balmain Swimming Club and the *The Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser* both advocated that, as part of the works, Council design the upgrade to give women bathers a permanent place to swim. One suggestion was to hang sheet iron on a pulley from the roof, which could section off part of the baths for women and be raised for sporting activities.<sup>12</sup> Council did not pursue the recommendation and women bathers continued to have separate swimming times from the men.

Balmain Council approved the Baths' extension in early 1888 and accepted the tender of Morris O'Sullivan for £498 14s.<sup>13</sup> No plans or sketches have been identified that show the layout of completed Baths but a later account recorded it as measuring 48 1/2 yards.<sup>14</sup>

After minor delays, the expanded Baths opened on Saturday 13th October 1888. The opening was celebrated with a gala day of sporting events attended by nearly 500 spectators.<sup>15</sup> The Baths reopened to women bathers on Monday 29 October.

On its completion, the local newspaper described it as "the most complete of any around Sydney".<sup>16</sup> However, it soon became apparent that more work was required. As the newspaper soon observed:



**Figure 2.4**

Speculative plan of the expanded 1888 baths, which appears to have been expanded east to provide more space for competitive sports. Retention of the 1883 pavilion, shown above, is speculative only

Source: GBA Heritage

*There is one feature about these bath alterations - a kind of addition to many other mistakes - that would make a good question to his worship at the next Council meeting, viz., why the alteration of the roof was not included in the contract. Do the Council only intend to cover half the baths? If so the social purity society will be down on them*<sup>17</sup>

Balmain Council called for tenders for a roof to the new addition at the end of 1888 and again awarded the work to Morris O'Sullivan, who completed them in January the next year.<sup>18</sup> The roof apparently did not completely cover the Baths as Council received a complaint later that year that the bathers were still exposed to view.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Trove, *Evening News*, "Balmain", Monday 1 August 1887, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Trove, *Daily Telegraph*, "Balmain", Friday 13 January 1888, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Trove, *Daily Telegraph*, Saturday 29 October 1887, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, Saturday 23 June 1888, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, Saturday 30 June 1888, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Swimming", Monday 19 November 1900, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Trove, *Australian Star*, "swimming", Tuesday 16 October 1888, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, "Opening of the Corporation Baths", Saturday 20 October 1888, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, Saturday 27 October 1888, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, "Balmain Borough Council", Saturday 12 January 1889, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, "Balmain Borough Council", Saturday 7 September 1889, 8.



Internal photographs of the Baths (right), probably recording the Balmain Swimming Club's Annual Competition in February 1899, show part of the roof space open to the sky. Unusually, an 1889 newspaper sketch of part of the Baths shows it with no roof at all, which is understood to be inaccurate.

Balmain Council undertook numerous other minor improvements to the Baths around this time. In 1889, Council considered installing a plank siding along the western perimeter to four feet above low water to protect from steamer wash.<sup>20</sup> In 1892, Council installed three gas lamps to light the interior of the Baths and hung galvanised iron chains from the ceiling for safety. Installation of the new lights were celebrated by night swimming matches, including exhibitions on the trapeze, 'sensational' high diving from the roof and music entertainment from the Coldstream Band.<sup>21</sup> Also in 1892, Council instructed its engineer to prepare plans to improve and expand the dressing rooms and install more substantial stairs but it is not clear if these works were undertaken.<sup>22</sup> As soon as 1895, Council began considering further enlarging the Baths and erecting a ladies Baths on the Elkington Park foreshore<sup>23</sup> but did not immediately act on the proposal.

The expanded Baths provided a significantly larger space for swimming and sports competitions and probably established it as the premier harbour swimming venue available. The Annual Carnival or Gala of the Balmain Swimming Club at the Baths became an important event in Sydney's swimming calendar. The event hosted the State's best and was the scene of a few records, including a national record for the 100 yards in 1899.<sup>24</sup> Women's swimming carnivals were also held. The venue was ideal for school carnivals and regularly hosted numerous schools from the wider area.

There are no identifiable physical remains of the 1882 or 1888 Baths visible in the current structure. Redevelopment in 1900 and subsequent changes have destroyed or covered the nineteenth century enclosure.



**Figure 2.5**  
Photograph of the starting lineup to the 220 yard swimming race for the Balmain Swimming Club Annual Championship at the Elkhington Park Baths, probably on Saturday 18 February 1899. Champion swimmer R Craig won the race  
Source: Hamill and Knight (1984)



**Figure 2.6**  
c.1899 internal photograph of the Elkhington Park Baths. The photograph was probably taken from the north-west corner of the Baths looking east. Note there is no roof over the left hand side  
Source: Hamill and Knight (1984)



**Figure 2.7**  
c.1899 internal photograph of the Elkhington Park Baths, probably taken from the north-west corner of the Baths looking south-east  
Source: Hamill and Knight (1984)

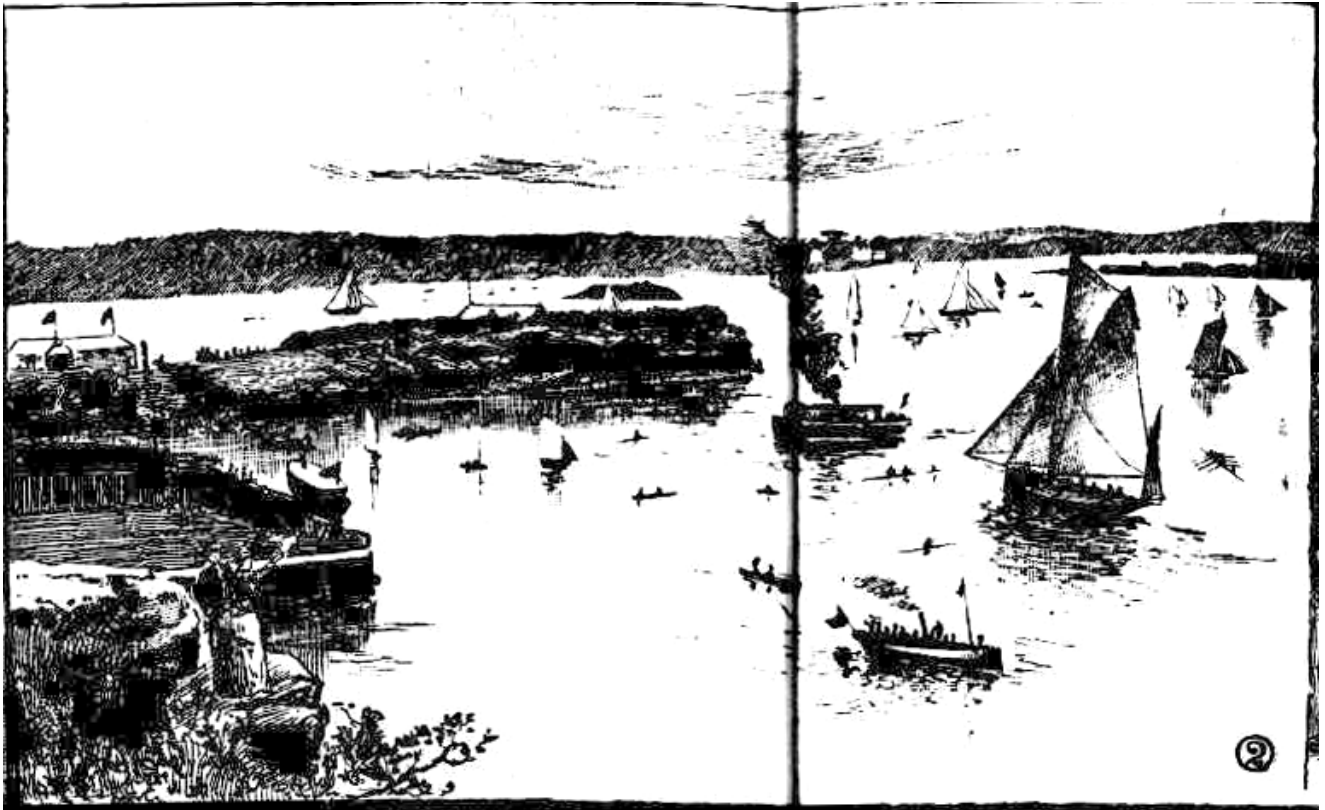
20 Trove, *Balmain Observer and Western Suburbs Advertiser*, "Orders of the Day", Saturday 4 May 1889, 6.

21 Trove, *Daily Telegraph*, "Swimming", Friday 9 December 1892, 6.

22 Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Wednesday 3 August 1892, 5.

23 Trove, *Evening News*, "Swimming", Tuesday 14 May 1895, 2.

24 Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Swimming. Balmain Club's Carnival", Monday 12 March 1900, 4.



**Figure 2.8**  
1889 sketch showing the Parramatta River, White Horse Point (Elkington Park) and part of the Elkington Park Baths (left). Note that the baths are shown without a roof, which is likely inaccurate  
Source: Trove, *Illustrated News*, Thursday 11 July 1889, 20



## 2.5 THE BALMAIN SWIMMING CLUB

The *Sydney Morning Herald* 18th March 1883:

*At a public meeting held at Warwick Castle Hotel, Mr W Parker presiding, it was resolved that a number of swimming matches should be held at the Baths, White Horse Point, Balmain on April 5th. A programme of the different events, and a considerable sum of money has already been subscribed for prizes.*

In March 1883 the Balmain Swimming Club was founded at a public meeting held in the Warwick Castle Hotel which stood on the corner of Mort and Darling Streets, Balmain. The opening of the new shark proof tidal baths was the principal generator of the new Club. This Club claims to be the oldest surviving Swimming Club in Sydney, quoting a *Daily Telegraph* article on 24 September 1897, which stated that

*They are the oldest and strongest Club in the country.*

Others such as the East Balmain, the Gladstone and another known as the Enterprise Club, have long since ceased to exist.

The first organised swimming competition was duly reported by the *Sydney Mail* on 12th April:

*The first of what are intended to be the Annual swimming sports of Balmain took place at the Corporation Baths White Horse Point on Saturday last and although the rain had been pouring in torrents all day every inch of standing being occupied, a goodly number of ladies being present. The management was very creditable and great praise is due to the Secretary and Committee for the pains they took and endeavouring to make things run smoothly.*

This band of enthusiasts promoted an annual gala, at which the Balmain Amateur Championship was decided, for three seasons, until in Season 1886-87 a Board of Management was appointed, much in the form in which it exists today, and President, Captain, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer elected.

The Balmain Swimming Club was very active during the 1890s organising competitive events, public carnivals and encouraging the game of water polo. By the end of the century, the sport of swimming was well established as a very popular pastime. There were three operating swimming clubs in the area at the time. A fourth, East Balmain, ceased to function in 1901.

The Balmain Swimming Club was instrumental in forming the NSW Amateur Swimming Association. Once formed, in 1892, the Balmain Club was the first to affiliate.

Membership of the three clubs in 1903-04 was as follows:

Balmain: 62  
Balmain Gladstone: 22  
Morts Dock: 72

The Morts Dock club was also based at the Elkington Park Baths. The Gladstone and Morts Dock Clubs closed in 1906-07, but the Balmain Club has gone from strength to strength.



**Figure 2.9**  
1907 photograph of the Balmain Ladies Swimming Club  
Source: Inner West Council, Reference: 1000004933



**Figure 2.10**  
c.1969 photograph of the Balmain Water Polo team at the Dawn Fraser Pool  
Source: Hamill and Knight (1984)

## 2.6 THE 1900 BATHS: ERECTION OF THE SOUTHERN PAVILION (1898-1910)

By 1900, public baths on Sydney Harbour were essentially constituted by enclosures such as the Elkington Park Baths or Concrete and Rock Pools.

Private pools had also become a common feature of the harbour side houses of the wealthy. Seawater baths or bath houses were erected on waterfront properties as an alternative to public pools. They added prestige and often included elaborate bathing houses, gardens and fountains. As suburbs such as Drummoyne, Hunters Hill and Mosman opened up, the harbour side pool became a popular feature.

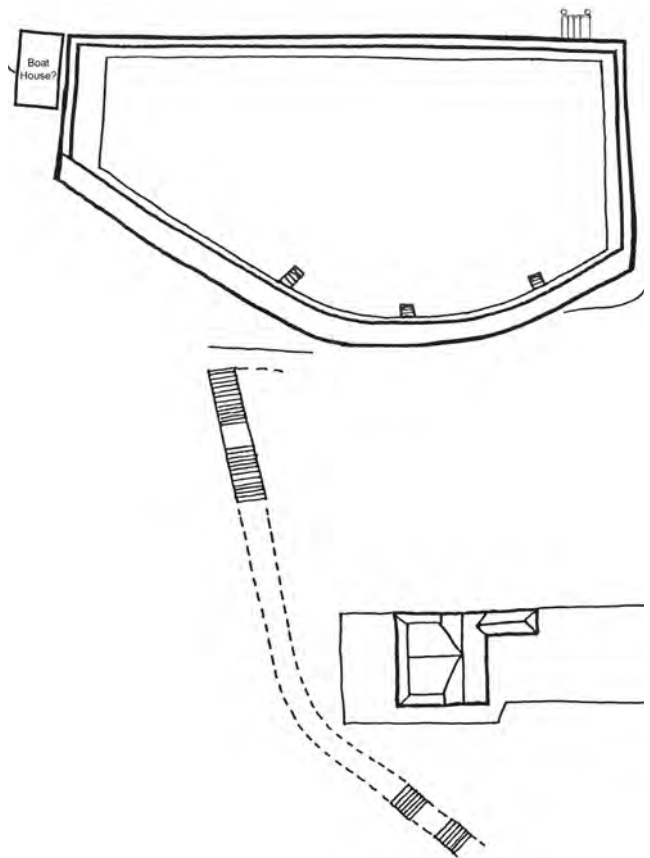
In response to the growing popularity of the sport, the public baths built around the turn of the century were often large structures, sometimes incorporating grandstands and pavilions. The grand structures also served as weekend pleasure resorts as well as for major spectator events.

Similar bathing structures proliferated in Australian coastal cities and towns, including around Port Philip Bay in Victoria. The Australian examples developed in a form which was quite different from the seaside piers and pleasure palaces of the European holiday resorts, largely due to the more amenable climate.

In 1898, the Balmain Swimming Club notified Council of the poor condition of the baths. They recommended a number of alteration works and that the Baths be dredged. Council responded by determining to remove the wooden piles, applying to the Government for use of a dredge, and would consider further works. Within a few years, Council determined to significantly upgrade the facility.<sup>25</sup>

Following pressure from the swimming club, a committee of aldermen from Council inspected the Baths and in June 1900 resolved that:

*“a sum of money, not to exceed £200, be spent in removing the present roof, erecting two-storey dressing-boxes and balcony at the south-eastern corner, extending the platform on the outside at the north-western corner, erecting trellis work at the edge of the platform on both sides, and generally renovating the woodwork. It was also moved to call for tenders for the work without delay”*



**Figure 2.11**  
Sketch drawing of the 1900 Elkington Park Baths  
Source: GBA Heritage

Apparently convinced to expand the proposed expenditure, by October 1900, Council had spent £1,000 expanding the Baths west to achieve a swimming length of 68 feet (and 32 yards width from the shoreline) with a swimming area of around 3/4 of an acre. The works also included constructing a two storey pavilion around the Baths' southern edge, able to hold around 1,000 spectators. A jetty was also installed on the northern side for landing ferries from the city.<sup>26</sup>

The improvements re-established the Baths as a premier aquatic sports facility in Sydney. The *Evening News* described it as being “a long way ahead of any other bath in Sydney”<sup>27</sup> while the *Sydney Morning Herald* judged it as “the most roomy swimming baths in the colony”. It was probably not until the Corporation Baths in Woolloomooloo were upgraded in 1908 that the Elkington Park Baths would be exceeded as a harbour swimming sports venue.

<sup>25</sup> Trove, *Daily Telegraph*, “Elkington Park Baths”, Tuesday 2 August 1898, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, “Swimming”, Monday 19 November 1900, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Trove, *Evening News*, “Charity Carnival”, Friday 16 November 1900, 2.



The 1900 redevelopment established the current form and layout of the southern end of the Baths, however, subsequent development, expansion and reconstruction has altered the profile of the Baths on the water side, added the central Entry Building and the modern changing facilities.

As constructed in 1900 the Baths comprised a curved two storey changing and viewing pavilion along the shore line, two boardwalks on timber piles extending out from the shore, and a connecting outer boardwalk.

It appears that the majority of the three sections of the boardwalk were lined with changing booths, thereby continuing the tradition of an enclosing “wall” some 2.5 metres high, around the outer sides of the pool.

The Southern Pavilion comprised a repetitive timber framework set above a paved boardwalk which was fronted by a stone retaining wall. The original timber framework appears to have survived relatively intact, although much of the cladding has been altered. Several contemporary photographs provided below illustrated the new layout.

The most interesting aspect of the two storey pavilion was the layout of changing booths at both upper and lower levels. The main structural framing grid was divided in half to create two small booths, each defined by a projecting blade wall and containing a seat and coat hooks. Privacy was established by a timber framed screen, in long lengths, which divided the changing booths from the walkway along the northern side of the pavilion. This privacy screen survives in places on the upper level. It is currently lined with timber boarding, however, apparently there had originally been canvas sheeting stretched between the timber posts.

One 1905 photograph illustrates a large crowd of spectators standing on both the upper and lower levels, watching an event in the Baths. The nature of the crowds behaviour is relevant, as the northern balustrade, with its lattice infill, was set at a height which prevented anyone looking over the rail unless they were standing up. Given the alignment of the privacy screen, it would have been difficult to set out chairs for spectators and still allow people to comfortably pass by.



**Figure 2.12**  
c.1906 photo of the 1900 baths (centre) and surrounding area  
Source: Inner West Council, ref:1000005150

A photograph (below) of the 1900 Baths shows a skillion roofed shed located outside the western boardwalk, which may have been a boat shed similar to that used in the earlier Baths or a club room. It has a different design but the same location as the current Western Shed, which is first documented in c.1925.

The Baths were re-opened on November 17, 1900, with a shared carnival by the Balmain and Mort's Dock Swimming Clubs. The carnival featured men's and women's swimming races, a water polo match, exhibitions and a comedy show, and interval music provided by the Civil Service Infantry Band.<sup>28</sup> The carnival raised £15 for the Balmain Cottage Hospital.

The upgrades saw immediate improvements in swimming results at the pool. At the Balmain Swimming Club's 1901 carnival, Dick Cavill broke a world record for the 500 yards only to have it revoked due to a measuring error.<sup>29</sup> The following year, his rival G. Read won the quarter mile competition at Elkington Park Baths, beating the previous world record by 9 seconds.<sup>30</sup>

The bath's status was soon challenged as new harbour baths were constructed and existing ones upgraded around the harbour. Those nearby include the Pymont Baths, upgraded in 1902, a new public baths at Leichhardt Park constructed in 1905, the aforementioned Corporation Baths upgraded in 1908, and a new floating baths in Johnson Street, Balmain constructed in c.1908.

Perhaps due to the increased competition, the Baths started losing money. This caused some concern at Council, and in 1906 the aldermen discussed closing them but a subsequent Baths Committee report recommended they be carried on.<sup>31</sup> By 1908, Council returned to its strategy of prior years, to upgrade the Baths to hold more visitors and spectators, and provide better sporting facilities. They repeatedly approached the Minister for Education for £1,000 for upgrades on the grounds that the Baths hosted many school carnivals, and provided twice-weekly free days for children to the exclusion of paying visitors but he seems to have always declined. The Baths were then hosting 1500 paying adults and 1,100 paying children weekly.<sup>32</sup>

Council continued plans for upgrades but in the interim made a number of smaller changes. In response to considerable complaints about male swimmers sunbathing on the Baths' roofs "insufficiently clothed", barbed wire was installed to prevent roof access. The eastern side was sheeted with jarrah planks at water level to prevent the entry of floating debris and 50 tons of sand was added to the south-western corner.<sup>33</sup> Improvements were also made to the sporting facilities, including construction of a club room for the Swimming Club and improvements to the lighting arrangements to allow night races and polo matches.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 2.13**

The 1900 pool from White Horse Point. Note the skillion roofed shed immediately outside the baths perimeter, which may be a boat shed and/or the Balmain Swimming Club's club room  
Source: Inner West Council, ref:1000005150



28 Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Swimming", Monday 19 November 1900, 4.  
29 Trove, *Sunday Times*, Sunday 31 March 1901, 3.  
30 Trove, *Australian Star*, Monday 23 December 1901, 7.

31 Trove, *Australian Star*, "At the Council Board", Wednesday 28 February 1906, 2.  
32 Trove, *Evening News*, Friday 20 May 1910, 3.  
33 Trove, *Evening News*, "Improving Balmain Baths", Thursday 10 September 1908, 8.  
34 Trove, *Daily Telegraph*, "Balmain Club", 28 October 1908, 13.



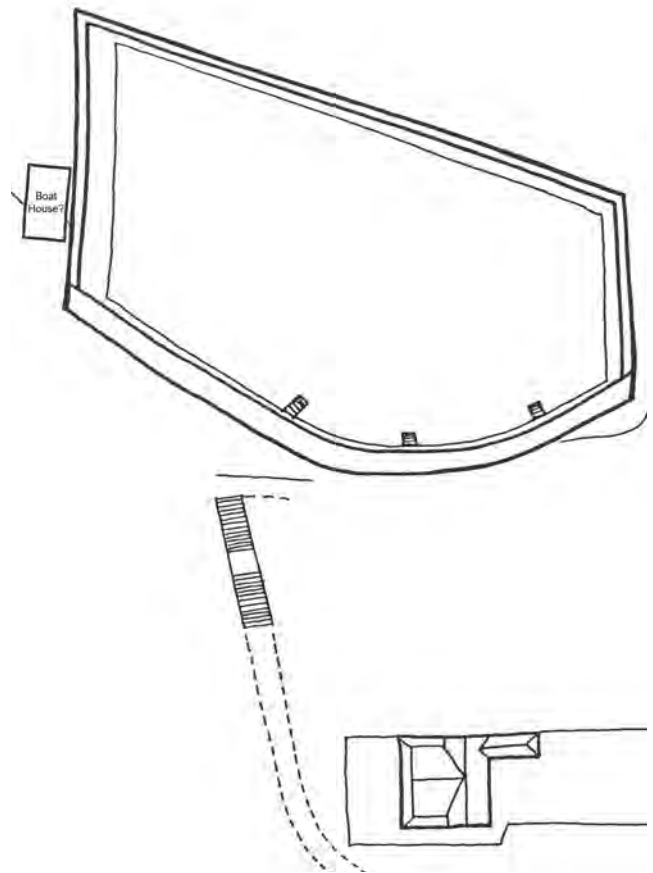
## 2.7 THE 1910 BATHS: EXPANSION TO DEEPER WATER (1908-1914)

Balmain Council prepared plans for the third expansion of the Elkington Park Baths in 1908. Soon after, a deputation from the Balmain Ladies' Swimming Club pressed the Mayor for their long sought separate ladies baths, which was considered but, again, not pursued. Council's real goals were to both expand the Baths and access deeper water. To do so, they decided to extend the north-west corner further into the harbour.

The works took time to arrange but by May 1910 Council had signed a contract for the works. The final design involved extending the north west corner around 62 feet north into the harbour. This expanded the swimming area by around 1/4, or 1,500 square feet,<sup>35</sup> which would relieve the crowding on the bath's busy days.

A new electrical lighting system was installed as part of the works. This included four 1000 candle-power lights over the centre of the Baths and other lights throughout the southern building. Good quality white sand was spread across the shallow areas to provide a nice bottom. Screens were also installed to protect the privacy of bathers. In all, the works cost council £1,600. The Sydney Morning Herald judged the improvements favourably, stating "Furbished up generally, the Baths are now in all essentials equal to any in the metropolitan area."<sup>36</sup>

The deeper water presumably also benefitted the playing of aquatic sports, including expanding the time available to play water polo in relation to the changing tides. On 30 September 1910, the Balmain Swimming Club's official colours were changed to Black and Gold. These colours have since been adopted as the primary identification of sporting teams in Balmain. The First World War reduced active club membership from around 38 to 18, but by 1919-20 membership had climbed back to 43. In 1922-23 the Balmain Club won the Kelso Shield in Life Saving.



**Figure 2.14**  
Sketch drawing of the 1910 Elkington Park Baths  
Source: GBA Heritage

Unlike with previous improvements, the expansion did not return the Baths to being a premier swimming competition centre. By then, Australian competitive swimming had been growing and improving for some decades. The sport was highly publicised and numerous swimming centres had been developed around Sydney. By 1914, the Sydney Morning Herald described the venue as one with past glory but now little used for carnivals.<sup>37</sup> Around a decade later, Council would once again consider expanding the Baths to provide a top class harbour competitive swimming centre.

35 Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Balmain Club (Annual Carnival)", Monday 28 November 1910, 12.

36 Ibid.

37 Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Swimming", Wednesday 4 march 1914, 4.

## 2.8 THE 1926 BATHS: THE FINAL EXPANSION (1925-1980)

By the 1920s, the Elkington Baths had fallen well behind current expectations for an aquatic sports venue. The Sun newspaper explained the various problems with the facility and their implications for local sports in 1925:<sup>38</sup>

### **Lost Prestige, Balmain Swimmers, Bad Baths Blamed**

*Time was when Balmain occupied the highest rung on the swimming ladder of New South Wales natatorial sport. Old time champions of the type of Knight Murphy and Johnson made Balmain's name prominent in the days when the double over-arm stroke was in its infancy. Then Sid Davis, Alf Holmes, "Mug" Bishop, Bob Craig, Bob Byers, Clive Ratgens and others further enhanced Balmain's reputation as a district of champions. But gradually Balmain competitors have slipped from grace, and to-day finds only one swimmer capable of holding a State championship. A. Scott, the holder of the professional sprint title of New South Wales. The whole trouble of the decline of the swimmers is attributed to the dilapidated state of the Elkington Park baths. Even the swimmers from Manly are lucky having their swimming arena to train in compared with the Balmain swimmers in the old White Horse Point Baths.*

### **No Correct Course**

*The club-room – forgive the figure of speech – is enough to turn swimmers off joining up with the clubs. The walls and floor are a great disgrace, both being worn and rotten, much to the danger of the members. But perhaps the worst of all is the racing course. The take-off boards are not parallel to the sides, and it is impossible to pick a correct course. At middle and low tides it is impossible to hold races more than the lap, as to turn would be too dangerous to the swimmers. Naturally competitors get tired of training under such conditions, and content themselves with sharp spurts of 50 yards or so. Thus we find to-day the members of both the Balmain Amateurs and League are creditable performers up to 50 yards, but very few can register decent times further than the lap of the baths. Perhaps Scott and Pont are the only exceptions. Not only have the swimmers declined through the bad state of*

*the baths but the clubs too have suffered. The Balmain League has to go out of the district to hold their annual carnival, as it is not a fair thing to contest a State championship under the conditions existing in the Elkington Park baths.*

### **Broken Promises**

*For several years the local aldermen have promised to repair the baths, but on account of the promises always being broken the members of both clubs treat anything said about repairs as a joke. Even at the commencement of this season the council intimated their intention of calling tenders and repairing the baths before Christmas, but the idea has frozen. The baths are still unfit for racing.*

By the time the above was written, Balmain Council had already resolved to expand the Baths and had drawn up plans. The project was approved in 1925<sup>39</sup> and tenders were called early the following year. In March 1926, Council accepted a tender for £6,993 from J. Hanson of Gladesville,<sup>40</sup> who had the alterations completed by November that year. The updated Baths was opened by Mayor R. Thornton at a ceremony at 8pm on Wednesday 8th December 1926, which was followed by a swimming carnival.<sup>41</sup>

The Baths were substantially enlarged at the western end to give a breadth of 73 1/3 yards. This was achieved by letting in the so-called "bay" area at the north-west corner. The primary reason for the change was to enable the easier measurement of a 220 yards race (3 laps). For shorter races, particularly the 110 yards, a rope was thrown in the 36.6 yards mark once the competitors were into the second lap. Provision was also made for 50 metre and 50 yard races.<sup>42</sup>

One major advantage of the change, which realigned the whole of the northern edge of the pool, was to capture an area of deeper water that was available further off-shore. Siltation had been a problem in the past and while the expansion improved conditions, siltation issues continued through the following decades.

38 Trove, *The Sun*, "Lost Prestige, Balmain Swimmers, Bad Baths Blamed", Wednesday 30 December 1925, 4.

39 Trove, *The Sun*, "Elkington Park Baths", Wednesday 12 August 1925, 4.

40 Trove, *The Sun*, "Elkington Park Baths", Wednesday 10 March 1926, 2.

41 Trove, *The Sun*, "Elkington Baths Successful Re-opening", Thursday 9 December 1926, 10.

42 Trove, *Evening News*, "Elkington Park Baths", Wednesday 16 June 1926, 3.



The 1926 alterations essentially established the imagery of the current Baths. For the first time, the changing facilities over the water, along the northern boardwalk, adopted the two storey profile of the 1900 southern range. The new pavilion was clad in painted boards or corrugated iron sheeting and provided three rows of change facilities, two on the lower level, for men and women, and one on the upper level, where it mirrored the 1900 pattern. On the first floor, there was a conference room and two new club rooms, which was particularly appealing to *The Balmain League*, who had applied to Council for such a room for years. The updated venue was designed to be used not only by swimmers but by those from range of sports, including boxing and rugby league.<sup>43</sup>

An architectural drawing of the 1926 alterations has survived. It illustrates a number of key alterations.

1. The realignment of the northern boardwalk
2. Expansion of the swimming lanes
3. Two storey northern change pavilions
4. Two springboards and a diving tower
5. A wharf on the northern boardwalk
6. The Western Shed, called a gymnasium
7. Two storey Entry Building in Southern Pavilion
8. Additional changing boxes with lockers on western and eastern boardwalks

The expansion works were well received. The sports newspaper *Referee* wrote of them just after opening:

*Elkington Park baths is second only to the Domain as a championship venue, with an expanse of water over an acre in area, accommodation for 1000 bathers (lockers in all bunks), and a 73 1-3yds course, which works out well for championship distance. The bath meets all requirements.*<sup>44</sup>

**Figure 2.15**

Newspaper photograph of the newly completed Elkington Park Baths just before its reopening in December 1926  
Source: Trove, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December 1926, 20



43 Trove, *The Sun*, "Elkington Park Baths", Wednesday 26 August 1925, 5.

44 Trove, *Referee*, Wednesday 15 December 1926, 14.

# PLAN SHEWING PROPOSED EXTENSION

— OF —

## ELKINGTON PARK BATHS

SCALE 20 ft = 1 in.



FRONT ELEVATION

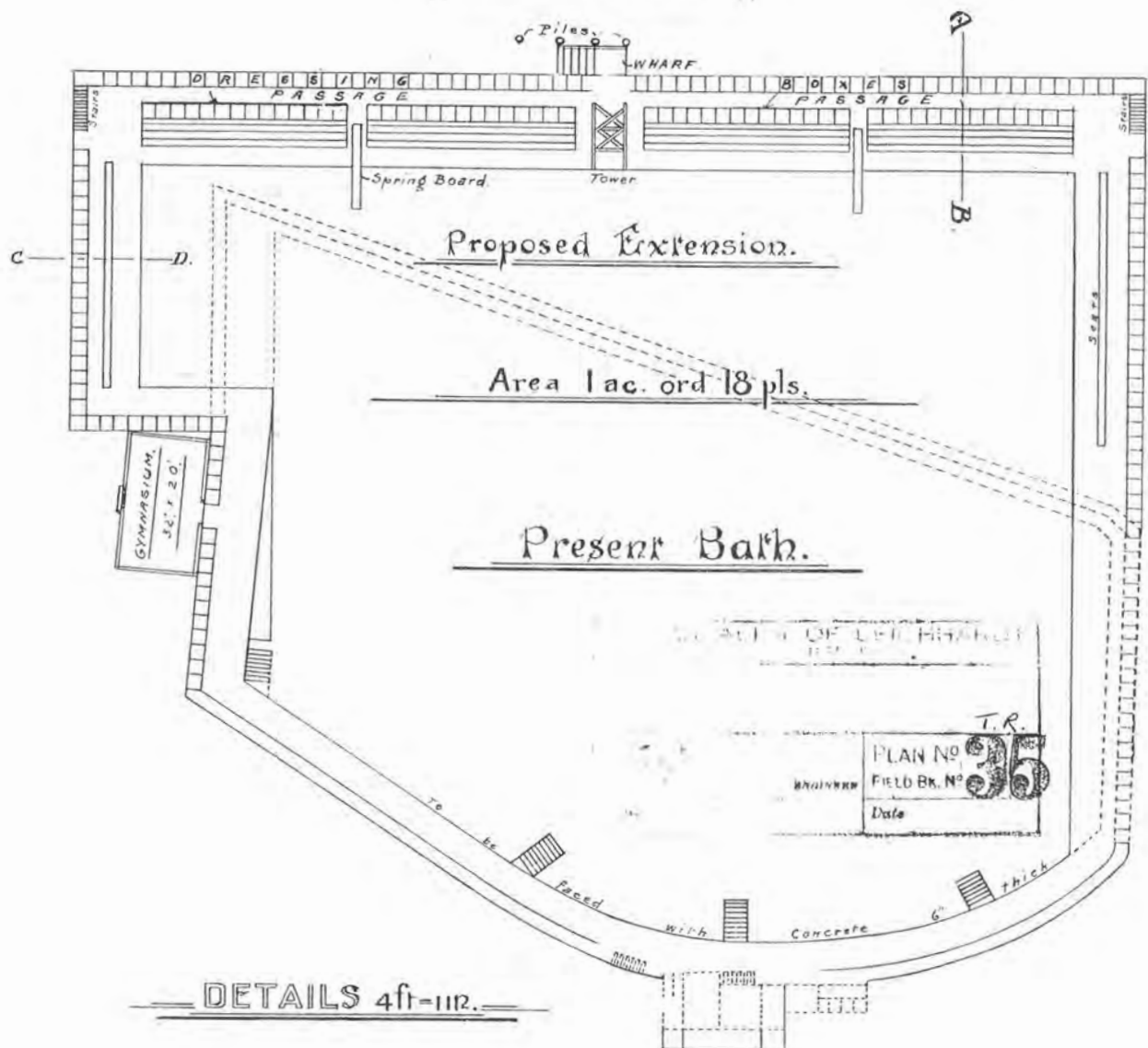
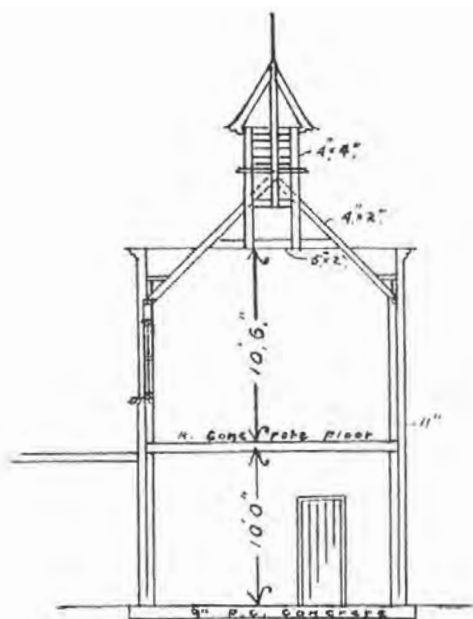


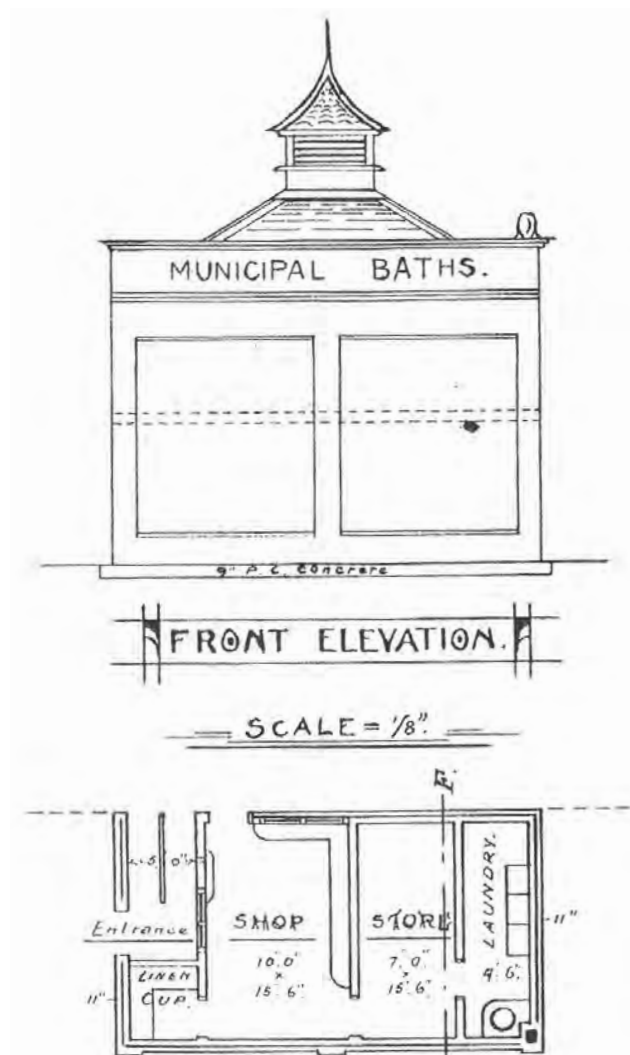
Figure 2.16

c.1925 plan of the proposed expansion of the Elkington Park Baths

Source: Inner West Council files



**Figure 2.17**  
c.1925 section drawing of the proposed entrance tower. Note that there is no roof shown over the first floor perimeter walkway  
Source: Inner West Council files



**Figure 2.18**  
Ground floor plan, section and elevation drawing of the two storey entry pavilion. The ground floor has since been significantly altered  
Source: Inner West Council files

The 1926 works also included the erection of a new Entry Building at the centre of the Southern Pavillion. Its prominent masonry structure with a pyramidal roof and tower created an attractive visual centrepiece to that side. Its erection required the Southern Pavilion be altered by raising the central section of the balcony. The Entry Building improved the facility's operational side, with a more formal entry, a shop, storage space for linen and other items, and a laundry. The chimney breast once attached to a laundry copper remains today but the interior has otherwise undergone numerous alterations. A single room was provided on the first floor but its intended use is not known. The 1926 drawings show it with a concrete floor that may have been altered to the timber floor that is there today.

The new facilities represented a significant expansion of the Baths and a reinforcement of both the identity, by means of the new Entry Building, and of the sense of enclosure with the two storey Northern Pavilion. Clearly the needs of the swimming club and others focussed on the provision of large numbers of changing areas and of additional spectator areas. This is reinforced by several early photographs which show large numbers of competitors, officials and members of the public crowding into the boardwalk and viewing stands during major carnivals.

Club membership grew dramatically in the 1920s, including a renewed interest by ladies in obtaining associate membership. Water polo also experienced a revival.<sup>45</sup>

The Club Annual Carnival had previously been moved to Drummoyne Baths but moved back to Balmain in 1926. In order to provide better facilities for the many locals they hoped to attract, members had to work hard carting seating accommodation and fixing rope lanes in Olympic Games style.

According to the Annual Report that year officials were not quite content with gate receipts.

*The Spectator's enclosure was crowded, but a larger crowd gathered on "Scotchman's Hill" outside the baths, from which vantage point a good view could be obtained of all events. Hon. Secretary acknowledges lack of foresight in not fixing hessian between the flagpoles on the shore side, but asks incoming officials to make a note that Mr J. J. Ferguson has quite a large stock of this material on hand, for future Carnivals.*

Life Saving was again revived as a major Club activity in 1929-30. A Club member won the Australian Cup while another was awarded the Diploma of Society, the highest Life Saving Award available.

<sup>45</sup> Schwager Brooks and Partners, 1993 CMP.





**Figure 2.19**

Undated photograph of a diver gracefully leaping from the elevated diving board in the 1926 baths

Source: Inner West Council files, Ref: 1000001089

1933-34 was declared the Club's Jubilee Year and a special carnival was held at the Pool to celebrate this event. Balmain produced an Australia Champion in its fiftieth year when Henry Tickle added to his Western Suburbs and State titles by winning the National High Board Championship.<sup>46</sup>

The forward to the Jubilee Souvenir Handbook produced by the Club said:

*it is a truly glorious record of men who have carried the Club's colours to local, national and international swimming victories. Men who have given years of administrative service to the promotion of nation of men whether officers or not who did all they could for its welfare and so this "patriarch" will continue – I am sure for "aye and aye" – its services to the Public which it has so unremittingly and successfully carried out for the past half century.*



**Figure 2.20**

c.1930s photograph of the south-east corner of the baths. The National Box Company works loom over the swimmers

Source: Dawn Fraser Baths Archives, Merlin Hansen Collection

In December 1935, the 75th anniversary of Balmain suburb was celebrated. Elkington Park hosted an evening band recital on 5 December. The local paper reported that:

*thousands rolled up to the brilliantly illuminated park where there was a splendid performance by the NSW Fire Brigade Band.*

On the weekend the Baths were thrown open free of charge and hundreds flocked to a carnival organised by the Swimming Club. The NSW Diving Troupe provided entertainment for the spectators, along with an exhibition polo game organised by the Club. There were also a number of novelty events, including a "lantern race" when all of the Baths lights were extinguished and competitors were required to swim 50 yards holding a lighted lantern in one hand.

46 Schwager Brooks and Partners, 1993 CMP.



Club Membership stood at 80 in 1938-39. Popularity was ensured when the 1st grade Polo Team maintained its premiership place in the key competition tables. The Second World War took its inevitable toll of the membership but this soon revived after 1945 and membership settled down to around the 60 mark for several seasons. By 1951-52 membership had increased to 111. In the same year Balmain contributed exactly half of the membership of the State Team. Two members, Tony Fenech and Frank Jordan were selected to represent Australia at the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952.<sup>47</sup>

In 1954 the name of Dawn Fraser rose to state and national attention. Two years later she gained international fame at the Melbourne Olympic Games. Dawn Fraser spent much of her youth and early training at the Elkington Park Baths. Between the ages of eight and thirteen she swam with the Leichhardt Balmain League of Swimmers, then had two seasons with the Balmain Ladies Club and won two NSW Championships. Eventually her trainer and uncle, "Chute" Miranda, convinced her to transfer to the Drummoyne Pool to be coached by Harry Gallagher. Ten years later, after her epic Gold Medal swim in the Tokyo Olympics the pool was renamed in her honour.

During the 1950s a series of repairs and alterations were carried out in response to the relatively fragile timber construction in a harsh marine environment. The full extent of these changes has not been identified. However, discussions with a past pool manager, reference to Council reports and research by Anne McLeod has identified the following:

- 1956 Major repairs conducted
- 1957 Installation of the pontoon
- 1959 General repairs
- 1961 Seating gallery installed and further maintenance
- 1962 Children's pool enclosure changed from pickets to a stone wall.

A 1959 aerial photograph<sup>48</sup> shows the central pyramidal tower had been removed, possibly as part of the 1956 major repairs cited above.



**Figure 2.21**  
1965 photograph of Dawn Fraser teaching children how to swim  
Source: State Library NSW, Digital Order No:d7/20625r

At various times some of the original hardwood cladding boards to the external walls were replaced with dark coloured corrugated iron sheets, the same or similar to the roof cladding. The aforementioned 1959 photograph show that three rectangular lighting structures had been added to the western end of the Northern Pavilion's roof. Photographs from 1982 show that these had been removed and replaced with lights on poles. The 1982 photographs also show an entry into the first floor via a narrow platform, with an altered pavilion roof in that location. The date of installation of this entry has not been identified. At that time, a bituminous path led to the Baths entryway.

Patronage began a slow decline in the 1950s reflecting population falls in the inner suburbs, an ageing population, increased mobility through car ownership and the growing popularity of the ocean beaches. Many Councils constructed chlorinated, filtered pools in park settings. There was also a gradual erosion of the harbour side pools through neglect, storm damage and demolition.

<sup>47</sup> Schwager Brooks and Partners, 1993 CMP.

<sup>48</sup> 1959 photograph by Milton Kent, State Library of NSW, Call No: ON 447 Box 160.

Changing community expectations also acted against the survival of most of the early harbour side pools. The chlorinated pools in suburban locations provided severe competition to the waterfront locations. Many of the timber structures were removed to be replaced with concrete enclosures and brick amenity blocks. High fences and screens were removed as modesty was no longer an issue. Increasingly people wore their swimming costumes to the pool, with casual cover-up clothing for comfort. The demand for extensive changing facilities also lessened.

A litany of complaints from the pool manager, through the annual reports, as well as complaints from the Club constantly reminded Council of the need for routine maintenance and replacement. The Municipal Engineer reported to Council on the related need to allocate funding for repairs. At periodic intervals the issue of future viability and the need to consider various options was also raised.

The Elkington Park pool retained its popularity and community support. The Balmain Club remained strong, with the focus being on water polo. The depth of water available in the harbour side locations made the Pool a better venue for the sport than were most municipal pools.

In 1959 the Municipal Engineer reported on a range of options, from repair to renewal with a fully enclosed concrete non-tidal pool complex. Another option was the construction of a new pool complex in Elkington Park, on the corner White and Glossop Streets. Nevertheless, Council opted to keep the pool and repairs were carried out. In 1960 the new Leichhardt pool was completed, and Council files record a subsequent sharp decline in patronage, as follows:



**Figure 2.22**  
Undated photograph of Herm Bakels, reputedly a stalwart of the Balmain Swimming Club, advising a young swimmer at the Dawn Fraser Baths, Note the Northern Pavilion behind them  
*Source: Hamill and Knight (1984)*

Year	Attendance	
	Adults	Children
1954	19,408	75,684
1955	20,239	72,701
1956	19,511	73,956
1957	18,851	63,728
1958	16,768	63,664
1959	20,151	56,481
1960	21,676	49,423
1961	12,570	36,411
1962	10,929	33,723
1963	12,147	32,824
1964	11,211	32,362
1965	8,833	26,579
<b>Decline</b>	<b>54.5%</b>	<b>64.9%</b>

The attendance declines in just over a decade would have alarmed Council and forced serious considerations over the future of the facility.

In 1966 the Woolloomooloo Baths were reconstructed as a non-tidal concrete pool complex and named after Boy Charlton. This pool was cited as an example to aspire to. The reconstructed Northbridge Baths was another example referred to.

A 1969 report by the Engineer drew unfavourable comparisons between the Dawn Fraser Pool and the expected standards of newer non-tidal pools. In 1971 the Council adopted the Engineer’s recommendations that the Pool be retained until 1980. Council set aside \$10,000 per annum for reconstruction or renewal at the end of the period. Throughout the 1970s maintenance and repair issues were raised from time to time.

In 1970, a DA was submitted to redevelop the adjacent early-twentieth century National Box Company’s works for apartments but this was rejected and Council later converted the land to Fitzroy Avenue Park.



**Figure 2.23**  
Photograph of the northern section of the baths taken before 1980. Note the three boxes above the Northern Pavilion, which appear to have housed lights used to light the pool  
*Source: 1993 Conservation Management Plan*

## 2.9 c.1984 EXTENSIVE UPGRADES (1980-1984)

The Municipal Engineer recommended to Council in 1980 that the pool be demolished and the cove converted to a beach with a netted enclosure. There were to be no amenities provided. Representations and petitions were made by the Club to save the pool. They argued that the Leichhardt Pool was not easily accessible, was overloaded and that Balmain had a claim as the oldest active swimming club in Australia with its own facilities. The submission cited the redeveloped harbour pools at Clifton Gardens and Northbridge.<sup>49</sup>

The proposed demolition caused great consternation in the Club. In the words of Anne Schulze:

*The whole Club seems to be closer knit and working well together, especially with the closure of the Pool hanging over us. Senior members of our Club have rallied together and formed a "Save the Pool" Committee. We hope to convince Council that it will be of historical significance to restore the Dawn Fraser Pool as it is now, but with better facilities.*

A submission was made to the Council of the Municipality of Leichhardt and a number of options raised. The third suggested restoration of the existing site.

### THE REPAIR AND RETENTION OF THE PRESENT BATHS STRUCTURE

*The swimming Club believes that the present Baths are not in irreparable condition and that it is possible, at a relatively small cost, to repair and upgrade them.*

*An inspection reveals that the current baths are situated on 150 timber piles. Of these piles, 50 are sound, 40 are fair, and 60 are poor. The outside perimeter of the baths looks worse than it actually is, due to debris and supplementary piles that have been removed years ago.*

*The estimated cost of replacing 100 timber piles, headstocks, girders and decking is \$120,000.*

*In addition a further cost of \$20,000 would be incurred in replacing decking and rebuilding the superstructure, where necessary.*

*THE COST OF PUTTING THE PRESENT STRUCTURE IN GOOD REPAIR IS THUS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THE COST OF REPLACING IT WITH ANY OTHER STRUCTURE.*

*THIS OPTION ALSO PRESERVES THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AS PART OF BALMAIN'S HERITAGE, AND AS THE SURVIVING EXAMPLE IN NSW OF NINETEENTH CENTURY BATHS ARCHITECTURE.*

*THIS IS THEREFORE THE PREFERRED OPTION*

*If this third option is adopted, it is suggested that the racing lanes and playing field ought to be relocated from the present position to the northern corner of the large pool area, where the water is of sufficient depth at low tide. It should be enclosed by small concrete pontoons to provide walkways and rope anchorages. The north eastern pontoon should be three metres wide and should contain starting blocks. The south western pontoon should be three metres wide.*

*The public spectator area, the marshalling area, dressing sheds, etc. Would be on the wooden decking or on the shore as at present.*

*A small office could easily be built into the present structure next to the playing area, at little cost.*

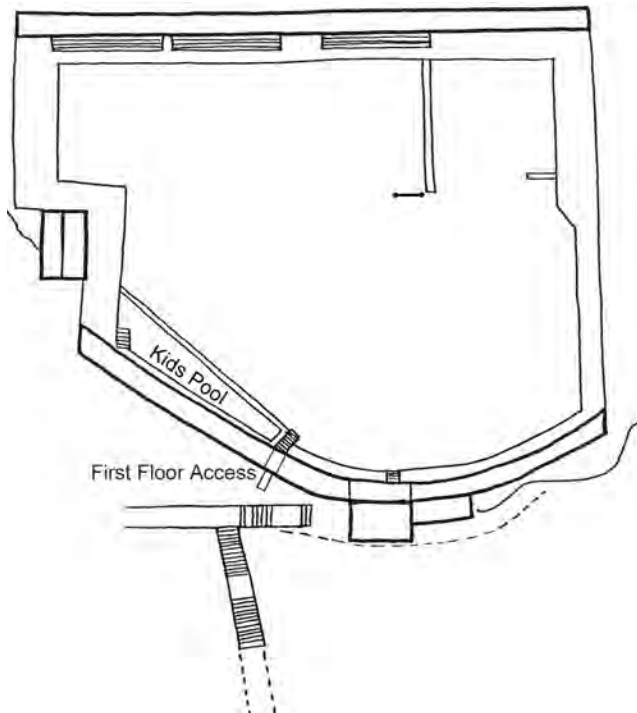
*The cost of this upgrading of the competition area by installing these pontoons is estimated to be a further \$120,000.*

*THIS WOULD PROVIDE BALMAIN, NOT ONLY WITH AN HISTORIC SITE, BUT ALSO WITH A POOL THAT WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY SWIMMING AND WATER POLO ASSOCIATIONS FOR STATE AND NATIONAL EVENTS, AND EVEN FOR COMPETITION AGAINST VISITING OVERSEAS TEAMS WHO ARE NOW COMING TO AUSTRALIA MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY.*

To the credit of the forward thinking and historically aware members of the Council, and in particular, to the Deputy Mayor, Ald N O'Neill, a commitment was made the next year to restore the Pool in time for Centenary celebrations. During restoration it was necessary to use Drummoyne Pool for the start of a couple of seasons and endure some hardship at Balmain.

49 Schwager Brooks and Partners, 1993 CMP.





**Figure 2.24**  
Sketch drawing of the Dawn Fraser Baths in 1980  
Source: GBA Heritage



**Figure 2.25**  
1982 photograph of the front entrance to the Dawn Fraser Baths. Note the single width entry doorway in the two storey entry pavilion. Also note that there is no path behind the pavilion to the east side, which has since been constructed



**Figure 2.26**  
1982 photograph of the entry path and Southern Pavilion to the Dawn Fraser Baths. Note the entry to the first floor entry platform (left)



**Figure 2.27**  
1982 photograph of the Southern Pavilion. Note the ground floor changing booths and the former openings to the ground floor Entry Building



**Figure 2.28**  
1982 photograph of the pool, Northern Pavilion (right) and the West Shed (left). Note the small windows under the eastern eaves and skylights that probably lit an attic space, since removed

In 1980 Council resolved:

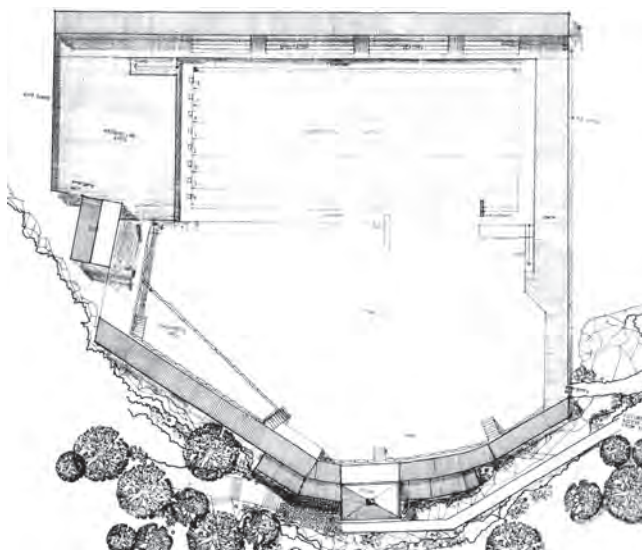
*To repair and retention of the existing structure in the style and character of the Pool.*

The decision boosted support for the Club. In the 1980-81 season active membership stood at 310. Of these over 50% were aged under 12 years, indicating a strong potential for future growth.

The 1980 proposal was to retain a 50 x 21 metre pool enclosure by pontoons. Tenders were called for repairs to the substructure.

The Architectural firm of Marchant Jones and Associates was engaged to undertake the work. In essence, the scope of work comprised the following:

1. Extensive repairs to the substructure of the eastern and western areas over the water, including scum boards and planking.
2. Replacement of corrugated iron cladding with painted softwood boarding.
3. Construction of two new single storey toilet and change areas in the 1900 landward pavilion. This required removal of the first floor entryway.
4. Replacement of the attached structure east of the Entry Building with a new ground floor structure with an office and first aid room.
5. Widening of the eastern section of the southern poolside pathway.

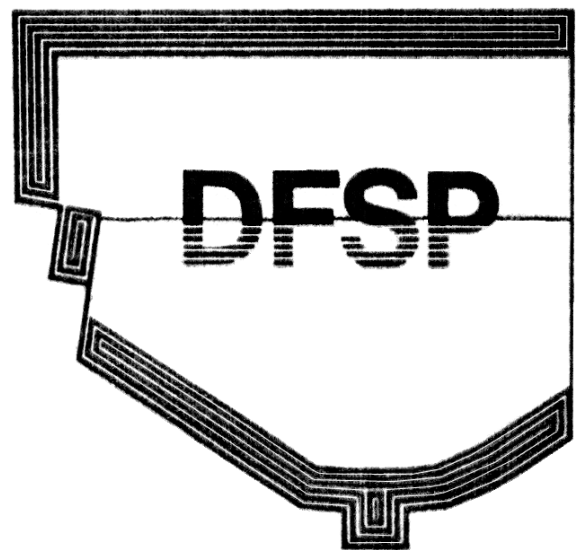


**Figure 2.29**  
Plan drawing of the proposed works to the Dawn Fraser Baths, which was partially adopted in the final scheme  
*Source: Marchant Jones and Associates, October 1981, Submission 2-A1*

6. Reconstruction of the pyramidal tower over the brick Entry Building and minor internal refurbishment.
7. Alterations, internally, to the Western Shed which included removing an internal partition, and reworking of the facade openings.
8. Boarding over the north western section of enclosed water to create a large sun deck.
9. Relocation of the pontoon further east.
10. Internal alterations to the Northern Pavilion to install changing facilities, office and storage areas.
11. Removal of some redundant changing booths between 1980 and 1984.
12. Excavation of a path from the entry to Fitzroy Park, behind the Entry Building.

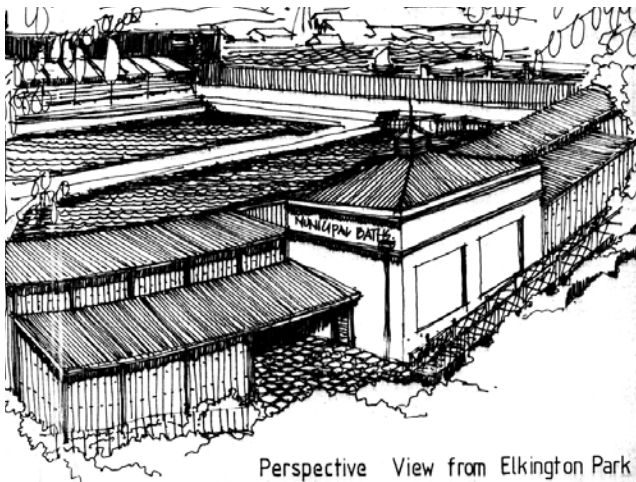
The ground floor changing booths in the Southern Pavilion were removed to make way for the new bathrooms and a seating area. This required removal of most central support posts on the ground floor, reducing the structural strength of the pavilion.

Marchant Jones and Associates' proposed a future access ramp from the top of the rise to the east behind the Southern Pavilion to the entrance, but this was not undertaken. \$705,000 was spent to undertake this work. At its conclusion, the Club celebrated its Centenary Year.



**Figure 2.30**  
Logo for the Dawn Fraser Swimming Pool  
*Source: Marchant Jones and Associates, October 1981, Submission 2-A1*





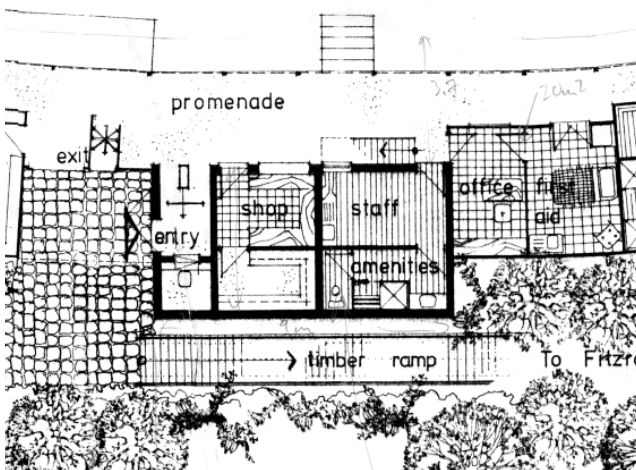
**Figure 2.31**

1981 sketch drawing of the proposed works. The proposed entrance way roof and pontoon across the baths were not adopted  
 Source: Marchant Jones and Associates, October 1981



**Figure 2.33**

1993 photograph showing the c.1984 works. Note the new female bathrooms, extending beyond the southern perimeter of the baths and the path behind the Entry Building to Fitzroy Park  
 Source: 2013 CMP



**Figure 2.32**

1981 sketch plan of the central part of the ground floor Southern Pavilion. Note that the Entry Building is shown as significantly altered from its original design, including removal of the laundry, and new openings and partitions. It is not clear if the plan shows the existing or proposed layout  
 Source: Marchant Jones and Associates, October 1981

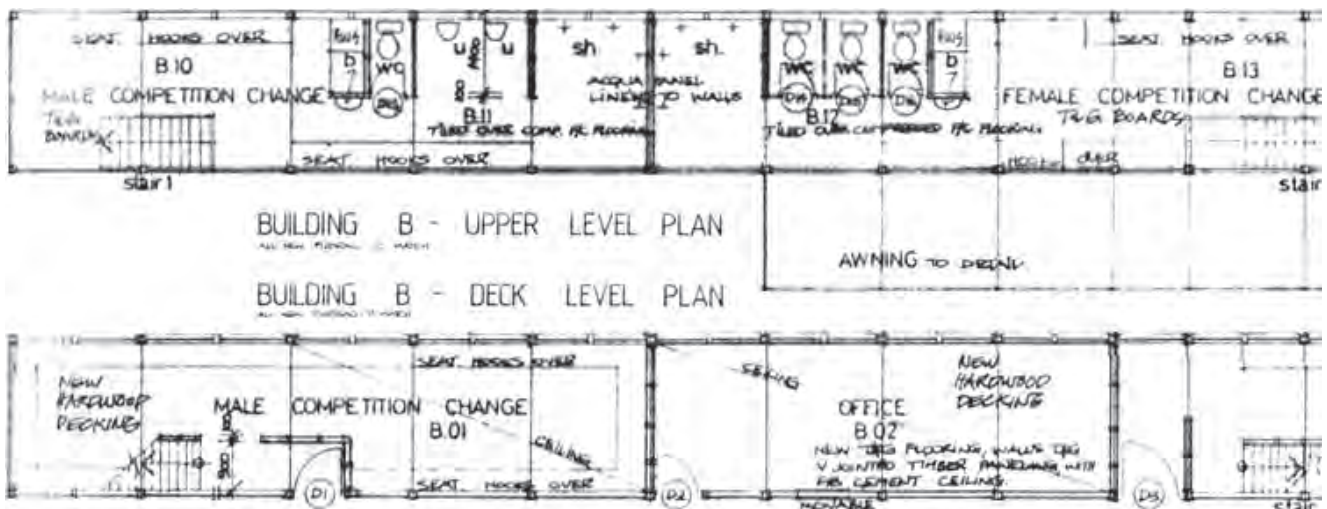


**Figure 2.34**

1993 photograph of the c.1984 bathrooms  
 Source: 1993 CMP

**Figure 2.35 (below)**

1993 plan showing the c.1984 alterations to the deck and upper level of the Northern Pavilion's west end. Plan edited for clarity  
 Source: Marchant Jones and Associates, July 1993







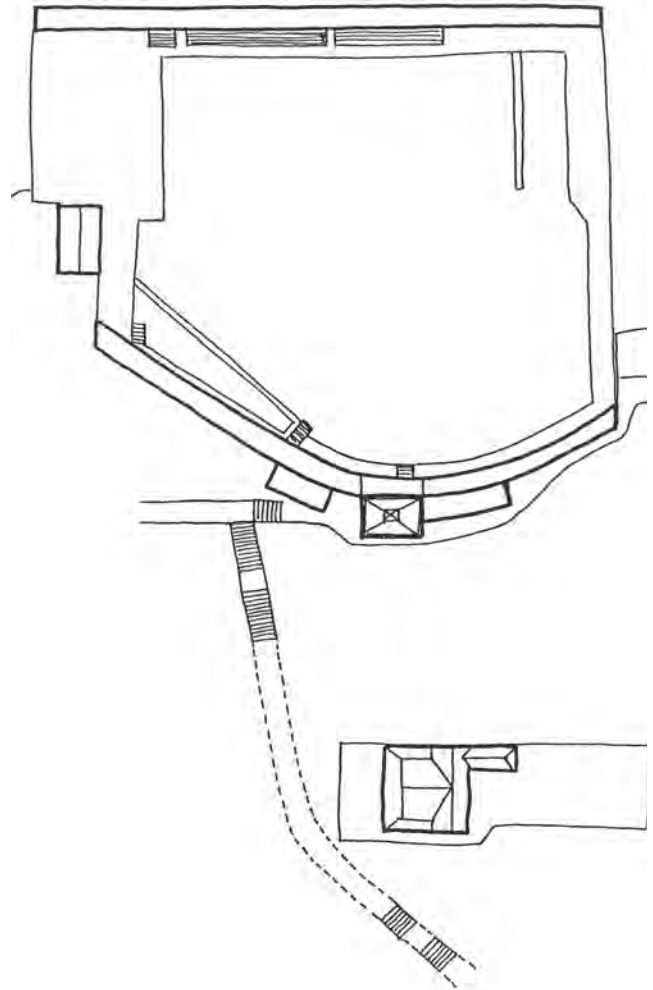
**Figure 2.36**  
1993 photograph showing the altered pontoon location, required for the installation of the sun deck  
*Source: 2013 CMP*



**Figure 2.37**  
1993 photograph showing the c.1984 deck addition and alterations to the Western Shed  
*Source: 1993 CMP*



**Figure 2.38**  
1993 photograph showing the former kids pool and changes to the ground floor of the Southern Pavilion  
*Source: 1993 CMP*



**Figure 2.39**  
Sketch drawing of the Dawn Fraser Baths following the c.1984 upgrade works  
*Source: GBA Heritage*

## 2.10 SUBSTRUCTURE AND NORTHERN PAVILION RENEWAL (1989-1995)

In 1989, following discussions about recurrent costs and the functional inadequacies of the Pool, Council resolved to commission the architect Feiko Bouman to do a feasibility study for refurbishment.<sup>50</sup>

The scheme which was developed and placed on public exhibition proposed to rebuild the Northern Pavilion over the water with a more durable glass reinforced concrete substructure. Upgraded facilities for the Swimming Club were proposed, including an enlarged deck area and spectators stadium. The existing on-shore structure at the western end was to be replaced with a new club room. There was to be a flat for the manager at first floor level within the existing structure and restaurant at the eastern end, partly over the water.

Also proposed was the creation of a beach within the Pool, with a concrete retaining wall to hold back sand for casual swimming and children.

The scheme aimed to make the pool more attractive to visitors and users. A 120 place restaurant would generate revenue and offset some of the costs of reconstruction. The use of more durable materials would redeem long term maintenance. Additional revenue would be gained by selling off the Caretakers Cottage in Elkington Park. Total estimated cost was \$1,650,000. Widespread public responses and concerns caused a serious review of all the options which had been under consideration.

A community support group was formed at about this time to lobby Council and others to retain and conserve the Pool. The Friends of Dawn Fraser Baths has been very active in raising awareness and gathering support for the conservation and re-use of the facility. A series of public consultations took place in late-1992 and early 1993 to gain the ideas of the public in what they saw as important about the Baths.

The Municipal Town Planner and senior Council staff prepared a report to Council titled *The Future of the Dawn Fraser Pool* in March 1992. This report summarised a range of options that were available. By late-1992 it was clear that Council preferred the option which focussed on retention and repair rather than redevelopment. The need to improve the revenue generating potential however, remained a prime consideration. A working party was established to guide the process.

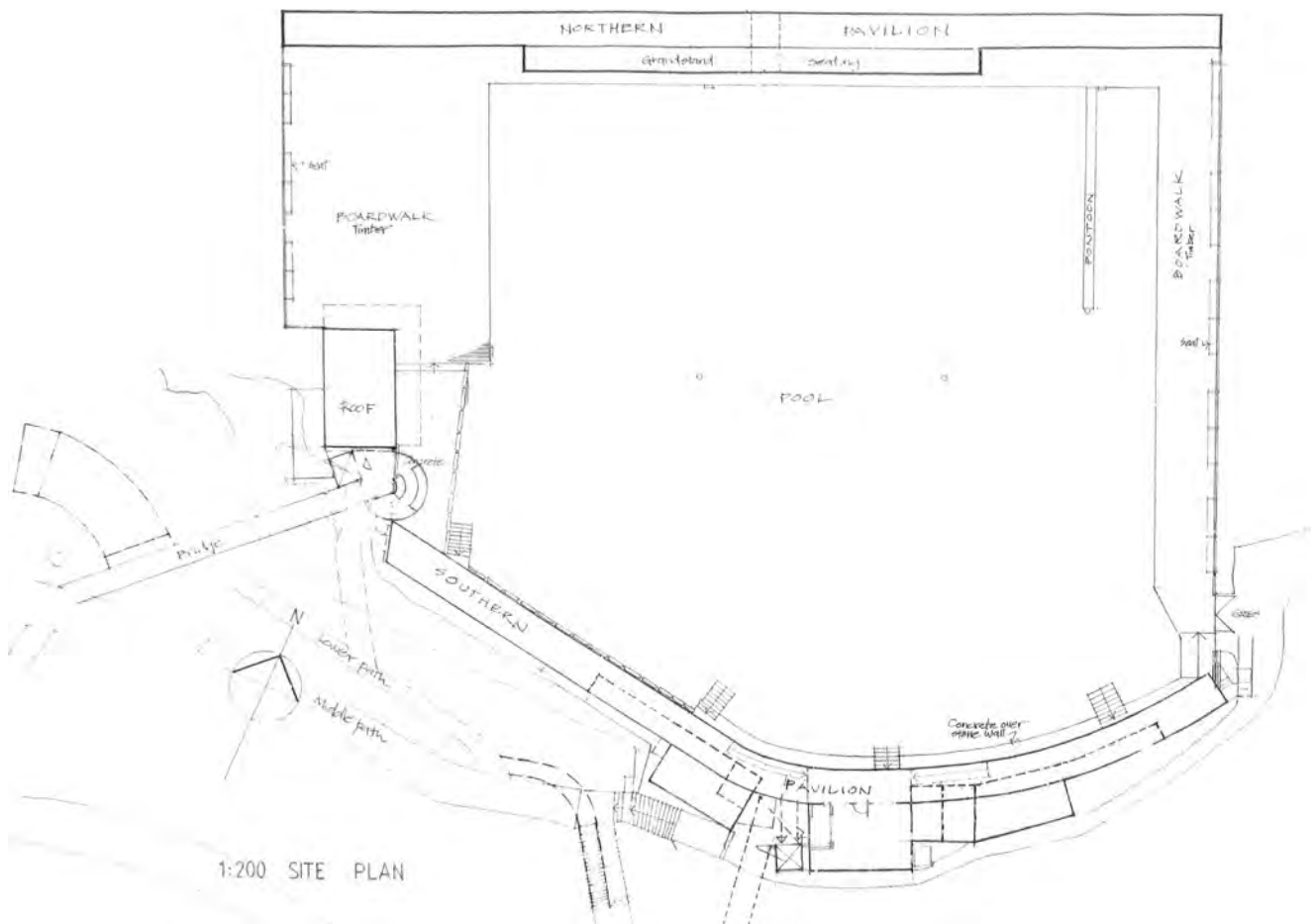
By late 1992, Colin Henstock and Associates, Structural Engineers, had been appointed to prepare documentation for the replacement of the substructure over the water. The programme called for construction works to be undertaken during the 1993 winter season, when the pool was closed. Mr Henstock had earlier reported to Council that he was unable to certify the adequacy of the substructure beyond the 1992-93 swimming season.

After considerable research, the most cost effective solution was identified. This required the dismantling of the northern dressing pavilion and other elements of the superstructure, to give clear access for re-piling. Design work for the new substructure was to allow for the accurate reconstruction of the dismantled components.

In order to provide a framework for the proposed work to the pool, and to protect its cultural significance in a time of change, Council commissioned Schwager Brooks and Partners in late-1992, to prepare a Conservation Management Plan, which was completed in 1993. Hughes Trueman Ludlow prepared a Structural Engineering Analysis that expanded on the substructure investigation.

Peter Hickey Architects prepared plans for a new Northern Pavilion in 1995. The plans included several alterations designed to improve access and flow through the site, including excavation of the sandstone rockface immediately south of the facility for a walkway, widening of the eastern boardwalk, installation of double gates in the eastern perimeter fence, and expansion of the entry door in the Entry Building and installation of a roller door. The kid's pool was removed, opening up the pool area. Council also took the opportunity to undertake major maintenance works to the Western Shed, including installing new decking, replacing deteriorated timber cladding and framing, new roof sheeting and an updated coat of paint. The timber fence along the east and west perimeter was also replaced with corrugated iron siding.

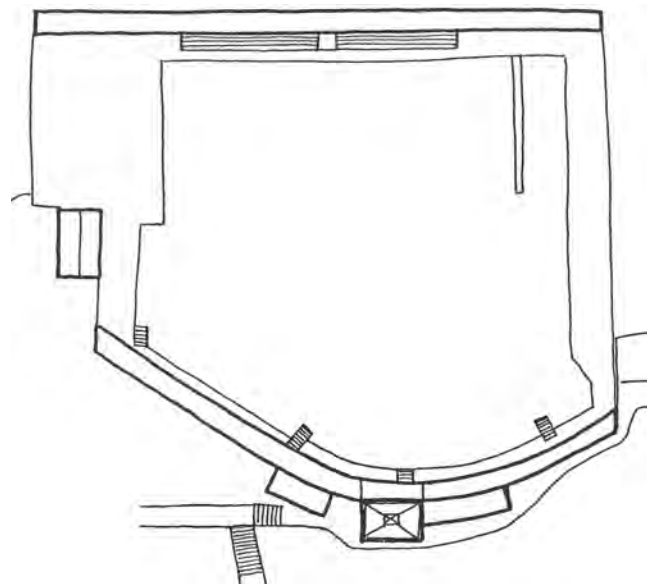
50 Inner West Council files.



**Figure 2.40**  
1995 preliminary design plan for updating the baths. The northern and eastern sides of the baths were generally altered as shown. Note the various options considered to improve access to the facility from the steep rise of Elkinington Park to the south, which were not pursued  
Source: Peter Hickey, Drawing A1A, 22 March 1995



**Figure 2.41**  
2012 view of the Dawn Fraser Pool. Most of the visible structures were replaced or refurbished in 1993-95



**Figure 2.42**  
Sketch drawing of the Dawn Fraser Baths following the 1993-95 upgrade works  
Source: GBA Heritage



## 2.11 ON-GOING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE (1996-2015)

In the decades since 1995, Leichhardt Council has progressively undertaken a maintenance regime and continuing minor repairs at the Dawn Fraser Pool.<sup>51</sup>

Most noticeable works include:

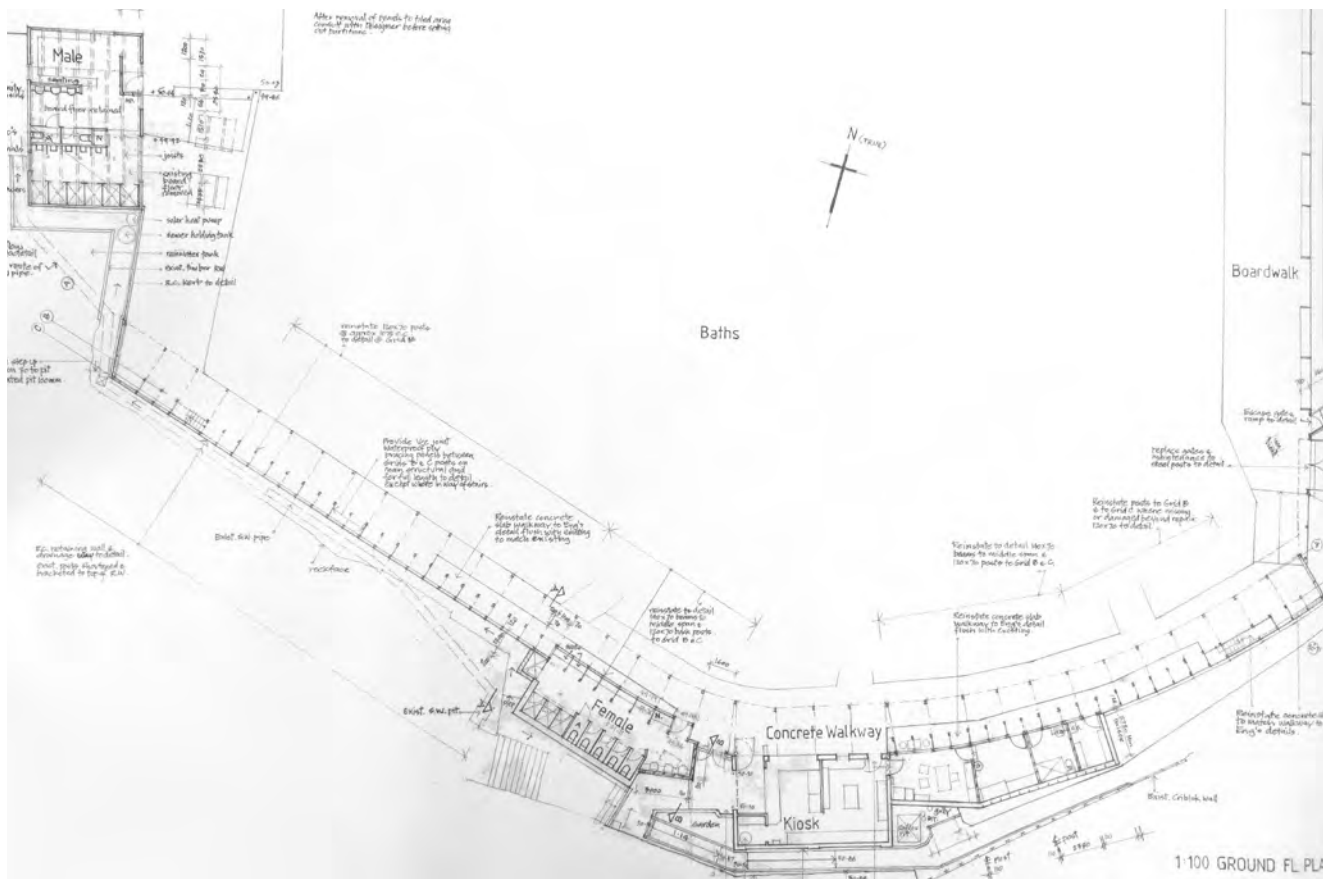
- Installation of an internal floating pontoon to better define the water polo competition area.
- Replacement of the existing 1993-95 floating pontoon.
- Installation of lighting along the northern pavilion for water polo matches.
- Removal of westernmost pool stairway and widening of adjacent pedestrian walkway.
- Repairs and replacement of softwood cladding boards around the southern buildings.
- Trimming the bottom ends of some timber posts in the Southern Pavilion.
- Stormwater management around the back of the pool structure at the base of the hillside, including progressive removal of decayed leaf matter.
- Alterations to the kiosk layout and installation of a new entry gate and turnstile.
- 2008-09 replacement of pool apron and remediation of timber piles in substructure.

In 2012, Leichhardt Council began to consider updating the Southern Pavilion. The pavilion was erected in 1900 and was showing extensive structural and fabric deterioration after years in this harsh marine environment. The projection of the c.1984 male and female bathrooms into part of the concrete walkway at the pool edge had increasingly become an issue as they reduced the available walking space and constrained the flow of people.

Leichhardt Council engaged Peter Hickey to draw up architectural plans for the upgrades. He proposed removing or reducing the northern projection of the change rooms, providing increased walking space and providing room for replica 1900 ground floor change booths. It was also proposed to reinstate ground floor support posts that were removed in the c.1984 alterations. The male change rooms would be altered for stores, first aid and a unisex bathroom and shower, with the male change rooms moved into the Western Shed. Other proposed works included replacing deteriorated cladding and fencing, improved drainage and fire systems, and general maintenance.

Council did not undertake the bulk of the proposed works. In late-2014, the deck timbers to the western sun deck were replaced and hooks installed to support a temporary event tent. In 2015, a new pontoon was added across the pool area, which better defined the swimming and water polo space.

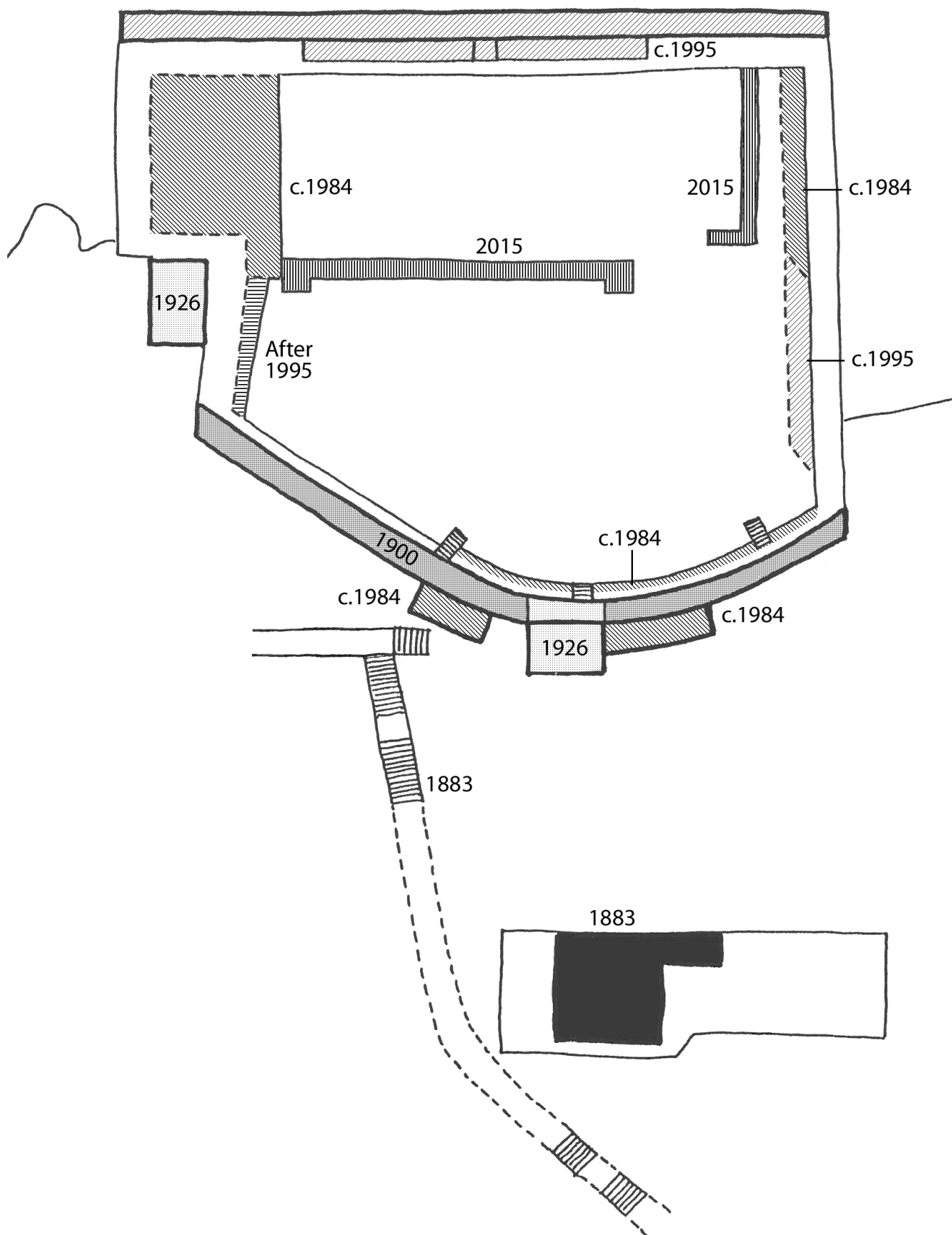
<sup>51</sup> Inner West Council files.



**Figure 2.43 (above)**  
Undated plans, understood to be from 2012, for changes to the ground floor Southern Pavilion and Western Shed  
Source: Peter Hickey, Drawing 3

**Figure 2.44 (below)**  
Aerial photograph of the Dawn Fraser Baths following the 2015 upgrade works  
Source: Nearmap, 19 January 2016





**Figure 2.45**  
Diagrammatic summary of the physical remains of the pool



# 3.0

## UNDERSTANDING THE EXISTING BATHS

### 3.1 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The Dawn Fraser Baths is located in a small cove on the northern, harbourside edge of Elkington Park, to the east of White Horse Point in Balmain. The Park falls steeply towards the water, with cliffs and steep gullies offering protection from southerly and westerly winds.

Photographs taken as late as the 1930s show Elkington park relatively clear of significant vegetation. This situation has now changed following extensive revegetation programmes over recent decades. The sense of seclusion of the Baths is now reinforced by the thick vegetation along the slopes and the mature tree cover in the Park.

The Park is surrounded on the east, south and west by the nearby residential areas of Balmain. In general these comprise rows of substantial, late-19th century terraced houses. White Horse Point is part of the Park and is therefore clear of any development. The caretakers cottage, which dates to 1885 and relates to the original 1882 Baths, is set on the high ground above the Pool.

To the north lies the waters of Iron Cove and a clear view to the nearby Cockatoo Island. This was formerly a major operational dockyard and ship repair facility. These operations ceased in the late-1980s and the island lies dormant awaiting a new use. At the close of the nineteenth century a coal mine was established on the slope above and to the east and a timberworks constructed on the adjacent shoreline to the east a few decades later. Since the Second World War most of the industrial structures have made way for residential development and the adjacent Fitzroy Avenue Park established from the 1970s.

Access to the Pool is via a steep staircase from the Park. These are secondary pathways leading from White Horse Point and from Fitzroy Avenue Park, the latter featuring a wide ramp without stairs from the road above. The reserve also features a small public wharf.

**Figure 3.1**  
The Dawn Fraser Baths from White Horse Point



## 3.2 DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING FACILITIES

While numerous alterations have been made over the years, the existing pool essentially illustrates the form which was achieved following the 1926 expansion. It comprises a large, enclosed body of water surrounded by pedestrian boardwalks, changing facilities and other amenities.

### 3.2.1 SOUTHERN PAVILION

The southern side contains the 1900 two storey pavilion which was originally constructed to provide semi private changing booths and spectator galleries. Its gently sloping curve mirrors the shoreline. Some of the changing booths survive on the outer sections of the upper level. This pavilion is essentially formed by a series of timber frames which are clad on the southern face but open to the north, facing the pool. The upper deck is protected by a high timber frame balustrade with timber lattice infill. The single slope corrugated iron roof falls to the south.

At the centre of the Southern Pavilion is the square, two storey mass of the 1926 Entry Building. This masonry structure is finished both internally and externally in painted cement render. It is topped, behind its parapet, with a tall, pyramidal roof and roof canter. The upper floor of the Entry Building is a little above the upper level of the dressing pavilion. The verandah deck is therefore raised for the width of the building before ramped connections provide a change of level to the east and west. This change is emphasised by the corresponding change in level of the balustrade and lean-to-roof against the bulk of the brick parapet.

At the lower level, the Entry Building contains the original turnstile entry, accessed through a doorway that was widened in 1995, a small kiosk, office and first aid room. The 1926 turnstile and attendant's chair are on display nearby.

On either side of the Entry Building are located the main change and toilet facilities, added in c.1984. These are single storey structures attached to the original southern wall of the main pavilion. They project part way into the ground floor colonnade, which was formed by the demolition of the former changing booths. Their construction necessitated required removal of most ground floor central support posts to each timber frame, reducing the structural strength of the pavilion.

Open timber stairs at each end of the Southern Pavilion provide access to the upper level. There was an upper level access directly out to the adjacent parkland which was demolished as part of the c.1984 works.



**Figure 3.2**

The yellow masonry main Entry Building, first floor of the timber Southern Pavilion and ground floor female bathrooms



**Figure 3.3**

The Southern Pavilion, looking south-west



**Figure 3.4**

The female bathroom in the Southern Pavilion. The central partition marks the line of the original boundary to the 1900 structure



### 3.2.2 NORTHERN PAVILION

The Northern Pavilion was constructed in 1995 to replace the deteriorated previous pavilion constructed in 1926. The new pavilion is constructed with durable materials that have held up well to the harsh maritime environment. Similar to the Southern Pavilion, the structure is formed by a series of timber frames that are clad on the northern face and open to the pool. It has a single slope roof falling to the north. The most exposed elements are constructed with enduring materials, including plastic plank ground level flooring and colorbond cladding to the external walls and roof. The framing and first floor walkway is constructed of oregon timber and hardwood.

The eastern and western pavilion ends are undivided spaces. There is a timber stairway to the first floor on each side, which has views over the pool and across the Parramatta River towards Cockatoo Island through long horizontal openings. The central portion of the pavilion is enclosed on the ground floor and features sports competition change rooms and storage space. The first floor features two enclosed rooms used for storage and general purposes flanking an open space overlooking the pool. There is timber grandstand seating on the ground floor fronting the pool.



**Figure 3.6**

The Northern Pavilion and western sun deck, viewed from the slope above the baths in Elkington Park



**Figure 3.7**

East end of the ground floor to the Northern Pavilion



**Figure 3.5**

The Northern Pavilion viewed from White Horse Point, looking south-east



**Figure 3.8**

First floor general purpose room in the Northern Pavilion



### 3.2.3 POOL PONTOONS

The pool features two floating pontoons that form the boundary of the competition area, used for swimming laps or games of water polo. The pontoon decking is constructed of durable plastic planking and the structures are fixed in place to large pylons, which allow them to rise and fall with the tide.

### 3.2.4 BOARDWALKS

The pool is surrounded by timber boardwalks supported on a piled substructure over the water and concrete pavement along the shoreline. The boardwalk varies in width at various locations, the largest area being at the north-west, where the pool area was partly sheeted over in c.1984.

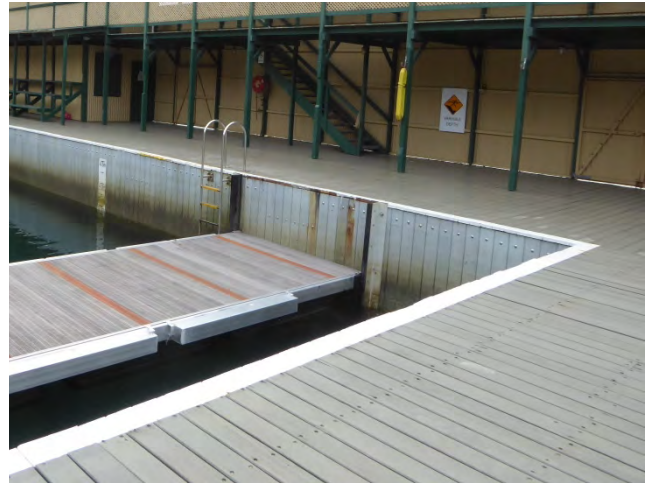
There are high, corrugated metal lined fences along the eastern and western boardwalks, completing the sense of enclosure. Paired wide change booths line the sides of the boardwalks. All of the areas over the water are faced, on the pool side, with vertical plastic scum boards. These protect down below tide level and protect the pool from most of the floating debris. They also provide a strong visual characteristic and reinforce the sense of enclosure.

There is a small shed on the western boardwalk that provides a sheltered area for recreation and meetings. It is a single, gable roof structure, clad in horizontal timber boarding. It was originally divided into two rooms but was opened into a single space in c.1984, when it was also provided with large openings in the eastern and northern elevations.

The southern boardwalk along the southern side is constructed of concrete and has retained its 1900 profile at the western end, but has been extended into the pool area by about 500mm at the eastern end. A new concrete wall was erected in the 1960's to provide the additional space in front of the original stone wall.

### 3.2.5 SUB STRUCTURE

It is understood that the entire sub structure was replaced in 1993. In 2008-09, remediation works were undertaken on the timber piles and a timber pile wrap system installed, which protects the surface from marine borer attack. Shreeji Consultant, Structural Civil Engineers, inspected the piles and substructure in 2017 and found them to be in generally good condition, with some specific maintenance issues noted.



**Figure 3.9**  
The boardwalk and pontoon at the north-east corner of the baths



**Figure 3.10**  
The wide change booths along the east boardwalk wall, installed in 1993-95



**Figure 3.11**  
The 1926 Western Shed, which has been highly altered to be

### 3.3 SUMMARY OF CONDITION

The 2017 reports prepared by Shreeji Consultant provide the most detailed account of the Baths' current condition.

The major influences on the condition of the Baths can be summarised as follows:

1. Immersion in sea water
2. Wave action
3. Non-durable material
4. General aging in marine environment
5. Termites and marine borers

#### 3.3.1 WAVE ACTION

Compounding the constant erosion from water impregnation is the influence of wave action. Typically, the whole of the pool structure moves under the action of waves to absorb and distribute the horizontal stresses. Although located in a relatively protected section of the Harbour the wash from passing vessels and wave action in inclement weather places the whole of the built elements over the water under considerable stress. There appears to be little evidence of deterioration to the structural upgrades of recent decades appear due to wave action.

#### 3.3.2 GENERAL AGING IN MARINE ENVIRONMENT

This factor compounds those issues discussed above. With the nature of public baths generating heavy pedestrian traffic and wet feet, the spread of deterioration is more than usual. This is particularly noticeable in the decay of the timber steps in the Southern Pavilion, in the spray of lime work around the storage areas, the heavy treatment of painted walls and the decay of the sea wall.

#### 3.3.3 TERMITES

The nature of the construction of the timber buildings and their connection with the adjacent ground has not been fully assessed, and is largely obscured. Damage from termite infestation has been observed in the past in the eastern end of the Southern Pavilion. The risks of damage to timber from termites is an ongoing issue that must be carefully and continually monitored, and quickly addressed when identified.

#### 3.3.4 NON-DURABLE MATERIALS

After years of deterioration following exposure to the difficult marine environment, the Northern Pavilion, eastern and western boardwalks and their substructure were all substantially replaced and refurbished with durable materials in 1993. After over two decades of use, these materials show only minor evidence of deterioration, which is a strong affirmation of the choice in construction materials. Deteriorated elements of the Western Shed's siding appears to have been replaced with matching timber, which is more vulnerable to weather deterioration. It shows a moderate level of deterioration, particularly with warped boards on the northern elevation, which has intensive sun and sea exposure.

The Southern Pavilion features timber structural elements from 1900 and the masonry Entry Building from 1926. The most recent major overhaul of the pavilion was in 1980-84 when the opportunity for extensive improvements was taken. Unfortunately, the choice of external wall cladding materials, painted softwood boarding, has decayed fairly quickly. The timber elements near the ground floor walkway are rotting and the bases to the outer structural posts have been cut off and replaced with metal feet. Most seriously, The 1900 timber frame shows significant deterioration after over a century of use, which undermines the stability of the entire structure. The roof and floor lines fronting the pool are warped and the western side of the pavilion is leaning to the north and has pulled away from the Entry Building. This structural 'bending' places stresses on other elements of the building, thereby exacerbating the deterioration process.

There will always be a process of general deterioration and renewal in this facility. This is a natural part of the characteristics of the place and has been a constant part of its historic development. Maintenance cycles are at two levels, the general items of minor maintenance and the periodic larger exercises. If the smaller items are ignored for excessive periods, the cumulative efforts generate a need for major works.

#### 3.3.5 IMMERSION IN WATER

The Baths are located within the tidal reaches of Sydney Harbour. Various elements are constantly or periodically immersed in sea water. These are primarily the piles and substructure and the scum boards. Several times each year king tides cover the boardwalk and flood the deck areas used as storage, office and changing facilities.





**Figure 3.12**  
The roof line and first floor walkway are no longer straight but have twisted from exposure to the environment and aging



**Figure 3.15**  
The cladding on the northern elevation to the Western Shed is distorted



**Figure 3.13**  
The end of the western side of the 1900 Southern Pavilion has pulled away from the masonry Entry Building



**Figure 3.16**  
A water damaged ceiling sheet on the balcony of the 1926 Entry Building

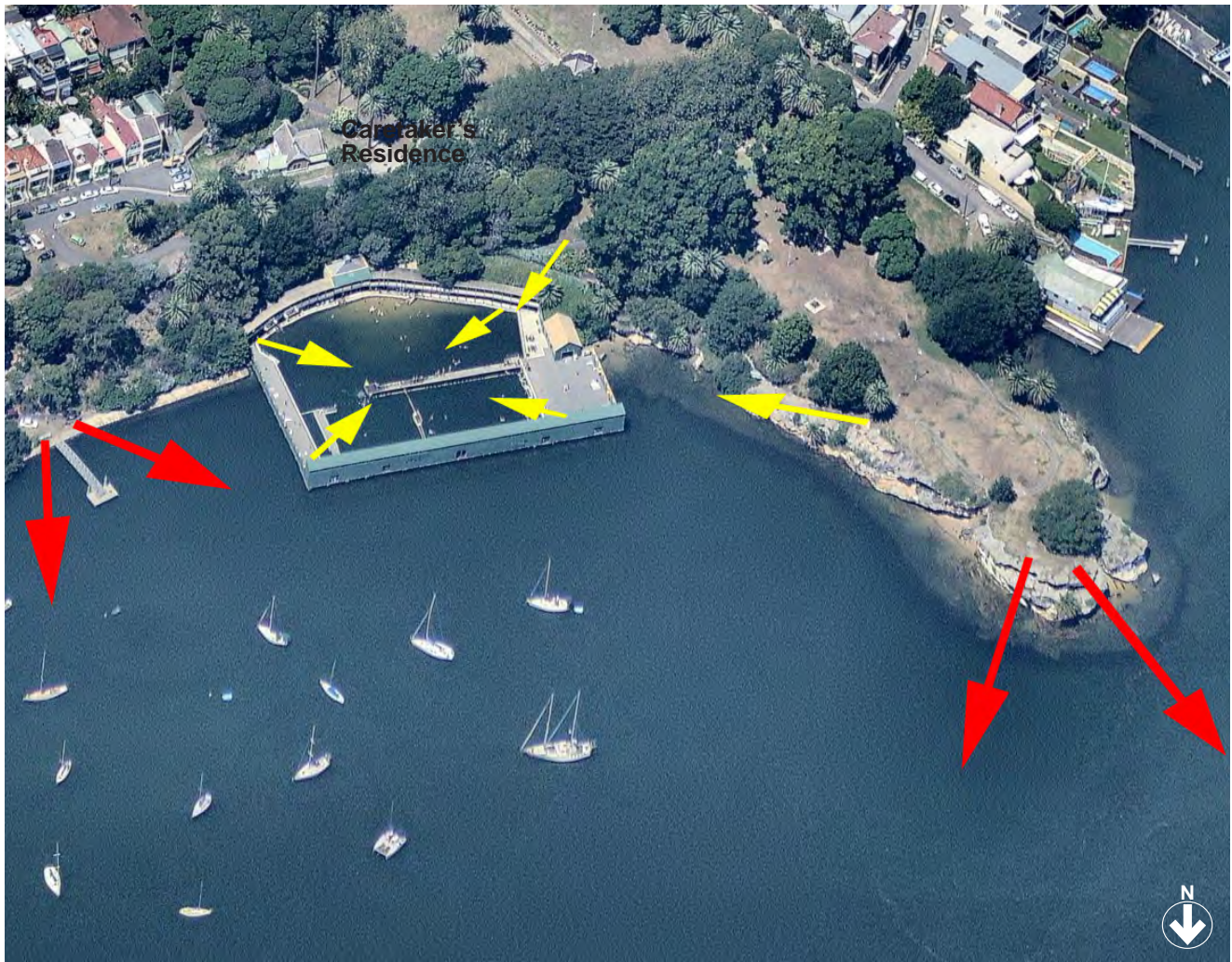


**Figure 3.14**  
The timber near the ground floor walkway is rotting. This area is prone to flooding during king tides



**Figure 3.17**  
A highly deteriorated structural beam in the male bathrooms, on the line of the southern perimeter to the 1900 pavilion

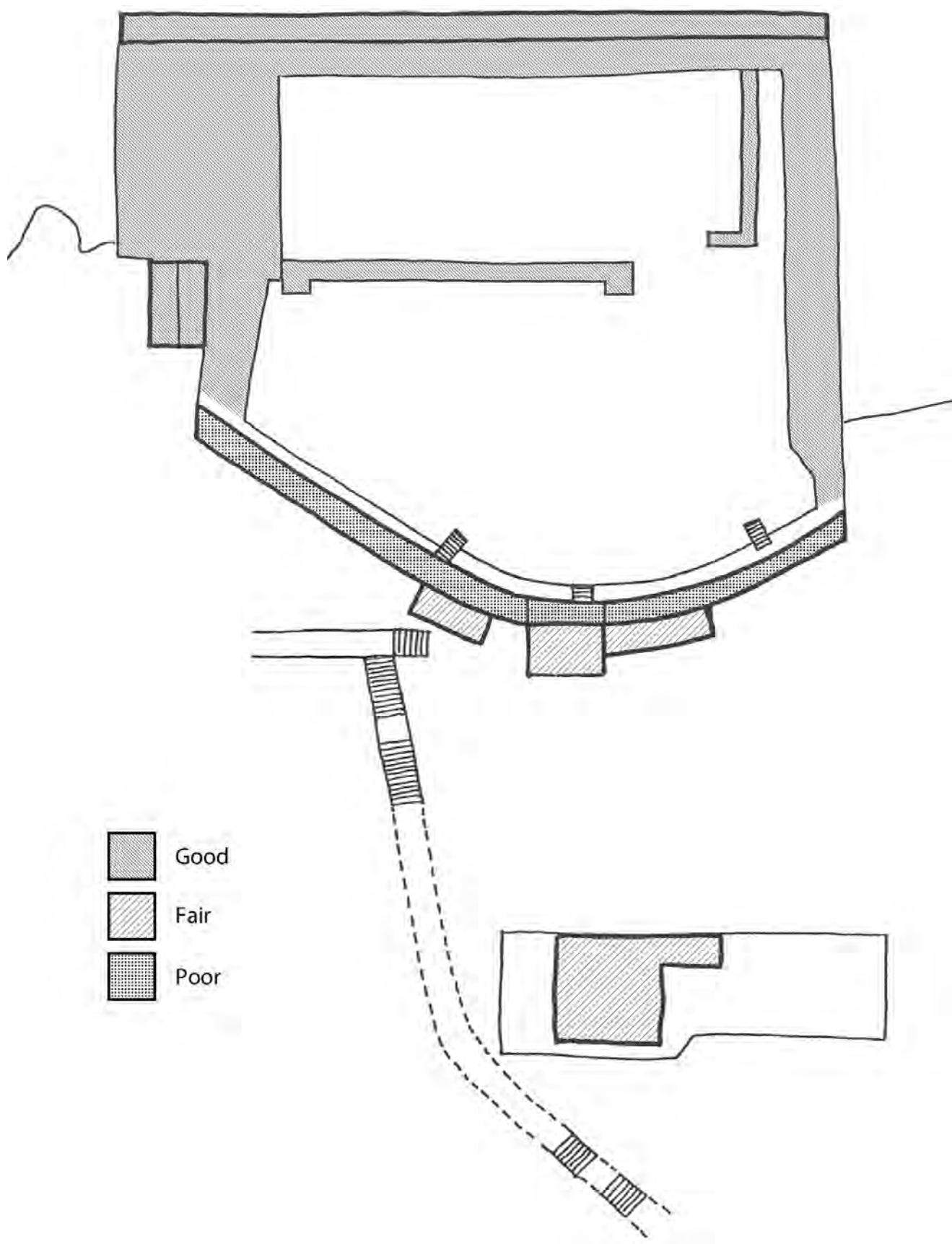




**Figure 3.18**

Oblique satellite photograph showing views to and around the subject site. The yellow arrows denote views into the bath's interior. Red arrows denote major views of areas outside the baths. The bath's interior can be viewed from the west but mature trees and perimeter walls block views from other positions, including from the Caretaker's Residence. The sense of enclosure is a key characteristic of the baths facility

Source: Nearmap website



**Figure 3.19**  
Plan showing the relative condition of the fabric



### 3.4 COMPARATIVE EXAMPLES

In order to fully understand the cultural significance of the Dawn Fraser Pool it is necessary to compare it to the other harbour side pools in Australia.

As was noted in the Historical Summary, the construction of enclosed harbour pools for public recreation commenced in Woolloomooloo Bay in the 1820s. During the second half of the 19th Century and the early years of this century, there were more than 20 public swimming baths constructed in Sydney Harbour and along the Parramatta River. In January 1900 the following Public Baths were in existence:

1. Cavills, Woolloomooloo
2. Fig Tree / Corporation Baths (later New Municipal or Domain), Woolloomooloo
3. Farmers / Rushcutters Bay Baths
4. Hellings, Woolloomooloo
5. New Ladies, Woolloomooloo
6. Dawes Point, Sydney
7. Point Street Baths, Pyrmont
8. Nicholson Street Baths, Balmain
9. Elkington Park, Balmain
10. Lavender Bay
11. Balmoral
12. The Spit
13. Manly Mens and Manly Ladies
14. Ashton's Baths, Mortlake

In addition there were coastal baths at Bondi, Bronte and Coogee. The Coogee Ladies Baths were first constructed in 1886. They were followed by the Giles Hot Baths in 1902 and Wylies Baths in 1907. These baths could be considered to be comparable to the Dawn Fraser Pool, but are constructed in rock with concrete enclosures.

There are no intact early 20th century harbour side public baths in Australia, with the exception of the Dawn Fraser Pool. Those that remain in Sydney are generally much modified or have been replaced with concrete enclosures and brick amenities blocks. Several of the remaining waterfront pools have been replaced by simple netted enclosures, such as Manly, Balmoral, Red leaf, Watsons Bay and Neilsen Bay. Only the Dawn Fraser retains the over water pavilion and opaque fenced enclosure.

The tidal public pools which were built in Sydney and were used, or are still being used for competitive swimming comprise the following:

#### MIDDLE HARBOUR

1. Roseville (demolished)
2. Balmoral (reconstructed)
3. Northbridge
4. The Spit (demolished)

#### SYDNEY HARBOUR

1. Manly (demolished)
2. Clifton Gardens (reconstructed)
3. Watsons Bay
4. Rose Bay
5. Red leaf
6. Rushcutters Bay (demolished)
7. Domain (4) (demolished)
8. Lavender Bay (demolished)

#### UPPER REACHES OF THE HARBOUR

1. Pyrmont (demolished)
2. Greenwich
3. Dawn Fraser, Balmain
4. Leichhardt (demolished)
5. Abbotsford (demolished)
6. Ryde (demolished)
7. Meadowbank (demolished)
8. Drummoyne (demolished)





**Figure 3.20**

The eastern and southern perimeter of the Domain Baths. Originally constructed in 1858, they were reconstructed in to this design in 1908. Note the line of changing booths along the perimeter fence  
Source: City of Sydney, ref: NSCA CRS 51/232



**Figure 3.23**

The 1908 Domain Baths, now a chlorinated pool. The two storey western pavilion has a similar format to the Southern Pavilion at the subject baths but with a grander design  
Source: City of Sydney, ref: NCSW CRS 43



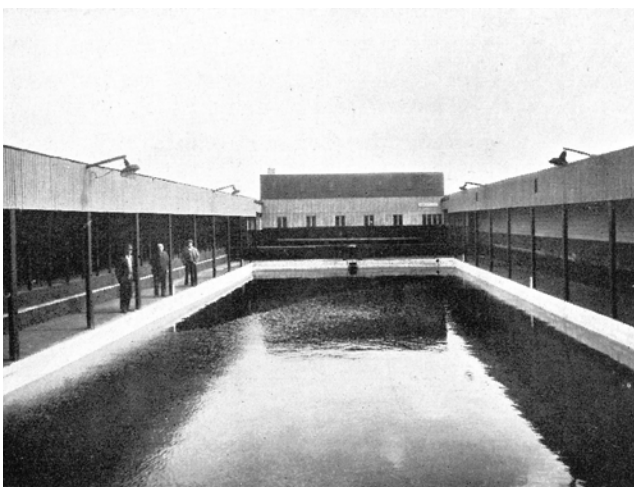
**Figure 3.21**

1906 photograph of the Pyrmont Baths. Originally constructed in 1875, it was reconstructed in 1902 and later demolished  
Source: City of Sydney, ref: NSCA CRS 274/12



**Figure 3.24**

The Lavender Bay baths, now demolished. Note the sheets hung across the swimming area to provide some measure of privacy  
Source: State Library of NSW, Call NO: PXE 711/99



**Figure 3.22**

c.1933 photograph of Ashton's Baths in Mortlake, now demolished  
Source: City of Canada Bay website



**Figure 3.25**

The Johnson Street 'floating baths' in Balmain East, constructed in c.1908 and since demolished. Note the modesty screens  
Source: Inner West Council website





**Figure 3.26 (above)**

c.1920 photograph of the Leichhardt Baths, built in c.1905 but since demolished and relocated nearby at the Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre

Source: Inner West Council Website

**Figure 3.27 (below)**

1909-1917 photograph of the Clifton Gardens Baths. Construction was completed in 1906 and burnt down in c.1956. It has been replaced with an shark proof swimming enclosure

Source: Powerhouse Museum, Object No. 85/1284-47



## OTHER STATES

There are a number of notable public baths servicing elsewhere in Australia.

The Spring Hill Baths, Brisbane, were opened in 1886 and have been claimed to be the oldest public baths in Australian swimming in their original form. They are not comparable to Dawn Fraser to the extent that they are located in a fully enclosed structure in a suburban location.

The main Melbourne Public Baths on the northern outskirts of the city are claimed to be the oldest in Australia but were extensively remodelled in the 1920s.

There were Municipal Baths constructed in Fortitude Valley in Brisbane in 1925, but only the façade remains. A number of public baths were constructed in Port Philip Bay in the 1930s, some replacing earlier structures. These included facilities at St Kilda in 1931, Middle Brighton in 1936, and at Geelong (Eastern Beach) in 1939.

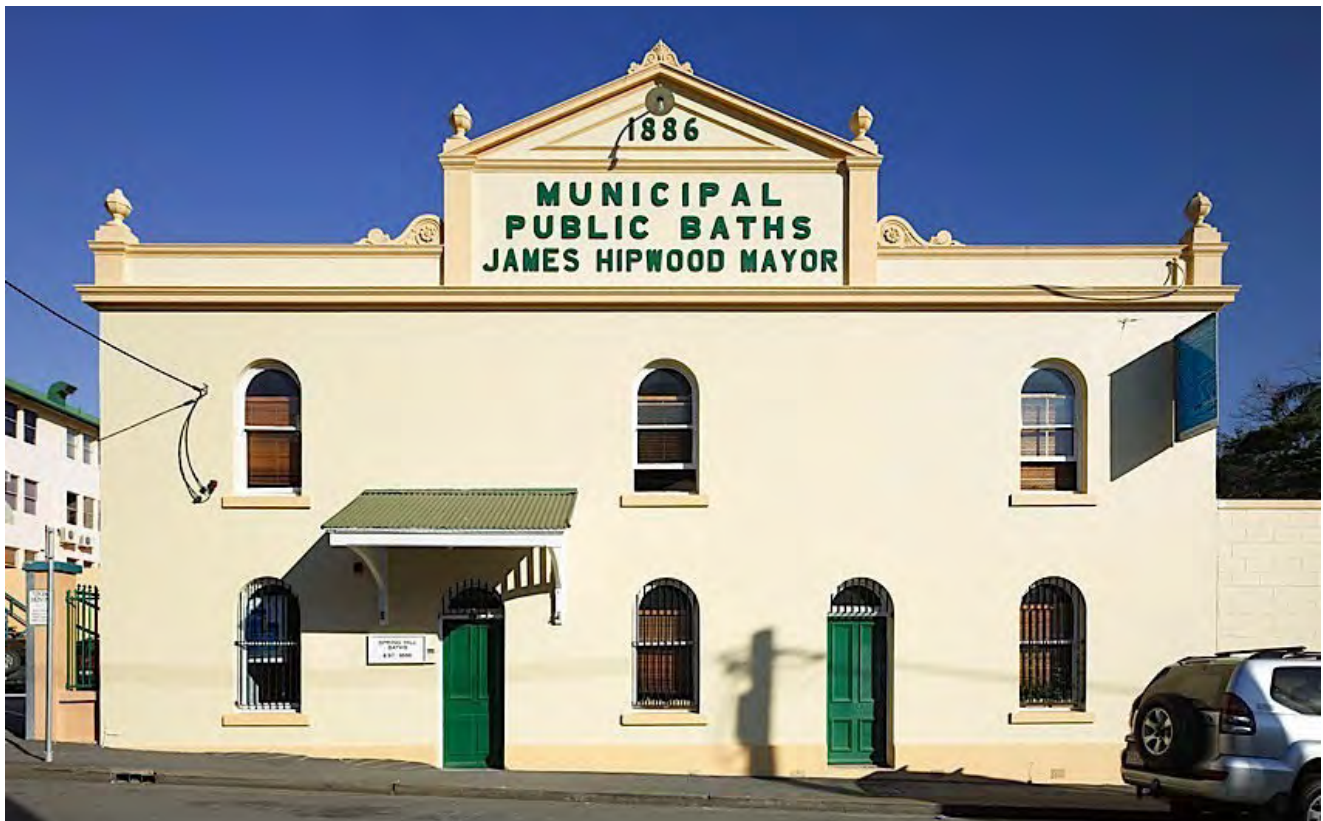
The St Kilda Sea Baths bather's pavilion building remains with some contemporary alterations but the swimming area has been removed to allow for open beach swimming. The original Middle Brighton Municipal Baths were heavily damaged by a storm and were reconstructed with a new Entry Building in 1936. The baths were restored in 1988 and remain in operation. The Eastern Beach Pool has been completely rebuilt in recent decades in a way that reflects its original design.

For a full comparative analysis it would be necessary to undertake a more detailed study of the private pools that survive around Sydney Harbour. However, it is clear that the long process of decay, high maintenance costs, the popularity of the post war suburban pools with their promise of clear, filtered water, actively discouraged the continuity of the traditional harbourside timber enclosure.

The Dawn Fraser Pool is thus a unique survivor from the early years of this century.

**Figure 3.28**

The 1886 masonry facade to the Spring Hill Baths  
Source: Conrad Gargett website







**Figure 3.29**  
The 1925 masonry facade to the (Fortitude) 'Valley Baths'  
Source: *Thefotofanatic, Smugmug website*



**Figure 3.30**  
The 1936 masonry entry building to the Middle Brighton Baths  
Source: *Middle Brighton Baths website*



**Figure 3.31 (Above)**  
The large 1931 bathers pavilion at St Kilda  
Source: *Construction Engineering website*

**Figure 3.32 (Below)**  
The Eastern Beach Baths in Geelong. The bathers pavilions remain but the baths structure has been completely rebuilt  
Source: *MapioNet website*



# 4.0

## ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Heritage, or “cultural” value, is a term used to describe an item’s value or importance to our current society and is defined as follows in *The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*, 2013, published by Australia ICOMOS (Article 1.0):

*Cultural significance* means **aesthetic, historic, scientific or social or spiritual value** for past, present or future generations.<sup>1</sup>

This section establishes the criteria which are used to understand significance and identifies the reasons for the cultural value of the site and its components.

Significance may be contained within, and demonstrated by, the fabric of an item; its setting and relationship with other items; historical records that allow us to understand it in terms of its contemporary context, and in the response that the item stimulates in those who value it.<sup>2</sup> The assessment of significance is not static. Significance may increase as more is learnt about the past and as items become rare, endangered or illustrate aspects that achieve a new recognition of importance.

Determining the cultural value is at the basis of all planning for places of historic value. A clear determination of significance permits informed decisions for future planning that will ensure that the expressions of significance are retained and conserved, enhanced or at least minimally impacted upon. A clear understanding of the nature and degree of significance will determine the parameters for, and flexibility of, any future development.

A historical analysis and understanding of the physical evidence provides the context for assessing the significance. These are presented in the preceding sections. An assessment of significance is made by applying standard evaluation criteria to the facts of the item’s development and associations.

The NSW Heritage Database contains the following Statement of Significance for Dawn Fraser Swimming Pool, Database No. 5001040:

*The pool is a complete swimming complex extending back to the turn-of-the-century. It is an excellent example of pool architecture no longer practiced and a well known Sydney landmark set in an attractive harbourside location which has become a feature of the pool. It is a representative of the swimming identities and world champions. It provides evidence of the popularity of swimming as a competitive and recreational sport in Australia.*

The NSW Heritage Inventory contains the same Statement of Significance for the subject Baths (Database No. 1940252).

This is revised below, based on the analysis of the historical and physical evidence documented in this report.

<sup>1</sup> *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, 2013, p.2

<sup>2</sup> ie “social”, or community, value

## 4.2 ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The following commentary discusses how each of the criteria established by the New South Wales Heritage Office (now the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) relate to the subject site.

### ***Criterion (a) – An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)***

The Dawn Fraser Baths is highly significant as the only surviving example in Australia of a once common, fully enclosed, public tidal baths from the late-19th and early-20th centuries. It is the oldest surviving tidal baths in Sydney Harbour.

The Baths were the first Municipal baths in Balmain and has been continually operated by the local council since its construction in 1882.

The Baths has an integral relationship with the history of NSW's and Australia's aquatic sports history. The Elkington Park Baths was a premier venue for sports competition for decades starting in the 1880s and was the scene of many major sporting events, records, and the training ground of numerous champions. The success of the Balmain Swimming Club, increasing sophistication of aquatic sports, and growing expectations of competitors, drove Balmain Council to undertake major improvements in 1888, 1900, 1910 and 1926 to keep pace with the best quality facilities in Sydney.

While altered numerous times over its lifespan, the Dawn Fraser Baths have always maintained its sense of visual and physical enclosure, which was a common feature of Victorian and Federation-era swimming baths.

### ***Criterion (b) - An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)***

The Dawn Fraser Baths are associated with a number of prominent local identities. They are associated with Balmain alderman and mayor, Albert Elkington, who was a prominent figure in the establishment of Elkington Park and the Baths, and after which the Baths were originally named. The Baths are associated with numerous State, national and world champions in water sports since the 1880s. Most prominently, they are associated with Dawn Fraser, a nationally recognised sports and political identity. Dawn Fraser spent much of her youth training there, which were named in her honour in 1964.

The Baths has been the base for the Balmain Swimming Club since 1884. It is now the oldest swimming club in Australia and has produced many state and national swimming and diving champions and several competitors who have represented their country at various Olympic Games.

### ***Criterion (c) - An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)***

The Dawn Fraser Baths is significant as the only surviving example in Australia of a once common, fully enclosed, public tidal baths from the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

The character of the Baths today closely reflects the Federation period of Sydney Harbour swimming baths, including the enclosed body of water with the backdrops of timber boardwalks, pavilions and the central focus of the Entry Building with its pyramidal roof. Much of the two storey Southern Pavilion evidences the 1900 redevelopment of the Baths, which retains numerous design features that were typical of the period. These include its timber construction, two storey walkway and spectator area, and changing booths on the first floor.

The Dawn Fraser Baths is a prominent landmark in the upper reaches of Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River. Its distinctive design and colour is clearly identifiable within the surrounding residential area.



***Criterion (d) - An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons***

The Dawn Fraser Baths has been in continual use by the local community since its opening in 1882. It remains a popular swimming, recreation and sports venue and has an almost institutional status in the community.

The Baths has a strong association with the Balmain Swimming Club, which has been based there since 1884.

The Baths is a venue for popular community activities, including water polo training and games. It is also the start and end point to the annual 'Dawny to Cockatoo Swim'.

***Criterion (e) - An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)***

The 1900 Southern Pavilion is the most intact example of a Federation baths pavilion remaining in Australia, which contributes to an understanding of the State's former approach to designing public baths.

The memorabilia stored in the first floor of the Entry Building are important documents and reminders of the history and sporting accomplishments of the local area.

***Criterion (f) - An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)***

The Dawn Fraser Baths is rare as the only surviving example in Australia of a once common, fully enclosed, public tidal baths from the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

The 1900 Southern Pavilion is the only surviving example of a Federation baths pavilion in Australia.

The Baths retains an early cast iron and timber turnstile and attendants chair are understood to be rare examples of their kind.

***Criterion (g) - An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments)***

The Dawn Fraser Baths is a good example of a Federation tidal baths, which were once common in Sydney Harbour.

### 4.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dawn Fraser Baths is a public tidal baths in the Parramatta River. It opened in 1882 as an original feature of the newly established Elkington Park and was the first Municipal baths in Balmain. The Baths has been operational to the present day. It has been modified many times over its lifespan, most notably in 1888, 1900, 1910, 1926, c.1984, 1993-95 and 2015, when the Baths were expanded and new facilities were constructed. The southern pavilion built in 1900 survives relatively intact. The pool's current format was established in 1926, when the entry building, western shed and northern pavilion were constructed, the latter having been sympathetically replaced in 1993-95.

The Dawn Fraser Baths is highly significant as the only surviving example of a fully enclosed, public tidal baths from the late-19th and early-20th centuries in Australia. This type of baths was once a common Sydney Harbour recreational and sporting facility and is a remarkable survivor from that time. It is a landmark in the Parramatta River and Sydney Harbour.

It is a good example of a Federation style baths, with two storey timber pavilions with spectator balconies and pool side walkways. The southern pavilion retains its original first floor changing booths. The sense of enclosure reflects the Victorian and Federation-era desire to protect bather's privacy and modesty. The facility has retained its sense of identity over its lifespan through retention of its sense of enclosure, ongoing association with aquatic sports, and the evolutionary approach to change adopted.

The Dawn Fraser Baths are highly significant NSW's aquatic sporting history. From the late-1880s to the early 1900s, the Baths were a premier sporting competition venue in the State's nascent competitive swimming and water polo competitions. It was the scene of a number of state and national swimming records and at least one World record. For many decades, the Baths have been the training ground for numerous swimming and water polo champions at the state, national and international level.

The Dawn Fraser Baths are associated with former Balmain alderman and mayor, Albert Elkington, who was instrumental in the establishment of Elkington Park and after which the Baths were originally named. They are also associated with multiple Olympic gold medal winner Dawn Fraser, a nationally recognised sports and political identity who trained at the Baths in her youth. The Baths were named in her honour in 1964. It has been the base for the Balmain Swimming Club since 1884, which is the oldest swimming club in Australia and which has produced many state and national sporting champions.

### 4.4 GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dawn Fraser Baths has been carefully assessed to determine a relative grading of significance into five levels. This process examines a number of factors, including:

- Relative age
- Original design quality
- Degree of intactness and general condition
- Extent of subsequent alterations
- Association with important people or events
- Ability to demonstrate a rare quality, craft or construction process

Grading reflects the contribution the element makes to the overall significance of the item (or the degree to which the significance of the item would be diminished if the component were removed or altered).

#### EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Includes rare or outstanding building fabric that displays a high degree of intactness or can be interpreted relatively easily.

#### HIGH SIGNIFICANCE

Includes the original extant fabric and spaces of particular historic and aesthetic value. Includes extant fabric from the early phases of construction.

#### MODERATE SIGNIFICANCE

Includes building fabric and relationships which were originally of higher significance but have been compromised by later, less significant modifications.

#### LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE

Includes most of the fabric associated with recent alterations and additions made to accommodate changing functional requirements. These are components generally of neutral impact on the site's significance.

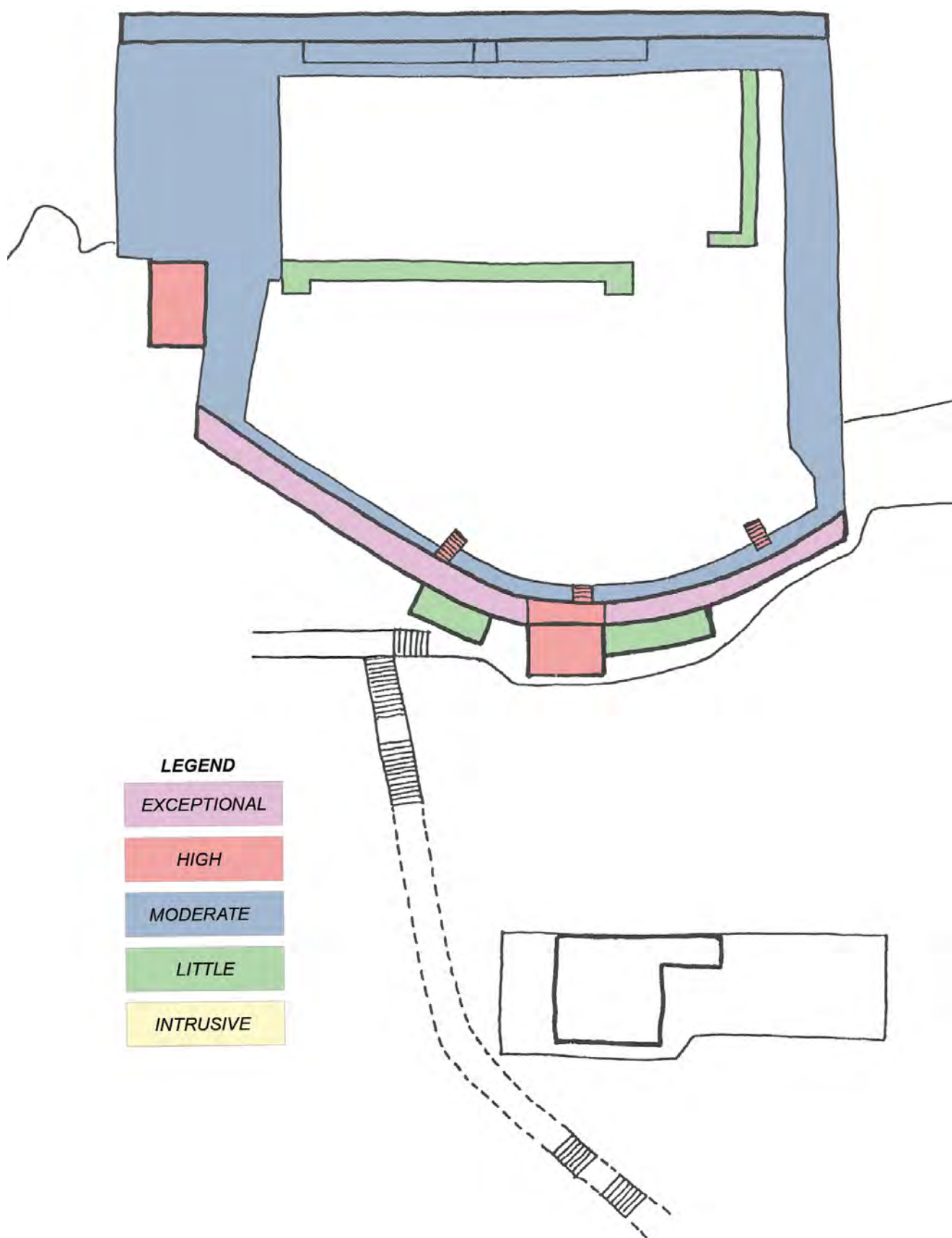
#### INTRUSIVE

Recent fabric, which adversely affects the significance of the site.

Grading has been established as a valuable tool, to assist in developing appropriate conservation measures for the treatment of the building and its various elements. In general, good conservation practice encourages the focussing on change, or upgrading of, an historical building/site to those areas or components which make a lesser contribution to significance. The areas or components that make a greater or defining contribution to significance should generally be left intact or changed with the greatest care and respect.

<b>GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>SITE ELEMENTS</b>
EXCEPTIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The sense of enclosure for patrons created by two storey pavilions and high side fences</li> <li>- The 1900 Southern Pavilion (excluding the Entry Building and bathrooms)</li> <li>- The ongoing association with aquatic sports</li> </ul>
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Baths' architectural imagery, layout and character</li> <li>- The 1926 Entry Building and associated balcony</li> <li>- The 1926 Western Shed</li> <li>- Three pool entry stairways on southern perimeter</li> </ul>
MODERATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The general design and format of the 1995 Northern Pavilion</li> <li>- The northern, western and eastern boardwalks, including extensions and the north-western sun deck</li> </ul>
LITTLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The c.1984 bathrooms in the Southern Pavilion</li> <li>- The two pontoons</li> </ul>
INTRUSIVE	There are no elements of the subject site considered to be Intrusive





**Figure 4.1**  
Grading diagram indicating the relative significance of individual components, as shown in the key on the left. The grading diagram is to be read in conjunction with the Grading Table provided above

## 4.5 CURTILAGE ANALYSIS

The NSW Heritage Office (now the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) publication *Heritage Curtilages*<sup>3</sup> defines “heritage curtilage” as the area of land (including land covered by water) around an item or area of heritage significance which is essential for retaining and interpreting its heritage significance. Heritage curtilage can be classified as one of four types:

- Lot Boundary Heritage Curtilage: for places where the legal boundary of the allotment is defined as the heritage curtilage. The allotment should, in general, contain all significant related features, for example outbuildings and gardens, within its boundaries.
- Reduced Heritage Curtilage: for places where an area less than the total allotment is defined as the heritage curtilage. Applicable where not all parts of a property contain places associated with its significance.
- Expanded Heritage Curtilage: for places where the heritage curtilage is larger than the allotment. Particularly relevant where views to and/or from a place are of significance.
- Composite Heritage Curtilage: for larger areas that include a number of separate related places, such as heritage conservation areas based on a block, precinct or whole village.

The Expanded Heritage Curtilage for the Dawn Fraser Baths comprises the entire facility and a visual catchment that includes parts of White Horse Point and the Parramatta River.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Although Archaeological Assessment is outside the scope of this Report, it should be noted that the Archaeological Management Provisions of the *NSW Heritage Act* apply to any relics which are essentially located below ground level. If, at any time, unexpected archaeological remains are uncovered or disturbed, work must stop immediately and the NSW Heritage Council must be notified.

**Figure 4.2**

Plan of the Expanded Heritage Curtilage for the Dawn Fraser Baths



# 5.0

## CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section outlines various major issues involved in the preparation of the conservation guidelines for the site. It takes into consideration matters arising from the Statement of Significance and procedural constraints imposed by cultural conservation methodology such as that of the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter*. It identifies all statutory and non-statutory listings that apply for the site and describes constraints and opportunities arising from these listings.

### 5.2 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Considering the Statement of Significance, the following issues need to be addressed in the conservation guidelines:

1. The Statement of Significance provided in Section 4.3 of this report should be accepted as one of the bases for the future use and management of the site.
2. Conservation of the outstanding cultural significance should be a requirement of future use and development strategies for the Dawn Fraser Pool.
3. The Pool should be conserved and managed as a centre for active public recreation, particularly casual and competitive swimming.
4. All original and significant components of the site, as identified in Section 4.5 Grading of Significance, should be retained and conserved in accordance with the principles of the *Burra Charter*.
5. The long standing association between organised amateur swimming club participation and the local Council should be fostered and encouraged both as a community benefit and as an effective support network for the facility's management.
6. The Southern Pavilion, including the Entry Building, should be conserved as an integral component of the Baths facility.
7. The Caretaker's Cottage should be conserved and retained as an integral component of the Pool environment.
8. The heavily landscaped backdrop and natural features of Elkington Park and White Horse Point, including the patterns of steps and pathways down to the Pool should be conserved.
9. The architectural imagery of the existing Baths, with its vernacular character, sense of enclosure and composition of major elements from varying periods, should be conserved.
10. Existing views of the Baths from Elkington Park, Fitzroy Avenue Park and the Parramatta River should be retained.
11. All future programmes of subsurface excavation within the vicinity and the footprint of the southern dressing pavilion should take note of the potential for physical evidence of the 1882 and 1888 Baths.
12. The name Dawn Fraser Baths should be retained in recognition, not only of her achievements, but for the importance of the association in the minds of the Balmain community.



## 5.3 HERITAGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

### 5.3.1 CURRENT HERITAGE LISTINGS

The following statutory and non-statutory lists have been reviewed in relation to the subject site. The implications of these listings, if any, are discussed below.

LIST	INCLUDED
National Heritage List	NO
NSW State Heritage Register	YES
Leichhardt Local Environmental Plan 2013	YES
National Trust	YES

### 5.3.2 NSW HERITAGE ACT 1977

#### State Heritage Register

The *NSW Heritage Act 1977* (Amended) is an Act to conserve the environmental heritage of New South Wales. The Act established the Heritage Council of NSW and, more recently, the State Heritage Register. Section 4 of the Act defines State heritage significance as being:

*...relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, natural or aesthetic value of the item.*

The subject site is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. The NSW Heritage Inventory contains the following Statement of Significance for database entry number 5001040, *Dawn Fraser Swimming Pool*:

*The pool is a complete swimming complex extending back to the turn-of-the-century. it is an excellent example of pool architecture no longer practiced and a well known Sydney landmark set in an attractive harbourside location which has become a feature of the pool. It is representative of the development of a harbourside recreational and social facility and is associated with prominent swimming identities and world champions. It provides evidence of the major popularity of swimming as a competitive and recreational sport in Australia.*

Section 60 of the *NSW Heritage Act* requires approval to be gained from the Heritage Council when making changes to a heritage place listed on the State Heritage Register.

Section 118 of the *NSW Heritage Act* sets out minimum requirements for maintenance and repair of items listed on the State Heritage Register. These requirements are detailed in the *Heritage Regulation 2005*. In summary, the listed item must be protected from damage or deterioration due to weather, measures must be in place to prevent damage from fire and vandalism, and essential maintenance and repair must be carried out to prevent serious or irreparable damage or deterioration.

#### Archaeological Management

Under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*, the disturbance or excavation of land containing or being likely to contain relics can only take place when an Excavation Permit has been granted by the Heritage Council. A “relic” is defined in the *NSW Heritage Amendment Act 2009* as:

*Any deposit, artefact, object or material evidence that:*

- (a) relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and*
- (b) is of State or local heritage significance*

All “relics” are protected under the *Heritage Act*, regardless of whether or not the place is listed as a heritage item on a local, State or national level. For places listed on the State Heritage Register, an Excavation Permit is obtained under Section 60 of the *Heritage Act*. For all other places, the disturbance of relics requires an Excavation Permit under Section 140 of the *Heritage Act*.

### 5.3.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

“Dawn Fraser Swimming Pool, including interiors” is listed as a heritage item (I237) in Schedule 5 of the *Leichhardt LEP 2013*.

Approval from Inner West Council is required for any alterations or additions to the site which must be assessed under Part 4, 79(c) of the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The relevant operative statutory regulations of the *Leichhardt LEP 2013* are noted in clause 5.10 Heritage conservation.

The controls of the *Leichhardt Development Control Plan (DCP) 2013* are also applicable to any future development of this site.

## 5.4 COMMUNITY AGENCIES

### 5.4.1 NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NSW)

The property has been classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

The Trust’s register is intended to perform an advisory and educational role. The listing of a place on the Register, known as ‘classification’ has no legal force. However it is widely recognised as an authoritative statement of the cultural significance of a place.

The opinions of the Trust, however, are usually sought when major proposals are being formulated in heritage precincts or in relation to heritage buildings.

### 5.4.2 AUSTRALIA ICOMOS

Australia ICOMOS a professional body of conservation practitioners, represented by the Australian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

Australia ICOMOS has developed and published a Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, generally known as *The Burra Charter*. This document establishes principles and methodologies for conservation work in Australia, based primarily on an understanding of the heritage values of a place and then appropriate responses to looking after the place in relation to various management issues and requirements. Its status is advisory, not statutory, but it has become widely recognised as establishing the basic methodology for conservation work in Australia.

## 5.5 OTHER RELEVANT STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

### 5.5.1 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995 AND 2005 (COMMONWEALTH)

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of their disability. Section 23 of the DDA requires non-discriminatory access to premises which the public or a section of the public is entitled or allowed to use.

The DDA does not require equitable access to be provided to single dwellings, although occupants may wish to provide it for their own use. Where the DDA does apply, heritage places are not exempt from it, although the Australian Human Rights Commission has advised that heritage significance may be taken into account when considering whether providing equitable access would result in unjustifiable hardship. Works proposed to be undertaken to comply with the DDA are not exempt from the need for approval under the Heritage Act. If such an application is contemplated, it should be sought at development application stage and include advice from an appropriately qualified professional with experience with heritage buildings.

In 2012, Funktion prepared an Access Strategy for Leichhardt Council (now Inner West Council) that made a number of recommendations to improve equitable access to the Baths.

### 5.5.2 NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CODE (INCORPORATING BUILDING CODE OF AUSTRALIA)

The National Construction Code (NCC), incorporating the Building Code of Australia (BCA) is a national set of building regulations with some state-specific variations. The performance requirements of the BCA are mandatory, although the introductory sections of the NCC make clear that not all requirements will apply to a given case. The NCC includes 'deemed-to-satisfy' requirements which are accepted as meeting the performance requirements. However, the NCC also makes provision for alternative solutions to meet the performance requirements, subject to satisfactory verification.

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 (EP&A Regulation), all new building work must be carried out in accordance with the BCA. In the case of an existing building, there is generally no requirement to comply with the BCA unless works are being carried out. However where works (in particular alterations or additions) are proposed, the building in question will need to comply on completion with the relevant performance requirements of the BCA (EP&A Regulation Clause 145). In addition, where an existing building has a change of use, the structural capacity and fire safety of the building must be acceptable for the new use. Alterations to a building where the use remains unchanged must not reduce its structural capacity and fire safety (EP&A Regulation, Clause 143).

In certain circumstances, exemption can be obtained from the requirements of the BCA under Clause 187 of the EP&A Regulation. Because in most cases there will be an acceptable alternative solution to satisfy the performance requirements of the BCA, applications for exemption are sought comparatively rarely. If such an application is contemplated, it should be sought at development application stage and include advice from an appropriately qualified professional with experience with heritage buildings.

In 2012 - 13, Holmes Fire prepared a BCA Compliance Report and a subsequent Fire Safety Upgrade Report for Council that identified numerous issues with the Baths and associated access facilities including but not limited to:

- Non-compliant stairs,
- Inadequate head height along paths of travel,
- Disability access and facility provisions,
- Fire resistance, services and equipment,
- Inadequate sanitary facilities, and
- Unsafe flooring in Southern Pavilion.

As Inner West Council proposes to demolish and reconstruct the Southern Pavilion, the new structure will need to meet relevant code requirements.

## 5.6 PHYSICAL CONDITION

Figure 3.19 includes a plan of the general physical condition of the various components of the Baths. Condition reports prepared by Shreeji Consultant (2017), ACOR (2018) and the peer review by Mott Macdonald (2018) provide a detailed account of the Baths' current condition. In summery, the ACOR assessment identified major maintenance issues and recommended that 70-80% of structural members required replacement.

The condition of the Baths has the following implications:

1. Given the nature of materials and their ongoing deterioration in a marine environment, conservation activities should focus on maintaining the integrity of protective coatings, such as paint systems, with fire protection and with the maintenance of the place in a safe and usable condition.
2. Where fabric has deteriorated but remains viable, conservation works should be focused on its preservation through maintenance that retards deterioration.
3. Where fabric has deteriorated and is no longer viable, conservation works should reconstruct the specific building element by replacing the fabric with materials which will provide a similar contribution to the cultural significance.
4. Areas of active deterioration, such as termite attack and severely corroded timber components should either be stabilised or removed for reconstruction with sound material.
5. Flooding of the Southern Pavilion during King tides. A 2018 Coastal Assessment by Cardno predicts future increases in frequency and severity, which is a serious conservation issue. Alterations to the facilities and land in and around the southern, landward side of the Baths are likely required for the long term conservation of the structures at the southern end of the Baths. These may include raising the ground level and sea wall height, and the corresponding height of the Southern Pavilion, and altering drainage arrangements.

Following an inspection and assessment of the Southern Pavilion, structural engineering consultants ACOR found it to be generally 'moderately to severely deteriorated'. A February 2018 report by TKD and ACOR report found that refurbishment of the existing Southern Pavilion "may be unjustifiable, compared with total demolition and re-construction."



## 5.7 OWNERS REQUIREMENTS

The identification of the needs of the owners and occupiers of the building need to be considered when formulating guidelines for the conservation, use and management of the building.

The Dawn Fraser Baths is in use as a community sports and recreation facility. The facility is generally open to the public for recreational purposes during the warmer months of October through to April and has limited use for training and swimming outside that period. The pool is also available for hire for events year round, and the sun deck is designed to hold a marquee tent for such a purpose.

There are no immediate plans to change the use of the facility. However, a number of factors and expectations frame Inner West Council's considerations for the pool:

1. The heritage status of the Baths.
2. Public expectations about both the character and amenity of the facilities.
3. The need for the operations of the Baths to be consistent with the 2018 Masterplan for Elkington Park.
4. A desire to maintain an ongoing relationship with the Balmain Swimming Club.
5. The condition of the Southern Pavilion, parts of which is unsafe to use.
6. The need to control and limit ongoing maintenance expenditure to within acceptable parameters.
7. A preference for public facilities to generate some income, to offset operating, and maintenance costs.
8. Council policy that Council properties be equipped with solar power.
9. A desire to ensure that the facility, as a public asset, remains popular, relevant and in constant use.

Inner West Council has commissioned a number of studies into the Baths and Elkington Park to develop a detailed understanding of the status, including condition, regulatory compliance, asset management costs, and analysis of redevelopment options.

Inner West Council engaged DTB Architects in 2017 to prepare three options for refurbishing the Baths. It subsequently engaged MBM for a cost plan for each of the options.

Inner West Council engaged C Leisure to prepare a business case for DTB Architect's Option 1 works, identified in the report as essential maintenance works (Stage 1). The study aimed to determine the future financial and usage implications for the Baths of Stage 1 for an understanding of the implications for a potentially larger program of works for the Baths and Elkington Park.

C Leisure's study examined the current and future demographics profile of the local area, trends in leisure provision, the community benefits of aquatic venues and operating data. It identified a number of issues facing the management of the Baths, including the increasing preference of potential users to swimming in treated and heated aquatic facilities, and a significant decrease in special event income. The Baths' recent operational deficit, including depreciation, was between \$122,880 to \$201,774 per annum. The report found that even with the projected average annual attendance of 41,275, the Baths are likely to require an average annual subsidy of over \$150,000. However, C Leisure also found that the upgrading works then under consideration would have worthwhile heritage, social, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Inner West Council has allocated funds for a works program to the baths and is currently preparing a Masterplan for Elkington Park that will be central to considerations for any additional works the Dawn Fraser Baths.

## 5.8 OPPORTUNITIES

Considering the assessment of significance and revised Statement of Significance, the following opportunities have been identified:

- Removing the northern section of the c.1984 bathrooms to provide more pedestrian space along the southern boardwalk.
- Reintroduction of central support posts in the Southern Pavilion.
- Recladding the Southern Pavilion exterior walls in a sympathetic durable material.
- Sympathetic reconfiguration of the altered ground floor Entry Building and office/first aid rooms.
- Sympathetic alteration of the Western Shed's interior.

# 6.0

## CONSERVATION POLICIES

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation can be regarded as the management of change. It seeks to safeguard that which is important in the built environment, within a process of change and development. As such, it is one of the functions of this document to establish policies and recommendations for the conservation and on-going use of the building in a way that protects and enhances its heritage value. In this way, the owners and managers of the building will be able to formulate proposals within a known framework of acceptable directions, and planning authorities will be able to assess those proposals against the criteria.

The following conservation policies have been developed in respect of the current operational and physical circumstances of the Dawn Fraser Baths but absent the findings of an Elkington Park Masterplan, currently under preparation. The policies in this report should be revised to reflect the findings of the masterplan, when completed.

### 6.2 PRINCIPAL CONSERVATION POLICIES

#### BACKGROUND

The Dawn Fraser Baths has been identified as being of considerable heritage significance.

#### POLICY 6.2.1

The Dawn Fraser Baths should be retained, conserved and upgraded as part of its continuing use.

#### POLICY 6.2.2

The architectural imagery of the existing pool, including its vernacular character, sense of enclosure and composition of major elements from varying periods, should be conserved.

#### POLICY 6.2.3

The Caretaker's Cottage should be conserved and retained as an integral component of the Pool environment.

#### POLICY 6.2.4

Conservation of the Baths should include retention of its use for recreation and aquatic sports.

#### POLICY 6.2.5

The long standing association between organised amateur swimming club participation and the local Council should be fostered and encouraged both as a community benefit and as an effective management support network.

#### POLICY 6.2.6

Future changes to fabric, form and associated structural elements should respect its visual significance, architectural integrity and long association with aquatic sports, and respond accordingly.

#### POLICY 6.2.7

The Dawn Fraser Baths' landmark position as a strong visual element in Elkington Park, Fitzroy Avenue Park and the Parramatta River should be maintained.

#### POLICY 6.2.8

The name Dawn Fraser Baths should be retained in recognition, not only of her achievements, but for the importance of the association in the minds of the Balmain community.

#### POLICY 6.2.9

The Elkington Park Masterplan should consider the recommendations made in this report and this CMP be subsequently updated to reflect the findings of the Masterplan, when completed.

## 6.3 APPLICATION OF THE BURRA CHARTER

### BACKGROUND

The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (known as the *Burra Charter*) is widely accepted in Australia as the underlying methodology by which all works to sites/buildings that have been identified as having national, state and regional significance are undertaken.

In order to achieve a consistency in approach and understanding of the meaning of conservation by all those involved, a standardised terminology for conservation processes and related actions should be adopted. The terminology in the *Burra Charter* is a suitable basis for this.

### POLICY 6.3.1

Because the Dawn Fraser Baths is of demonstrated cultural significance, procedures for managing changes and activities for the site should be in accordance with the recognised conservation methodology of the *Burra Charter*.

### POLICY 6.3.2 CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY

The following terms apply to the historic fabric of the site and are included here to assist in understanding the intent of the conservation requirements in this section.

*Place* means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.

*Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric*, *setting*, *use*, *associations*, *meanings*, records, *related places* and *related objects*. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

*Fabric* means all the physical material of the *place* including elements, fixtures, contents, and objects.

*Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a *place* so as to retain its *cultural significance*.

*Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of a *place*, and its *setting*. Maintenance is to be distinguished from repair which involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.

*Preservation* means maintaining a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

*Restoration* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.

*Reconstruction* means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material.

*Adaptation* means changing a *place* to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

*Use* means the functions of a *place*, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.

*Compatible use* means a *use* which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

*Setting* means the immediate and extended environment of a *place* that is part of or contributes to its *cultural significance* and distinctive character.

*Related place* means a *place* that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another place.

*Related object* means an object that contributes to the *cultural significance* of a *place* but is not at the place.

*Associations* mean the connections that exist between people and a *place*.

*Meanings* denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses to people.

*Interpretation* means all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.



## 6.4 CONSERVATION OF THE SETTING

### POLICY 6.4.1

The Baths should retain its visual prominence to White Horse Point, Fitzroy Avenue Park and the Parramatta River.

### POLICY 6.4.2

The heavily landscaped backdrop and natural features of Elkington Park and White Horse Point, including the patterns of steps and pathways down to the Pool should be conserved.

## 6.5 PRINCIPLES FOR REUSE

### POLICY 6.5.1

Recreation and aquatic sports should remain the primary function of the Dawn Fraser Baths. Alternative uses for sections of the existing buildings may be considered where they would not be of detriment to the primary use of the site and would not negatively impact on its heritage significance.

### POLICY 6.5.2

New uses that are selected for any particular internal space should adopt the principle of 'loose fit', whereby the functional and spatial requirements of each use are tailored to suit the available space, in contrast to the approach that alters the building to suit the requirements of the new use.

### POLICY 6.5.3

Location and visual presentation of new services within the building should generally remain subservient and respectful to the scale, dignity and presentation of the existing Baths facility.

### POLICY 6.5.4

New internal elements should not attempt to replicate the original features. They should be of a contemporary design and character but remain respectful of the power and mixed character of the old.

## 6.6 RETENTION OF SIGNIFICANT SPACES

### POLICY 6.6.1

The Dawn Fraser Baths is designed as a single open interior space with perimeter structures that are largely open towards the pool. Any alterations to the Baths shall retain the open relationship between the pool area and the perimeter structures.

## 6.7 TREATMENT OF FABRIC OF DIFFERENT GRADES OF SIGNIFICANCE

### BACKGROUND

The conservation planning process, which is outlined within this *CMP*, has its guiding principle to protect and conserve the elements and fabric of the place that most clearly make a contribution to its significance. In consequence, conservation activities, as defined above, are assigned to the assessed level of significance set out in Section 4.4 Grading of Significance.

### POLICY 6.7.1

In general, future changes should be focused on areas or components which provide a lesser contribution to the overall significance and are, therefore, less sensitive to change.

### POLICY 6.7.2

Any work which affects fabric, spaces or relationships with an Exceptional or High assessed heritage value should be confined to preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation as defined in *The Burra Charter* and should be carefully maintained.

### POLICY 6.7.3

In relation to elements of Moderate significance the principles of *The Burra Charter* should be followed as above; work involving the adaptation of a particular element may be an acceptable option where it is necessary for the proper function of the place and is beneficial to, or does not reduce, the overall significance of the place.

### POLICY 6.7.4

Elements with a Little assessed heritage value are of slight significance and do not intrude on the place in a way that reduces significance. Both retention and removal are acceptable options.

### POLICY 6.7.5

Where possible, damage or scarring caused by earlier fit-outs or service installations should be repaired to match the original or the original fabric reinstated.

### POLICY 6.7.6

In order to reinstate, or reconstruct parts of a building, sufficient information must be available to guide the design and documentation of the work. Such information includes documentary evidence, archaeological material and evidence held within the fabric of adjacent components. Reinstatement of missing fabric, or detailing known to be consistent with such traditional beginnings, or reconstruction should only take place within the context of retention of cultural significance of a particular element and of the building.

#### **POLICY 6.7.7**

Unless otherwise stated, existing fabric should be preserved if feasible. Where fabric is no longer servicable and requires replacement, it should be replaced with a component of like material and design.

#### **POLICY 6.7.8**

While reconstruction or reinstatement should return an element to a known earlier state, past materials selection, building practices or construction details which are known to be defective should not be adopted.

## **6.8 SPECIFIC BUILT ELEMENTS**

### **1900 SOUTHERN PAVILION**

#### **POLICY 6.8.1 FORM**

The form, design and materiality of the 1900 Southern Pavilion are of exceptional significance and shall be retained.

#### **POLICY 6.8.2 RELATIONSHIP TO THE POOL**

The open visual relationship between the pool space and the Southern Pavilion's ground and first floor walkways shall remain and shall not be obscured.

#### **POLICY 6.8.3 TIMBER FRAMING**

The original timber framing scheme shall remain the primary structural system for the building. The timber frame shall not be enclosed, except along the southern wall, but shall remain a visually prominent characteristic of the building.

Central support posts may be reinstated in keeping with the 1900 building design.

Structural members that are in an unsafe or unuseable state may be replaced with sympathetic new members.

#### **Policy 6.8.4 c.1984 BATHROOMS**

The c.1984 bathrooms have little heritage significance and may be removed or internally altered in a way that is sympathetic with the 1900 design of the Southern Pavilion.

#### **POLICY 6.8.5 EXTERNAL CLADDING**

The external cladding on the south, east and west facades may be replaced with timber board or corrugated metal sheet. The external cladding may be aligned either vertically or horizontally.

#### **POLICY 6.8.6 INTERNAL CLADDING**

The internal cladding on the southern wall may be replaced with timber board and shall be aligned vertically.

#### **POLICY 6.8.7 RECONSTRUCTION**

Given the poor condition of the 1900 pavilion, the structure may be demolished and reconstructed to as reasonably and feasibly close to its 1900 design and materiality while meeting code requirements and being durable enough to withstand the harsh maritime environment for the medium to long term.

#### **POLICY 6.8.8 SEA LEVEL RISE**

The entire Southern Pavilion, including the floor to the 1926 Entry Building and the surrounding ground level, may be sympathetically raised as part of a program of works to protect the building from future sea level rise.

#### **POLICY 6.8.9 1900 BALCONY DESIGN**

The existing stepped first floor balcony may be altered to reflect the 1900 design of the building, which had a single level balcony, as long as the general architectural imagery of the Southern Pavilion and Entry Building is otherwise broadly maintained.

#### **POLICY 6.8.10 BALCONY HEIGHT**

It may be possible to raise the height of the first floor verandah relative to the ground floor walkway to provide adequate head clearance for the passage of people below. Such an alteration may be acceptable should the proposal be sympathetic with the significance of the building, including retention of the consistent line of the fascia board along the entire verandah, and retention of the visual dominance of the 1926 Entry Building.

#### **POLICY 6.8.11 NEW OPENINGS**

No new window openings shall be introduced into the southern, eastern or western elevations of the Southern Pavilion.

New doorways may be installed and existing doorways may be altered in the entry courtyard, which shall remain the main entry to the facility. New external doors may be installed elsewhere along the external perimeter but must be designed to match the appearance of the surrounding wall to the greatest extent possible such that it has minimal visual impact when viewed from outside of the Baths.

#### **POLICY 6.8.12 CHANGING BOOTHS**

New uses may be installed into the first floor changing booths provided that:

- Any alterations have minimal physical impact on the booth fabric and are easily reversible.
- Any alterations are visually subtle such that they can only be seen from the immediate vicinity of the associated booth and the original function of the booths remain interpretable.
- A minimum of two booths in each wing of the Southern Pavilion remain unaltered.

## 1926 ENTRY BUILDING

### **POLICY 6.8.13 ICONIC ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE**

The 1926 Entry Building shall be retained and conserved as an iconic central architectural feature of the Southern Pavilion. It shall remain higher than other elements of the surrounding pavilion structure. Existing views to the pediment and pyramidal roof from within the Baths shall be retained. No new structures shall be constructed south of the Entry Building that would diminish the setting of the building when viewed from within the Baths.

### **POLICY 6.8.14 ADDITIONS**

No additions shall be constructed on the northern, western or southern elevations. Sympathetic minor alterations to the existing first aid / office addition on the eastern elevation may be acceptable provided the addition retains a modest design to its exterior and the presentation of the Entry Building is not diminished.

### **POLICY 6.8.15 EXTERNAL OPENINGS**

There shall be no new openings to the eastern, southern or western elevations of the Entry Building.

The ground floor openings on the northern elevation may be sympathetically altered to improve the function of the interior space provided the building's external envelope remains easily interpretable.

The existing first floor openings on the northern elevation must be retained. The openings may be moved higher up the northern elevation provided that the openings retain their existing position relative to the balcony floor and building sides, the existing door and window hardware are retained to the extent reasonable and feasible, and the northern elevation is made good.

### **POLICY 6.8.16 SIGN**

The existing "Municipal Baths" sign in relief letters on the western elevation shall be retained and conserved.

### **POLICY 6.8.17 INTERNAL ALTERATIONS**

The interior to the ground floor of the Entry Building may be altered, including the removal or alteration of existing internal partitions and installation of new partitions. Should original partitions be altered or removed, wall nibs shall be retained to allow interpretation of the original layout. Alteration of the main entrance passage is acceptable provided it remains generally interpretable as a past entrance. The floor to the entry building may be raised if required to address issues with sea level rise.

The first floor archive room may be altered internally with the sensitive installation of partitions provided the work has minimal negative impact on significant fabric and is reversible. The archive room floor may be altered if required to ensure the long term viability of the baths.

## 1995 NORTHERN PAVILION

### **POLICY 6.8.18 ALTERATIONS**

Alterations to the 1995 Northern Pavilion may be acceptable provided they respect the general architectural form and imagery of the pavilion and its relationship with the pool.

The pavilion's timber framing shall not be enclosed but shall remain visible and interpretable as an important architectural feature of the building.

## WESTERN SHED

### **POLICY 6.8.19 FORM**

The Western Shed shall remain interpretable as a timber framed and clad, cabled building.

### **POLICY 6.8.20 INTERIOR ALTERATIONS**

The interior of the Western Shed may be sensitively adapted to allow for an appropriate new use, including partitioning the internal space. Any new interior additions and alterations shall be interpretable as new work. A ceiling shall not be installed in the shed and the roof structure shall remain exposed.

### **POLICY 6.8.21 EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS**

The existing openings on the northern and eastern sides of the Western Shed may be sensitively altered provided the building's external envelope remains readily interpretable. Additions to the external envelope of the Western Shed are not acceptable.



## WATER POLO LIGHTING

### POLICY 6.8.22

New lighting poles and lights surrounding the northern section of the pool used for water polo are acceptable provided the lights:

- are required to facilitate amateur and/or professional sporting competitions,
- meet the standards established by the relevant water polo sports body,
- are designed to minimise negative impacts on significant fabric, views to and within the baths, and the architectural imagery of the site, and
- do not visually divide the open internal pool space.

## SUBSTRUCTURE AND POOL APRON

### POLICY 6.8.23 MATERIALS

The substructure piles and pool apron may be replaced as required. Any replacement fabric may include the use of alternate materials that will provide a superior performance or an extended life span provided they will be visually sympathetic with the Baths.

## BOARDWALKS

### POLICY 6.8.24 MATERIALS

The timber decking planks to the western, northern and eastern boardwalk may be replaced with like planks when required to provide a safe walking environment. When the current decking is no longer serviceable, the decking may be replaced with similar timber planks or an artificial decking material of a similar appearance that is suited for use in a maritime environment.

The c.1984 concrete edging to the southern boardwalk may be replaced with a sandstone edging, which is consistent with the early materials used for the boardwalk.

### POLICY 6.8.25 POOL STEPS

The three sets of steps from the southern boardwalk into the pool may be altered to improve access and meet changing site conditions but shall remain in their current location.

## 6.9 PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGN OF NEW ELEMENTS

### BACKGROUND

The design of the Dawn Fraser Baths strongly distinguishes between the interior pool space and exterior. Since its construction in 1882, the Baths has always had a design focus towards venue patrons to the exclusion of those outside. Design details of the built elements almost exclusively present to the pool's interior with a minor focus to the entry courtyard. Those viewing the Baths from the surrounding landscape are presented with very simple and often bare elevations, and for many of the early years were prevented from any view of the interior by a covering roof. The interior setting has also always been defined by a strong sense of enclosure, with limited views of the surrounding area behind two pavilions and high side fences.

### POLICY 6.9.1

Any alterations to the Baths shall have a design emphasis towards the facility's interior with minimal design features to the exterior elevations.

### POLICY 6.9.2

If any new structures are required on the site, they shall be located on the facility's perimeter and shall not reduce the open internal space. The design shall present to the pool's interior with minimal design features to its exterior, and shall be designed in a way that is sympathetic to the 1926 Baths' design, layout and massing.

### POLICY 6.9.3

New elements should not attempt to replicate the original features. They should be of a contemporary design and character but remain respectful of the power and mixed character of the old, in accordance with Article 22.2 of *The Burra Charter*.

### POLICY 6.9.4

New elements should be designed to withstand the harsh marine environment of the Baths.

## 6.10 SERVICES

### POLICY 6.10.1

Redundant services should be removed carefully to avoid damaging original fabric.

### POLICY 6.10.2

Where new services or upgrading of existing services are required (communication, fire, electrical and plumbing), these should be sympathetic to the original design intent. They should be introduced discreetly in areas of lesser significance to avoid damage to significant fabric and avoid visual impact on significant spaces.

### POLICY 6.10.3

Existing functional fire protection, emergency and electrical lighting should be maintained as part of the regular maintenance program.

## 6.11 COLOUR

### BACKGROUND

The correct use of colour is a most important aspect in the restoration and interpretation of old buildings. The nineteenth century forms of the Baths may not have been painted in any colour scheme. The first known colour photographs, dating from 1982, show the Baths with a similar green and yellow colour theme to the current Baths, although the Entry Building was painted white and the corrugated metal roofs appear to be black.

### POLICY 6.11.1

Green and yellow shall remain the predominant colours for any new colour scheme for the Baths. Other colours may also be included in a new colour scheme provided they are sympathetic with the history and dignity of the Baths as a whole.

With the exception of the Entry building, the Baths' exterior elevations shall remain green.

### POLICY 6.11.2

Selection of colour schemes, details and finishes should be provided to the consent authorities and endorsed before implementation.

## 6.12 CODE COMPLIANCE

### POLICY 6.12.1

If original or early architectural elements have to be removed or concealed in order to achieve code compliance, then the appropriate approach should be one of "reversibility".

### Guidelines

For example, if original or early timber doors need to be replaced with fire doors, the original or early timber doors should be carefully stored on site to facilitate potential reinstatement.

## 6.13 ACCESS

### BACKGROUND

An objective of the *Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standard 2010*, made under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)* is 'to ensure that dignified, equitable, cost-effective and reasonably achievable access to buildings, and facilities and services within the building, is provided for people with a disability'. However, if strict adherence to the provisions of the *DDA* is likely to have an adverse heritage impact on significant fabric, this may be considered unjustifiable hardship under the terms of the Act. In such cases expert consultancy advice should be sought to investigate alternative compliance provisions.

### POLICY 6.13.1

Any changes to the site required to improve public access should also be made in accordance with the other policies in this *CMP*.

### POLICY 6.13.2

Where compliance with the *DDA* is likely to have an adverse heritage impact on significant fabric, formal advice on alternative means of compliance shall be sought from the Fire, Access and Services Advisory Panel of the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, or expert consultants.

## 6.14 SIGNAGE

### POLICY 6.14.1

Signage on Heritage Items should be:

- i. consistent in design to the architectural form of the building to which it is attached, and
- ii. of a high standard of materials, construction and graphics.

### POLICY 6.14.2 LOCATION

New signage may be installed in the entry courtyard to facilitate the operation of the Baths. New signage in this location may be designed to emphasise this location as the primary Baths entrance. Minor temporary advertising signage for local community events is acceptable in this location.

New signage may be installed on the exterior elevation of the eastern entrance, if required for the operation of the Baths. Any new signage in this location must be related to the operation of the entry. It must be as small and visually unobtrusive as possible and should not distract from the entry courtyard as the primary entrance to the facility.

New signage on the external envelope of the Baths, other than described above and required for public safety, is not acceptable.

## 6.15 INTERPRETATION

### BACKGROUND

Interpretation is a valuable means of communicating the significance of a site to its current users. An Interpretation Strategy is a site specific document that identifies how this can be achieved.

### POLICY 6.15.1

A separate Interpretation Strategy/Plan should be prepared and implemented for the place.

### POLICY 6.15.2

Key interpretation themes for inclusion in an interpretation of the building should be developed. Suggested themes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) The development history of the Baths.
- (ii) The history of aquatic sports at the Baths.
- (iii) The important personages associated with the Baths.

## 6.16 APPROPRIATE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

### POLICY 6.16.1

The approach to the conservation of the historic building fabric should be based on a respect for the existing significant fabric. Competent direction and supervision should be maintained at all stages, and any maintenance work should be implemented by professionals and/or tradespeople with appropriate conservation experience and knowledge of traditional building skills.

Where any significant fabric or spaces are to be disturbed, the advice of a Heritage Consultant is to be sought and implemented.

## 6.17 HERITAGE MAINTENANCE REGIME

### POLICY 6.17.1

To ensure the on-going conservation of significant building fabric, a regular maintenance schedule should be implemented. Regular inspections should be carried out and remedial action taken to minimise deterioration of building fabric due to the effects of weathering and use.

In addition to regular maintenance activities, prompt preventative action and repair should be taken as necessary.

The Heritage Maintenance Schedule should be reviewed and updated every five years to coincide with a review of the Conservation Plan, or prior to major programs of upgrading or reuse.

No maintenance or repair work should negatively impact on the significance of the fabric.



## **6.18 REVIEW OF THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **BACKGROUND**

This CMP for the Dawn Fraser Baths proposed a framework for the ongoing use and maintenance of the building. Circumstances, however, will change over the years as various recommendations are implemented and new user requirements emerge.

Conservation Policies need to progressively respond to changing situations if they are to remain relevant.

### **POLICY 6.18.1**

Conservation Policies should be reviewed every ten years or whenever a major upgrade of the building is considered.

### **Guidelines**

Reviews of the Conservation Policies should be based on The Burra Charter and other guidelines provided by the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Reviews should also take into account any other relevant legislation, planning framework, appropriate literature and widely recognised conservation practices and procedures. They should be undertaken by experienced conservation practitioners, in conjunction with relevant ownership and management representatives.

## **6.19 MANAGEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **POLICY 6.19.1**

Management of archaeological resources associated with the Dawn Fraser Baths shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations and consent conditions of any Excavation Permit that is required under the provisions of the *NSW Heritage Act*.

# 7.0

## IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This *Conservation Management Plan* has been prepared to provide guidelines for the on-going use and conservation of the Dawn Fraser Baths and to ensure that the heritage value of the place is maintained and enhanced.

This section sets out the implementation guidelines for the policies, including a list of management issues and schedules for conservation and maintenance works.

### 7.2 MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The current owners are to:

- Review and adopt this *Conservation Management Plan (CMP)*.
- Refer any development proposals to Inner West Council and the NSW Heritage Council.
- Ensure funding for recurrent long-term maintenance.
- 
- Revise the Conservation Policies in this report upon completion of the Elkington Park Masterplan, currently under preparation.

### 7.3 OBTAINING DEVELOPMENT CONSENT

Any development proposals for Dawn Fraser Baths must be referred to Inner West Council Council for approval.

As the Dawn Fraser Baths is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register, any works proposed also require approval from the NSW Heritage Council, under Section 60 of the *Heritage Act*.

### 7.4 EXEMPTIONS UNDER THE NSW HERITAGE ACT

The *NSW Heritage Act* allows the Minister responsible, on the recommendation of the Heritage Council, to grant exemptions for certain activities which would otherwise require approval under the *NSW Heritage Act*.

There are two types of exemptions which can apply to a heritage item listed on the State Heritage Register. These are:

- Standard exemptions for all items on the State Heritage Register. Typical activities that are exempted include building maintenance, minor repairs, alterations to certain interiors or areas and change of use.
- Site specific exemptions for a particular heritage item can be approved by the Minister on the recommendation of the Heritage Council.

A list of the Standard Exemptions, issued by the NSW Heritage Office (now the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) in 2006 has been included as an appendix to this report. They apply to on-going heritage management works that are only minor in nature and will have minimal impact on the heritage significance of the place.

Some exempted works require that an application for exemption be lodged with the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

# 8.0

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# APPENDIX ONE: STANDARD EXEMPTIONS

The standard exemptions were issued by the NSW Heritage Office, now the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, in 2006. The purpose of the standard exemptions is to clarify for owners, the Heritage Office and local councils what kind of maintenance and minor works can be undertaken without needing Heritage Council approval. This ensures that owners are not required to make unnecessary applications for minor maintenance and repair.

The exemptions are for:

- 1: MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING
- 2: REPAIRS
- 3: PAINTING
- 4: EXCAVATION
- 5: RESTORATION
- 6: DEVELOPMENT ENDORSED BY THE HERITAGE COUNCIL OR DIRECTOR-GENERAL
- 7: MINOR ACTIVITIES WITH NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE
- 8: NON-SIGNIFICANT FABRIC
- 9: CHANGE OF USE
- 10: NEW BUILDINGS
- 11: TEMPORARY STRUCTURES
- 12: LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE
- 13: SIGNAGE
- 14: BURIAL SITES AND CEMETERIES
- 15: COMPLIANCE WITH MINIMUM STANDARDS AND ORDERS
- 16: SAFETY AND SECURITY
- 17: MOVABLE HERITAGE ITEMS

## EXEMPTION 1: MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING

1. The following maintenance and cleaning does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act:

(a) the maintenance of an item to retain its condition or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials;

(b) cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths or graffiti by the use of low pressure water (less than 100 psi at the surface being cleaned) and neutral detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing.

NOTE 1: Traditional finishes such as oils and waxes must continue to be used for timber surfaces rather than modern alternative protective coatings such as polyurethane or acrylic which may seal the surface and can cause damage.

NOTE 2: Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved during maintenance and cleaning.

### Guidelines

*Maintenance is distinguished from repairs, restoration and reconstruction as it does not involve the removal of or damage to existing fabric or the introduction of new materials. It is a continuing process of protective care. Typical maintenance activity includes*

- *the removal of vegetation and litter from gutters and drainage systems;*
- *resecuring and tightening fixings of loose elements of building fabric;*
- *lubricating equipment and services which have moving parts;*
- *the application of protective coatings such as limewash, polish, oils and waxes to surfaces which have previously had such coatings applied; and*
- *cleaning by the removal of surface deposits using methods other than aggressive mechanical or chemical techniques such as high pressure, high temperature or strong solvents which may affect the substrate.*

*This standard exemption applies to the maintenance of all types of heritage items including buildings, works, landscapes, cemeteries and movable heritage. Reference should be made to other relevant standard exemptions (#12, 14 and 17) for particular types of items.*

## EXEMPTION 2: REPAIRS

1. Repair to an item which is of the type described in (a) or (b) below does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

(a) the replacement of services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing service routes, cavities or voids or replaces existing surface mounted services and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric;

(b) the repair (such as refixing and patching) or the replacement of missing, damaged or deteriorated fabric that is beyond further maintenance, which matches the existing fabric in appearance, material and method of affixing and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric.

NOTE 1: Repairs must be based on the principle of doing as little as possible and only as much as is necessary to retain and protect the element. Therefore replacement must only occur as a last resort where the major part of an element has decayed beyond further maintenance.

NOTE 2: Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance.

NOTE 3: Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing detailing, such as vents, capping, chimneys, carving, decoration or glazing.

### Guidelines

*This standard exemption is not intended to allow the cumulative replacement of large amounts or a high proportion of the fabric of an item. If replacement of large amounts of fabric is necessary, an application will be required to be submitted under s.60 of the Heritage Act. If there is uncertainty about whether the proposed extent of repair is exempt from approval, advice should be sought from the NSW Heritage Office.*

*Repairs should have detailed specifications and carried out by licensed tradespeople with experience in the conservation of heritage buildings. It is essential that the composition of elements of the fabric such renders, mortars, timber species and metal types remain the same to assist with matching appearance and avoiding chemical incompatibility.*

*Repair may involve reconstruction which means returning an item to a known earlier state. This may involve the use of new or recycled materials.*

*Reconstruction must satisfy a four-part test to qualify for exemption from approval:*

*1. The nature of the earlier state being reconstructed must be known. Where there is conjecture about the earlier state of the fabric or where it is proposed to change the appearance, material or method of fixing of the fabric an application under s.60 of the Heritage Act will be required.*

*2. The replacement fabric must be matching in appearance and method of fixing. The use of salvaged or recycled fabric can be a valuable resource in matching appearance in preference to the use of new fabric which may appear obtrusive. However the damage to other heritage buildings by the salvaging of fabric for reuse is unacceptable. Salvaged materials must be judiciously sourced so as not to encourage secondary damage to other heritage resources. The use of artificial ageing techniques to assist the matching of new with original fabric is only advocated where there is an obtrusive mismatch of materials which negatively impacts on the heritage significance of the item. Ideally, new and original fabric should be subtly discernable on close examination to assist interpretation of the history of change to the building.*

*3. The fabric being replaced must be beyond further maintenance. The replacement of fabric may only occur where fabric is missing or it is so damaged or deteriorated that it is beyond further maintenance. In many cases the judgement about the level of deterioration and the effectiveness of further maintenance will require the advice of a person who is suitably experienced in similar heritage conservation projects. If it is unclear that the fabric is beyond further maintenance, its replacement will require the submission of an application under s.60 of the Heritage Act.*

*4. Significant fabric must not be damaged or removed. In all cases of repair, the damage or removal of significant fabric is not permitted without approval. Significant fabric is that which contributes to the heritage significance of the item. The identification of the level of significance of fabric will usually require the advice of a person who is suitably experienced in similar heritage conservation projects. The damage or removal of significant fabric will require the submission of an application under s.60 of the Heritage Act.*

*New material used in repairs should where possible be date stamped in a location which is not conspicuous but is legible on close examination.*

*Archival recording of removed and replacement fabric is advocated and should be used in interpretative displays where practicable.*



### EXEMPTION 3: PAINTING

1. Painting does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act if the painting:

(a) does not involve the disturbance or removal of earlier paint layers other than that which has failed by chalking, flaking, peeling or blistering;

(b) involves over-coating with an appropriate surface as an isolating layer to provide a means of protection for significant earlier layers or to provide a stable basis for repainting; and

(c) employs the same colour scheme and paint type as an earlier scheme if they are appropriate to the substrate and do not endanger the survival of earlier paint layers.

2. Painting which employs a different colour scheme and paint type from an earlier scheme does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act, provided that:

(a) the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed colour scheme, paint type, details of surface preparation and paint removal will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the item; and

(b) the person proposing to undertake the painting has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied.

3. A person proposing to undertake repainting of the kind described in paragraph 2 must write to the Director-General and describe the proposed colour scheme, paint type, details of surface preparation and paint removal involved in the repainting. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 2(a) the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

NOTE: Preference should be given to the re-establishment of historically significant paint schemes of the item that are appropriate to the significance of the building.

#### Guidelines

*Painting of surfaces which have not previously been painted such as face brickwork, stone, concrete or galvanised iron is likely to adversely affect the heritage significance of the item and is not exempt from approval under this standard exemption. Likewise, the stripping of paint coatings which were intended to be protective may expose the substrate to damage and cause the loss of the historical record and significance of the building. In cases where surface preparation has revealed significant historic paint layers, repainting should facilitate the interpretation of the evolution of the building by displaying appropriately located sample patches of historic paint schemes. This information should also be examined if it is proposed to recreate earlier finishes or paint schemes.*

*Paint removal of failed layers to achieve a stable base for repainting is exempt from approval but intervention should be minimised to avoid the loss of the significant historical record. Where old paint layers are sound they should be left undisturbed. The removal of paint with a high content of lead or other hazardous materials requires considerable care and use of experienced tradespeople as its disturbance can create health hazards. If the removal of such paint layers will adversely affect the heritage significance of the item, an application will be required under section 60 of the Heritage Act.*

*Reference should be made to The Maintenance Series, NSW Heritage Office, particularly Information Sheets 6.2 Removing Paint from Old Buildings, 7.2 Paint Finishes and 7.3 Basic Limewash. Available online at [www.heritage.nsw.gov.au](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au).*

## EXEMPTION 4: EXCAVATION

1. Excavation or disturbance of land of the kind specified below does not require approval under s.57(1) of the *Act*, provided that the Director-General is satisfied that the criteria in (a), (b) or (c) have been met and the person proposing to undertake the excavation or disturbance of land has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied:

(a) where an archaeological assessment has been prepared in accordance with Guidelines published by the Heritage Council of NSW which indicates that any relics in the land are unlikely to have State or local heritage significance; or

(b) where the excavation or disturbance of land will have a minor impact on archaeological relics; or

(c) where the excavation or disturbance of land involves only the removal of unstratified fill which has been deposited on the land.

2. A person proposing to excavate or disturb land in the manner described in paragraph 1 must write to the Director-General and describe the proposed excavation or disturbance of land and set out why it satisfies the criteria set out in paragraph 1. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

NOTE 1: Any excavation with the potential to affect Aboriginal objects must be referred to the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Conservation.

NOTE 2: If any Aboriginal objects are discovered on the site, excavation or disturbance is to cease and the Department of Environment and Conservation is to be informed in accordance with s.91 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974*.

NOTE 3: This exemption does not allow the removal of State significant relics.

NOTE 4: Where substantial intact archaeological relics of State or local significance, not identified in the archaeological assessment or statement required by this exemption, are unexpectedly discovered during excavation, work must cease in the affected area and the Heritage Office must be notified in writing in accordance with s.146 of the *Act*. Depending on the nature of the discovery, additional assessment and possibly an excavation permit may be required prior to the recommencement of excavation in the affected area.

### Guidelines

*Excavation or disturbance to which clause 1(c) applies only involves the removal of unstratified fill material of minor heritage significance. Such fill will have been deposited in a single episode.*

## EXEMPTION 5: RESTORATION

1. Restoration of an item by returning significant fabric to a known earlier location without the introduction of new material does not require approval under s. 57(1) of the *Act*.

2. The following restoration does not require approval under s. 57(1) of the *Act*, provided that the Director-General is satisfied that the criteria in (a) have been met and the person proposing to undertake the restoration has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied:

(a) the restoration of an item without the introduction of new material (except for fixings) to reveal a known earlier configuration by removing accretions or reassembling existing components which does not adversely affect the heritage significance of the item.

3. A person proposing to undertake restoration of the kind described in paragraph 2 must write to the Director-General and set out why there is a need for restoration to be undertaken and the proposed material and method of restoration. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 2(a), the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### Guidelines

*Restoration in accordance with clause 1 of this standard exemption does not involve the removal of fabric and only relates to the return of fabric which has been removed to storage or has been dislodged from its original location.*

## EXEMPTION 6: DEVELOPMENT ENDORSED BY THE HERITAGE COUNCIL OR DIRECTOR-GENERAL

1. Minor development specifically identified as exempt development which does not materially impact on heritage significance, by a conservation policy or strategy within a conservation management plan which has been endorsed by the Heritage Council of NSW or by a conservation management strategy endorsed by the Director-General does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

2. A person proposing to do anything of the kind described in paragraph 1 must write to the Director-General and describe the proposed development. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 1, the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### **Guidelines**

*This standard exemption does not exempt development that is consistent with a conservation policy or strategy contained in an endorsed conservation management plan or interim conservation management strategy other than development that is specifically identified as exempt development in that conservation plan or strategy.*

## EXEMPTION 7: MINOR ACTIVITIES WITH NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

1. Anything which in the opinion of the Director-General is of a minor nature and will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the item does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

2. A person proposing to do anything of the kind described in paragraph 1 must write to the Director-General and describe the proposed activity. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed activity meets the criteria set out in paragraph 1, the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### **Guidelines**

*This standard exemption has the potential to relate to a wide range of minor development. In determining whether a proposed development is minor the Director may have regard to the context of the particular heritage item such as its size and setting. For instance a development may be considered to be minor in the context of Prospect Reservoir's 1200ha curtilage whereas a similar proposal affecting an item on a smaller site may not be considered to be minor.*

*In order to assess whether a proposal has an adverse affect on heritage significance it is necessary to submit a clear and concise statement of the item's heritage significance and an assessment of whether a proposal impacts on that significance.*



## EXEMPTION 8: NON-SIGNIFICANT FABRIC

1. The following development does not require approval under s.57(1) of the *Act*, provided that the Director-General is satisfied that the criteria in (a) have been met and the person proposing to undertake the development has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied:

(a) the alteration of a building involving the construction or installation of new fabric or services or the removal of building fabric which will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the item.

2. A person proposing to do anything of the kind described in paragraph 1 must write to the Director-General and describe the proposed development. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 1(a), the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### **Guidelines**

*In order to assess the level of significance of fabric it is necessary to submit a clear and concise statement of the item's heritage significance and to grade the fabric of the place in accordance with its association with or impact on that significance. It may not always be concluded that more recent fabric is of less or no heritage significance.*

## EXEMPTION 9: CHANGE OF USE

1. The change of use of an item or its curtilage or the commencement of an additional or temporary use does not require approval under s.57(1) of the *Act*, provided that the Director-General is satisfied that the criteria in (a) and (b) have been met and the person proposing to undertake the change of use has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied:

(a) the use does not involve the alteration of the fabric, layout or setting of the item or the carrying out of development other than that permitted by other standard or site specific exemptions; and

(b) the use does not involve the cessation of the primary use for which the building was erected, a later significant use or the loss of significant associations with the item by current users.

2. A person proposing to change the use of an item or its curtilage or to commence an additional or temporary use of an item or its curtilage in the manner described in paragraph 1 must write to the Director-General and describe the changes proposed. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 1(a) and (b), the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### **Guidelines**

*For the purposes of this standard exemption any change of use which is inconsistent with specific conditions of any previous approval or consent such as hours of operation or nature of conduct of an activity requires approval under section 57(1) or the modification of an approval under section 65A of the Heritage Act.*

## EXEMPTION 10: NEW BUILDINGS

1. Subdivision under the *Strata Scheme (Freehold Development) Act* or *Strata Scheme (Leasehold Development) Act* of the interior of a building that has been constructed since the listing of the item on the State Heritage Register or the publication of an interim heritage order in the Gazette which applies to the land does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

2. Alteration to the interior of a building which has been constructed since the listing of the item on the State Heritage Register or the publication of an interim heritage order in the Gazette which applies to the land does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

### **Guidelines**

*Subdivision to which clause 1 of this standard exemption applies must not subdivide the curtilage of the exterior of a building other than approved car spaces. A strata plan which otherwise proposes the subdivision of the curtilage of a heritage item requires approval under section 57(1) of the Heritage Act.*

*For the purposes of clause 2 of this standard exemption, alterations to the interior of a building:*

- *do not include internal alterations to additions to buildings which existed prior to the listing of the site on the State Heritage Register or publication of the interim heritage order;*
- *must not affect the external appearance of the building such as by balcony enclosure or window screening; and*
- *must not be inconsistent with any specific conditions of a previous approval.*

*Such alterations require approval under section 57(1) of the Heritage Act.*

## EXEMPTION 11: TEMPORARY STRUCTURES

1. The erection of temporary structures does not require approval under s. 57(1) of the Act, provided that the Director-General is satisfied that the criteria in (a) and (b) have been met and the person proposing to erect the structure has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied:

(a) the structure will be erected within and used for a maximum period of 4 weeks after which it will be removed within a period of 2 days and not erected again within a period of 6 months; and

(b) the structure is not to be located where it could damage or endanger significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of its curtilage or obstruct significant views of and from heritage items.

2. A person proposing to erect a structure of the kind described in paragraph 1 must write to the Director-General and set out the nature of the structure, the use for the structure and how long it will remain in place and the next occasion on which it is anticipated that the structure will be erected. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### **Guidelines**

*The cumulative impact of the multiple use of this standard exemption will be considered by the Director in the assessment of the simultaneous construction of a number of temporary structures or a succession of temporary structures which may have a prolonged adverse impact on heritage significance of the item.*

## EXEMPTION 12: LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

1. Landscape maintenance which is of the type described below does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

(a) weeding, watering, mowing, top-dressing, pest control and fertilizing necessary for the continued health of plants, without damage or major alterations to layout, contours, plant species or other significant landscape features;

(b) pruning to control size, improve shape, flowering or fruiting and the removal of diseased, dead or dangerous material, not exceeding 20% of the crown of a tree within a period of 2 years; or

(c) tree surgery by a qualified horticulturist or tree surgeon necessary for the health of those plants.

NOTE 1: In relation to cemeteries, landscape features include monuments, grave markers, grave surrounds, fencing, path edging and the like.

### Guidelines

*Landscape features and gardens are fundamental to the setting of heritage items and are important to the appreciation of heritage significance. Landscape setting is by its nature evolving and often requires more regular maintenance than other elements of heritage fabric. Horticultural advice may be required to ensure a regime of maintenance appropriate to the retention of heritage significance of a place. General advice about landscape maintenance is provided by The Maintenance of Heritage Assets: A Practical Guide Information Sheet 9.1 Heritage Gardens and Grounds, printed versions available from the Heritage Branch of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) NSW Heritage Office.*

## EXEMPTION 13: SIGNAGE

1. The erection of signage which is of the types described in (a) or (b) below does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

(a) temporary signage which is located behind or on the glass surface of a shop window which is not internally illuminated or flashing and is to be removed within eight weeks; or

(b) a real estate sign indicating that the place is for auction, sale or letting and related particulars and which is removed within 10 days of the sale or letting of the place;

2. The erection of signage which is of the types described in (a) or (b) below does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act, provided that the Director-General is satisfied that the criteria in (a) and (b) respectively have been met and the person proposing to erect it has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied:

(a) the erection of non-illuminated signage for the sole purpose of providing information to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the item and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of its curtilage or obstruct significant views of and from heritage items; or

(b) signage which is in the form of a flag or banner associated with a building used for a purpose which requires such form of promotion such as a theatre or gallery, which is displayed for a maximum period of eight weeks and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of its curtilage;

3. A person proposing to erect signage of the kind described in paragraph 2 must write to the Director-General and describe the nature and purpose of the advertising or signage. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 2(a) or 2(b), the Director-General shall notify the applicant.



4. Signage of the kind described in paragraphs 1 and 2 must:

(a) not conceal or involve the removal of signage which has an integral relationship with the significance of the item;

(b) be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the item;

(c) be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the item; and

(d) reuse existing fixing points or insert fixings within existing joints without damage to adjacent masonry.

#### **Guidelines**

*In addition to the requirements of clause 4 of the standard exemptions, signage may be controlled by development control plans or signage policies prepared by the relevant local council. The operation of the standard exemptions do not affect the requirements for consent by local councils or the need to satisfy any signage policies which may have been adopted by them.*

*Additional forms of signage not addressed by this standard exemption may not require approval under section 57(1) of the Heritage Act if they satisfy the requirements of other standard exemptions such as Standard Exemption 7 (Minor Activities with no Adverse Impact on Heritage Significance) or Standard Exemption 8 (Non-significant Fabric).*

*Signage in accordance with clause 2(a) of the standard exemption for the purpose of assisting the interpretation of heritage significance:*

- *requires approval under section 57(1) of the Heritage Act if additional information is provided which is unrelated to heritage interpretation such as commercial promotion or sponsorship; and*
- *must be in accordance with Interpreting Heritage Places and Items published by the NSW Heritage Office and available online.*

## **EXEMPTION 14: BURIAL SITES AND CEMETERIES**

1. Development on land within a burial site or cemetery which is of the type described in (a), (b) or (c) below does not require approval under s. 57(1) of the Act:

(a) the creation of a new grave;

(b) the erection of monuments or grave markers in a place of consistent character, including materials, size and form, which will not be in conflict with the character of the place; or

(c) an excavation or disturbance of land for the purpose of carrying out conservation or repair of monuments or grave markers; provided that there will be no disturbance to human remains, to relics in the form of grave goods, associated landscape features or to a place of Aboriginal heritage significance.

2. A person proposing to carry out development in the manner described in paragraph 1(b) or (c) must write to the Director-General and describe the development proposed. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 1, the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

3. This exemption does not apply to the erection of above-ground chambers, columbaria or vaults, or the designation of additional areas to be used as a burial place.

NOTE 1: Other standard exemptions apply to the maintenance, cleaning and repair of burial sites and cemeteries.

#### **Guidelines**

*In addition to burial remains and artefacts, above ground cemetery elements may include headstones, footstones and other burial markers or monuments and associated elements such as grave kerbing, iron grave railings, grave furniture, enclosures and plantings. It is important that cemeteries listed on the State Heritage Register have a conservation policy or conservation management plan endorsed by the Heritage Council and that it records the history and significant fabric of the place with policies for conservation, relocation and the erection of new monuments and grave markers.*

*Additional advice about the management of heritage cemeteries is provided in:*

- *Cemeteries: Guidelines for their Care and Conservation, NSW Heritage Office, 1992;*
- *Skeletal Remains, NSW Heritage Office, 1998;*
- *Guidelines for Cemetery Conservation, National Trust of Australia (NSW), 2002.*

## EXEMPTION 15: COMPLIANCE WITH MINIMUM STANDARDS AND ORDERS

1. Development which is required for the purpose of compliance with the minimum standards set out in Part 3 of the *Heritage Regulation 1999* or an order issued under either:

(a) section 120 of the *Heritage Act 1977* regarding minimum standards of maintenance and repair; or

(b) section 121S of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* regarding an order which is consistent with a submission by the Heritage Council under section 121S(6) of that Act;

does not require approval under s. 57(1) of the Act.

### Guidelines

*This standard exemption is intended to facilitate and expedite compliance with orders and minimum standards of maintenance and repair.*

*The Minimum Standards of Maintenance and Repair replaced the “wilful neglect” provisions of the Heritage Act in 1999. The minimum standards are contained in Part 3 of the Heritage Regulation 1999 and are reproduced in the Heritage Information Series published by the NSW Heritage Office. The minimum standards only apply to items listed on the State Heritage Register and relate to:*

- weather protection;
- fire prevention and protection;
- security; and
- essential maintenance and repair to prevent serious or irreparable damage.

*Maintenance and repair which exceed the minimum standards in the Regulation may be exempt from approval under other standard exemptions (refer to #1 and #2).*

*Orders under s.121S(6) of the EP&A Act are those given by a council or other consent authority in relation to an item listed on the State Heritage Register, land to which an interim heritage order applies or a heritage item listed under an environmental planning instrument. Orders must not be given in relation to items listed on the State Heritage Register or land to which an interim heritage order relates unless the consent authority has given notice of it to the Heritage Council and considered any submission made by it.*

## EXEMPTION 16: SAFETY AND SECURITY

1. The following development does not require approval under s. 57(1) of the Act, provided that the Director-General is satisfied that the criteria in (a) or (b) have been met and the person proposing to undertake the development has received a notice advising that the Director-General is satisfied:

(a) the erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the item including landscape or archaeological features of its curtilage; or

(b) development, including emergency stabilisation, necessary to secure safety where a building or part of a building has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and poses a safety risk to its users or the public.

2. A person proposing to undertake development of the kind described in paragraph 1 must write to the Director-General and describe the development and, if it is of the kind set out in 1(b), provide certification from a structural engineer having experience with heritage items confirming the necessity for the development with regard to the criteria set out in 1(b) and any adverse impact on significant fabric. If the Director-General is satisfied that the proposed development meets the criteria set out in paragraph 1(a) or (b), the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### Guidelines

*Development exempt under this standard exemption must be for the temporary or emergency securing of safety for users or the public.*

*Permanent upgrading of site or building security may be exempt under other standard exemptions such as #7 (Minor Activities with no Adverse Impact on Heritage Significance) or #8 (Non-significant Fabric). Development described in 1(b) of this exemption is intended to apply in circumstances where there has been damage caused by a sudden change in circumstances of the building such as a catastrophic event, rather than safety risks which may arise from ongoing neglect of maintenance.*

*Emergency maintenance and repairs such as required following a storm event may be exempt under other standard exemptions such as #1 (Maintenance and Cleaning) and #2 (Repairs). More intrusive means of upgrading security which may damage significant fabric will require the submission of an application under section 60 of the Heritage Act.*

*Development in accordance with this exemption must be undertaken with minimal intervention to significant fabric.*

## EXEMPTION 17: MOVABLE HERITAGE ITEMS

1. The temporary relocation of movable heritage items, including contents, fixtures and objects, to ensure their security, maintenance and preservation, for conservation or exhibition, to ensure health or safety, the need for a controlled environment for those heritage items, or to protect the place, and which are to be returned to their present location within six months, does not require approval under s.57(1) of the Act.

2. A person proposing to relocate a movable heritage item as set out in paragraph 1 must advise the Director-General in writing of the proposed location and the reasons for its relocation. If the Director-General is satisfied that the temporary relocation meets the criteria set out in paragraph 1 the Director-General shall notify the applicant.

### **Guidelines**

*Movable heritage items or objects which are listed on the State Heritage Register must be specifically referred to in the gazetted listing. Unless specifically listed, the movable content of buildings such as furniture, paintings and other decoration is not movable heritage for the purposes of the Heritage Act which triggers approval requirements to “move, damage or destroy it”.*

*The permanent relocation of an item of movable heritage such as listed ships or railway rolling stock will require the submission of an application under section 60 of the Heritage Act.*

*Additional advice regarding movable heritage is provided by:*

- *Objects in Their Place: An Introduction to Movable Heritage, NSW Heritage Office, 1999; and*
- *Movable Heritage Principles, NSW Heritage Office and Ministry for the Arts, 1999.*