



Northern Beaches Council
Manly Dam Playplace

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View across Manly Dam from the proposed playplace site



MANLY DAM PLAYPLACE DRAFT REPORT

Client:
NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL

Prepared by

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Pedestrian path and stairs across Manly Dam wall



Existing water edge and wildlife found at Manly Dam

1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

OVERVIEW

The Manly Dam Playplace project is being prepared by CLOUSTON Associates in concert with Ric McConaghy Playscapes and AT&L for the Northern Beaches Council. This report proposes a vision for an upgraded playplace at Manly Dam to meet current and future needs for its users, including in part those of all abilities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Manly Dam Playplace project is to upgrade the existing playplace at the Manly Warringah War Memorial Park. The proposed upgrade is part of the 'Connecting All Through Play' program developed by the Northern Beaches Council in concert with the NSW State Government. The objective of the project is to enhance the recreational provision at Manly Dam by developing a universal access playplace that reflects the remarkable natural surrounds, and offers comfort, engagement and challenge for all.

The playplace will focus on improving links to the natural landscape, encouraging exploration and providing accessible play opportunities and amenity for all to enjoy.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this project are to:

- Create a Regional Playplace which caters for residents within the local community along with visitors from outside the Northern Beaches region.
- Ensure universal access is provided to the site from nearby roads, footpaths and carparks.
- Reconsider the location, architectural character and footprint of the existing toilet block.
- Create and play journey that celebrates the natural surrounds and endeavours to afford play opportunities sympathetic and complimentary to the environment in which it will exist. The design will be innovative, sensitive and robust, and focus on opportunities for engagement for all.
- Be a playplace that is vibrant, emphasising inclusiveness, provides elements for users of all abilities, encouraging risk in play and provides a connection to the local community.
- Make provision that is engaging and challenging and with a design emphasis that enables the user to make informed decisions about risk taking, aspirations and responsibility. In order that the space be as safe as is necessary the provision shall comply with Australian Standards regarding Playgrounds and Public Spaces.
- Encourage environmental education opportunities, increasing their understanding of responsibility for environment caring in a long term sustainability.
- Incorporate where practical, WSUD treatments to mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff through the site before entering the main waterbody.
- Research, reflect upon, respect and respond to local cultural and heritage values.



Manly Warringah War Memorial

CONTEXT MAP

Figure 1 shows the immediate context of the Manly Dam Reserve illustrating the features and landuses in the locality.

LEGEND

- Circuit Track
- Main Park Entry (Vehicle Access)
- Surrounding Road Network
- Manly Warringah War Memorial Park Boundary
- Main Park Entry Point (Vehicle Access)
- Secondary Park Entry Point
- Bus Stops
- Open Space/ Reserves
 - Wakehurst Golf Club
 - Condoover Reserve
 - David Thomas Reserve
 - Millers Reserve
- Bushland
- Manly Creek
- Schools/Institutions
 - Balgowlah North Public School
 - Manly Hydraulics Laboratory
 - UNSW Water Research Laboratory
 - Manly Vale Public School
- Residential Area



Figure 1: Context

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2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Manly Warringah War Memorial Park is situated approximately 12km north of the Sydney CBD with an area of roughly 375ha. The Park is characterised by bushland which contains a number of vegetation communities and is the home to Manly Dam, one of the largest freshwater lakes in Sydney.

The Manly Dam wall was originally constructed in 1892 and continued to be improved until it reached its current height of 35m in 1922. The dam provided fresh potable water to residents until 1933. The majority of the land within the park is identified as Crown Land which is currently under the management of Northern Beaches Council. The current playplace is approximately 50 m² and forms part of public recreational facilities along the south-western edge of the Dam.

Given the strategic location of the park and the increasing pressure and usage needs from a greater residential population nearby, Northern Beaches Council has determined to set out a series of strategic approaches to manage its future development. The Manly Dam Playplace upgrade is one of these steps.

REVIEW OF EXISTING BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The various documents summarised below contain information relating to the proposed upgrades to the playplace. The reports have been identified as support material for the Manly Dam Playplace Project, and the summary includes how each relates to the proposed playplace.

Manly Warringah War Memorial Park Plan of Management (2014)

A 10 year strategic plan, the Manly Warringah War Memorial Park Plan of Management continues the works set out in the previous Manly Warringah War Memorial Park Plan of Management (1998). Incorporating fresh information and studies in relation to the park to set a vision for future development.

The Plan of Management sets out several strategic goals which are specific to the improvement of the Manly Dam Playplace and include:

- Upgrading existing playplace and its surrounding open space to address issues of population demand for recreation.
- Protecting existing bushland and vegetation communities to preserve water quality in order to accommodate recreational use.
- Improving picnic areas and providing more facilities, such as seating and shelters for the elderly and people with special needs.
- Upgrading car park capacity to address peak use periods particularly during public holidays.

A Spirit of Play: Warringah's open space strategy (2015)

The Warringah open space strategy encapsulates all recreational activities within the Warringah Council Area (LGA). It pictures a vision of establishing a vibrant community environment and open space network to encourage people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the open space within the LGA.

Some elements within the Strategy identified as meeting the requirement for the Manly Dam Playplace Project are:

- Integrating existing open spaces and parks into recreational use to encourage and support healthy life style.
- Addressing issues of technology distraction and obesity concerns by providing better open space for people to enjoy.

Recreation Strategy (2009)

The Recreation Strategy produced by Warringah Council provides a long term strategic plan for the future management for recreational areas within Warringah. The strategy includes a set of guiding principles which form a framework for the preparation of future recreational assets. The strategic plan and framework that can be adapted for the Manly Dam Playplace project includes:

- Providing a better recreational environment to maximise the participation of people of all ages and abilities.
- Developing accessible programs and infrastructure for communities.
- Promoting healthy activity and life styles.

Connecting All Through Play Program (2017)

The Program emphasises bringing inclusive and active play space to all recreational areas across the entire Northern Beaches, consolidating connections through different play programs.

The program provides several strategies that could be employed in the upgrading of the Manly Dam Playplace, such as:

- Delivering a high level of inclusive play elements to encourage residents of all abilities to enjoy
- Upgrading facilities and capacity to offer a healthy and enjoyable environment for community.

Manly Dam Playplace Online Survey (2017)

An online survey setup and run by the Northern Beaches Council asking responders about their reasons for visiting Manly Dam, the activities they take part in at the park and what elements they would like to see in a Playplace. All the data gathered in the survey is relevant to the Manly Dam Playplace and a summary of the major themes impacting the design of the playplace can be found in Chapter 02 - Online Survey Consideration and Themes.



Existing water's edge



SITE ANALYSIS

Existing view across the dam

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies on the southern shoreline of the waterbody contained by the Manly Dam wall and is predominantly covered by native vegetation and bushland. The War Memorial to the east of the site was built to remember fallen service personnel during World War I and World War II.

The site is approximately 1400m² with a small fenced playplace of 50m² and a large turfed slope area for passive recreational use. It also offers significant views towards the water, dam wall and opposite bank.

The existing playplace is a relatively simple space made up of off-the-shelf equipment arranged in the centre of a small fenced area. This perimeter fence prevents easy access to the surrounding areas and in combination with the use of soft fall as a paving material reinforces the playplaces lack of connection to the natural surrounds.

There is very little reference to nature in the playplace apart from the scenic views of the bush from within the playscape, however even this is not utilised within the prescribed play opportunities.

With respect to the playplace in its landscape context, the following is noteworthy:

- Sight lines to the play area from all points are limited.
- There is little connection between the playplace and adjoining areas.
- Fencing and plating create something of an isolated island.

The equipment is well maintained, although the paving and shade structure is starting show wear. The current playplace does not contain any elements which would now be considered innovative playplace design, nor do any of the elements of play reference the specific context. It does however have the potential, through its natural setting to become an exemplar play place for the Northern Beaches Region.



Existing playplace with the surrounding landscape

SITE ANALYSIS

Figure 2 Comprises the landscape analysis of the site's circulation, access, recreational uses and facilities.

CIRCULATION AND ACCESS

- ➔ Main Road Entry provides the main access point into the park vehicular visitors.
- - - Internal Vehicle Circulation via a single narrow sealed road with a turn around at its far end. The road tends to get congested during peak park use times.
- Formal Footpaths are concrete paths separated from the road with a vegetated buffer to provide a better pedestrian experience. The footpaths provide filtered views of the water where vegetation permits.
- Informal Trails form part of the park's wider walking and bicycle trails. The trails also provide secondary minor access points into the site via residential streets.
- Car Parks provide nearby vehicle parking. Car Parks are spread out along the road and tend to be at capacity during peak park usage. The spaces are not well defined or efficiently laid out.

USES AND FACILITIES

- Open Grass Areas provide a break from the vegetation cover and open up views to the water while allowing solar access. However, they are under utilised and poorly defined spaces.
- The Playplace is a fenced play space with off-the-shelf equipment and a shade structure. The playplace does not take full advantage of the unique location.
- The picnic Area is adjacent to the playplace and close to the existing toilet block. The view from picnic spot to the water is partially blocked by trees and surveillance of the playplace is not optimal.
- The Picnic Facilities include covered and uncovered tables, shelters and BBQ facilities available for wire. The facilities are scattered along the water's edge and provide views ranging from the water to bushland.
- The Toilet Facilities are located near the playplace and carpark and provides great surveillance views. The facilities are old and out-dated.
- The Council Depot is positioned near the Main Road Entry and holds the ranger/park manager offices. The location blocks views of the dam from the road entry.
- The Boat Ramp provides water craft access to the dam. The ramp is not visible from the Playplace site.
- Water Craft Area is accessed by the Boat Ramp and is well separated from the Playplace by the Swimming Area.
- Swimming Area is directly adjacent to the Playplace site and stretches across the water along the Dam wall.

Site Boundary

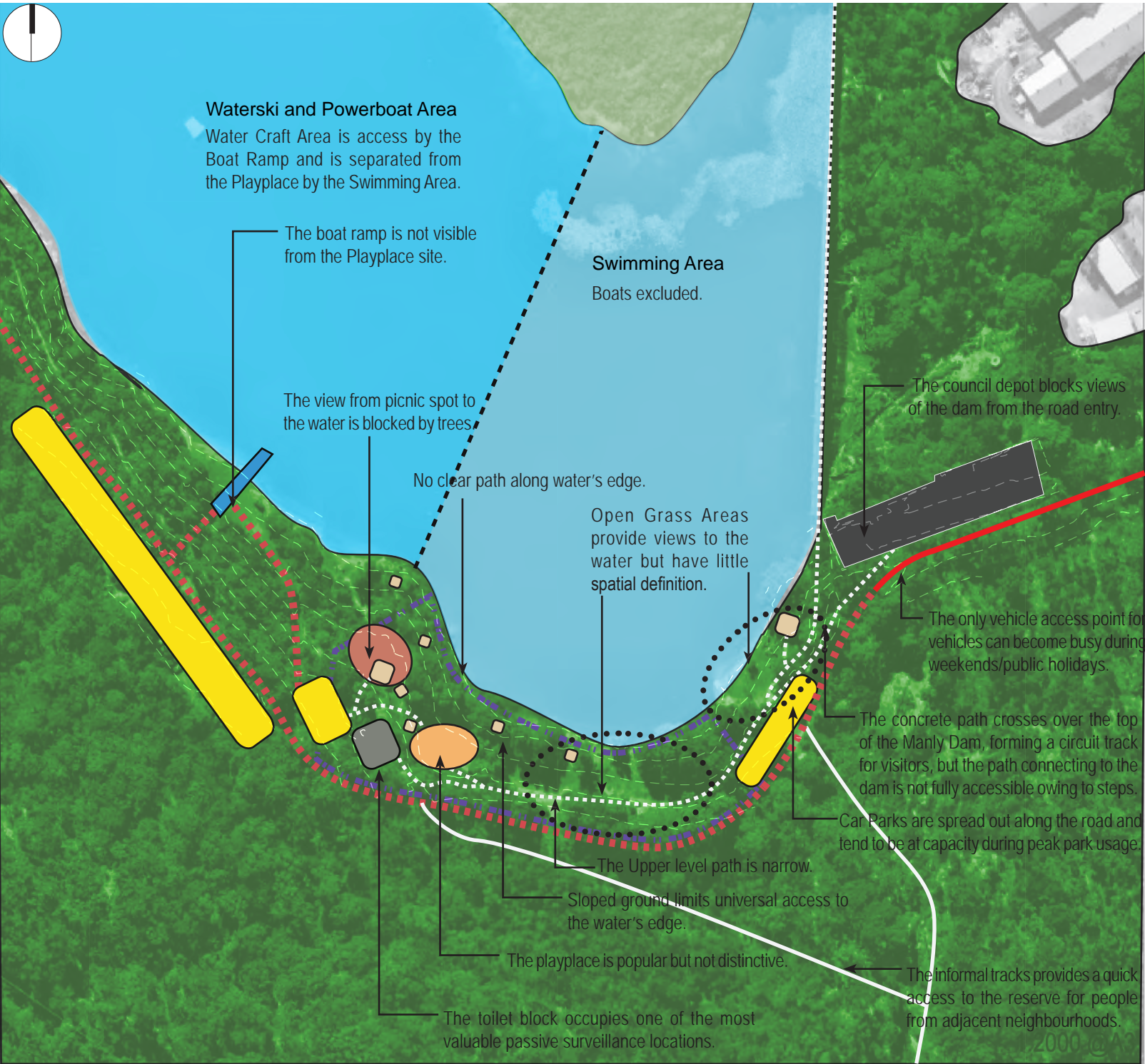










Figure 2: Circulation, Access, Uses and Facilities.

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SITE ANALYSIS


Figure 3 comprises the landscape analysis of the site's landscape character, visual quality, environment and cultural heritage.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL QUALITY

-  Some tree species along the waters edge are not endemic to the area and block views over the water.
-  Native vegetation on site provides shade and forms semi-open bushland, widely appealing to park users.
-  Open Grass Areas provide open space for recreational uses, but are not in optimal condition, with weebly grass and some erosion .
-  Blocked view towards water
-  Filtered view towards water
-  Panorama view towards the site
-  Existing Buildings
 - ① Council Depot
 - ② Manly Hydraulics Laboratory
 - ③ UNSW Water Research Laboratory
 - ④ Existing toilet facilities
-  Play equipment in the playplace is structured and prescribed without creative opportunities for children's play.

ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

-  Manly Dam Wall is a heritage feature which connects the North and South, providing views towards the site over the water but partially blocking the view towards the east.
-  Anzac Memorial is of significance to the local community and the site for major Anzac commemoration.
-  Waterbody is the main landscape feature on site and offers a variety of recreational activities including swimming, waterskiing, fishing, etc. However, flooding is a potential threat to site and recreational uses.
-  Bushland forms a critical corridor and has a high ecological and biological value.

 Direction of stormwater flow as a result of existing topography.

 Site Boundary

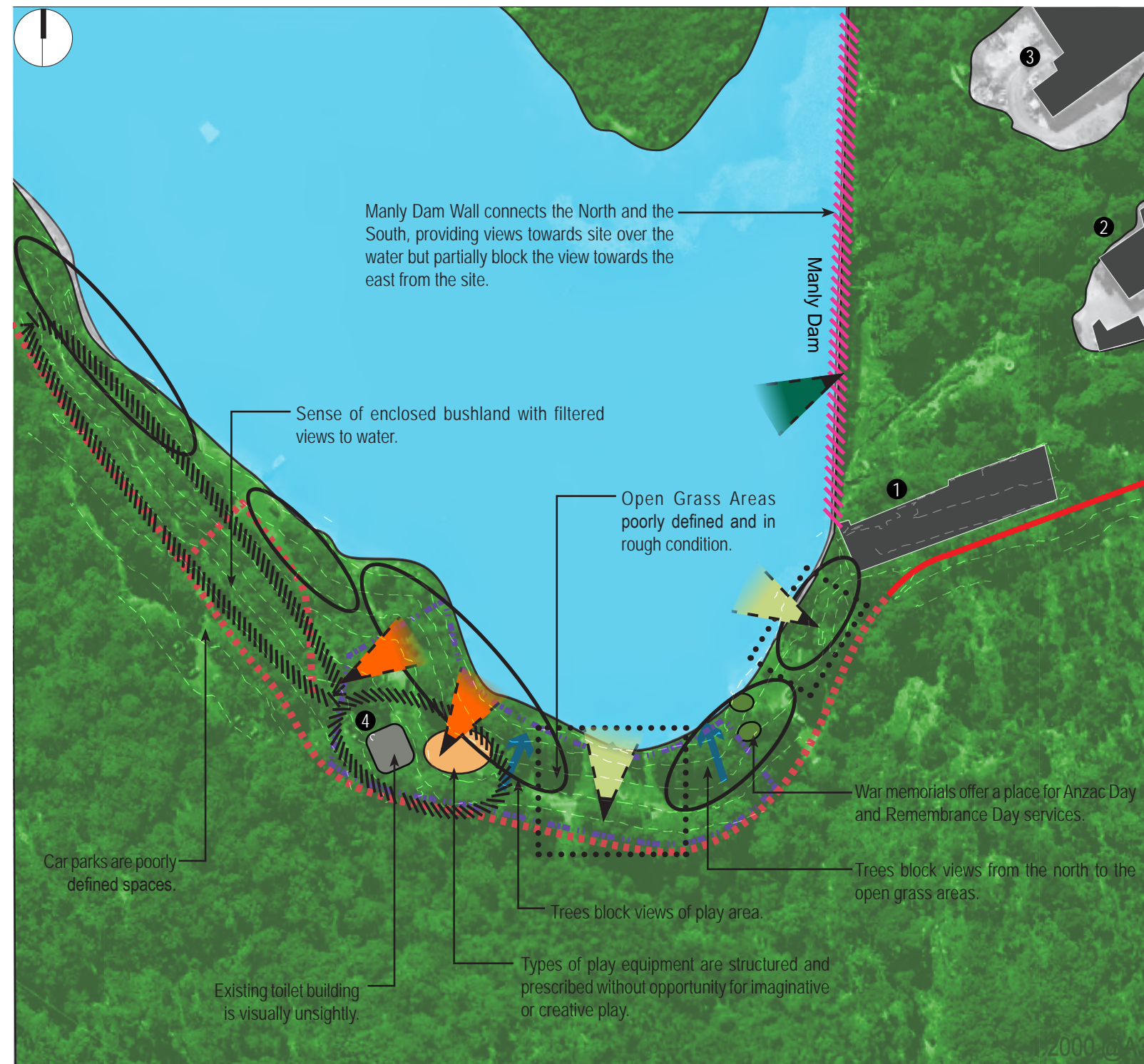


Figure 3: Landscape Characters, Environment and Cultural heritage.

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CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Figure 4 illustrates the constraints and opportunities on site.

LEGEND

- Streamline car parks to maximise available spaces
- Existing Playplace
- Picnic Area
- Scattered Picnic Facilities
- Existing toilet block location, architectural style and footprint to be addressed
- Open up blocked views to create filter water views
- Car park access
- Consolidate existing spaces to make best use of limited available open recreational space.
- Potential Linkage through site
- Primary existing views to water
- Internal Vehicle Circulation
- Formal Footpaths
- All abilities access to water edge is not currently available
- Potential flood line
- Proposed boardwalk by others

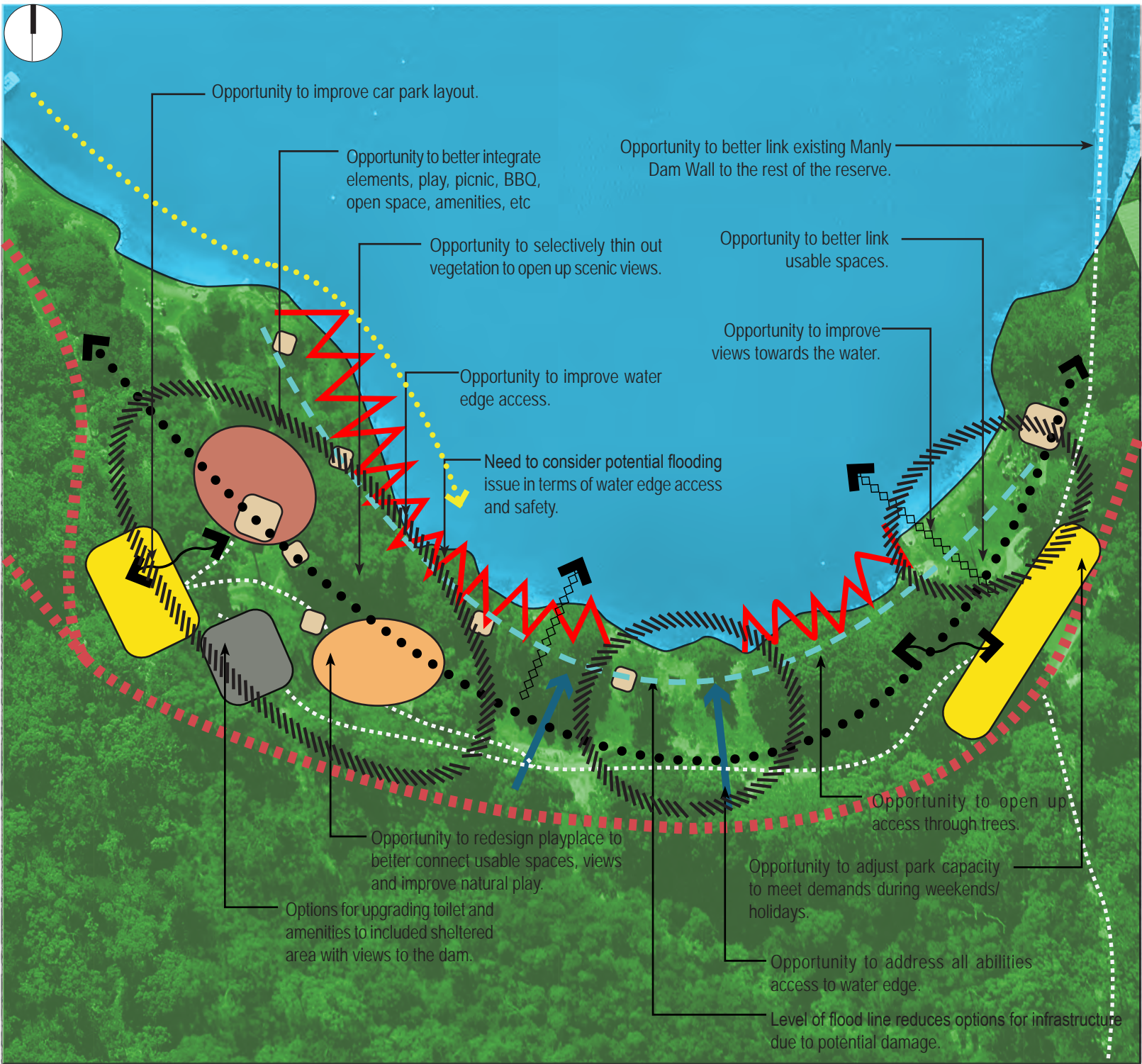


Figure 4: Constraints and Opportunities.

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CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the site analysis, the following summarises the major constraints and opportunities to provide an inclusive playplace for the site.

KEY CONSTRAINTS

- The nature of the site and its key values limit capacity to extend parking and vehicle access.
- Pedestrian links between the reserve and adjacent suburb are largely absent.
- Existing topography limits universal accessibility in some places.
- Removal of any trees to improve views will need to consider environmental implications.
- The site is constrained by the water for physical and safety concerns.
- Flooding poses potential risks to site users. (Max level height: +36m AHD)
- The site is currently divided by dense planting reducing views and connectivity.
- The access road along the southern edge of the site prevents expansion.
- The site is constrained to the north by the water.
- Safety concerns surrounding the water may limit expansion towards the water edge.
- Non-endemic tree species along the water edge block views.

MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore selectively removing non-endemic tree species along the water's edge to open up water views and allow better solar access into site.
- Consider thinning vegetation between playplace and other open spaces to better link the site visually.
- Review ways to better connect existing elements on site such as the playplace, picnic facilities, BBQs, toilet block and other amenities by revised path system.
- Consider water/dam theme for creative play to integrate play with the park.
- Redesign of playplace should ensure better connection with surrounding spaces.
- Explore ways to integrate nature and natural themes into play elements.
- Review connection of pathways and the Manly Dam wall to provide accessible route across dam.
- Review design of toilet block to provide best use/facilities for public.
- Consider improving existing pathway system to allow equal access routes to all areas including the water's edge.



Manly Dam wall walk, picnic facilities, and swimming are some of the recreational opportunities within the park

ONLINE SURVEY CONSIDERATIONS AND THEMES

The Manly Dam Playplace Online Survey was setup and run by the Northern Beaches Council and ran from the 18.07.2017 through to the 14.08.2017. The vast majority of the respondents were parents/carers of children under the age of 13.

The key themes raised by the survey are as follows:

Essential and high priority things that visitors would like to see or do in a playplace

- Playing with water
- Climbing
- Flying through the air
- Swinging
- Sliding
- Balancing
- Riding on bikes/scooters
- Discovering nature
- Learning
- Imaginative play
- Defined areas for age groups

Desirable environmental and natural design features

- Grassy spaces
- Water features
- Planted/sensory walkways
- Trees
- Natural plant areas
- Stepping stones

Essential and high priority Amenities

- Accessible/family/baby change toilet facilities
- Water bubblers
- Picninc tables, Benches and seating, shade structures, BBQ facilities
- Shelter from wind/rain
- Garbage bins
- Accessible parking
- Fencing

Desirable and essential/high priority elements from the survey will be considered for the design of the playplace where appropriate.



Manly Dam Spillway



Manly Warringah War Memorial and views across the water