

Archaeological Assessment



**UNSW CLIFFBROOK CAMPUS REDEVELOPMENT:
41-45 BEACH STREET, COOGEE, EASTERN SUBURBS, NSW**

*Historical Archaeological Assessment (European Heritage)
+ Research Design & Excavation Methodology*

Report prepared by MDCA for the UNSW (Faculties Management)

Friday 3 March 2017

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Introduction

The University of NSW (UNSW) is one of the Asia-Pacific's leading research and tertiary teaching institutions. Headquartered at Kensington, the university has seven campuses in Greater Sydney and one in Canberra. As part of its ongoing endeavours to continually evolve and meet changing educational needs, the university is seeking to redevelop and renew its Cliffbrook Campus. Over the past 12 months, a range of redevelopment options have been subject to careful planning consideration. The preferred option, recently approved as a State Significant Development (SDD1826), will see creation of a 'bespoke educational and residential retreat': a new campus building that will be constructed to accommodate the UNSW Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) residential program. This redevelopment will involve conservation of heritage buildings, improved landscaping and replacement of outmoded facilities with the new purpose built campus wing.

Presently, the site features four main buildings (CC1 - CC4) with thoroughfares and car parking areas, landscaped gardens and lawn areas set about. The centrepiece is the landmark, state heritage-listed 1920s mansion - Cliffbrook House (CC1). Most of the buildings are currently tenanted as offices, with the majority (including the offices of UNSW Press) located in Building CC4 (constructed in phases from the 1950s).

Project

In order to inform redevelopment planning and detailed design, UNSW has engaged Mary Dallas Consulting Archaeologists (MDCA) to conduct European and Aboriginal heritage investigations on campus. The main objectives of these investigations are to provide an historical overview of the study area; identify archaeological items (or areas of sensitivity/potential) within the study area; and develop strategies for the management of the study area's archaeological resource through and beyond the redevelopment process.

Study Area

The Cliffbrook Campus is located at the corner of Beach and Battery Streets in Coogee. Sited approximately six kilometres southeast of the Sydney CBD and three kilometres to the west of the UNSW Randwick Campus (Kensington), the campus is within the Parish of Alexandria in the City of Randwick LGA. The campus accounts for some 1.15 hectares, set over two allotments (Lot1/DP8162 and Lot1/DP09530). It is situated directly behind Gordon's Bay, a small beach inlet to the immediate north of Coogee Beach. For the purposes of this report the study area comprises the campus described above as well an adjoining residential allotment at 10 Battery Street (Lot8/DP8162), which is just over 700 m² and is held in freehold title by the university.

Report

This document was prepared by Dan Tuck (MDCA archaeologist). It addresses the historical archaeological heritage of the study area; presents an assessment of the campus and proposes a strategy for management. Based on a review of relevant heritage legislation and listings; collation and appraisal of previous reporting; archival research; and the results of a recent field survey/site inspection, is also a companion document to the UNSW Cliffbrook Campus Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (MDCA 2017).

The author would like to thank Dr Paul Irish (MDCA), Ken Flook and Janine Deshon (Faculties Management UNSW) for providing background information and facilitating site access.

Refer **figures 1 - 8**.

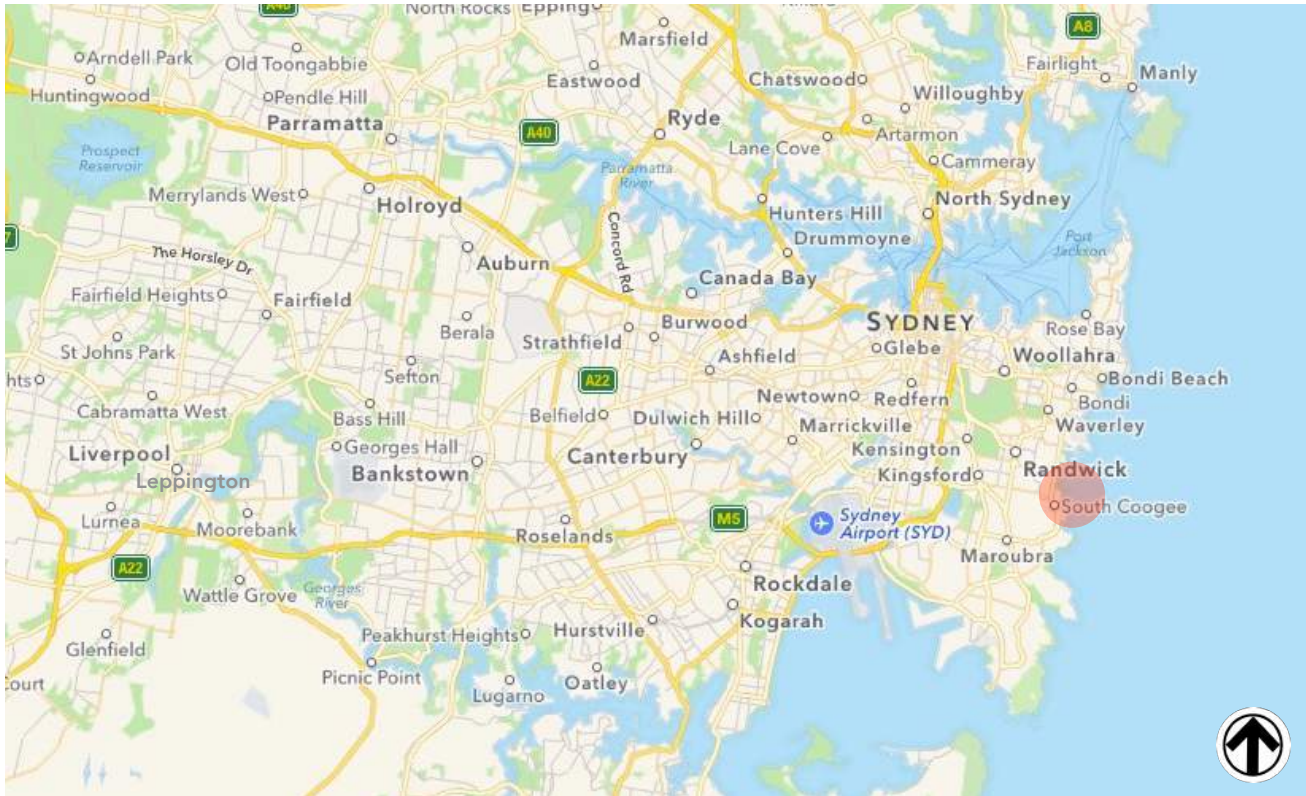


Figure 1: Eastern Sydney

Maps 2016

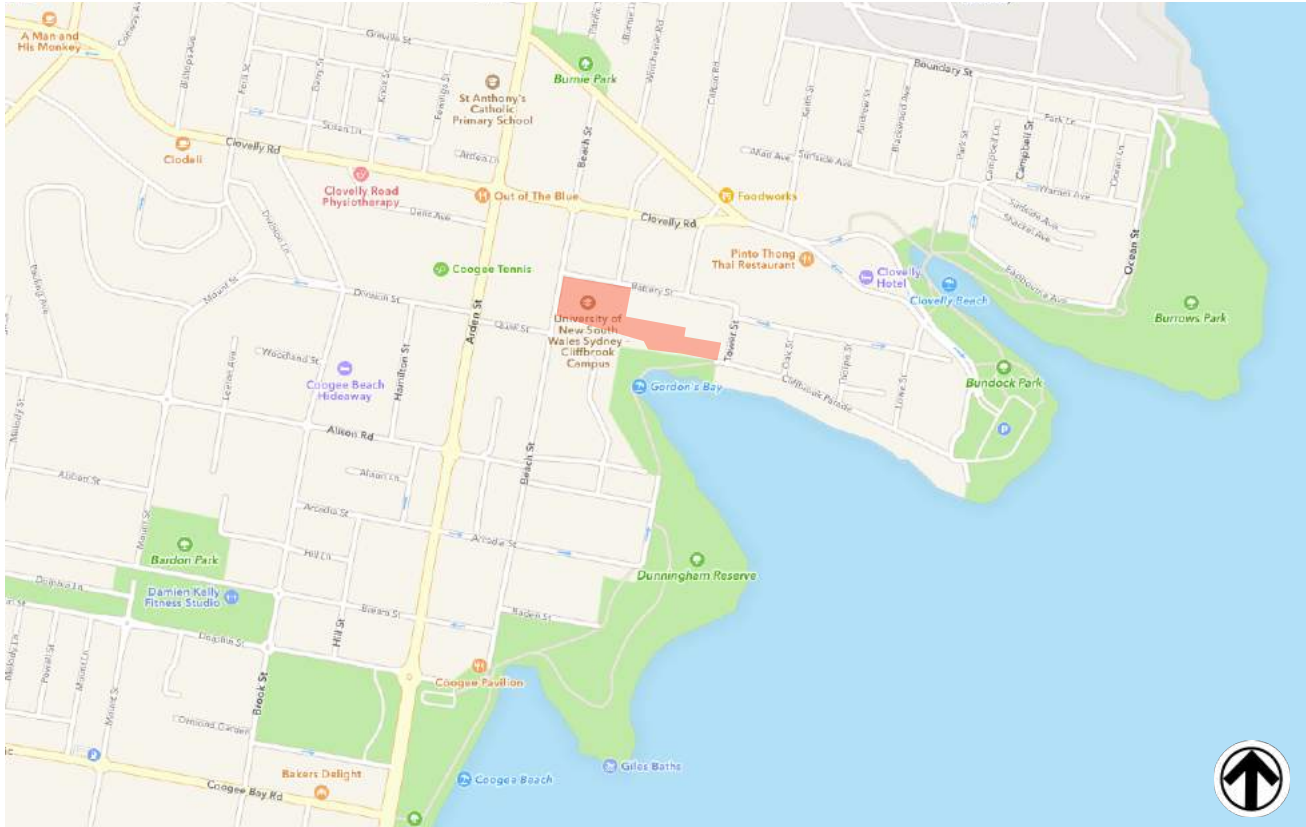


Figure 2: Cliffbrook Campus

Maps 2016



Figure 3: Cliffbrook Campus

LPI SIX Viewer 2016



Figure 4: Cliffbrook Campus

LPI SIX Viewer 2016



Figure 5: Cliffbrook Campus

LPI SIX Viewer 2016

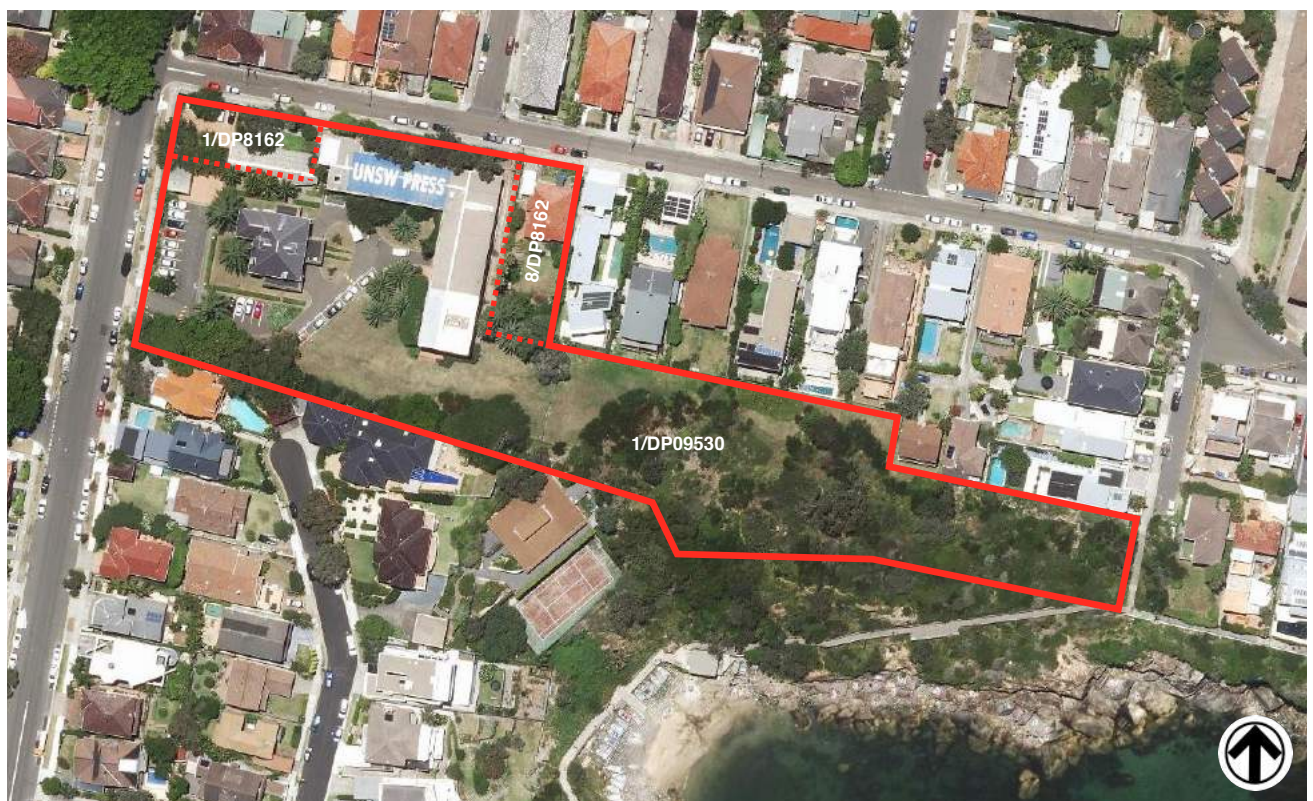


Figure 6: Cliffbrook Campus (detail)

LPI SIX Viewer 2016

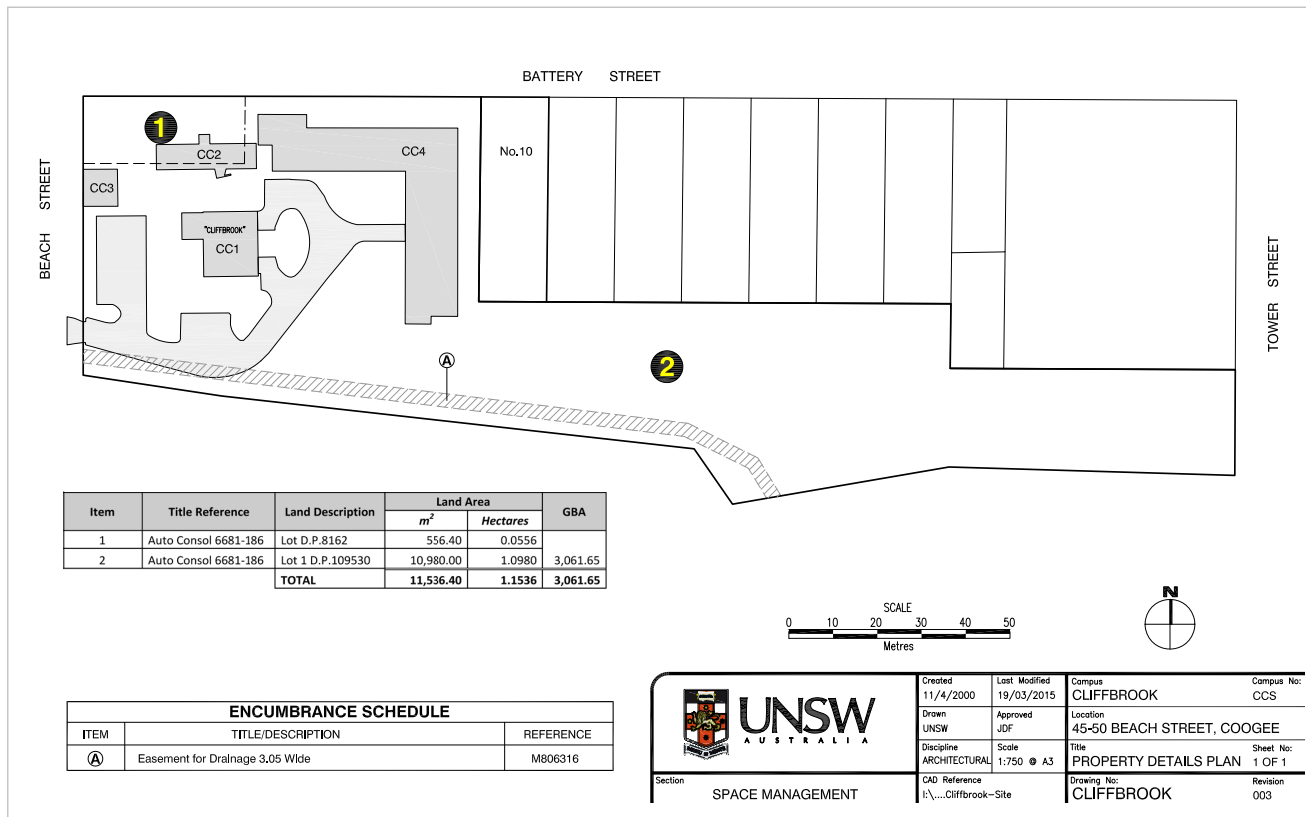


Figure 7: CliffBrook Campus (layout)

LPI SIX Viewer 2016

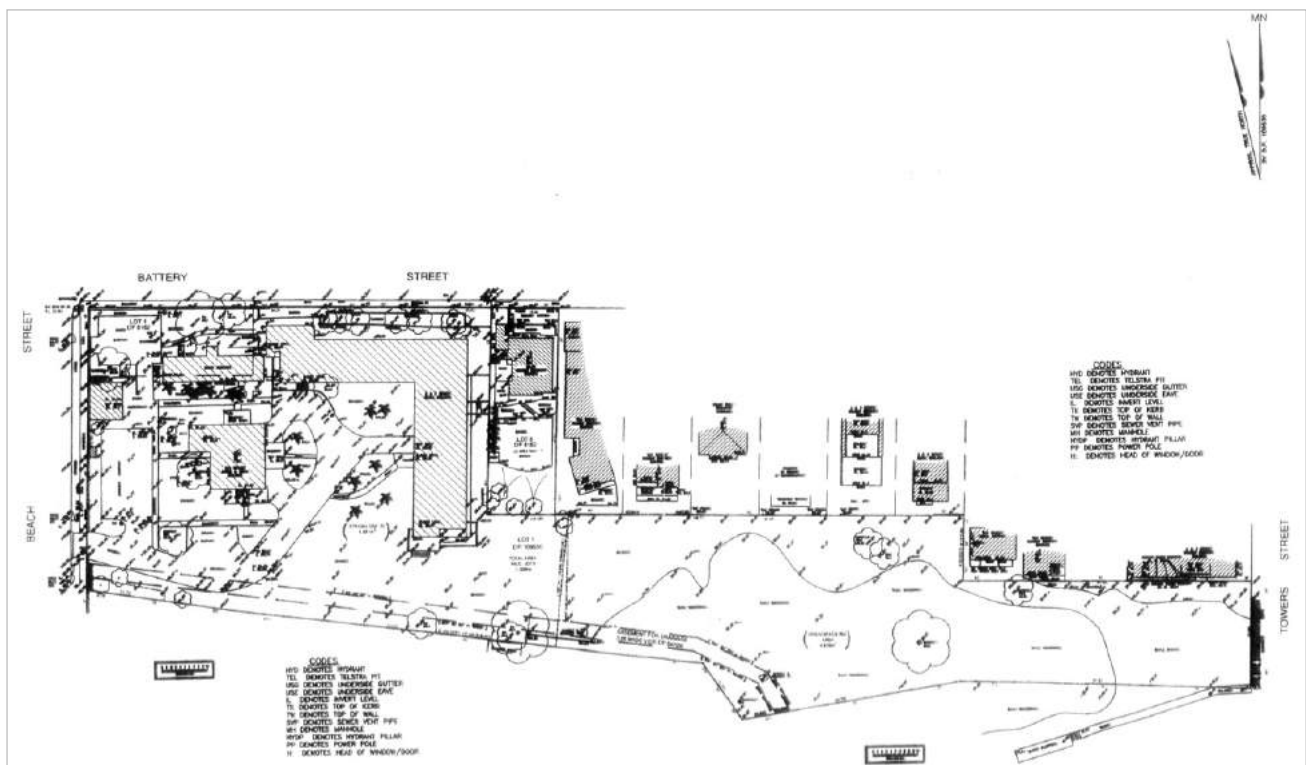


Figure 8: CliffBrook Campus (survey)

Watson Buchan Consulting Surveyors 2008

Project

Planning for the UNSW Cliffbrook Campus redevelopment and renewal program is as follows:

Conservation

The main campus heritage buildings and structures (and significant plantings and landscapes) are to be retained and conserved. These include:

- Cliffbrook mansion (CC1)
- Sandtone garage/office (CC3)
- Sandstone perimeter wall.

The mansion and garage are likely to be adaptively reused for seminar rooms and a gymnasium respectively.

Demolition

The L-shaped, multipurpose/multilevel building (CC4) - that dominates the northern portion of the site and has been constructed in phases since the 1950s - is to be demolished.

Construction

A new residential and educational retreat is to be constructed, largely within the footprint of the building that is to be demolished. This new campus building will primarily accommodate the UNSW Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) residential program and will provide up to 52 bedrooms, supporting amenities and a customised suite of learning spaces. The design is empathetic to the highly sensitive nature of the heritage of nearby buildings, adjacent environment, unique outlook and neighbourhood amenity.

Features of the new three-level campus building include:

- basement car parking
- entrance; reception spaces; student support facilities
- kitchen & dining facilities; flexible teaching rooms; student accommodation
- bathrooms; storage facilities; cleaning rooms; services plant rooms & infrastructure

In addition to the above, there will also be services upgrades (including installation of an electrical substation) as well as general landscaping improvements aimed at improving amenity and synthesising heritage, environment and architectural form within the unique coastal setting of the place.

The following links provides additional general and specific information about the project:

<http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/node/651>

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=8126

Refer **figures 8 - 14**.



Figure 8: UNSW Cliffbrook Campus Renewal Schematic Design (Ground Floor)

FJMT 23 November 2016

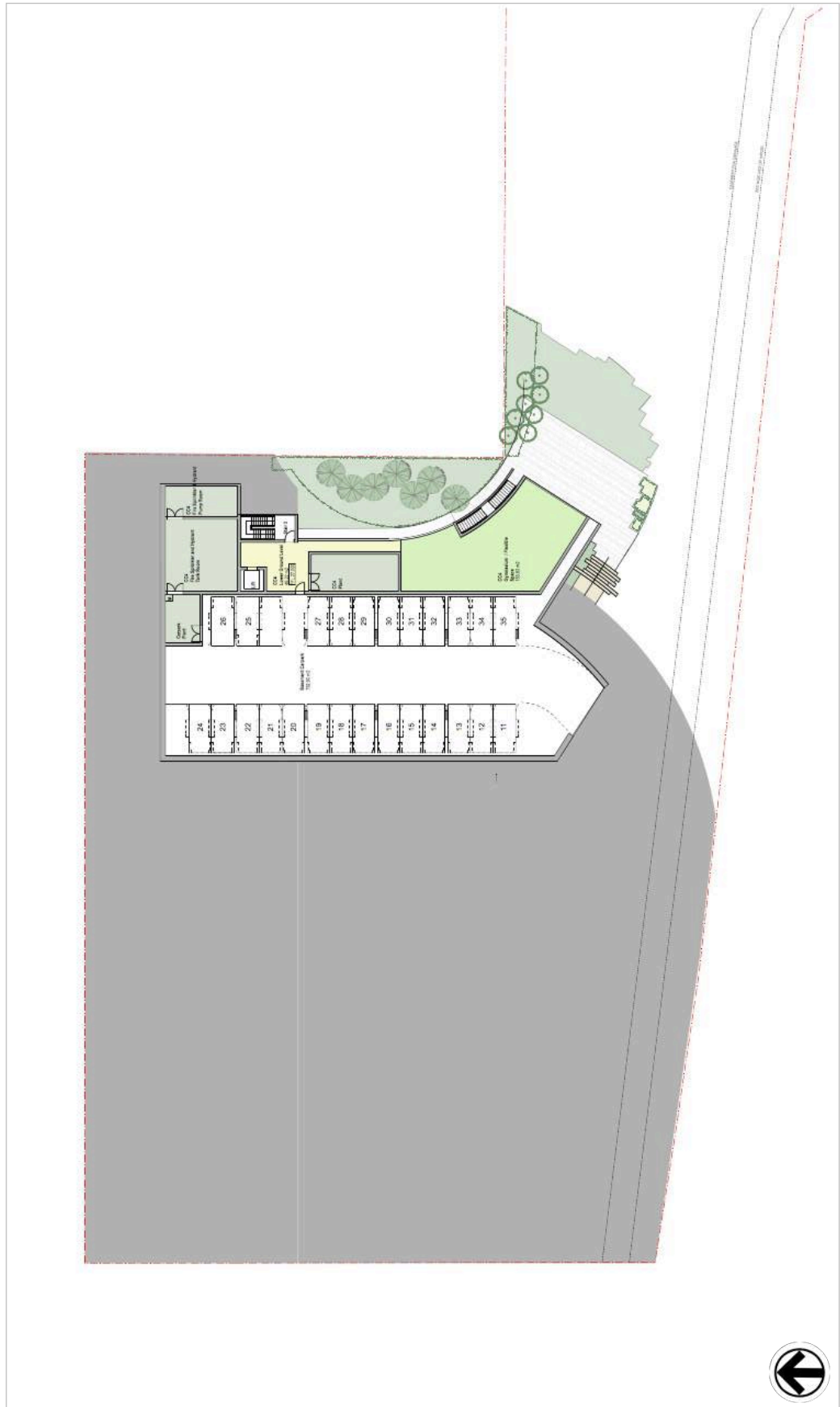


Figure 9: UNSW Cliffbrook Campus Renewal Schematic Design (Basement Carpark)

FJMT 23 November 2016

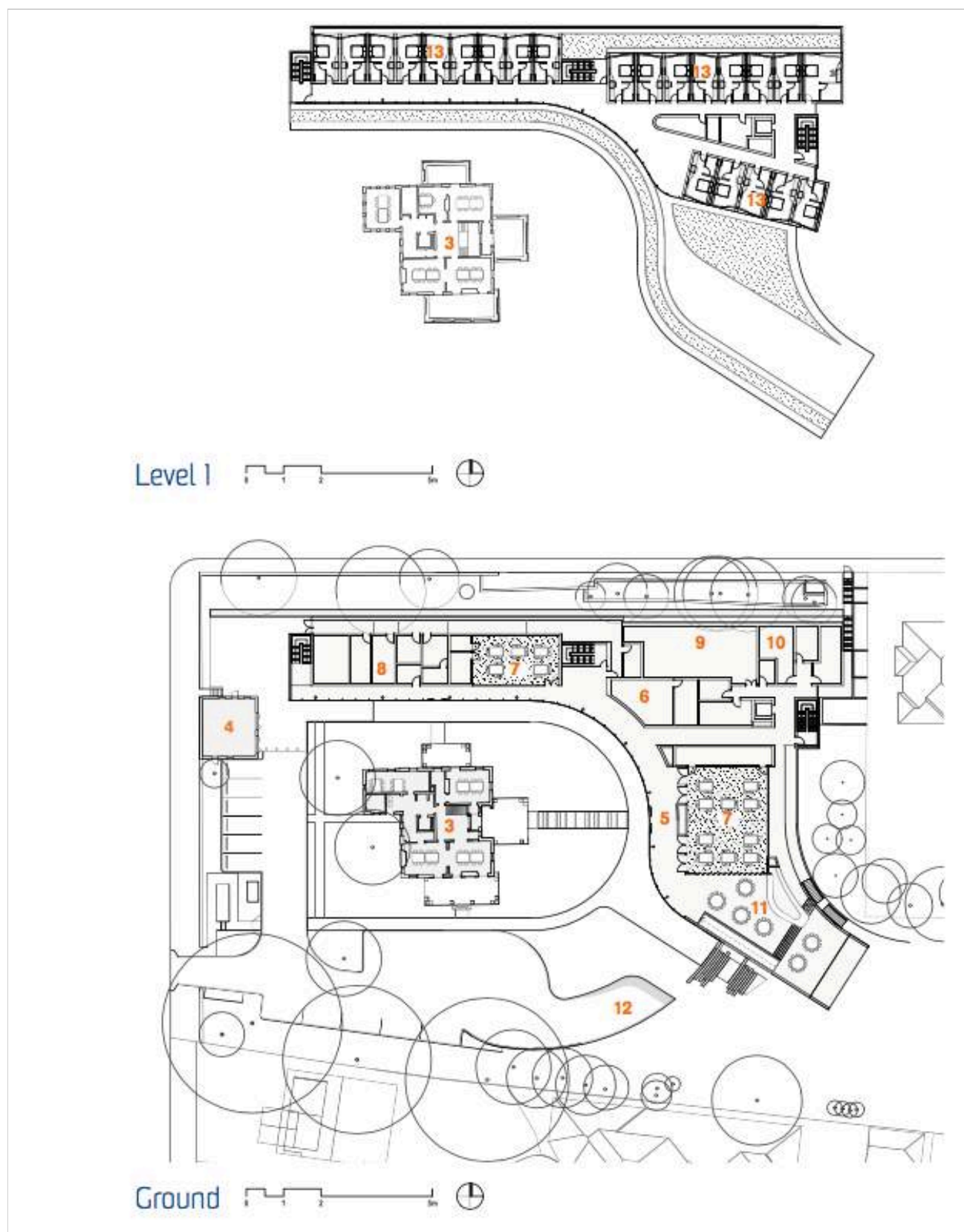


Figure 10: Cliffbrook Campus Redevelopment Concept Design (Ground + Level 1)

http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/sites/all/files/161125_Cliffbrook_DesignConcept_WEB.pdf

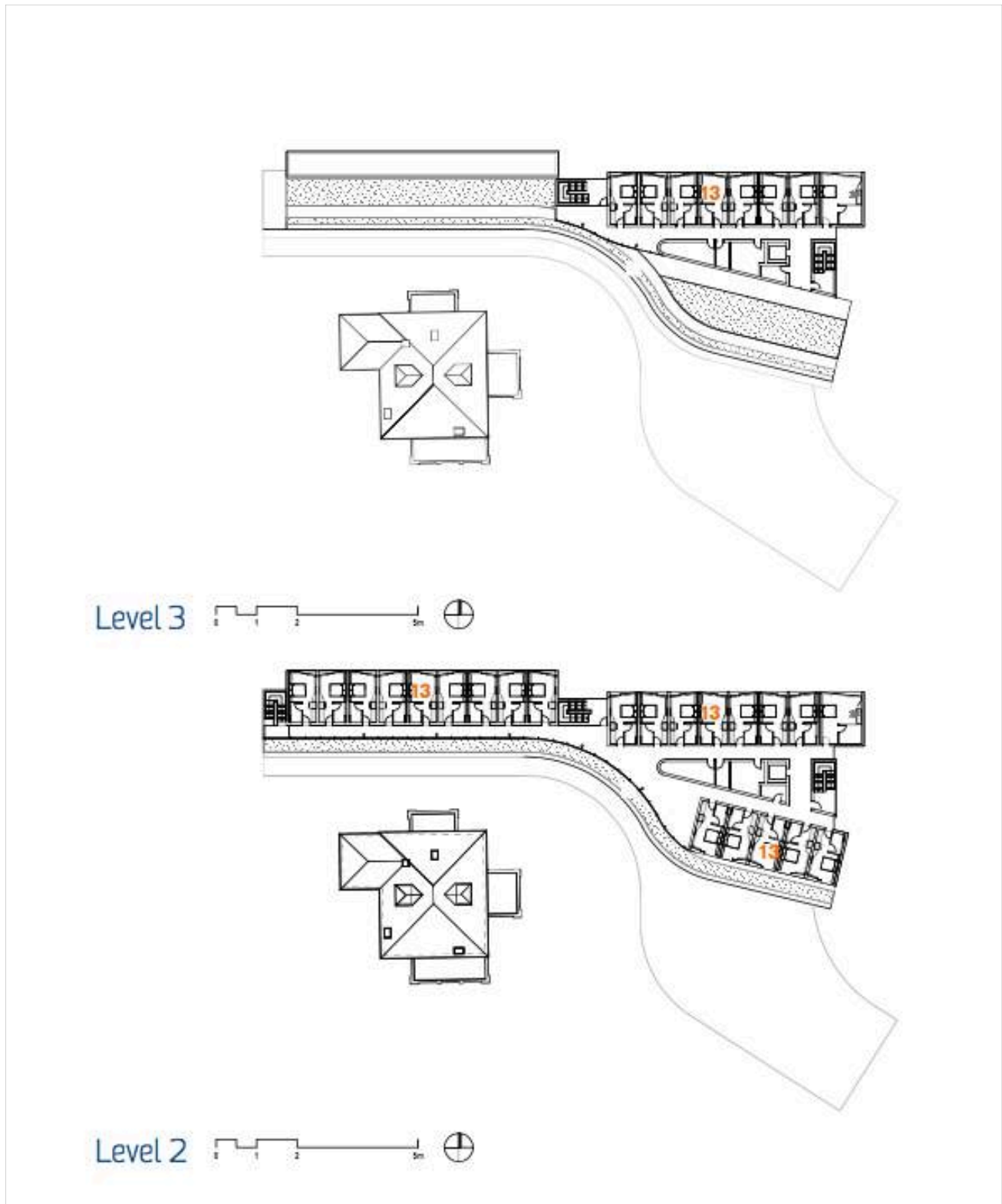


Figure 11: Cliffbrook Campus Redevelopment Concept Design (Levels 2 + 3)

http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/sites/all/files/161125_Cliffbrook_DesignConcept_WEB.pdf



View of Cliffbrook House from the entrance

Figure 12: CliffBrook Campus Redevelopment Concept Design (Entrance Views)

http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/sites/all/files/161125_Cliffbrook_DesignConcept_WEB.pdf



View towards Gordon's Bay from Level 1 access corridor

Figure 13: CliffBrook Campus Redevelopment Concept Design (Views from New Campus)

http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/sites/all/files/161125_Cliffbrook_DesignConcept_WEB.pdf



Figure 14: Cliffbrook Campus Redevelopment Concept Design (Beach & Battery Street Elevations)

http://www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/sites/all/files/161125_Cliffbrook_DesignConcept_WEB.pdf

History

The study area is set within the broad East Coast bioregion known as the Sydney Basin, which encompasses the area between Batemans Bay and Newcastle, extending west to the Great Dividing Range.¹ Characterised by its Permian and Triassic-era sedimentary geology, the bioregion is notable for its rugged coasts, notable ranges and incised waterways. The local landscapes are based specifically on Hawkesbury Sandstone: the Triassic-era bedrock that characterises much of Sydney's rockier localities and is evident in many colonial buildings as yellow block.² Within the study area, the soil landscapes which overtop the Hawkesbury Sandstone include the shallow, earthy-loamy sands, yellow earths and stone outcrops of the Hawkesbury colluvial landscape (in the eastern part of the study area) and the windblown sands and soils of the Newport and Tuggerah aeolian landscapes (which appear to be evident in the western, upslope part of the site as the moderately thick quaternary sands overlaying coffee rock).³

First People

Prior to European settlement the coastline of the Coogee-Clovelly area was covered with a mosaic of coastal vegetation that backed onto a variously vegetated, unstable dune system that extended into the expansive Botany swamplands. Within the study area, it is likely that the vegetation regime was dominated by scrubland and wind-pruned heathland (with the possibility of rainforest in the sheltered rock cleft above Gordons Bay).⁴ The coastline's rocky fringe and alternating sandy beaches harboured innumerable resources and supplied the traditional Aboriginal people of the area with an array of living places, food stuffs and raw materials. Occupation and use of Sydney's East Coast by Aboriginal people (including clan groups of the *Cadigal* and others) is understood to predate European settlement by up to 20000 years.⁵

Settlement

Despite its value to Aboriginal people, the Clovelly-Coogee area was initially avoided by early colonists. Hilly, scrubby and sandy - and at a significant distance from Sydney Town - the district remained largely unsettled for much of the opening decades of the nineteenth century. In 1835 however, William Charles Wentworth (poet, explorer, journalist and politician) purchased thirty acres at the head of Great Coogee Gully for the sum of £78. Wentworth's acquisition covered the area now annexed by Judge, Oswald and Dolphin Streets and Carrington Road. Governor Richard Bourke ordered that the land on the shores of Coogee Bay be laid out for settlement in 1837 and in the following year the village of Coogee was officially gazetted. Proto-Coogee was subsequently divided into one acre lots that were offered for sale at the Sydney Markets on George Street in February 1840. Despite some initial optimism on the part of colonial planners and real estate agents, access to the locality from Sydney Town was difficult, interest was variable and development was slow. By 1858, only fourteen houses had been erected in the fledgling seaside village. Refer **figures 15 - 19**.

¹ Branagan & Packham 2000; Branagan et al 1979

² Herbert 1983; <http://australianmuseum.net.au/the-sydney-basin>

³ <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/eSpadeWebApp/>; Chapman & Murphy 1989; MDCA 2016

⁴ Benson & Howell 1995

⁵ Attenbrow 2010; Waugh 1999

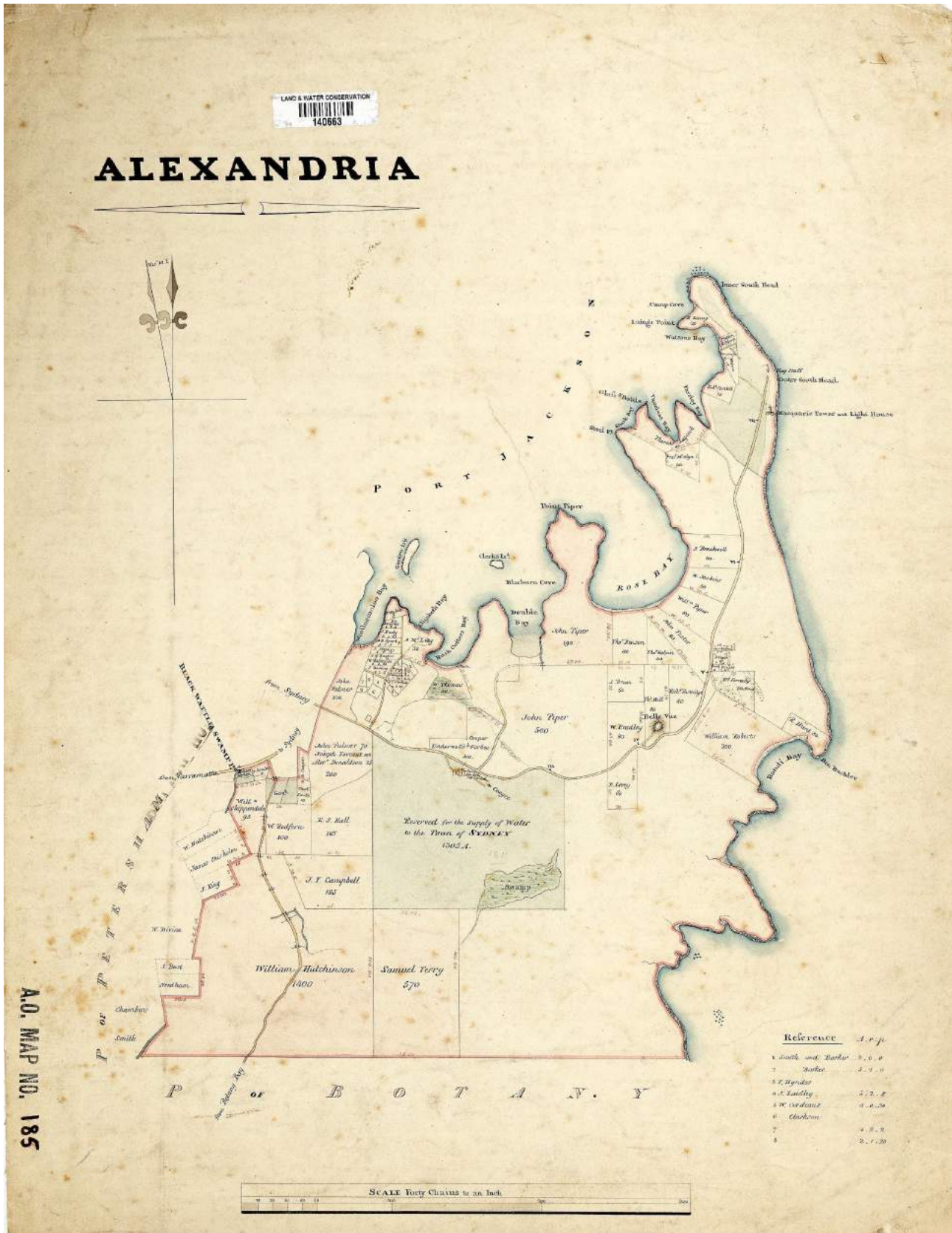


Figure 15: Map of the Parish of Alexandria (c.1840s)

A0 Map 185/LPI Historic Lands Record Viewer

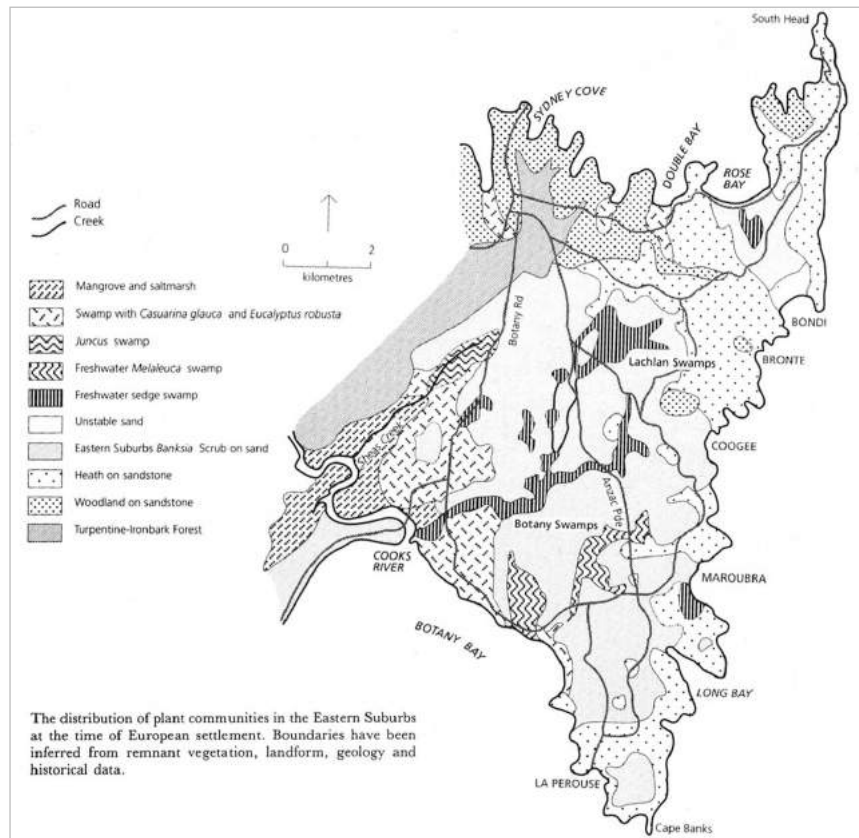


Figure 16: Pre-European Vegetation Landscape in Southeast Sydney

Benson & Howell 1995: 90

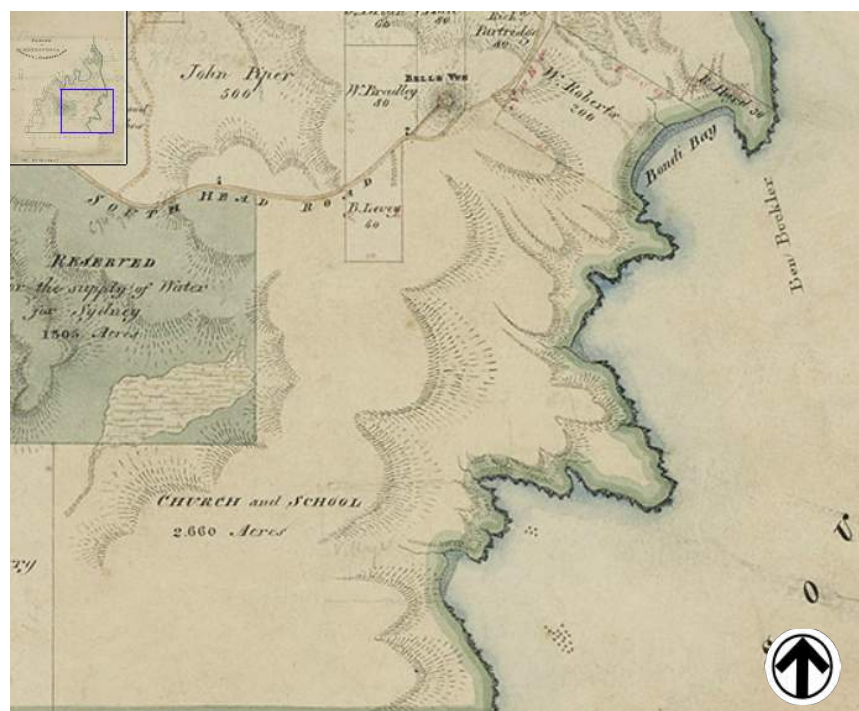


Figure 17: Map of the Parish of Alexandria (1841)

LPI Historic Lands Record Viewer



Figure 18: Map of Randwick, Waverley & Coogee (1859)

SLNSW Z/M3 811.181/1859/1A



Figure 19: Part of a Map of Port Jackson, & the City of Sydney showing Adjacent Municipalities (1868)

SLNSW Z/M2 811.12/1868/1

Seaside Resort

During the 1860s, Coogee's fortunes began to change. Sydney was growing and spreading in all directions and the flats of the locality had become a popular place to grow vegetables to accommodate increased demand. Furthermore, tracks to the district from the north and west (including latter-day Anzac Parade, Alison Road and Whale and Beach Streets) had been improved and formalised. Beachside day-tripping, picnicking and fossicking were popular pastimes and the craggy headlands and alternating sandy beaches of Sydney were popular destinations. By the 1883, steam-driven trams ran down to Coogee from Sydney via Randwick.⁶

Even with improved access, Coogee and surrounds was a place to visit on the weekend rather than a place to live. While the tramline created a steady flow of mostly weekend visitors, it did not promote the resort to become a place of residence. The *Daily Telegraph* stated in 1887:

It has often been a matter of conjecture why Coogee Bay, with all its natural advantages, should year after year remain neglected. One would expect that long ago the hills and shores would have been adorned with marine villas and terraced gardens instead of remaining as it does to this day, a mere fishing village with only a few wooden buildings and two hotels worthy of the name where visitors can procure refreshments after their long drive from the city.

The further growth of Sydney during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and broader long term growth founded on the gold rushes and the wool trade, finally saw the rise of Sydney's Eastern Suburbs as a place of both leisure and living.

Cliffbrook Estate

The Cliffbrook Campus of UNSW stands (in part) on the former Cliffbrook (Cliff-Brook) Estate. The estate was established in the mid 1840s and originally comprised three parcels of crown land granted to Lewis Gordon (Government Surveyor) in 1845 and 1846. Lewis' initial grant comprised four acres and one rood procured from the Crown in 1845. This was followed a year later by two parcels of two acres, three roods, 30 perches and one acre, three roods, ten perches respectively. Lewis Gordon is understood to have erected a dwelling on the estate, though there is no ready information as to where and when.⁷ Little is known of Lewis' association with the estate, though it is his name that is borne by the bay that is overlooked by the estate grounds as well as a latter-day roadway (Gordon Avenue). By 1856, the estate had been sold in full to M. H. Lewis, to be then acquired by O. M. Lewis.⁸

John Thompson

In 1859, the Cliffbrook Estate was on-sold to John Thompson, a local businessman and Mayor of the municipality of Randwick in the 1870s. Thompson had obtained a neighbouring Crown Grant of six acres two roods in September 1956 and by 1860, the grounds of Cliffbrook Estate were spread over fourteen acres and included Gordon's original grants, Thompson's 1956 addition and the foreshore of Gordons Bay.⁹

⁶ Keenan 1979; Curby 2009

⁷ McDonald McPhee Pty Ltd 1993; John Graham & Associates 2008

⁸ McDonald McPhee Pty Ltd 1993

⁹ John Graham & Associates 2008; LPI Certificate of Title Volume 6681; Folio 186

Cliffbrook 1 (Gordon Court)

In the 1860s, John Thompson built a mansion on the Cliffbrook Estate in the Victorian-Italianate style. Overlooking Gordons Bay (which also became known locally as Thompsons Bay) and set below the natural drainage line than ran down to it, the elaborate residence was constructed of solid stone quarried at the site, with balustrades to the verandahs and parapets constructed of cement-rendered brickwork. The mansion was finished with a lime and cement wash, which gave it a uniform colour. Other features included a large verandah on the upper floor that was laid with Italian mosaic tiles imported from Rome. In addition to the house, the estate grounds also featured a stone lodge at the main entrance gates; large stone stables with four horse stalls; and a coach house, harness room and man's quarters. Several of these outbuildings were sited in the northwest corner of the estate - where the extant Cliffbrook house now stands.¹⁰

George Hill

In the late nineteenth century, the estate was sold to 'squatter and horse-player' George Hill.¹¹ Several additions to the mansion, including the ornamental towers, are believed to have been carried out by George Hill during his tenure.¹² Hill died at Cliffbrook in early April 1897 after a series of protracted illnesses. The Brisbane journal *The Week* noted that his death:

... though expected ... was very sudden. He had walked to his bathroom after partaking of a light breakfast, and while returning to his couch he expired without giving the slightest note of warning'.¹³

Hill's effects were sold off in June of the same year and he was declared bankrupt posthumously in 1899. Cliffbrook was subsequently repossessed from Frank Hill (George's son and sole executor of his will) by the Bank of New South Wales by way of payment for debts owed.¹⁴ The bank thereafter employed a caretaker to look after the house and grounds. Early in the new century and under the caretaker's watch, the grounds were apparently used as a poultry farm and fell into disrepair. The caretaker was dismissed after some £600 was spent to clear up the house and garden.¹⁵

Sir Denison Miller

Cliffbrook was put up for auction in 1901 and again in 1905 but it appears that it failed to sell. Later in 1905, Fairy Meadow-born Denison Miller (assistant to the General Manager of the Bank of New South Wales) was asked by the bank to occupy the mansion. This was a rent-free proposition that Miller appears to have readily taken up. In June 1912, Prime Minister Andrew Fisher appointed Miller first Governor of the Commonwealth Bank. This role, accompanied by the then enormous salary of £4000 a year, allowed Miller to purchase the Cliffbrook estate for the sum of £8000. Miller retained the mansion and grounds but later sold the Gordons Bay foreshore to the Randwick Municipal Council for £3000. Refer **figures 20 - 31**.

¹⁰ John Graham & Associates 2008

¹¹ McDonald McPhee Pty Ltd 1993; John Graham & Associates 2008

¹² George Hill (1834-1897) was famous in coursing circles and owned *Malta* (which won the Sires Produce Stakes in 1875 and the Epsom in 1876); and *Marvel* (which won at he won the Epsom and Doncaster in 1891-92). He is not to be confused with his uncle, also George Hill (1802-1883): a butcher, alderman and sporting patron.

¹³ *The Week* 9 April 1897: 19

¹⁴ *Sunday Times* 6 June 1897: 3; *Evening News* 10 March 1889: 6

¹⁵ McDonald McPhee Pty Ltd 1993; John Graham & Associates 2008



Figure 20: General Survey of the Colony, County of Cumberland, Parish of Alexandria (1889)

National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-229915685>

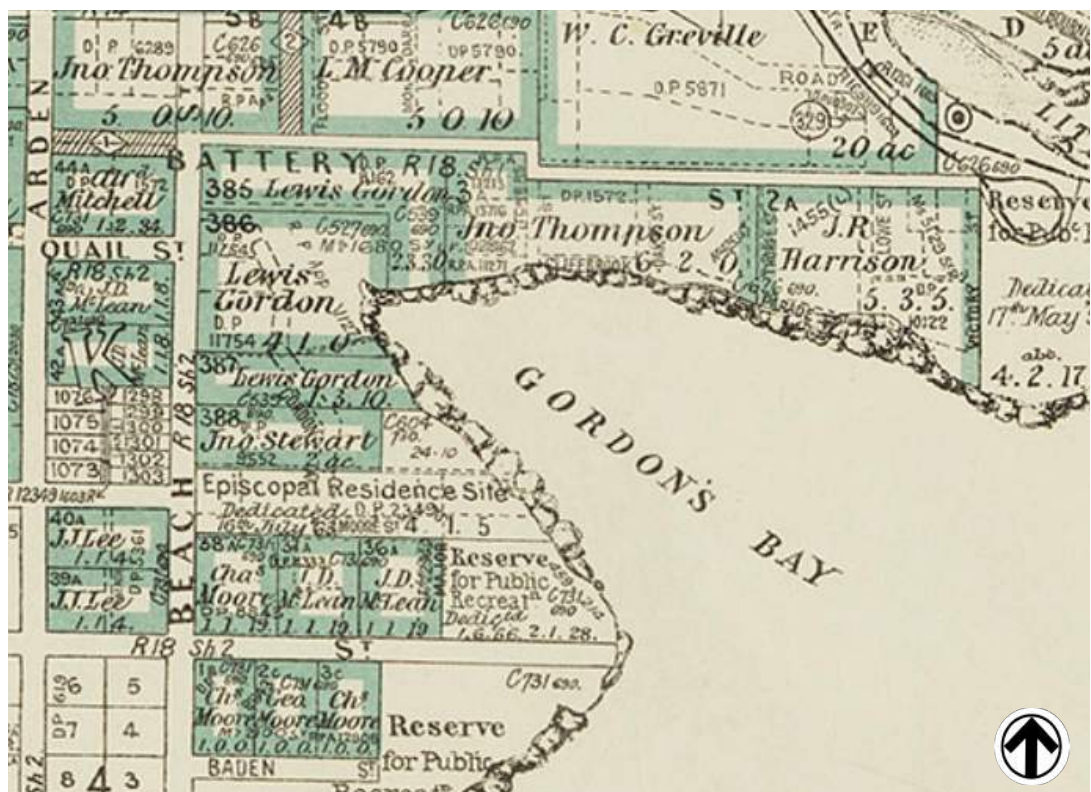


Figure 21: Map of the Parish of Alexandria (1928)

State Library of NSW Digital Order No. a5588002



Figure 22: Gordons Bay showing the original Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (c.1880s)

Randwick City Library



Figure 23: Gordons Bay showing the original Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (Nd)

Randwick City Library



Figure 24: The original Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (Nd)

Randwick City Library

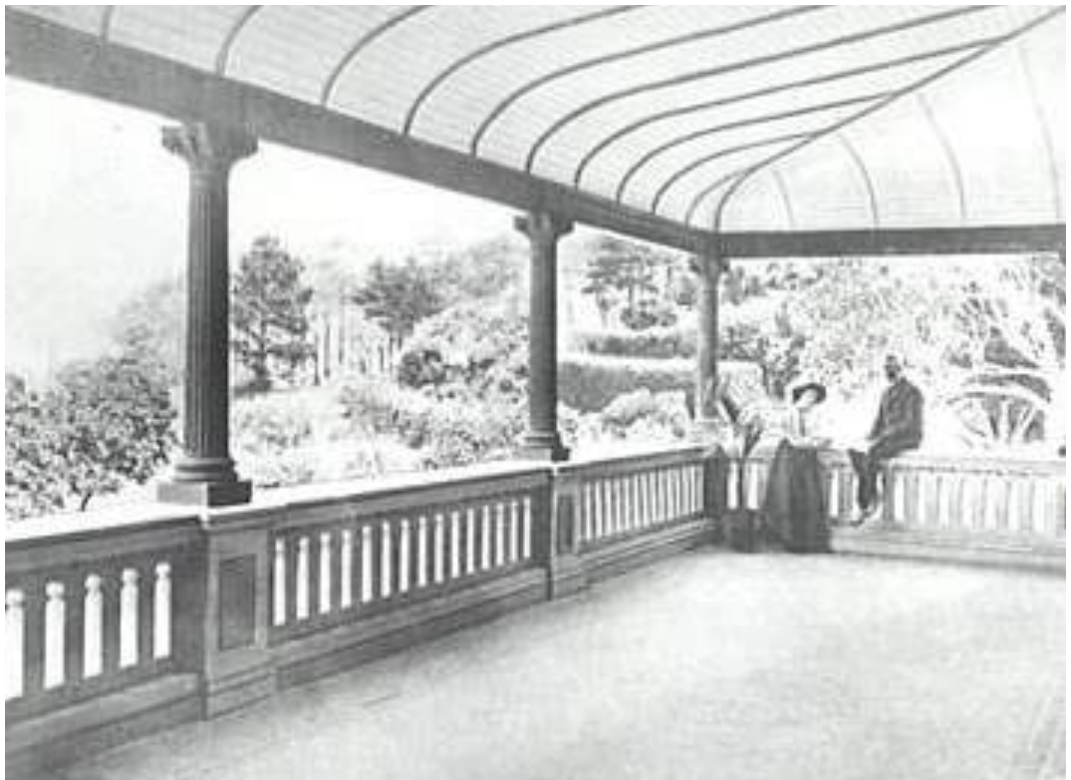


Figure 25: Mr & Mrs Denison Miller on the terrace at Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (Nd)

Randwick City Library

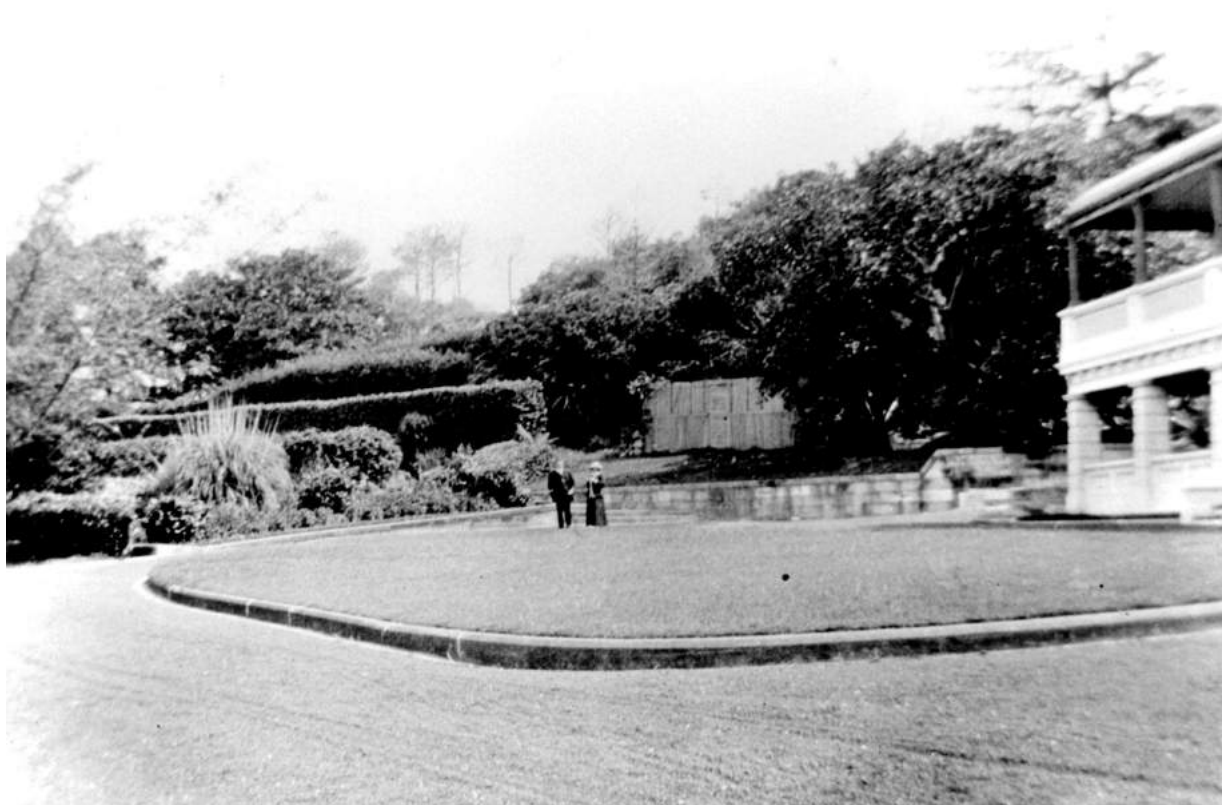


Figure 26: Mr & Mrs Denison Miller on the lawn at Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (Nd)

University of NSW Archives



Figure 27: Festivities at Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (1913)

University of NSW Archives



Figure 28: Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (Nd)

University of NSW Archives



Figure 29: Cliffbrook House/Gordon Court (c.1950s/60s)

Image from *Demolished Houses of Sydney* (Hughes 1999)

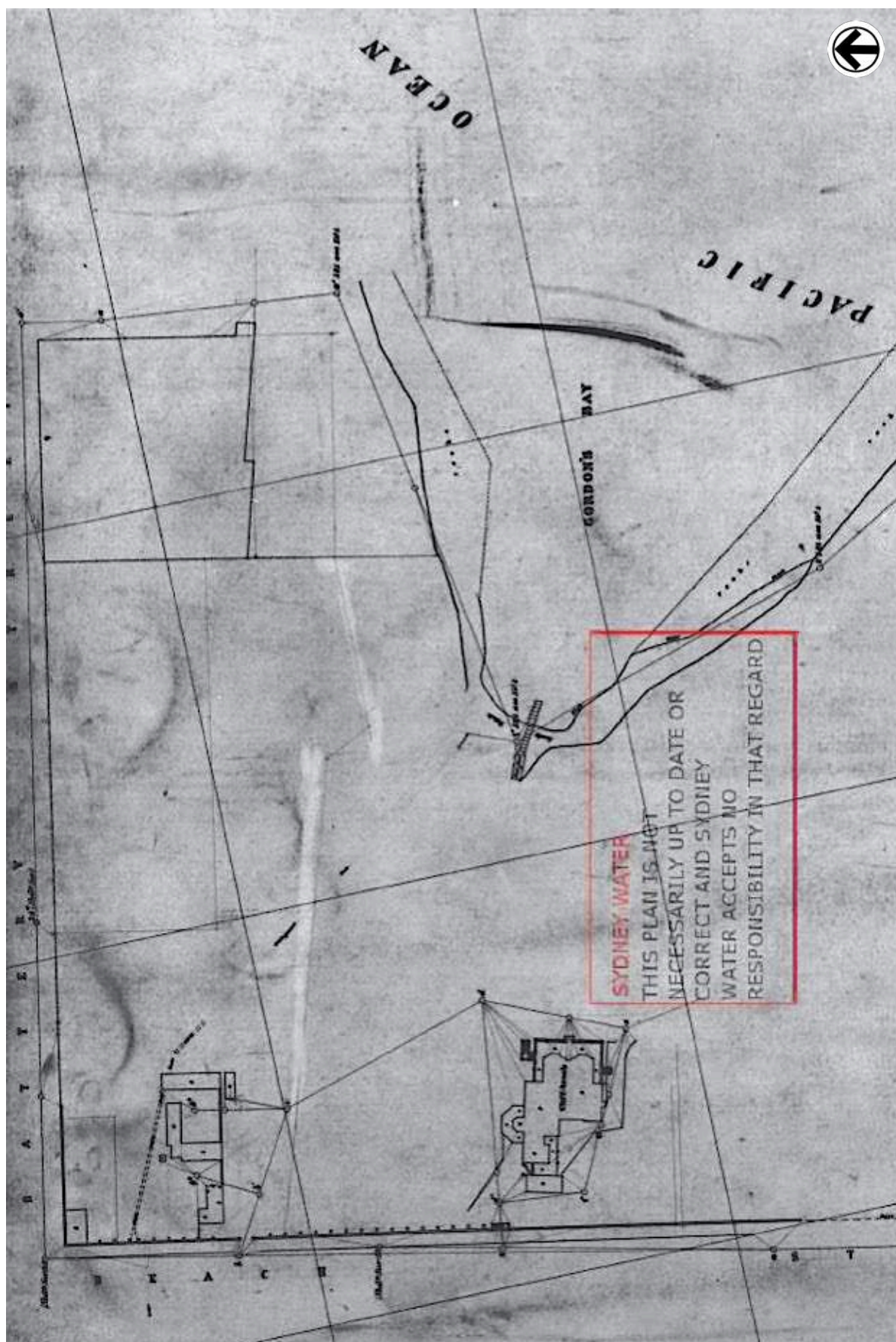


Figure 30: Sydney Water Board Plan: Randwick Sheet 19 (1893)

Sydney Water Archives PWDS1544-S1149 - presented in *Draft Cliffbrook CMP* (Weir Phillips Heritage 2016)

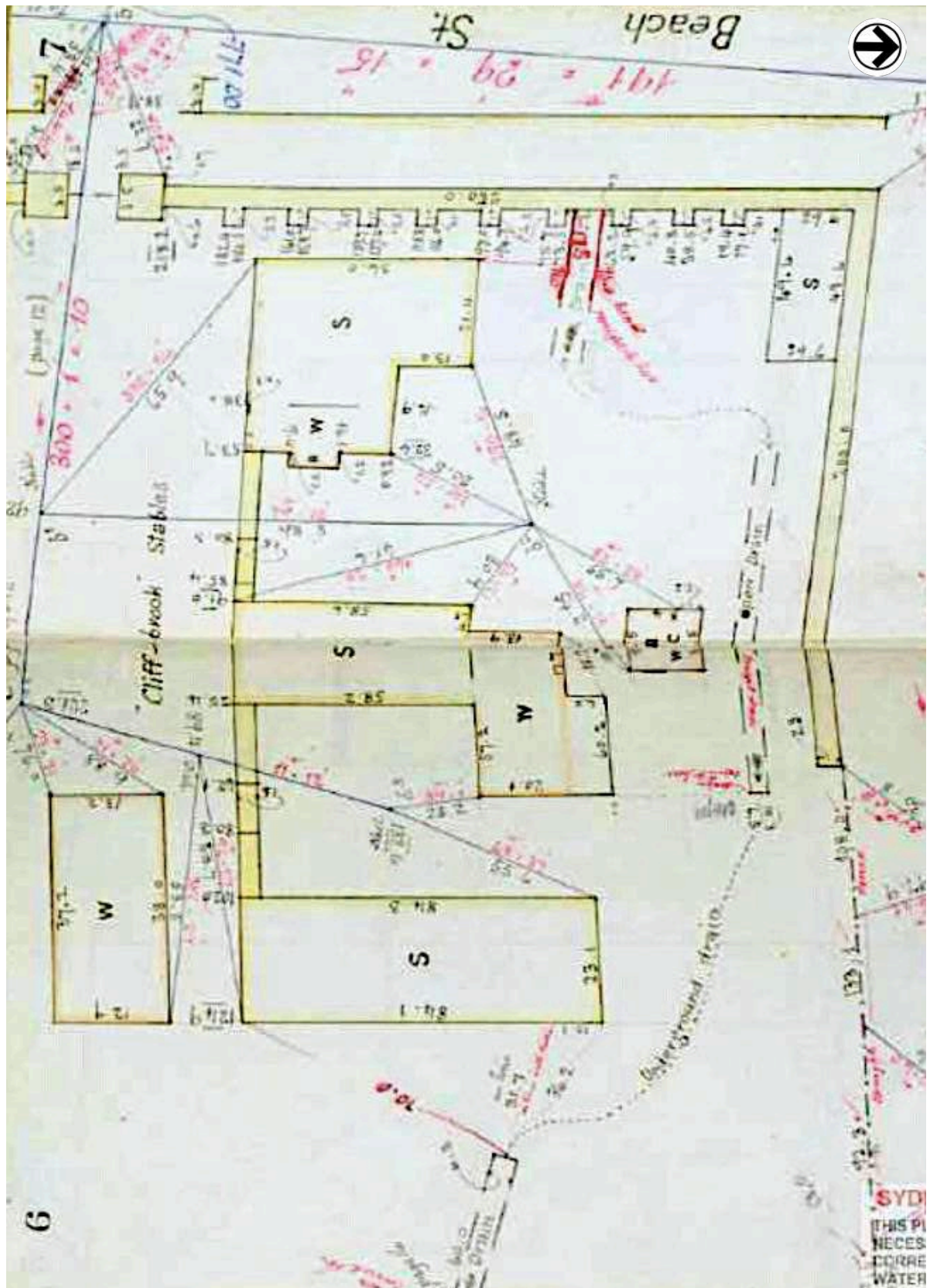


Figure 31: PWD Field Book Survey of Cliffbrook Stables (February 1893)

This image shows clearly the suite of outbuildings associated with the original Cliffbrook including the stone lodge at the main entrance gates; large stone stables (with four horse stalls); coach house, harness room and men's quarters; WC & drainage;

Sydney Water Archives CFB2307 - presented in *Draft Cliffbrook CMP* (Weir Phillips Heritage 2016)

Cliffbrook 2 (Beach Street)

Randwick Historical Society documentation indicates that the extant Cliffbrook mansion (in the Free Classical style) was commissioned by Denison Miller after his knighthood in the King's Birthday honours list of 1920. It was built in 1921/22, reputedly to the designs of architect John Kirkpatrick in 1921.¹⁶ John Kirkpatrick had established himself as a prominent Sydney architect during the 1880s and had already designed a number of significant Sydney buildings including the Colonial Mutual Life Building in Martin Place (1894) and the Commonwealth Bank building in Pitt Street (1914). Though Miller's mansion has been attributed to other architects, including E. A. Scott, Kirkpatrick remains the most likely candidate and would have been known to Miller through his earlier design of the aforementioned Bank building in Pitt Street. Somewhat confusingly, Miller's ornate homestead - built in the northwestern corner of estate on the site of the demolished stone outbuildings of Thompson's Cliffbrook - was also called Cliffbrook. Later, to avoid confusion to all and sundry, the former Cliffbrook became known as Gordons Court.

Denison Miller's Cliffbrook

The Cliffbrook Conservation Plan notes that the mansion/homestead was designed in the Interwar Free Classical style and is a two storey, liver brick building with sandstone detailing. Its overall form (and stylistic elements employed in the external design) have hark back to the Victorian Italianate style, however the brick work, simple stone detailing, terrazzo floors and interior joinery are distinctly of the 1920s.

The mansion features a slate roof; copper gutters and downpipes; bracketed eaves; liver brick walls (with sandstone quoins); sandstone window and door heads; sandstone sills; sandstone porticos and terraces on the north, east and west elevations; white painted timber double-hung windows, front doors and French doors on the upper level terraces.

The interiors are mostly plain, having moulded plaster ceilings of Regency style with deep coved cornices in the main living and reception rooms only. The original door and window joinery is largely intact and includes deep timber skirting (which survives in most rooms stained dark maple or covered in white paint). Beyond the house are plantings, gardens and a sweeping bitumen driveway approach.

Miller died unexpectedly of heart failure in 1923 not long after the mansion was completed.¹⁷ The property was sold off in the 1920s to a Mr George Wilkie King. The grounds were subdivided in the 1940s and the study area (including Miller's Cliffbrook) was finally acquired by the Government in the 1950s. For a time during the Second World War, the estate lands were occupied by the army and served as a school for doctors studying tropical Medicine. There is little information about use of the place during this period.¹⁸ Refer **figures 32 - 41**.

The Fate of Gordon Court

Gordon Court appears to have been divided into flats in the 1920s and functioned as such thereafter. After WWII, Gordon Court and surrounds was auctioned and sold to Mr Friedrich Schiller, a Hungarian electrician. Schiller lived in the mansion with his sister Ella, who was the last resident of the property and lived alone in an upstairs room after Friedrich's death. The property was reported to be run down in the early 1970s and plans were at play for its demolition as property developers circled. In 1977, the property was sold and controversially demolished to make way for housing development.

¹⁶ McDonald McPhee Pty Ltd 1993; John Graham & Associates 2008

¹⁷ Sydney Morning Herald 7 June 1923

¹⁸ John Graham & Associates 2008; Sydney Morning Herald 19 May 1974: 18

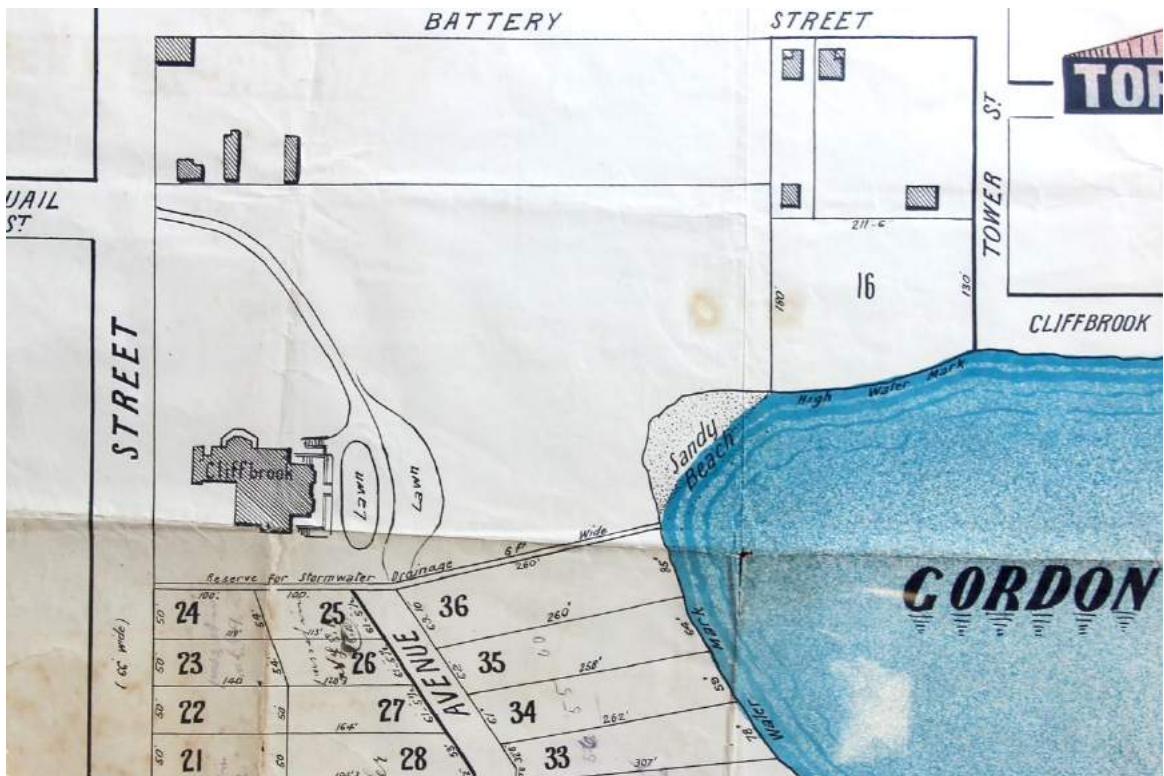


Figure 32: Cliffbrook Estate Auction Sale Poster (1918)

This image shows the original Cliffbrook (outside of the study area) and its suite of outbuildings (inside the study area): stone lodge at the main entrance gates; large stone stables (with four horse stalls); coach house, harness room and men's quarters

SLNSW ML M3 811.18166/1918/1

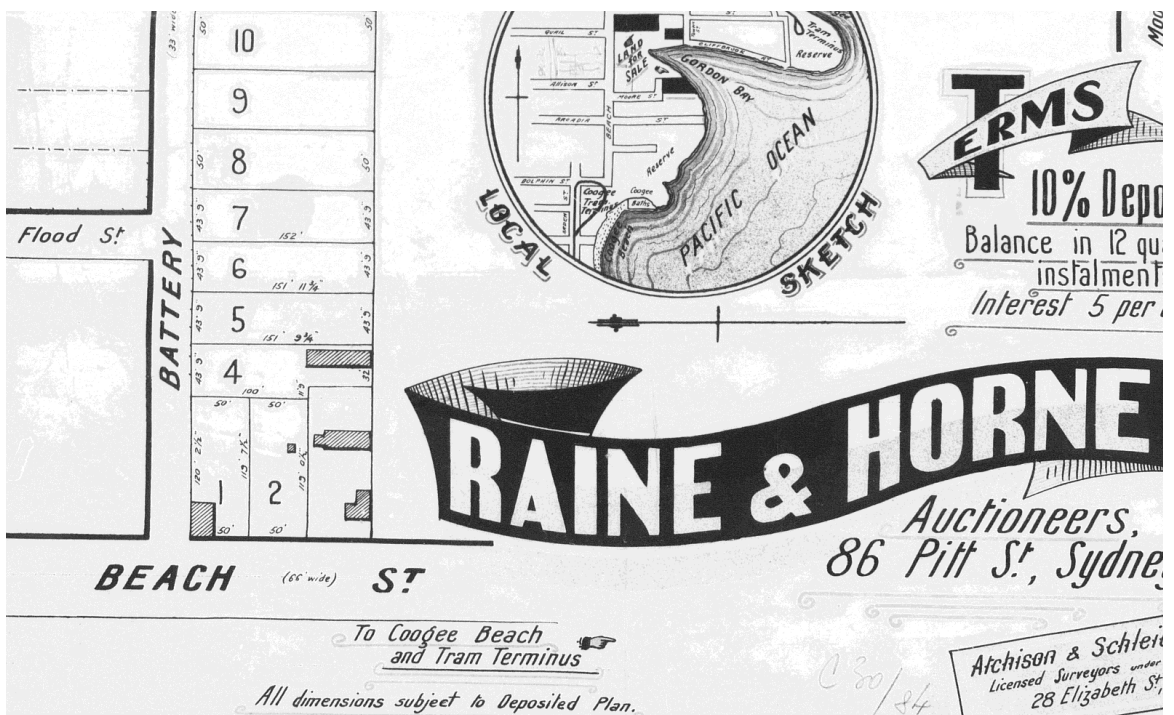


Figure 33: Cliffbrook Estate Auction Sale Poster (1915)

This image shows the suite of outbuildings including the stone lodge; large stone stables; coach house, harness room and man's quarters

SLNSW ML Subdivision Plans: Coogee