



The Vision for Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay

Masterplan Summary 2006



**NSW National Parks
and Wildlife Service**

Department of **Environment and Conservation** NSW



Bobbin Head + Apple Tree Bay Masterplans 2006 Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

The Vision for Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay 2006 Masterplan Summary

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Department of Environment and Conservation

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Abbreviations

CMP

Conservation Management Plan

DDA

Disability Discrimination Act

DEC

Department of Environment and Conservation

KCNP

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

LMP

Landscape Management Plan

NPWS

National Parks and Wildlife Service

NSW

New South Wales

RTA

Roads and Traffic Authority (NSW)

REF

Review of Environmental Factors

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Introduction

National Parks and Wildlife Service recognised that Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay required revitalising and commissioned Conybeare Morrison, and Context Landscape Design and associated specialists to provide a long term Masterplan to achieve this aim, without compromising the natural and cultural heritage of the parklands.

The Masterplan provides strategic direction, objectives, opportunities and actions for management to achieve a Vision for upgrading parklands and amenities in a staged approach when finance from Government is made available. Implementation would be in accordance with the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park Plan of Management (2002), which would be updated to incorporate the Masterplan.

This document contains the 2006 Masterplanning Summary – The Vision for Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay. The Vision is a summary of the technical aspects of the Masterplan, and is intended to sketch experiential qualities only. Technical information regarding the manner in which the Vision could be achieved is contained in Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the Masterplan. The entire Masterplanning process included extensive Community, External Stakeholder, Project Control Group, RTA (NSW) and National Parks and Wildlife Service Regional Advisory Committee consultation. The consultation culminated in the Public Exhibition of the Draft Masterplan, with invited comment. Reference should be made to the Summary and Detailed Submissions Reports regarding the Draft Masterplans, which contain information regarding the consultation process, exhibition, feedback, submission and agreed recommendations for improvements to the Draft Masterplan to achieve final status.

Concurrent with the finalisation of the Draft Masterplan, an estimated costing of the Masterplan was undertaken by the Consultant Team, so that funding for implementation of the Masterplan could be prioritised by Department of Environment and Conservation/National Parks and Wildlife Service over a 20-30 year period.

The Masterplan contains summary information regarding the project costings. The whole of the Masterplan was finalised in August 2006.

The following documents make up the Masterplans:

The Vision for Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay Masterplan Summary 2006

Volume 1 Bobbin Head Masterplan

- Part 1 Masterplan
- Part 2 Conservation Management Plan
- Part 3 Landscape Management Plan

Volume 2 Apple Tree Bay Masterplan

- Part 1 Masterplan
- Part 2 Conservation Management Plan
- Part 3 Landscape Management Plan

Volume 3 Appendices

The Vision for Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay Masterplan Summary 2006



P1. Eccleston Du Faur, undated (source: NPWS Archives)



P2. Orchard Park, undated (source: NPWS Archives)



P3. Recreation Area, undated (source: NPWS Archives)



P4. Woodnutt's Boatshed, C.S. Harnett (source: State Library of NSW/GP01-04910)

Background

Conservation

A visit to the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is one of Sydney's most pleasurable experiences. The dramatic and serene bushland provides a refuge from the frenetic activities of the city that surrounds the National Park.

Our forebears, especially the founding Trust Chairman E F Du Faur, ensured through a far-sighted proclamation that generations of visitors would continue to benefit from the tranquillity and serenity of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. Entering the National Park bushlands makes one aware of the exceptional significance of an accessible National Park.

Experiencing the Bushland Road to Bobbin Head

Bobbin Head Road, built in the early years of the twentieth century, descends steeply through the bushland to Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay. The blue-green eucalyptus forests, with majestic *Angophora*, and steep sandstone cliffs, form a shady canopy over the winding road. At the lowest part of the road, glimpses of Cowan Creek appear and the cultural landscape of Bobbin Head emerges.

Premier Parklands

Bobbin Head, and Apple Tree Bay are two of the premier recreation parklands within Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Sydney. The parklands have a rich social history, which includes Aboriginal inhabitation of the area and more recent settler reclamation of the mudflats, between the 1900s and 1950s, for recreational purposes.

Parklands that Contrast with the Natural Surroundings

The most significant cultural landscape was developed under the trusteeship of Hon. R B Orchard in the 1930s. The formalised layout of Orchard Park includes picnic shelters, 'Bobbin Inn', and the exotic trees. These features make the twentieth century 'pleasure ground', a favourite place for generations of visitors. This cultural landscape contrasts with the natural bushland surroundings.

A Vision for Revitalising Parklands

Learn about the Natural and Cultural Environment

In this Vision, the upgraded parklands would provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about the conservation of the flora, fauna, marine biology, ecology and the former Aboriginal inhabitation of the area and, in so doing, provide glimpses to the past. Education, information and wayfinding systems throughout the parklands and tracks would create opportunities for learning about the natural and cultural heritage.

Recreation in and Around the Parklands

Opportunities for adventure walking and hiking on new tracks would provide new recreation options. Feature rest-areas along the tracks would enrich the bushwalking experience. Fishing would remain a favourite pastime of many visitors, and opportunities for low impact fishing would be provided from the foreshore. Rest, picnicking and relaxation would still be some of the most popular passive recreation activities. The revitalised parklands would continue to serve as a passive recreation place for social gatherings, surrounded by the natural environment. Conservation and adaptation of all amenities of the parklands to contemporary standards would be important to ensure that the parkland experience is enjoyable. Memories of a family picnic would continue to be a feature of the social significance of Bobbin Head.



P5. Canoeists, 2006 (source: CM+)

Boating, Kayaking , Canoeing and Sailing

Boating would continue to be enjoyed by many on the Pittwater / Hawkesbury waterways. The Marina at Bobbin Head would continue to provide berthing and jetties for a variety of boats. Canoeing, a favourite pastime of many, would be promoted as an alternative to other boating, and facilities for supervised canoeing would be improved. Waterway information systems would be improved to assist users. Apple Tree Bay would continue to serve motor boats, which, along with new canoe facilities, for experienced users would launch from the upgraded ramp into the picturesque waterways of Apple Tree Bay.

Walking Tracks

To enhance visitor experience, new walking tracks would be considered. There would need to be a complete review of environmental factors to minimise the overall impact of the track on the natural environment, in terms of Aboriginal sensitivities, natural ecosystems and visual impacts. Walking tracks would provide variations in track type, offering a choice of optional destinations and fitness or difficulty classification levels. The walking tracks would open new views and vistas to the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

Sustainability

Sustainability would be a major visual and environmental strategy and would benefit all aspects of environmental awareness. Renewable energy systems could be considered, to provide power for the parklands. Interesting durable finishes would be carefully selected to ensure low maintenance characteristics, renewable and low environmental impact. Low maintenance landscape, including native plantings and some native grasses, could create a new aesthetic for the parklands.

Meeting Rangers and Management

Meeting National Parks and Wildlife Service Rangers in a National Park would continue to be a memorable experience. Their extensive knowledge and helpfulness are well known and respected, and they would be instrumental in implementing the Vision. Much of their time is focused on sustainability and the ever increasing environmental demands on the National Park due to the increasing population of Sydney. Revitalised and sustainable parklands could assist the Rangers on a daily basis. Continuing community and stakeholder consultation would ensure that social and cultural values were regularly updated, and the parklands would, consequently, retain their vitality and relevance to the communities they serve.



P6. Trees and Water, 2006 (source: CM+)

Getting to and from Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay

While most people access Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay by car, other options include boat and ferry. In the future, a satellite car park at the entrance to the National Park may be necessary, with a courtesy bus to transport visitors to and from the parklands when demand arises. Reinstating public bus services would also be considered, to allow more visitors, and fewer cars, into the parklands.



P7. Bobbin Head Road, 2006 (source: CM+)



P8. Orchard Park from the Wharf Area, 2006
(source: CM*)



P9. Bobbin Inn, 2006 (source: CM*)



P10. Bobbin Head Bay and Park, 2006
(source: CM*)



P11. The Wharf Area and Foleys Bay, 2006
(source: CM*)

Bobbin Head Masterplan Vision 2006

The Masterplan incorporates a balanced and holistic approach to conservation, landscape and recreational management, where the whole of the landscape is considered.

The Cultural Landscape Contrasts with the Natural Environment

Views across the Waters from the Wharf Area to Orchard Park, are some of the most memorable of this unique setting, and would be preserved. The scene would remain one of delightful contrast in the natural landscape and Bobbin Head would continue to build on its heritage of cultural and social significance. Improving the parklands would include raising Orchard Park and the Wharf Area to avoid saline waters, which periodically inundate the parklands. Parking would be removed from the foreshore area to improve views to Cowan Creek from the picnic area, and parking would be consolidated along the road at the rear of the park. Reconstruction of the seawall, and soil replacement would allow new shade trees and textural plantings to provide dappled shade on the green grass for picnicking. Some of the original trees and plantings that are now struggling to survive would improve. The contrast that makes the place special would survive and be enhanced for the pleasure of future generations.

Orchard Park and the Wharf Area

The 1930s landscape design would be interpreted in the reconstruction to reinforce the existing and desired parkland characteristics. Conservation of many of the existing trees, shelters and upgraded amenities would ensure that the landscape carefully interprets the original design.

'Bobbin Inn'

'Bobbin Inn' would continue to be the central focus for parkland refreshment as it has been since it was built in the 1930s. The distinctively Australian Art Deco style building would be conserved and adaptively reused. Customers would be able to enjoy the improved facilities in the building. Both floors of the building would be sensitively upgraded in the future to allow for a number of possibilities including conferencing, education, meetings or as a restaurant.

The entry to 'Bobbin Inn would be improved with the road relocation, to make more space at the entrance steps. The walk to the upgraded Pavilion and the foreshore would be safer with slower traffic. New pedestrian and vehicle safety measures would be implemented throughout Bobbin Head.

Shady Promenades

Parkland promenades would allow visitors to fully experience Cowan Creek. New parking layouts would provide uninterrupted views to the waters from the parklands. Vehicular movements and noise impacts within the parklands would be reduced through gentle landscape undulations and by relocating the parking and roads towards the rear of the parklands. Shade trees would cool the promenade and nearby grassed areas, providing pleasant places for quiet picnics.

The Loop Track

The existing Gibberagong Mangrove Boardwalk would be extended in this Vision, to include a loop back to the Wharf Area. A new up-stream crossing, or bridge, could be built at Cowan Creek. The track would include views to the mudflats, valley and coastal rock ecologies. Information about Aboriginal archaeology, cultural heritage and the environment would be included in feature rest areas where groups can congregate. The easy walk would wind its way back to the Wharf Area.

Wharf Area

Buildings in the Wharf Area would be adaptively re-used, continuing to perform their current functions until such time as new opportunities arise. Track walkers would have easy access to the historic sandstone amenities building, which would be upgraded to include easy access for the disabled. The ferry from Pittwater would continue to stop at the new pontoon and ramp near the bus stop for forty minutes. Coaches and buses would also be able to access this area for groups visiting the parklands. However, the primary coach drop-off and pick-up areas would remain at Orchard Park South near Bobbin Inn.



P12. Fishing on Cowan Creek, 2006
(source: CMF)

Bus and Coach Parking

Buses would park near a new and modern amenities building located in Gibberagong Park, which would serve children, the aged, the disabled, in short, everybody equally. The large turning circle area would also facilitate canoe launching and dedicated parking for canoeists entering Cowan Creek under supervision.

Families and the Children's Playground

Children could continue to enjoy the park and, especially, the playground facilities. New playground slides, climbing frames, a short tricycle path and swings would be sculpturally designed in a shady area of Gibberagong Park. New discovery and adventure areas would be built to delight all ages, including supervising parents and guardians.

Infants could also have a dedicated area to play under the watchful eye of parents in this Vision. The playground area would be contemporary, integrated as a landscape solution and an exciting learning place. Children would have strong memories and want to return to discover more. Teenagers would be encouraged to use the parklands under supervision - an informal activity area in Gibberagong Park near the playground could offer an alternative to fishing, hiking, canoeing and interest games.

Apple Tree Bay Masterplan Vision 2006

The Foreshore Area

Visitors to Apple Tree Bay would continue to arrive at the foreshore area on roads with new safety and associated management systems. The foreshore area overlooking Cowan Creek would be the focal area of Apple Tree Bay in this Vision. A new waters edge with sandstone platforms for picnicking and fishing, a saltwater marsh and oyster study area would be created.

An upgrade to the 1960s stone and glass amenities building at the foreshore would include the kiosk with an outdoor café under the shade of large fig trees. Fishing tackle, hire and bait could be provided from the kiosk in the future. An interpretation and discovery area would entertain children under parental supervision, near to the outdoor seating area. The amenities building would be upgraded for everybody's use. To achieve this Vision of a new foreshore area, a new road layout would be required to allow for queuing of cars and trailers at the existing boat ramp to the south of the kiosk/amenities building, and the consolidation of parking towards the rear of the parklands.

Boat Launching

The boat ramp would retain its function as one of several of its kind that provide safe access to the Hawkesbury River complex; it would be highly used at weekends and holiday periods. Traffic management measures, line markings, signposting and penalty notices would be provided and compliance enforced to assist all boat ramp users in optimising the use of this limited resource for everybody's convenience. Waterway management systems would also be considered to help ramp launching.

A designated wash down area would prevent salt water from damaging the landscape. The saline water would replenish the saltwater wetlands near the revitalised foreshore revetment. Advice and restrictions regarding boat pollution reduction would be posted in the area and boat users would be asked to remove their waste and to maintain the water quality. Recycling bins would be provided for those who choose to use the facility.

Security and Safety

Generally, security at the parklands would be improved. Rangers would be on-hand to assist in the area, in accordance with parkland notices and road markings. Emergency helicopters would have a shared area to land at the ramp area when needed. A vandal resistant public telephone, gates and other surveillance facilities could be considered for improving security and safety at Apple Tree Bay.

Trailer and Car Parking Facilities

The number of parking bays for cars with trailers would be maintained at current levels. Trees would shade the parking area and assist in improving the visual qualities of the parking area. Car with trailer parking could be made easier, with designated car and trailer bays, restrictive rear wheel kerbs and increased bay sizes.

Additional Car Parking

Forty-five additional car bays would be incorporated into the rationalised parking area. Three new bus parking bays would ensure that visitors would be accommodated within the natural parkland setting of Apple Tree Bay. Disabled persons cars, buses and 5 minute stop areas would also be available. Gentle landscaped undulations and plant screening would separate the noise and traffic movements of the parking area from the parklands.

Apple Tree Creek Bridge

Apple Tree Creek Bridge would be relocated to improve pedestrian safety, especially at the boat ramp area. The Mt Kuring-gai Track would be extended to meet the new bridge location. Conservation of Aboriginal archaeological sites would be improved and information provided about the spiritual and cultural aspects of the Guringai community that once inhabited the area.

Enhanced Landscape Integration

In this Vision, the parklands of Apple Tree Bay would be transformed to a shady natural landscape. Parkland space at the water's edge would be provided with trees for picnickers and people fishing. Native trees, shrubs and grasses would be planted to improve the sustainability of the parklands. New picnic shelters could be features of the landscape, joined by a path that would direct visitors to a new group barbeque shelter at the southern end of the park. The parklands would integrate with the bushland setting, providing shade, tranquillity and a peaceful setting for visitors.



P13. Mangrove Area at Apple Tree Bay, 2006
(source: CM*)



P14. Apple Tree Bay Bridge, 2006
(source: CM*)



P15. Apple Tree Bay Boat Ramp, 2006
(source: CM*)



P16. Apple Tree Bay Creek, 2006
(source: CM*)



P17. Cliffs of Apple Tree Bay, 2006
(source: CM*)

Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay

Linking Tracks

The Masterplan Vision also recommends a new Bobbin Head to Apple Tree Bay Track which would provide visitors with opportunities to contemplate the dramatic waterway and valleys of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The track would link three major tracks of the National Park; the Bobbin Head Track, Mt Kuring-gai and Birrawanna Tracks. The Apple Tree Bay to Bobbin Head Track could become a major tourist feature of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, offering shade, rest, recreation and general health benefits for park visitors.

The Track Experience

The Bobbin Head to Apple Tree Bay Track could be one of the most visually appealing tracks in Sydney. The track would take about an hour to walk, as it winds its way through the Eucalyptus bushlands, along sandstone cliffs, across steel bridges and timber boardwalks at the water's edge. The serene beauty of the changing blue waterways and sky would be experienced directly from the textural pathway. It could be a sensory experience: touch, smell and the feel of bushlands, where water, sky and forested lands meet, ending at Apple Tree Bay.



P18. Consultant and Client Team, 2006
(source: CM*)

Management

Masterplanning

The Vision for Bobbin Head and Apple Tree Bay was developed during the consultation and early masterplanning stages in 2006. Critically important to the improvements recommended in the Masterplan are the staging, prioritisation and implementation of the objectives for the parklands. The improvements would unfold over time, require updating and careful consideration to ensure that the existing qualities that people currently enjoy would be carefully conserved, as finance is made available by government, or donation.

A precautionary approach, peer review, ongoing community consultation and specialist consultation for all development and changes would be required. This would ensure that improvements would be accomplished in an appropriate manner.

Commitment to Revitalization

The NSW Government has earmarked some early finance for parkland improvements. This is part of an initiative to improve tourism and recreational pursuits for the general well being of the population.

Consultation and Management

The 2006 Masterplan for Bobbin Head involved extensive consultation with the community and other interested parties, including park management and government agencies. A consultative approach ensures that contemporary recreation, conservation and management of the parklands are captured in the management of the parklands. This masterplan creates a vision for the parklands that includes the most significant improvements and conservation strategies attempted since the reclamation of the mudflats in the 1950s.

Whole of Landscape Approach

The landscape approach to the parklands is holistic. Conservation, environmental sensitivity, culture, heritage, recreation and sensory awareness would be integrated in a sustainable manner. Future generations would inherit a cultural and natural landscape of tranquil waters, steep valleys and eucalyptus forests to enrich their lives.