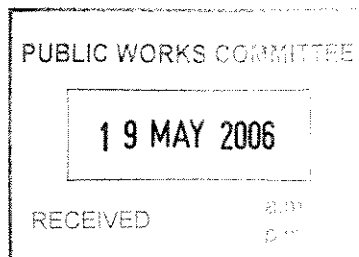




The University of Sydney



SUBMISSION 22

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Submission to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Re: Proposed Redevelopment of the Australian Institute of Police Management Site, Collins Beach Road, Spring Cove Manly

From: Associate Professor Alison Bashford

Date 19 May 2006

1.1 I have closely examined the plans for redevelopment of this site, am familiar with the site, and have strong and grounded objections.

2.1 As an Australian historian, my professional opinion is that this site is a critical one. There is a question amongst historical specialists over precisely where the spearing of Capt. Phillip took place: it is not at all clear that this incident occurred the beach at Manly itself as some claim, but entirely probable that this took place at Collins Flat (Spring Cove). If the Standing Committee so desires, I can substantiate this claim and this debate. This places the environs of Spring Cove as amongst the most important in the nation's early history, and in the history of Indigenous - settler relations and Aboriginal history, and indeed in British maritime history. Absolutely no further building should be undertaken anywhere in the area.

2.2 As a medical historian of infectious disease management, quarantine and of North Head itself,¹ I am aware that the current buildings were used to house so called "venereal disease" patients - soldiers - in WW1. This places these buildings as one heritage-site unit with the quarantine station. It is only the accident of subsequent divisions between state and government land tenure which have separated them. The buildings have an historical significance themselves and should remain intact, in my opinion. Both of these historical objections are backed now by the new heritage status of North Head, although these specific points were not used to argue the heritage

¹ Alison Bashford, 'Quarantine and the Imagining of the Australian Nation', *Health, Health*, 2 (1998): 387-402; Alison Bashford, 'Epidemic and Governmentality: Smallpox in Sydney, 1881', *Critical Public Health*, 12 (1999): 301-16; 'At the Border: contagion, immigration, nation', *Australian Historical Studies*, 120 (2002): 344--58. Alison Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene: a critical history of colonialism, nationalism and public health*, London and New York, Palgrave, 2004; Alison Bashford (ed) *Medicine at the Border*, Palgrave, New York and London, 2006.

value of the area: they serve to show how wise that decision was, as new historical information comes to light over time. It will continue to do so.

3.1 I am experientially aware of the penguin colony, noting penguins occasionally in the rocks immediately underneath the current AIPM buildings. Of course the tenacious hold the penguins have over their very existence is well documented. The waste, increased paved floor area and car parks and increased traffic will potentially affect the colony beyond replacement. If NPWS have seen fit to draw an exclusion zone for motor boats and fishing in the area, why would any government permit the much larger threat of construction, pollution, and waste which would accompany the proposed development?

3.2 In addition to inadequate sewage capacity which is well known all over North Head (ironically, given the position of the Sydney Water outfall) and the likely increase in water pollution, the waterfall currently at the site will potentially be polluted by many types of waste.

4. The rationale for a residential conference centre on this site seems ill-founded: there is no necessity for it, in that other less sensitive sites are available. I am well aware of the difficulties of State/Commonwealth land tenure on North Head. However, commonsense requires us to see clearly the nonsense of developing the AIPM site as a residential conference centre, when the Artillery School - but one km away - is readily available for development and use or even hire as the occasion demands it. Why is a new conference facility being proposed, when another arm of the Commonwealth Government (Sydney Harbour Federation Trust) is seeking advice on uses for an existing complex of buildings in the immediate area? As a member of the tertiary education sector, it is clear to me that there is no particular need for such a Centre to be built on any business/education site, except for the historical accident of it being in AIPM hands: venues to serve the purpose abound. After all, how many meetings and conferences can the AIPM possibly require? (this is not asked flippantly, but as a professional in the business of government tertiary education and professional training).

In summary, the Commonwealth should take the lead in uniting the approach to North Head. Professional, community and government stakes in the area are high - and for good reason. Piecemeal approaches are disastrous and shortsighted. The site is a beautiful one, as well as an historically and environmentally significant one, and so the attempt by the AIPM to develop the zone is understandable, but endorsement of it by the Commonwealth is not excusable in the least: it should not receive support. For if AIPM looked beyond their own institutional interests (and surely this is the Commonwealth's job) the sensitivity and the deep historical significance of the precise land on which the buildings lie would militate against any development whatsoever.

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