

SHR/10
Gap Bluff Track Proposal



GAP BLUFF TRACK PROPOSAL



Sheet 10



NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

WALKING TRACK AND LOOKOUT PROPOSAL GAP BLUFF SYDNEY HARBOUR NATIONAL PARK

Sydney Harbour National Park contains some of the most outstanding views of one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Particularly impressive is the outlook from Gap Bluff, an undeveloped area of park above Watsons Bay near South Head. The vista takes in Port Jackson to the Harbour Bridge and Opera House; Manly; North Head; and the expanse of the Pacific Ocean (cover photo, figs 1, 2 & 3).

Watsons Bay is already a popular destination with tourists, including international visitors. People come to enjoy the beaches; the historic, village-like atmosphere; and the fine restaurants. Overlooking this attractive area, Gap Bluff is potentially one of the most popular parks in Sydney.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service acquired the land at Gap Bluff from the Army in 1984. Many unwanted buildings were demolished during the same year. Some buildings remain, including the two-storey, white Officer's Mess and the Quartermaster's Store. Long-term use of these buildings is currently under review.

Public access to Gap Bluff has not been permitted, mainly because of lack of safety fencing and to allow regeneration of native plants. The success of the latter policy can be seen on the high cliffs above the Pacific Ocean, where stands of Tea Tree and Coast Rosemary are growing vigorously.

It is now planned to open the area to the public as soon as possible. However, safety fencing, walking tracks, lookouts and explanatory signs are needed before visitors can enjoy this magnificent part of the National Park.

The attached proposal includes cost estimates, including contract labour and materials, to construct a track linking the present Council Coastal Walkway at The Gap with the start of the Service track to Inner South Head.

Section One: Service track link with the Coastal Walkway at the Gap (see A, Map One)

This relatively short section of track requires requires substantial upgrading to make it safe and consistent in character with the present Council Trail (fig 4). It will be excavated where necessary, concreted and safety fences installed.

	\$
Excavation (by hand, no machine access)	17,000
Concrete	20,000
Safety fencing	5,000
Interpretation	1,500
TOTAL	43,500

Section Two: The Gap to the top of Gap Bluff (A to B, Map One)

A flat area leading to a steep, rocky slope with excellent views of The Gap (fig 1). Minimal work is required on the flat, other than to replace current poor safety fencing and define the northern track border with wharf timber. Existing natural steps can be utilised on the incline, though excavation and construction (using sandstone blocks) will also be required (fig 5, 6 & 7).

	\$
Safety fencing	7,000
Excavation (no machine access)	18,000
Step Construction	7,000
Trackwork on level ground	5,000
Interpretation	2,500
TOTAL	39,500

Section Three: Gap Bluff Plateau (B to C, Map One)

Safety fencing will be required along the entire length of the cliffline. However, the track will be placed slightly inland from the cliff to encourage the regeneration of native plants already occurring in the area. The regeneration will mask much of the otherwise intrusive fenceline. Two spur trails will be constructed to lookouts on the edge of the cliff (figs 2 & 3). An existing disused Army Ammunition Store can be utilised as a shelter. An old garden in the area will be restored as a point of interest. Track construction will be relatively low-key to help retain the wild character of the place. There is still a considerable amount of demolition debris in the area which will have to be cleaned up (fig 8).

	\$
Safety fencing	15,000
Remove existing fence	4,000
Clean demolition debris	8,000
Trackwork	25,000
Lookout Construction (2)	7,000
Interpretation and directional signs	6,000
Visitor facilities (including upgrading ammunition store as a shelter)	5,000
TOTAL	70,000

**Section Four: Gap Bluff plateau to Lower Gap Bluff (C to D,
Map One)**

An existing concrete stairway will be utilised. Some repair is required. The stairway emerges near an old toilet block which can be refurbished and used for visitor convenience.

	\$
Repairs to steps & clear overgrown vegetation	7,000
Upgrade toilet block (includes roofing, interior tiling, painting, replacement of damaged bowls etc)	20,000
Signs	1,500
Trackwork	4,000
TOTAL	32,500

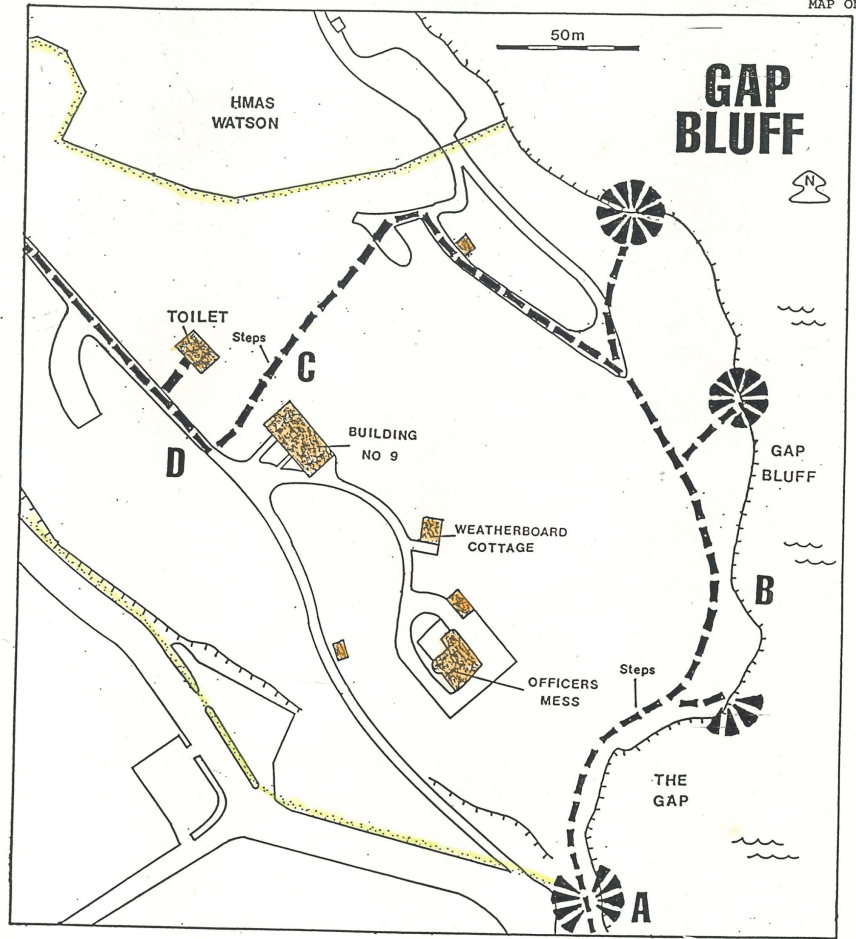
**Section Five: Lower Gap Bluff to Cliff Street (D to E, Map
Two)**

This will be the last section of track to be built. Temporarily, visitors will be guided along Military Road towards the HMAS Watson boom gate, then south along St George Road to Cliff Street. A pedestrian crossing will have to be installed in St George Road near the Navy entrance.

In the long term, a better option is to construct two sets of steps, the first linking Military Road with St George Road and the second St George Road with Cliff Street. The steps would have to be high quality, preferably concrete, as the area collects large quantities of stormwater runoff.

	\$
Steps-Military Road to St George Road	10,000
Steps-St George Road to Cliff Street	12,000
Signs	1,500
TOTAL	23,500

Section One	43,500
Section Two	39,500
Section Three	70,000
Section Four	32,500
Section Five	23,500
GRAND TOTAL	209,000

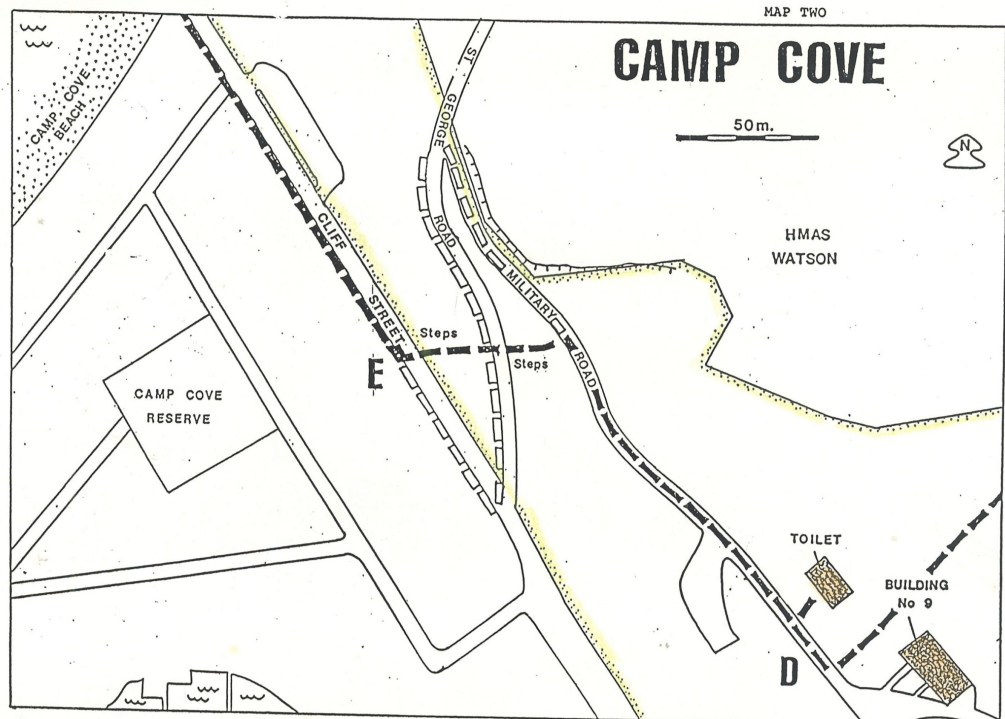


-  PROPOSED TRACK ROUTE
-  CLIFFLINE
-  PARK BOUNDARY
-  LOOKOUT
-  BUILDING

MAP TWO

CAMP COVE

50m.



- PARK BOUNDARY
- CLIFFLINE
- BUILDING
- PROPOSED TRACK ROUTE
- TEMPORARY TRACK ROUTE (WHILE STEPS ARE BUILT)



Fig 1 (above) The view from Gap Bluff overlooking 'The Gap'. The vista includes the Pacific Ocean, Watsons Bay and Dover Heights, and Sydney Harbour up to the Harbour Bridge and Sydney. This is undoubtedly one of the most magnificent views in the metropolitan area.

Fig 2 (below) View from a proposed lookout site on Gap Bluff Plateau towards North Head.

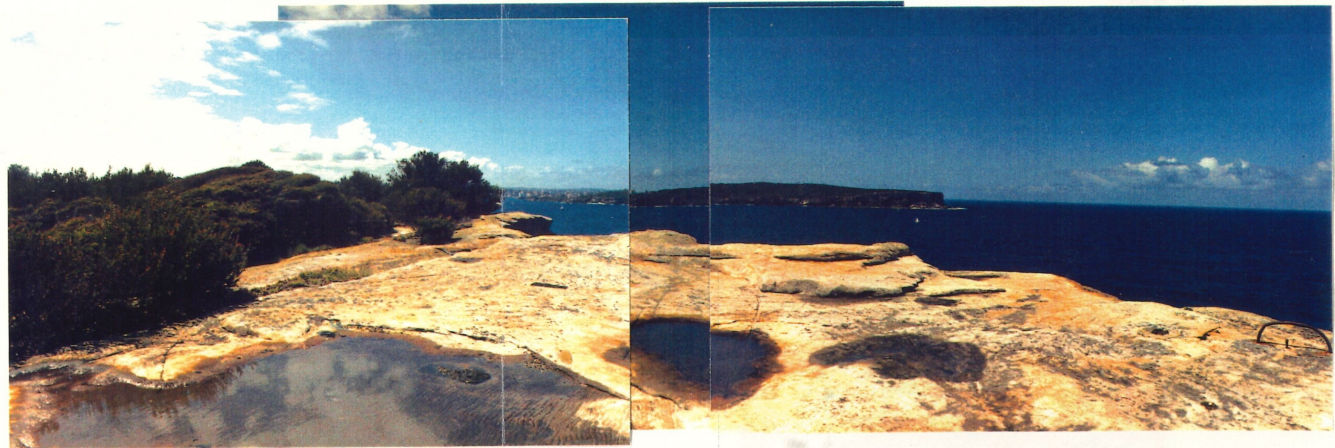




Fig 3 (above) View from a proposed lookout near the HMAS Watson boundary. North Head on the right, Manly in the centre. The lookout will be reached from a spur trail leading off the main route.

Fig 4 (opposite) Proposed link with the Coastal Walkway. Some concrete work and safety fence installation is required.



Proposed lookout



Fig 5 (above) Lower Gap Bluff in the vicinity of 'The Gap' looking north-east. Officers' Mess on the left. Proposed track route runs from the end of the existing safety fence (to be replaced) along the cliff edge towards the two posts on the horizon (right side of collage). A lookout will be installed, utilising an existing searchlight shelter (out of sight in photograph) on the prominent rock platform.

Fig 6 (opposite) Detail of the proposed track route beside the cliff. Many existing landscape elements can be incorporated into the work, such as natural sandstone 'steps'. Erosion should be minimal as most of the route is over rock.



Fig 7 (opposite) Rock platform overlooking 'The Gap' to be used as a lookout. This is the same platform as that arrowed in figure 5.

Fig 8 (below) Upper Gap Bluff plateau looking north. The track will run across the plateau slightly left of centre. Access will not be encouraged in revegetating areas at the cliffedge, though spur trails to vantage points will be provided. The existing wooden fence will be removed. The entire length of this high, sheer cliffline will have to be protected with safety fencing.

