the reported site was chosen on which to undertake a field survey, both along the shoreline and underwater, in order to identify and document the area and any associated artefacts.

Further analysis included a background investigation of the study area, including historical research, in order to ascertain past and present usage of the site, and the type and origin of any artefacts.

Finally, the survey and research results were analysed with the objective of either confirming or challenging the suggestion in the Heritage Office report that the site was the location of a timber pile jetty.

Location and environment

In accordance with the NAS Pt II course requirements,
Little Manly is the name given to a small sandy cove on the northern shore of Sydney Harbour (Port Jackson). It is located approximately 1 km due north (magnetic) from Cannae Point, which is situated just inside North Head (Fig. 1). Geographic location is latitude 33°48.434’ south and longitude 151°17.166’ east (GPS datum WGS 84). The cove rests between the rocky outcrops of Manly Point to the west and Little Manly Point to the east. The deep cove is often subjected to strong southerly gales and a consequent heavy wash or drawback resulting in storm damage.

Little Manly Cove is bordered to the east by Little Manly Point Reserve (formerly the Manly Gasworks site), and to the north by Stuart Street. To the west is Craig Avenue, which is level with the beach, and Addison Road, which runs above the Cove along the western ridgeline. The Cove landscape is characterised by private residential properties along Stuart Street, with unit blocks and houses extending along the western water’s edge of Manly Point. Public access to the Cove is limited to the beach, its associated facilities and a public boat ramp, accessible by vehicle via Craig Avenue. The boat ramp is one of the few concrete ramps on the northern shore of Port Jackson. The nearest other public access ramps to Little Manly are at Bantry Bay, many kilometres up stream, and at Northbridge. Proximity to the Heads means that the ramp at Little Manly is a much used resource.

Within the present swimming enclosure the seabed is sandy and the water shallow, reaching a maximum depth of approximately 4 m at its southerly extent. Beyond the pool enclosure the cove deepens and includes scattered moorings for many craft, which continue south to the end of Little Manly Point. The seabed is sandy with patchy blankets of sea-grass vegetation. The rocky eastern edge of the Cove is characterised by large boulders scattered above and below the water-line.

Study Area
The study area is located in the vicinity of the Little Manly swimming enclosure on the eastern side of the cove, and potentially extends beyond the protective fence into the surrounding waters. The enclosure runs south (perpendicular to the beach) before turning east and joining the rocky outcrops that form Little Manly Point.

The description reported to the NSW Heritage Office refers to the natural sandstone rock platform on the north-east side of the swimming enclosure. A pattern of circular holes is cut into the platform surface (Fig. 2). Except for the remnants of a wooden pylon in one of the holes, no further structural remains were noted in the vicinity of the platform above the low water-line.

Historical context
Captain James Cook named Port Jackson in 1770, although he sailed past the headlands without investigating the harbour beyond. It was a further eighteen years before what is now referred to as the ‘First Fleet’ arrived to establish a convict settlement, and it was Captain Arthur Phillip who first entered the heads and established a settlement at Sydney Cove in 1788. He named the area on the northern shore of Port Jackson ‘Manly’. On the naming of the site, Phillip wrote in his log:

The boats, in passing near a point of land in their harbour, were seen by a number of men, and twenty of them waded into the water unarmed, received what was offered them, and examined the boats with a curiosity that gave me a much higher opinion of them than I had formed from the behaviour of those seen in Captain Cook’s voyage, and their confidence and manly behaviour made me give the name of Manly Cove to this place (cited in History of New South Wales from the Records Vol 1: 282–283).

John Hunter surveyed Port Jackson in February 1788, but the name ‘Manly’ was not included on the hydrographic chart that resulted. The name first appeared in The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay (Phillip, et al., 1789) published by John Stockdale, London (Curby, 2001: 9).

In 1809 surveyor James Meehan drew up two plots of land in the Manly area, one for Richard Chears and one for Gilbert Baker. Richard Chears’ land encompassed what we know today as Little Manly. On Meehan’s field book drawing, ‘Little Manly’ is clearly written (Curby, 2001: 36). A quarantine zone was established in the area between Little Manly and North Head in 1828 when smallpox
arrived in Sydney aboard the convict transport Bussorah Merchant. The zone was enlarged and permanent facilities established five years later, after the first Quarantine Act was passed in 1832 (Curby, 2001: 39). The study area lies just outside this historical quarantine zone.

Henry Gilbert Smith, who had arrived in Sydney in 1827, saw the potential of Manly as the location for a ‘day trip’ from Sydney, the new ‘Brighton’ of the Colony. He was instrumental in establishing a hotel, wharf, regular ferry service and baths in Manly in the mid-1850s. Smith referred to the area as ‘Ellensville’ and ‘Brighton’, but ultimately the original name was retained.

Because of its remoteness from the main settlement at Sydney Cove, the Manly area was slow to develop. In the 1841 Census there were only 29 residents in the (now) Manly Local Government Area. By the 1848 Census the number had risen to just 63 (Curby, 2001: 50). That same year, Little Manly Cove was the scene of the wrecking of the timber schooner Elizabeth. While later reported as re-floated, a Heritage Office diving inspection has confirmed the absence of underwater remains along the western boundary of the Cove.

The increasing popularity of Manly as a recreational area and the reliability and speed of the ferry services, saw the population of the area grow to approximately 500 by 1876, the same year that the telegraph line was completed, and a year after the first bank opened. On 6 January 1877, the Municipal District of Manly was proclaimed and the first Council meeting was held a few weeks later on 21 February (Curby, 2001: 69).

**Baths and Bathing**

Bathing in colonial Sydney was subject to the provisions of *The Sydney Police Act 1833*, Section 21, which forbade bathing ‘between the hours of six o’clock in the morning and eight in the evening’, to ensure public decency and safety in this busy working harbour. Initially, Manly’s remoteness from Sydney deemed the area exempt from the *Sydney Police Act* with no legal impediment to bathing in open water at Manly at any time of the day or night. However, the *Towns Police Act 1838* extended the provisions of *The Sydney Police Act* to towns as far afield as Parramatta, Windsor, Maitland and Bathurst, and in July 1880 was implemented in Manly.

Henry Gilbert Smith, in fitting with his plans for the ‘New Brighton’, had baths constructed in 1857 on the western side of Manly Cove, on a site near the present day Art Gallery/Museum (Fig. 1). The baths were erected without consulting the authorities, leading to the request for official bathing facilities in Manly (Champion, 2000: 3).

**Little Manly Baths**

1878–1880: Proposal and construction

On 11 January 1878, a deputation from Manly Council (including the Mayor) saw the Minister of Lands, Mr Farnell, about the construction of two new baths in the Municipality, one for women and one for men, to replace the dilapidated facilities built by Henry Gilbert Smith 20 years earlier. The Council preferred to situate the baths on either side of Manly Cove—the men’s on the south-east corner and the women’s on the western end of the Esplanade. Due to opposition from residents, it was decided to re-locate the proposed men’s baths to Little Manly Cove. Tenders were called for their construction in February 1879, and a fresh tender appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) on 26 March 1879 (Fig. 4).

The contract for the construction of the baths was won by Mr Daniel Sheehy, (Manly Council Minutes, 8 April 1879: 172), the first to be awarded to a builder by the new council, and after a ceremony to drive in the first pile on 21 May 1879, construction commenced.

From research into the Council Minutes, it is evident that the ‘Council’s Overseer of Works’, Mr Russell, was concerned that the Baths should be built according to plan. For instance, at the Council Meeting of 28 August 1879, he was keen that someone should be appointed by the Council to make sure the pile driving was carried out in accordance with the specifications (Manly Council Minutes, 28 Aug. 1879: 237). In the Council Minutes of 5 April 1880, he is recorded as alleging that the piling was insecure and that it should be watched carefully during heavy weather (Manly Council Minutes, 5 Apr. 1880: 298). The same Council Meeting records that the Baths were nearing completion.

The construction of the baths was completed by May 1880, and they were leased to Lieutenant F.A. von Hammer, who had offered his services in this role to Council in July 1879 (Curby, 2001: 39; Champion, 2000: 4–5, Manly Council Minutes, 31 July 1879: 221). The layout of the original Baths was similar to that which exists today.

The southern and eastern boundaries were delineated by timber pilings and palisade shark proofing. The sandy beach to the north and the rocky platform to the east...
provided the other boundaries. The enclosed area was about seven-eighths of an acre, (approximately one-third of a hectare), and on the sandstone rock platform a timber building housed ten dressing rooms for the use of bathers (Champion, 2000: 4).

Following serious damage in 1882, Manly Council minutes taken on 26 February 1885 record that the Baths had been ‘repaired and strengthened, wire netting was in place and the baths were now ‘perfectly safe’’ (Manly Council Minutes, 26 Feb. 1885). Rough stone steps were to be erected at the baths, as well as wooden steps on either side of the springboard (Champion, 2000: 11). It is this layout of the Little Manly Baths that is reflected in a photograph taken on 6 March 1886 (Fig. 6). A close look at the photograph reveals several bathers standing in the doorways of these facilities. It also shows, though not clearly, the relatively flimsy nature of the southern timber boundary.

Before the Towns Police Act was extended to cover Manly in 1880, the new Council had published local by-laws intended to control public decency. This was to the advantage of the lessee of the Little Manly Baths as they were the only place where public bathing was legal. According to the Champions’ book

...Manly Council’s decision to place the Municipal baths at Little Manly instead of Manly Cove may have had some unintended consequences. By January 1883 some thirty to fifty bathers were gathering (for free) each morning at what was termed the Fairy Bower corner of the Ocean Beach (Champion, 2000: 7).

In a letter to The Sydney Morning Herald on 25 January 1883, Philip Cohen bemoaned the fact that Manly lacked proper bathing facilities, pointing out that the baths at Little Manly were ‘in an out-of-the-way locality, in close contiguity to the Quarantine Station’ (SMH 25 Jan. 1883). On 7 February, Manly Council’s auditor W.R. Rowe wrote, in reply, that the ideal place for a bathing facility would have been ‘on the ocean side, near the steps leading to the Fairy Bower’ (SMH 7 Feb. 1883) (Fig. 1).

There was further storm damage and subsequent repair to the Little Manly Baths in 1889 and 1890. Just ten years after their construction, dilapidated and out of official use, a sign placed at the baths informed bathers that they were swimming at their own risk (Champion, 2000: 13–14).

In 1892, newer and much larger Men’s Baths were constructed on the eastern side of Manly Cove (between Wood Street and Stuart Street). These made the older
baths located at Little Manly largely redundant. The new baths were less susceptible to storm damage (being sited on the western, slightly more protected shore) and were close to the ferry wharf and all else that Manly had to offer at the end of the 19th century. In 1896, the manager of the gasworks wrote to the council drawing their attention to the unprotected condition of the Little Manly Baths. Two years later, he offered to lease them from the council at a price of 4 shillings a week. This offer was accepted (Curby, 2001: 125).

By 1906, the original Baths at Little Manly were in a very poor state. According to the Evening News (1 Oct. 1908), Alderman Quick proposed at a Council meeting ‘that the council take the necessary steps to have the beach and reserve at Little Manly improved by removing unnecessary buildings, and that the government be asked to resume portions in the vicinity at present held privately’. He also drew attention to the unsightly piles that remained from the old swimming baths (Champion, 2000: 108).

1906–2004: Recent history
Twenty two years’ worth of Manly Council documents and correspondence pertaining to the Little Manly Baths are collected in the Manly Library Local Studies archives (MMC File 175), dating between 1951 and 1973. An aerial photograph taken in 1932 clearly shows the Baths and reveals that by this time the dressing sheds had been demolished. A springboard remained installed at the Little Manly swimming enclosure until the mid-1960s. In this period, the board was repaired at least once, with a solid oregon plank, in 1965. However, repeated damage from inappropriate use eventually resulted in the January 1966 council resolution not to replace it (Municipal Engineer’s Report No. 66/27, 19 Jan. 1966).

Engineers’ reports in the collection confirm that the Little Manly site was always subject to southerly winds and harbour currents, which deposit large quantities of floating matter on Little Manly Beach. This included ‘large pieces of timber, floating logs and miscellaneous debris’ (L. Whalen, letter to Mr V. Niblett, 1 Feb. 1966, Manly Municipal Council File No. 175; Engineer’s Report No. 67/210, 11 July 1967).

As well as being unsightly and dangerous, pounding of debris damaged the Little Manly Pool during storms (Engineer’s Report No. 66/110, 7 Aug. 1966). There are a number of records of storm damage to the pool, including incidents in March 1962 and 15 March 1968, when netting had to be replaced (Engineer’s Report No. 62/113, 30 Mar. 1962; Deputy Engineer’s Report No. 68/225, 21 Aug. 1968). On one occasion on 26/27 March 1966, storm action not only damaged the shark-proof netting, but deposited debris ‘literally feet thick’ on the beach (Engineer’s Report No. 66/110, 7 Apr. 1966).

There have also been periodic complaints from the public about seaweed growth and the presence of rocks within Little Manly pool. At one point (in 1966) the Council employed a dragline excavator to remove the stones and debris that had accumulated (Engineer’s Report No. 66/66, 11 Mar. 1966; Engineer’s Report No. 68/55, 8 Mar. 1968).

What is clear from the archives is that there was (and is) a constant process of structural renewal of the swimming enclosure being undertaken by Manly Council. Deterioration of wooden piles and storm and boat damage to the shark proof netting means that the fabric of the enclosure is constantly being replaced (Engineer’s Report No. 68/55, 8 Mar. 1968; Little Manly Pool Pile Inspection 1967). Given the long existence of the enclosure, we
judge it highly unlikely that any of the original fabric still remains.

There has, however, been undeniable continuity of function. A pool enclosure still exists in the same location over 100 years after it was first conceived. It is still used for recreational purposes by the local community, and, as it has been for so much of its existence, is currently in a state of imperfect repair. A number of the metal poles that support the shark-proof mesh are missing or damaged. The bathing sheds immediately adjacent to the enclosure were never replaced with any other structures, although the holes that held their footings are clearly visible in the sandstone rock shelf.

New facilities servicing Little Manly Cove, including public toilets and open air showers, as well as a kiosk, are now located on the grassed reserve above Little Manly Beach.

Site survey
Preliminary investigations at Little Manly Cove were undertaken on land. A walk over of the study area identified a distinctive pattern of holes in the sandstone platform arranged in three lines of nine holes running in a north–south orientation and a further two rows of five holes perpendicular to the first set extending toward the pool enclosure (Fig. 3). NSW Heritage Office records listed the site as the location of a timber jetty, so initial thoughts suggested the holes might have been the foundation pits for timber pier supports.

At the southern extent of the platform a carved channel was noted, which extends from the eastern rock face to the water’s edge. The channel appeared to be carved into the rock and incorporated two sizeable holes, one toward the end of the channel at the rock face and one at the platform edge partially submerged by the rising tide. To the east of the platform the rock face exhibits evidence of quarrying, with ‘jumper bar marks’ visible along the face of the rocks.

No underwater investigations were carried out during the preliminary investigations, but it was noted that future dives could be easily undertaken either via access from the shallow rock ledges within the pool or directly from the beach. There was a possibility that future underwater searches would reveal remnant material, or artefacts that were lacking from areas above the water-line.

Historical research established that the rock ledge was the location of a timber platform and change rooms built in 1879 to provide gentlemen’s bathing facilities at Little Manly Cove. These structures are visible in an 1886 photograph of the baths (Fig. 6). The holes in the rock ledge indicate the positions of the timber support piers for the change room platform, and a pool walkway that extended over the water.

The removal of the original rock profile to broaden the platform area may have been associated with the provision of bath facilities, but no archival evidence was found.

Methodology

Land survey
The post holes on the rock shelf were assigned numbers from H1 to H44 for ease of identification during the survey. The location of the centre point of each hole was measured by means of trilateration from fixed survey points along Datum Line (1). Further data and photographic records were taken which identified the relative depth and diameter of the holes.

Features H25, H26, H27 and H30 were recorded as potential hole locations, even though no physical hole could be positively identified. Their suggested positions appear to fit the grid layout of the platform structure.

The outer row of holes (H1 to H9) was used to
enclosure piles were assigned numbers from P1 to P11, and their relative distance from datum point X was recorded.

To record a 3D profile of the seafloor, a measuring tape was aligned with holes 33 to 41, and extended into the enclosure (bearing 260° magnetic). These holes mark where the timber supports of a walkway structure were once located, which extended out into the enclosure in the 1880s (Fig. 7).

Depth measurements were taken at 1 m intervals along the tape, and the seabed composition was recorded at each point.

No debris, artefacts or additional post supports or holes associated with the study area were identified within the pool enclosure during the underwater survey. Underwater investigations were also undertaken outside the pool enclosure in order to search for other artefacts or site features, and a search around the outside of the pool fence enclosure revealed a few large rectangular shaped lumps of rock close to the existing pool fencing (Fig. 8). The blocks appear to have been dumped and could relate to the original stone wall and fill construction located on top of the rock platform.

**Post survey analysis**

The survey process has revealed a substantial amount of information about the configuration of the holes in the sandstone platform and their original purpose. Plans and profiles have been prepared using data collected from the surveys, and clearly identify a grid layout of holes. Evidence from historical photographs and records has proven to be very useful when looking for and interpreting the field data.

Manly Council has no records of the original detailed plans prepared for the baths, and communication with the State Archives at Kingswood indicated that it was unlikely that they would have them. That said, at some future time it might be worth further investigation there. In addition, information might be found in the Marine Board/Navigation Department Archives.

**Interpretation**

The collected survey data and historic data appear to correspond and support the following conclusions. The holes in the sandstone shelf were footings for piles that supported a structure associated with the gentlemen’s baths that were built in 1879 (Fig. 6). From the 1886 photograph it can be observed that the piles supporting the walkway were embedded in holes H32 to H41, and the surrounding ground level was raised to form a flat area just below the walkway. Though it is not clear from the photograph, it is safe to assume that the wooden ‘shed’ structure is supported on the piles, which rested in holes H1 to H28. Note that the retaining wall and the level area under much of the walkway no longer exists. The last two piles in the photograph to the left of the ladder structure (holes H40 and H41) are resting on what is currently the rock surface. Further
Deterioration and/or demolition beginning almost upon completion of the gentlemen’s baths facilities and walkway have ultimately removed any material evidence of these structures. The physical features (post holes and channel) carved within the rock platform and the stone block debris possibly associated with the study area are all that remain to indicate the extent of the bathing facilities. The absence of any further remains or artefacts can be attributed to a combination of processes such as biological activity, water movement, storm damage and human interaction, including the periodic clearing of stone blocks and debris from Little Manly Baths by Manly Council.

Conclusion

Our investigations indicate that the holes were made for piles which supported structures associated with the original Gentlemen’s Baths, built in 1879. We can find no evidence, either physical or historical, that there was ever a jetty on the eastern side of Little Manly Cove. Further investigation may establish the origins of the rubble piles located beyond the swimming enclosure, and ascertain if the stone blocks located along the cliff edge are indeed the old retaining wall.

Since it was built, there has been a continuity of purpose in the use of the Little Manly Baths site as a recreational facility. The site has significance for the local area because
of its close historic association with leisure activities and its strong connection with Manly’s identity as a seaside holiday location.

Recommended Action
The holes in the sandstone rock shelf are very briefly mentioned in *Manly: Eastern Hill Heritage Walk* (Manly Council, 2001). The addition of a commemorative plaque at the site to inform the public of the long history of the Little Manly Baths and the history of bathing in the Northern beaches is recommended.

The most important thing that Manly Council can do to acknowledge the heritage value of the site is to continue to keep the swimming enclosure, beach and grassy reserve maintained in order to encourage continued public participation in recreational activities at Little Manly.

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References

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