

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

REPORT

relating to the

**DEFENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY
HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AT RANDWICK, HOLSWORTHY
AND EAST HILLS, SYDNEY**

(Twenty-First Report of 1989)

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC WORKS

(Twenty-ninth Committee)

Mr Colin Hollis MP (Chairman)

Mr Percival Clarence Millar MP (Vice-Chairman)

Senate

Senator Bryant Robert Burns
Senator John Robert Devereux
Senator Dr Glenister Sheil

House of Representatives

Mr George Gear MP
Mr Robert George Halverson OBE MP
Mr John Graham Mountford MP
Mr William Leonard Taylor MP *

* Appointed on 29.9.88 following resignation of
Mr Maxwell Arthur Burr MP

Secretary: Mr Peter Roberts

**SECTIONAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENTS AT
RANDWICK, HOLSWORTHY AND EAST HILLS, SYDNEY.**

Mr Colin Hollis MP (Chairman)
Senator Sheil (Vice Chairman)
Senator Bryant Robert Burns
Mr John Mountford

Inquiry Staff: Mr Peter Roberts - secretary
 Mrs Denise Denahy - assistant secretary
 Mrs Helen Fyfe - secretarial support

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ACT 1969

ORDER UNDER SUBSECTION 18(4)

I, William George Hayden, the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, in pursuance of subsection 18(4) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969 hereby, by this Order, declare that the public works described in the schedule be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report.

SCHEDULE

Housing developments by the Defence Housing Authority at Randwick, Holsworthy and East Hills, Sydney.

Given under my Hand and
the Great Seal of
Australia on 31 July 1989

Governor-General

By His Excellency's Command
(Signed) Stewart West
Minister of State for Administrative
Services

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

DEFENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT RANDWICK, HOLSWORTHY AND EAST HILLS, SYDNEY

1. On 31 July 1989 the Governor-General in Council referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report the proposal for housing developments by the Defence Housing Authority at Randwick, Holsworthy and East Hills, Sydney.

THE REFERENCE

2. The work proposed under this reference involves housing developments on six hectares at Randwick, 166 hectares at Holsworthy and 70 hectares at East Hills for both Defence and civilian families.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

3. The Committee received a submission and drawings from the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and took evidence from its representatives at a public hearing in Sydney on 11 October 1989.

4. The Committee also received submissions and took evidence from:

- . Liverpool Nature Reserve Action Group
- . Dr F.E. Trainer
- . Royal Botanic Gardens
- . Society for Growing Australian Plants (East Hills Group)
- . Cosmopolitan Homes

5. Submissions were also received from the National Consultative Group of Service Spouses and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

6. Prior to the public hearing the Chairman inspected the proposed sites.

7. A list of witnesses who gave evidence at the hearing may be found at Appendix A.

BACKGROUND

Role of the Defence Housing Authority

8. DHA was established by the Government as a Statutory Authority on 1 January 1988. Its aim is to provide Defence personnel and their families with housing consistent with community standards.

9. The functions and powers of DHA include:

- . purchasing, developing and disposal of land and houses;
- . renting, managing and controlling land and houses; and
- . determining and collecting market rents for housing from the Department of Defence.

10. DHA has a portfolio of about 23,000 houses and a current housing investment program in excess of \$100m per annum. In 1986 the Government gave a commitment that over the ensuing decade not less than \$750m would be directed to a capital expenditure program for defence housing. In May 1989 the Government, in addition to this earlier commitment, gave its approval for DHA to lease \$200m of housing and borrow up to \$250m for defence housing purposes. Thus, in total, the housing investment program over the 10 year period will be \$1.2b.

11. DHA is required to act in a commercial manner and relies substantially on the services of the private sector for project design, management and construction.

12. An essential aim of DHA and one of its flexibilities is to pursue a much broader range of housing options than the traditional programmed "design and construct" approach. Pursuit of the broader range of options will produce improved efficiency, increased housing choice and better location of housing. Options presently being utilised by DHA include spot purchasing of existing houses, the acquisition of standard project houses, leasing and joint venture arrangements (with private sector construction on DHA land), as well as the traditional construction on Commonwealth land.

Recent Government Initiatives Regarding Defence Housing

13. On the formation of DHA, the Commonwealth transferred housing assets amounting to \$788m (in current values) to DHA (approximately 9,000 houses). These assets, which are debt free, form the major assets of DHA and represent the Commonwealth's equity contribution to DHA. DHA receives the bulk of its funds in the form of market rent. The Commonwealth makes additional financial contributions in the form of interest bearing loan funds to enable DHA to undertake capital expenditure programs to improve the quality of the housing stock.

THE NEED

Commonwealth - State Housing Agreement (Servicemen) [CSHA(s)]

14. DHA controls approximately 14,000 CSHA(S) houses. Title to these houses is vested in the States but DHA has, in effect, a perpetual lease on these dwellings for as long as they are required for Defence personnel.

15. On 11 May 1989 the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel made a statement to Parliament which included an announcement that the Government had agreed to seek the renegotiation of the CSHA(S) with the States. The Commonwealth's offer to each State is that the Commonwealth, through DHA will return to the State, houses to the value of half the total CSHA(S) stock. This is to occur over a period of not more than 5 years. Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria have already agreed in principle to this offer.

16. The States will be able to use these houses for public housing. In return the States will be required to transfer title of the remaining houses to DHA. It is proposed that liability for the outstanding debt on the houses will be shared between the States and DHA. These terms of renegotiation will require DHA to undertake a major program to replace houses transferred to the States.

17. The Commonwealth Government has approved the renegotiation on the basis of 50/50 equity sharing, plus 50/50 sharing of debt. DHA has also been given approval to lease about 2,000 houses (\$200m) and borrow \$250m.

Temporary Rental Allowance

18. The Government has announced that, with effect from 1 November 1989, DHA will commence to progressively take over the housing function provided recently by Temporary Rental Allowance (TRA). TRA is paid to Defence personnel to enable them to rent a house in the private market when a suitable DHA house is not available.

19. The Government has decided to vary its existing policy and allow DHA to increase the number of houses it provides. This will consequently reduce the number of Defence families who are required to find a house in the private market and use the allowance.

20. DHA will attempt to lease the additional housing required direct from home-owners, real estate agents and Defence families who are home-owners and who are leaving their houses on posting. DHA has undertaken work aimed at the establishment of one or more large private organisations which would acquire suitable houses and lease them to DHA. Creation of such an arrangement would reduce the administrative burden of leasing a large number of houses from many landlords and would enable a consistent approach to repairs and maintenance to be followed. DHA would charge the Department of Defence an administrative fee, in addition to the lease costs, to cover its costs in identifying and arranging the lease of houses.

21. Implementation of the new arrangements can be expected to result in DHA providing approximately 4,500 houses through leasing over the next 3-4 years throughout Australia.

Housing Shortage

22. DHA advised the Committee that over the next five years 1,900 houses will be returned to the NSW Department of Housing. Of these, 1,140 must be returned within the next two years. It is necessary to upgrade or replace the substandard housing stock being acquired at Holsworthy Village from the Department of Housing. It will also be necessary to replace the houses currently under TRA leasing. Approximately 3,750 additional houses therefore need to be acquired over the next five years. DHA intends to adopt a range of delivery mechanisms including:

- . spot purchase of existing houses;
- . acquisition of large numbers of standard project homes;
- . various leasing arrangements;
- . construction of single or groups of houses;
- . construction and acquisition of medium density housing;
- and
- . larger scale land and housing developments either by DHA itself or in conjunction with developers.

23. The Sydney land and housing market presents many problems for any major acquisition program in terms of land availability, extremely high cost for established housing, low vacancy rate of rental premises and general shortage of large areas of vacant land for development.

24. DHA stressed that it is necessary to provide housing more conveniently located to the workplace for Defence personnel working in the city or on the eastern seaboard. Many of these personnel presently spend over three hours per day in travelling time. Although DHA invested \$36m in the purchase of existing houses in 1988, it was not possible to locate affordable housing in the Sydney market at that time. Purchases were therefore made in Townsville where suitable houses were acquired at low market prices. As a result, Sydney's housing shortage has continued.

Committee's Conclusion

25. The Committee agrees that a need exists to acquire suitable housing for Defence personnel within the Sydney metropolitan area.

THE PROPOSAL

26. Over the next three to five years it is proposed to develop sites at Randwick, Holsworthy and East Hills for integrated Defence/civilian housing.

27. DHA advised the Committee that it has elected to seek joint venture partners on all three projects. The reasons for this decision were to draw on private sector skills, minimise DHA's borrowings, restrict staffing levels and achieve integration of Defence and civilian personnel.

RANDWICK

The Site

28. Six hectares of land were purchased at Randwick in June 1989 for \$8.2m through public tender. Of this, four hectares are currently unused and the remaining two hectares have been leased to Randwick Municipal Council and are currently used as a football field.

29. The site is well located to a number of regional community, educational, commercial and recreational facilities. The University of NSW is within reasonable walking distance, as are Randwick Boys and Girls High Schools, Maroubra Junior High School and Coogee South Public School. The site is located in close proximity to Maroubra Junction and Westfield Pagewood centres, both of which are regional shopping centres and provide a wide range of goods and services. Shopping centres at Randwick, Coogee and Kensington are nearby and provide local shopping facilities. Some small local shops are within easy walking distance of the site.

30. An added attraction of the site is its accessibility to the Coogee and Maroubra surf beaches. The site is particularly well served by active recreational space areas. Latham Park, a regional park immediately adjacent to the south of the site, includes playing fields and the South Coogee Bowling Club. There are some smaller parks within 300 metres of the site.

31. Bus services are available to major public transport interchanges, namely the Sydney Central Business District, Bondi Bus/Rail Interchange and the Edgecliff Bus/Rail Interchange. Local bus services are also available to the regional shopping centres, schools and other employment centres and community facilities. Bus services connect with rail services to the city.

Type of Housing

32. It is proposed to build 100-110 medium density town-houses for both Defence and civilian families. Fifty per cent of the houses will be for Defence families and 50% for sale on the open market. Although two storey dwellings will mainly be built, there will be provision for some one and three storey dwellings. The proposed medium density development is compatible with the surrounding mix of residential uses.

Point of Access

33. The design submitted to the Committee shows Henning Avenue as the point of access to the development. However, DHA advised that it would be preferable to obtain a second point of access from either Moverly Road, Bundock Road or Elphinstone Road and negotiations are presently taking place with nearby residents. However, although other access is desirable, DHA stressed that the proposal is not dependent on this second point of access.

Surrounding Areas

34. It is proposed to build on the present football field, as this area is regarded as the area of the site best suited to housing. DHA advised that they will offer to upgrade the adjoining Latham Park to provide alternative sporting fields. This proposal is currently under negotiation with the Randwick Municipal Council.

35. The former migrant hostel, Endeavour House, will be converted into accommodation for approximately 500 single Navy personnel.

36. A body of water is located on Commonwealth-owned land adjacent to the site. This pond is part of the stormwater control system in the municipality and acts as a retention pond.

DHA advised that stormwater from the steep areas of the site will flow into the pond and then gradually be dispersed through the stormwater system. The pond is a habitat for bird life and is of ecological importance. Should the Commonwealth divest itself of this pond in the future, DHA stressed its desire to purchase and upgrade this area.

37. Navy stores buildings are located on Commonwealth owned land to the west of the site. Should Navy decide to relocate these stores, then DHA indicated that it would be interested in acquiring this land for future housing.

38. A fenced area of Latham Park contains a rubbish dump which is presently giving off noxious gasses. DHA assured the Committee that this noxious fill would be removed.

39. Randwick has a declining population but a higher number of older persons than is the average for Sydney. The introduction of a new residential estate, particularly one in which 50% are Defence families, who tend to be young families, will assist in restoring a balance between young and aged persons in the local community. Schools in the area have been experiencing declining enrolments. The population increase from this development will assist in increasing these enrolment numbers.

Joint Commonwealth-State Housing Demonstration Program

40. At the March 1989 Special Premiers' Conference on Housing, State Premiers and the Commonwealth agreed to co-operate in addressing the problems confronting the Australian housing industry.

41. The Conference agreed to sponsor a joint Commonwealth-State demonstration program for high quality medium density housing in major metropolitan cities, as a means of encouraging more enthusiastic support by industry and local government, and community awareness of the benefits of medium density housing.

42. The NSW and Commonwealth Governments have since endorsed co-sponsorship of DHA's proposed medium density housing project at Randwick in the demonstration program. The aim is to show the contribution that well designed medium density housing can make to provide cost effective housing. The project will be documented and publicised, and will form part of a community awareness program.

43. DHA will have ultimate responsibility for all design and development decisions for the project while the NSW Planning Department will co-operate with the Randwick Council to obtain the necessary re-zoning and development approvals as well as facilitate other necessary State Government approvals (eg Torrens titles). The Commonwealth Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce will, from the funds allocated for joint initiatives arising at the Special Housing Conference, meet the additional costs incurred as a consequence of the "demonstration" aspects, ie. the public awareness promotional package and the additional design costs arising from the inclusion of a competitive element.

Planning Controls

44. The site is currently zoned 5(a) for Defence purposes. This includes Defence housing. However, a proposal to sell houses on the private market requires re-zoning by the Randwick Municipal Council. DHA advised the Committee that co-operative negotiations are presently taking place with the Randwick Municipal Council to enable this to occur.

Development Costs

45. The expected average cost per unit site is \$110,000 (a total of \$12.1m for 110 sites). Average house construction costs for DHA are estimated at between \$180,000 - \$200,000 per house (an approximate total of \$21.6m). A total land/house package cost for a three bedroom town-house for DHA on the proposed

development would be approximately \$300,000. If DHA acquires 52 dwellings the total cost will be in the order of \$16.0m (June 1989 prices).

46. The proposed development cost of these town-house/land packages compares reasonably with the current cost to DHA of existing spot purchase housing in the middle suburbs of Sydney, and other town-house projects in areas such as Ryde and Epping (average cost \$240,000-\$260,000).

Joint Venture Development

47. The proposed development will be undertaken through a Joint Venture arrangement between one or more developers and DHA. Such an arrangement will involve shared equity and profit, with the joint venture partner(s) providing project design and being responsible for project management and marketing. Agreement will be reached on the design of the houses with DHA actually selecting the houses it requires. The rest will be sold jointly by the joint venturers and DHA on the open market. Although medium density, most of the houses are detached. DHA advised the Committee that it is expected that these houses will sell well on the open market.

Servicing

48. DHA consultants have advised that water, sewerage, stormwater, and electricity are available to the site and that the existing infrastructure in the locality has the capacity to cater for the proposed housing. Drainage will require the retention of the retarding basin on Commonwealth land to the west of the site.

Proposed Program

49. The project represents a significant financial commitment by DHA. The holding costs for the land at an 18% interest rate are around \$29,000 per week. These holding charges, together with DHA's desire to expedite Joint Venture arrangements and development approvals, have led DHA to vigorously pursue this development.

50. It is anticipated that re-zoning will take from six to nine months to be approved. DHA expects the first houses to be completed approximately 14 months following Council approval. The total project should be completed in two to three years following this approval.

CONSULTATIONS

51. DHA has consulted and involved Commonwealth, State and Local Government Authorities in the proposed development of this site. The Commonwealth Departments and Authorities consulted are:

- . Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce;
- . Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories;
- . Department of Defence;
- . Royal Australian Navy;
- . Australian Regular Army;
- . Department of Finance; and
- . Department of Administrative Services (Australian Construction Services, Australian Property Group)

52. The NSW State Government Authorities and instrumentalities which have been consulted include the Department of Planning, the Water Board and the Sydney County Council. Randwick Council has been consulted and kept informed of the development proposals and of the inclusion of the site as part of the Commonwealth/State

demonstration estate. DHA has also consulted with the National Consultative Group of Service Spouses together with local spouse representatives. DHA assured the Committee that service spouses are consulted on all major projects.

HOLSWORTHY

The Site

53. The 167 hectare site was purchased by DHA in June 1989 as part of the Commonwealth's divestment of surplus land.

54. The site comprises two distinct but adjacent parcels of land. The larger (146 hectares) is located between Anzac Road to the north, Holsworthy Village to the east, East Hills - Campbelltown railway to the south and a military reserve (ammunition stores) to the west. The smaller parcel (21 hectares) is located to the north of Anzac Road and west of Anzac Village.

55. The larger area of flat land has been cleared. Natural bushland remains in the south west corner, adjacent to the East Hills - Campbelltown railway corridor and within the 21 hectare parcel of land.

56. The Holsworthy site is an excellent location for a new housing estate for both Defence and civilian families, as it is well located to regional shopping and community facilities, employment and educational opportunities. A posting at Holsworthy can provide Defence families with locational continuity over several service postings, thus providing stability for the family, particularly in child education and spouse employment.

Types of Housing

57. The proposal is to develop a high quality, integrated development for Defence and civilian families. DHA plans to develop about 1,500 residential allotments to provide a mix of conventional, cottage and medium density housing in an attractive, well planned environment. The aim is to complete the development and sale of all allotments within five years. DHA will ensure the new Holsworthy development is well integrated with the existing housing development in Holsworthy and Moorebank.

58. Between 25% and 33% of the total dwelling units in the development will be for Defence families. The Defence housing will be integrated with private housing so that no section or area of the development can be readily identified as non-civilian. Provision will be made for a choice of housing types for Defence families, consistent with community standards and Defence requirements.

59. DHA intends to develop the land at Holsworthy in a manner which is consistent with State and Commonwealth objectives for housing choice and affordability. Land will be released in a manner conducive to economic staging of works in line with market conditions. A consistent quality of landscaping and streetscape development will be complementary to the existing facilities in the locality. There will be ample scope for a comprehensive range of approved builders to be engaged on the development.

60. DHA advised the Committee that approximately 1,500 individual sites will be developed and of these 500 will be retained for Defence personnel. As the estate is progressively completed, DHA will dispose of smaller housing in Holsworthy Village. Although these houses will not be able to be upgraded economically, they will be attractive to first home buyers.

61. The area was identified as an Urban Growth Centre by the Cities Commission in the early 1970s. A Development Control Plan was approved for a Pilot Project of 590 blocks on 49 hectares and servicing was commenced. The Pilot Project was stopped in 1976, due to high infrastructure costs.

62. Residential development of the Holsworthy site is subject to the granting of a permit under Interim Development Order 40 (IDO). Further planning approval is required for that part of the site from the IDO area to the railway line (about 20 hectares). An application has also been made to include the total site on the State Urban Renewal Program.

Surrounding Areas

63. The site is located within close proximity of sporting ovals, golf courses and regional open space. It is close to retail facilities at Holsworthy Village and Hammondville. These facilities are well placed to cater to increased trade. A local shopping centre is proposed within the development to meet the retail needs of residents.

64. DHA advised that at present an ammunition depot is located on adjacent land west of the site. However, the Army and DHA have agreed in principle to purchase additional land adjacent to the site so as to enable transfer of the depot onto the Holsworthy range. By the time the houses are placed on the market the ammunition depot will have been moved.

65. The Committee queried the possible existence of some unexploded ordnance on the site. Defence confirmed that during the Second World War the entire area was used as a firing range for small arms, rifles and machine guns. However, although some minor quantities of ammunition were discovered fifteen years ago, Defence assured the Committee that it is confident that no

unexploded ordnance is presently on the site. DHA will ensure that unexploded ordnance risk information will be disclosed to potential purchasers and Defence occupants.

Servicing

66. Water supply has been connected for the first 500 lots. The Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board has advised DHA verbally that the balance can be provided through normal contribution. Current advice from Prospect Electricity is that all allotments can be serviced with electricity. DHA's advice from the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board indicates that sewerage can be provided to at least 1200 sites. Estimates from Scott and Furphy, consulting engineers and planners, indicate that appropriate drainage and water quality can be provided at a cost of approximately \$1.2m.

Amenities

67. The Liverpool region provides a range of government and private schools as well as Hurlstone Agricultural High. The Milperra College of Advanced Education is accessible by road and rail while a TAFE college is located 20 minutes away in Bankstown. The local area has several primary schools. Holsworthy has a local shop within the Village, a neighbourhood centre, pre-school and occasional-care centre and a swimming pool.

68. Future development includes a shopping complex to be built in the Holsworthy Village, which will contain a group of shops, bistro, community centre and two cinemas. Long day-care centres will be established in Holsworthy Village on land provided by the Commonwealth. DHA understands that plans for a service station along Heathcote Road has also been submitted to Council.

69. Private bus services transport children to local schools and into Liverpool. The bus service runs through Holsworthy Village

to the Holsworthy Railway Station and provides access to Hurlstone Agricultural High and employment opportunities in Campbelltown and Sydney. The journey by rail from Holsworthy to Sydney takes approximately 32 minutes.

CONSULTATIONS

70. DHA consulted and involved various Commonwealth, State and Local Government Authorities in the development of this proposal. Commonwealth Departments and Authorities consulted were:

- . Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories;
- . Department of Defence;
- . Royal Australian Navy;
- . Australian Regular Army;
- . Department of Finance;
- . Department of Administrative Services (Australian Construction Services, Australian Property Group); and
- . Telecom.

71. The NSW State Government Authorities and instrumentalities which have been consulted include the Department of Planning, the Water Board and the Prospect County Council. Liverpool Council has been consulted and kept informed of the development proposals. DHA has also consulted with the National Consultative Group of Service of Service Spouses together with local spouse/tenant representatives.

PROPOSED PROGRAM

72. DHA has held detailed discussions with a number of developers regarding the development of the Holsworthy site.

73. Development approval will be required from Liverpool Council and concept plans for the project will be lodged with Council by the end of November 1989. Presuming these plans will be approved within a six month time-frame, work can then commence on the area already partially serviced.

74. It is anticipated that the first lots will be available in early 1990. The entire project is planned to be completed within 5 years following Council approval.

EAST HILLS

The Site

75. The 37 hectare site is located on the eastern and southern sides of Sirius Road, west of the Georges River and north of the East Hills - Glenfield railway line, being generally south of, and adjacent to, Voyager Naval Village.

76. Part of the Commonwealth's conditions for the sale of the East Hills land was that approximately 38 hectares of substantially flood-prone land north of Sirius Road and fronting the Georges River, should also be purchased by DHA. This land, included in the proposal referred to the Committee, is regarded as environmentally sensitive. DHA proposes to negotiate with the NSW Government for the exchange of the title for other suitable residential land, or for the management of the area by an appropriate State Government Department and/or Authority.

Types of Housing

77. The proposal is to develop approximately 400 residential allotments to provide a mix of housing densities in an attractive, well planned environment. DHA will retain 100 of these for Defence families. It is anticipated that the first houses will be completed by mid 1991.

78. DHA advised the Committee that although provision of the building of flats near the foot-bridge was shown on the concept plan, DHA was uncertain as to whether these flats would be built. The Committee was assured that should these flats be erected they

would not exceed a ground floor plus two storeys. They would therefore be below the treeline and not visible from the Georges River.

Planning Controls

79. The site is zoned 5(a) (special uses - Military) in the Liverpool Planning Scheme.

80. DHA has requested Council to:

- . proceed with the necessary action under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to produce a Local Environment Plan to zone the land "Residential Use"; and
- . support the inclusion of this land in the Urban Development Program and advise the Department of Planning accordingly.

81. This development will provide local job opportunities for those displaced during the current downturn of the property market and wider support to the local businesses of Liverpool.

Servicing

82. Additional water storage and booster pumping will be necessary, probably in conjunction with an adjacent private developer. Maximum cost of about \$1.0 million could be expected. An augmented electricity supply will be necessary and some contributions for infrastructure may be required. Control of water quality including nutrient entrapment and treatment of suspended clays will be required.

Amenities

83. The site is adjacent to Voyager Point Village and within walking distance of East Hills Shopping Centre. A foot-bridge links the area to East Hills and is used by children for access

to schools. Naval personnel also use the foot-bridge as access to the East Hills Railway Station. The foot-bridge is in need of repair. A contract has been let by Liverpool Council and work has commenced. The present foundations will be the basis for a new bridge. The anticipated completion date for these works, funded by the Department of Defence, is late 1989.

84. At present families walk to local shopping in East Hills or drive to Hammondville or Moorebank, some three to five kilometres away. Regional shopping is available in Liverpool and Casula where large department stores are located. Sports facilities are available in Holsworthy, Hammondville and Moorebank and include football, hockey, basketball and swimming. There are several golf courses in the area. The Woodina Preschool is located within Voyager Point Naval Village.

85. The proposed development is expected to generate a number of high school aged children who will initially be accommodated in existing adjacent schools. Further studies by the Department of Education are required to assess the need for additional capacity at an adjacent High School to cater for additional numbers generated by the completed development. Private high schools exist at Revesby and Milperra. Six high schools are located within a five kilometre radius of East Hills.

86. Private bus services link Voyager Point, Hammondville and Liverpool. East Hills Railway Station is accessible via the foot-bridge. Travel time is some 30 minutes from East Hills to the City by rail. Holsworthy Railway Station is three kilometres away. Road access is by Sirius Road off Heathcote Road and future intersection works may be necessary by Council.

CONSULTATIONS

87. DHA has consulted and involved various Commonwealth, State and Local Government Authorities in the development of this proposal. Commonwealth Departments and Authorities consulted were:

- . Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories;
- . Department of Defence;
- . Royal Australian Navy;
- . Australian Regular Army;
- . Department of Finance;
- . Department of Administrative Services (Australian Construction Services, Australian Property Group); and
- . Telecom.

88. The State Government Authorities and instrumentalities which have been consulted include the Department of Planning, Water Board and the Prospect Electricity. Liverpool Council has been consulted and kept informed of the development proposals. DHA has also consulted with the National Consultative Group of Services Spouses.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

89. DHA engaged the consulting firm of Kinhill Engineers Pty Ltd (Kinhill) to investigate environmental conditions with regard to the East Hills site. Kinhill advised that 84% of the site has been cleared for past land uses. The remaining undisturbed areas include a 50m wide strip adjacent to Williams Creek and the 4.5 hectare area of open forest adjacent to the Georges River.

90. Several groups concerned with environmental issues appeared before the Committee. In general the groups were opposed to further urban development in the area. Of particular concern was retention in its natural state of the freshwater wetlands.

91. Mr D Benson for the Royal Botanic Gardens advised the Committee that the wetland is fresh rather than estuarine due to its being cut off from the Georges River by a levee bank. These wetlands are considered to be the best surviving example in the Sydney area, as they have been least disturbed. Other swamps along the Georges River have been destroyed by land fill and quarrying.

92. DHA acknowledged the environmental significance of these wetlands and assured the Committee that there is no intention to seek re-zoning of this area for residential purposes.

93. Dr F E Trainer, a local resident, expressed concern over the quality of the water entering the wetlands, claiming that detergents and pesticides could have an effect on migratory birds which use this area. However, consultants have assured DHA that similar problems have been managed successfully, particularly in Victoria. Techniques which will minimise the impact of the run-off will be introduced. DHA also confirmed that it would obtain the necessary advice and carry out the necessary work to ensure there is no excessive run-off water into the wetlands.

94. The Liverpool Nature Reserve Action Group (LNRAG) suggested that the entire site should be incorporated into the Georges River State Recreation Area. However, should the housing development proceed, then the LNRAG stressed the importance of preserving the foreshore area from the ridge down to the Georges River and especially the maintenance of tree cover.

95. Kinhill agreed that a buffer zone along the Georges River connecting the vegetation north of Sirius Road with the creek near Pleasure Point road to the south, is essential to protect the riparian vegetation and to provide a wildlife corridor connecting the two areas.

96. DHA assured the Committee that there is no intention to build along the river front and that tree cover would be retained in that area. The height of housing will be well below the tree-line and therefore will not be visible from the river.

97. Mr R Miller, President of the Society for Growing Australian Plants (East Hills Group), advised the Committee that approximately 13 orchid species have been recorded in this area. A number of plant species have been identified, including *PERSONIA NUTANS*, which is in danger of disappearing from the wild in a very short time. He suggested that further investigations be carried out to ascertain whether more of this species may be found in this area. Mr Miller stressed the importance of leaving a corridor which would allow the spread and migration of plant and animal species. DHA responded that vegetation surveys conducted by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney indicated that there are no rare or endangered species on the proposed development site. However, the mangroves (*Avicennia marina*) beyond the site are significant and protected.

98. Safeguards proposed for the area include the exclusion of development from the lands identified by the Royal Botanic Gardens reports (adjacent to Georges River) and additionally the margins of Williams Creek. These exclusions also recognise slope constraints, flood level constraints and landscape character and context constraints.

99. Safeguards proposed to protect the water quality of the Georges River include the operation and management of a Soil Erosion Control and Management Plan, and a Stormwater Pollution Control and Management Plan complying with the standards of the Soil Conservation Service, and the Pollution Control Manual for urban stormwater administered by the State Pollution Commission. Adoption and installation of these systems will prevent soil erosion, turbidity and water quality degradation to the Georges River, and will intercept run-off from the site that would

normally discharge into the wetlands area north of Sirius Road for discharge directly to Williams Creek or the Georges River.

100. DHA advised the Committee that the safeguards and standards proposed will protect the environment in the East Hills area.

101. DHA stressed that it will continue to liaise with the environmental groups and residents in the area and keep them informed of developments.

Committee's Conclusions and Recommendations

102. The Committee acknowledges that environmental safeguards and standards must be adopted by DHA in the proposed development of the East Hills site. The Committee believes that the water quality of the Georges River must be protected and that particular attention must be given to the freshwater catchment areas within the site.

103. The Committee agrees that development should be excluded from the forested slopes down to the Georges River and that a corridor linking the environmentally sensitive vegetation areas should be maintained.

104. The Committee commends DHA on its willingness to consult with the various environmental groups with regard to the East Hills site and stresses the importance of ongoing consultations.

Proposed Program

105. The holding costs for this property, at 18% interest, amount to \$20,000 per week. As with Randwick and Holsworthy, these costs are a direct burden on DHA's budget, and hence to the Commonwealth. Delay costs impact directly on DHA's ability to deliver housing. To reduce these delays DHA has commissioned a consultant, Richard Smyth Pty Ltd, to assist with the re-zoning of the land. A request for re-zoning was lodged on 3 August 1989.

106. It should be noted that delay in commencement of work may occur as a result of the time taken to obtain rezoning which is estimated to be of the order of 12-18 months, and as a result of probable delays in the availability of service headworks. It is anticipated that despite these delays, work will commence in late 1990 and the first houses will be handed over in mid 1991.

Development Costs

107. Site works and infrastructure costs are estimated at \$80,000 per block (a total of \$32m for 400 sites). House construction cost for a community standard three bedroom project home is estimated at about \$100,000 per house (a total of \$40m). This produces a total development cost for the East Hills site of approximately \$72m (not including land cost). The estimated cost to DHA for the 100 Defence houses which will be fully integrated throughout the estate is in the order of \$18m (June 1989 prices).

Joint Venture Development

108. By late 1989 or early 1990 DHA will obtain, through a process of expressions of interest, competitive proposals for the Joint Venture development of this site for the budget and delivery reasons outlined for Randwick and Holsworthy. The exact nature of the Joint Venture is not yet known. However DHA will use similar guidelines to encourage project homes for Defence personnel as part of the integrated housing strategy.

Cost Estimate

109. DHA advised the Committee that the estimated cost to it of the housing development at July 1989 prices is:

	\$
	m
Holsworthy	90.00
East Hills	20.00
Randwick	21.84
	\$131.84 Million

Committee's Recommendation

110. The Committee recommends the Defence Housing Authority proceed with housing developments at Randwick, Holsworthy and East Hills, Sydney at an estimated cost of \$131.84m at July 1989 prices.

Conclusions and Recommendation

111. The conclusions and recommendation of the Committee and the paragraph in the report to which each refers are set out below:

	Paragraph
1. The Committee agrees that a need exists to acquire suitable housing for Defence personnel within the Sydney metropolitan area.	25
2. The Committee acknowledges that environmental safeguards and standards must be adopted by DHA in the proposed development of the East Hills site. The Committee believes that the water quality of the Georges River must be protected and that particular attention must be given to the freshwater catchment areas within the site.	102
3. The Committee agrees that development should be excluded from the forested slopes down to the Georges River and that a corridor linking the environmentally sensitive vegetation areas should be maintained.	103
4. The Committee commends DHA on its willingness to consult with the various environmental groups with regard to the East Hills site and stresses the importance of ongoing consultations.	104

5. The Committee recommends the Defence Housing Authority proceed with housing developments at Randwick, Holsworthy and East Hills, Sydney at an estimated cost of \$131.84m at July 1989 prices.

110



Colin Hollis

Chairman

21 November 1989

APPENDIX A

List of Witnesses

- BENSON, Mr Douglas Howard, Senior Botanist (Plant Ecologist),
Royal Botanic Gardens, Mrs Macquarie's Road, Sydney,
New South Wales.
- BIRD, Mr Neil Thomas, Regional Manager, New South Wales and
Queensland, Delfin Property Group Ltd, Level 8
16 O'Connell Street, Sydney, New South Wales.
- CONDOLEON, Mr Andy, Director, Cosmopolitan Homes, Unit 1,
4 Iraking Avenue, Moorebank, New South Wales.
- EDWARDS, Lieutenant Colonel Alan Leslie, Staff Officer, Housing -
Army Office, Department of Defence, Russell Offices,
Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- FIRTH, Commander James Winston, Executive Officer, Naval Support
Command, Department of Defence, HMAS Nirimba, Quakers Hill,
New South Wales.
- GRAHAM, Mr John Edward, Chairman, Defence Housing Authority,
2 Brisbane Avenue, Barton, Australian Capital Territory.
- GRATTON, Lieutenant Colonel John Neville, Staff Officer,
Technical - Army Office, Department of Defence, Campbell
Park Offices, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- HILL, Mr Brian, Manager, Major Projects, Defence Housing
Authority, 2 Brisbane Avenue, Barton, Australian Capital
Territory.
- MILLER, Mr Robert Thomas, President, The Society for Growing
Australian Plants East Hill Group, 782 Henry Lawson Drive,
Picnic Point, New South Wales.
- MOSELEY, Mr Graham Edward, Consultant Town Planner, Scott and
Furphy Pty Ltd, 74 Emu Bank, Belconnen, Australian Capital
Territory.
- QUILL, Mr Steven, Managing Director, Civic Construction
(Australia) Pty Ltd, PO Box 69, Lindfield, New South Wales.

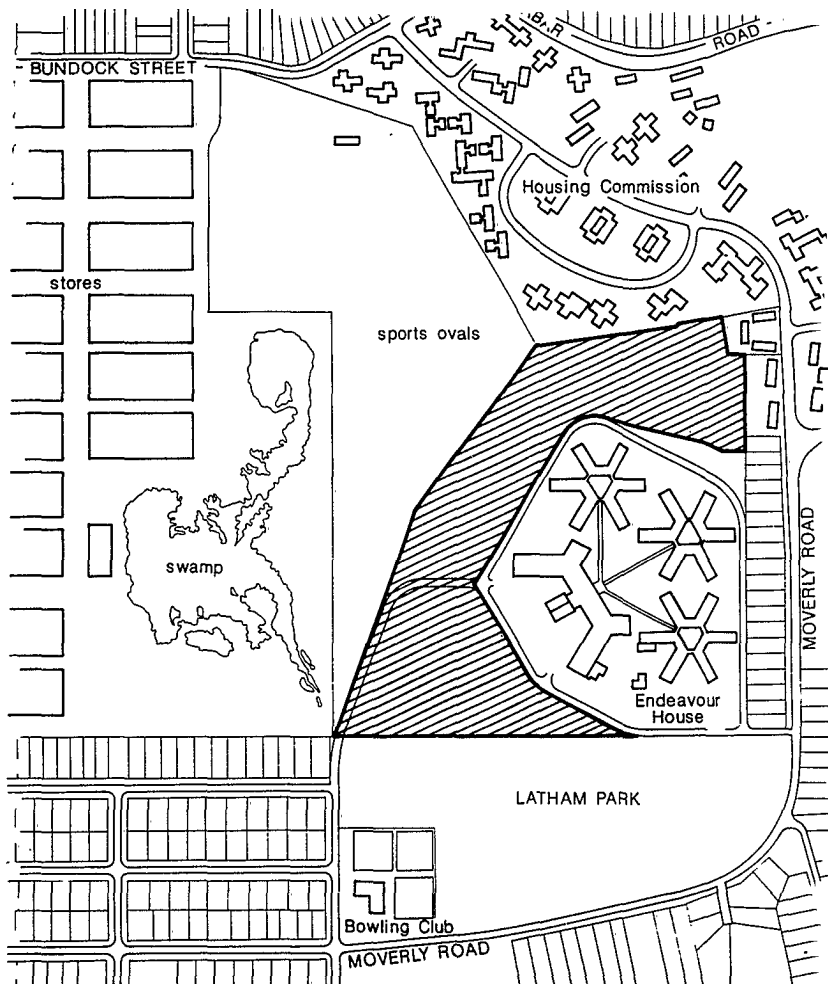
REEVES, Mr Michael David, Environmental Planner, Kinhill
Engineers Pty Ltd. 100 Hardwick Crescent, Holt, Australian
Capital Territory

TEMPLAR, Mr Rod, General Manager, Operations, Defence Housing
Authority, 2 Brisbane Avenue, Barton, Australian Capital
Territory.

THOMSON, Wing Commander Robert, Staff Officer, Accommodation -
Air Force Office, Department of Defence, Russell Offices,
Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

TRAINER, Dr Frederick Edward, Lecturer, University of New South
Wales, PO Box 1, Kensington, New South Wales.

Waters, Ms Kerry Margaret, Executive Officer, Liverpool Nature
Reserve Action Group, Lot 3 Pleasure Point Road, Pleasure
Point, New South Wales.

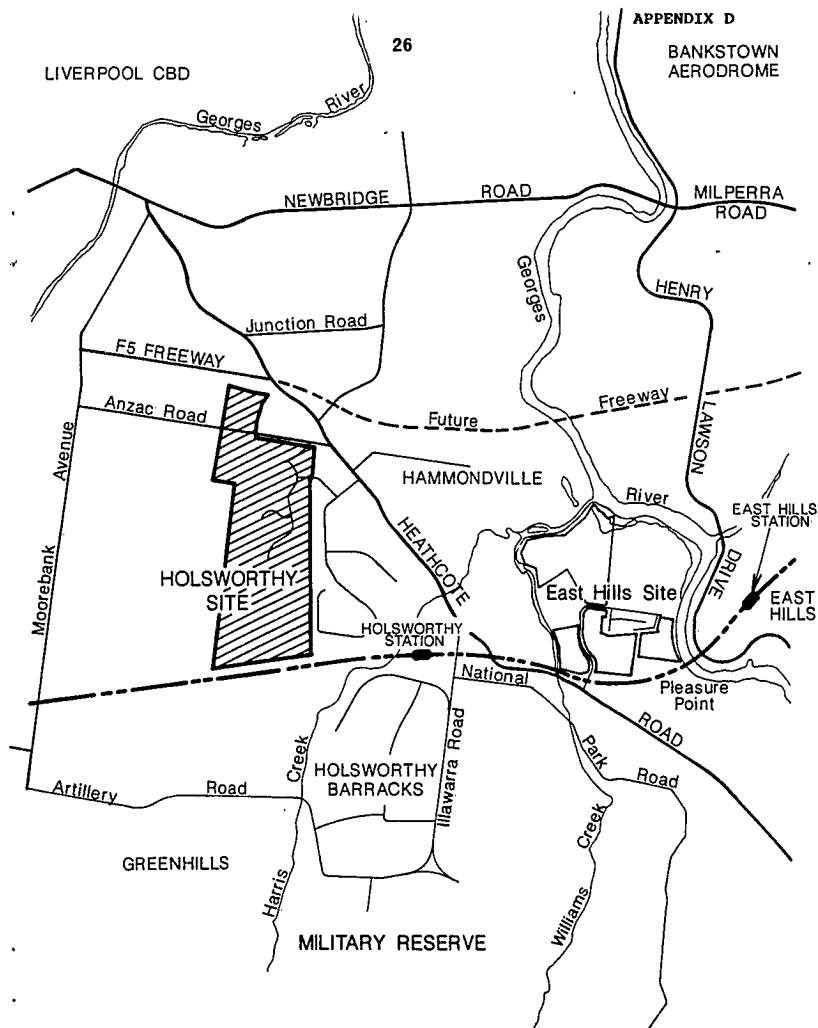


**SITE PLAN
RANDWICK**

0 10 40 80m



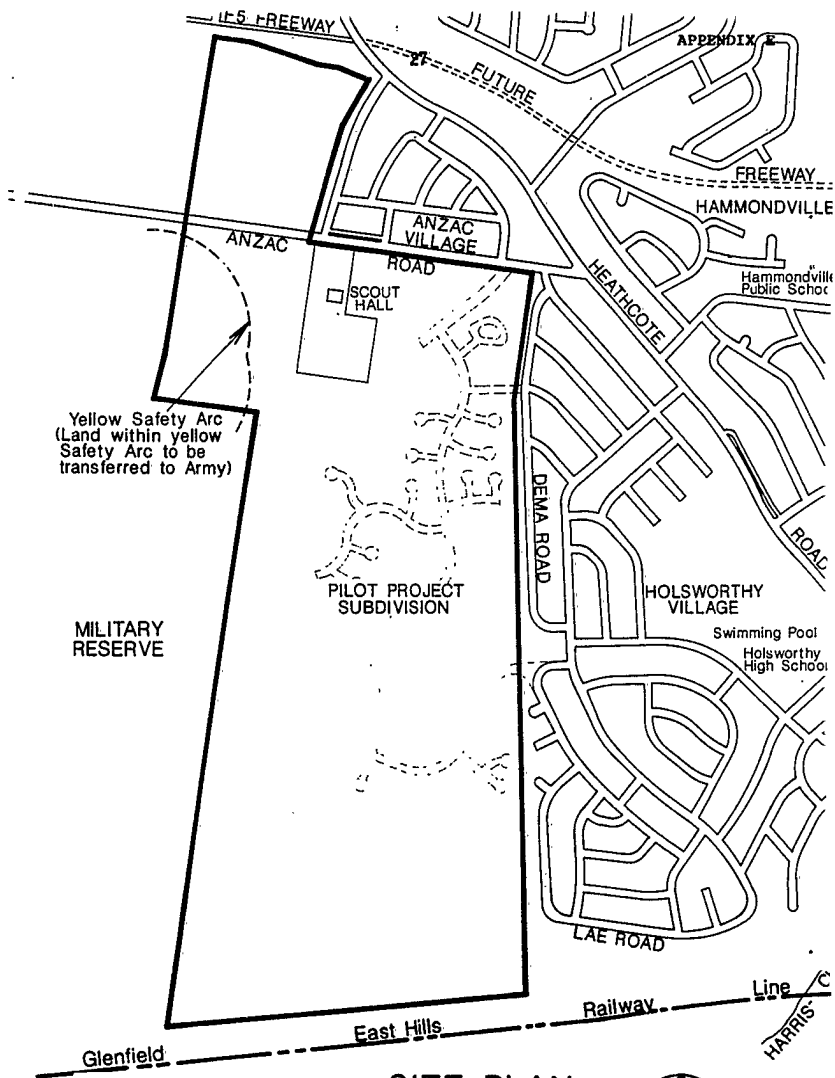
LIVERPOOL CBD



LOCALITY PLAN HOLSWORTHY SITE

0 500 1000 2000m

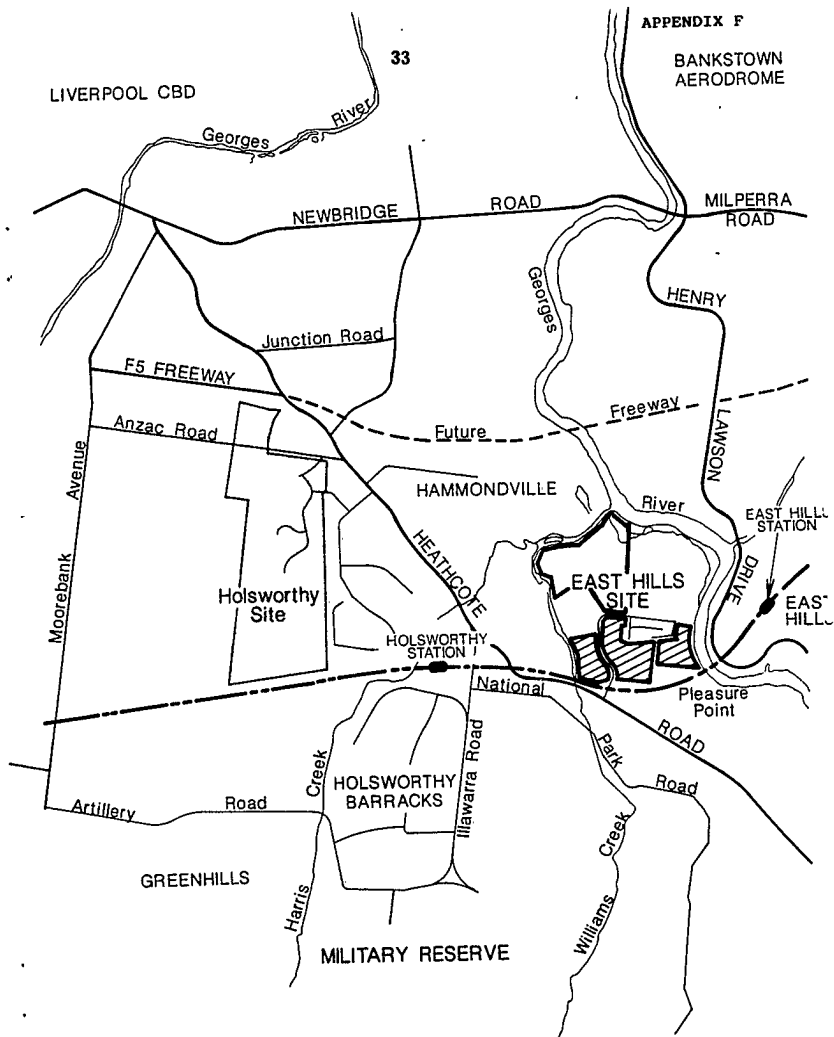




SITE PLAN HOLSWORTHY

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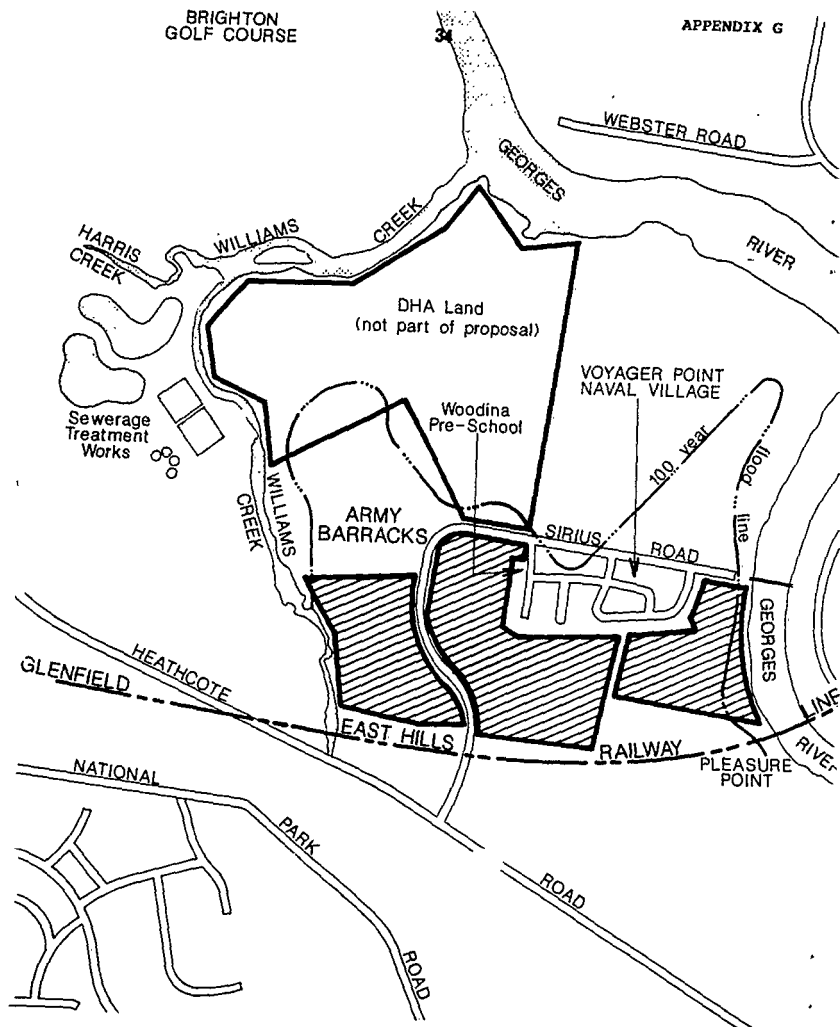




LOCALITY PLAN EAST HILLS SITE

0 500 1000 2000m





SITE PLAN
EAST HILLS

0 100 200 500m

