



## ITEMS OF SIGNIFICANCE



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## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to learn more about Mosman's Heritage, including historical records and photographs, please visit Council's website:

[www.mosman.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mosman.nsw.gov.au)

or Mosman Library, Local Studies Section.



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# BALMORAL SELF GUIDED HERITAGE WALK



# ITEMS OF SIGNIFICANCE

## BALMORAL BEACH

Balmoral comprises of a unique assemblage of natural and built features set on a large beach with panoramic views of the harbour. Hosting a range of land and water activities in these picturesque surroundings has made it one of the finest and most popular recreational areas in northern Sydney. Balmoral has significance at a local, state and national level for its associations with the development of public bathing in Australia and the development of Mosman Municipality. Balmoral Beach was named after Queen Victoria's Scottish Castle. It was dedicated as a Public Reserve on 11 March 1878 and proclaimed as Balmoral Park on 9 March 1886.

## 1 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Prior to European settlement in 1788, the Aboriginal group occupying the Mosman area was the Camaraygal Clan who formed part of a larger language group, the Guringai. The cave and midden indicate Aboriginals occupied the area over 3000 years ago. However, the rapid spread of European settlement meant that by the late 1800s there were few Aboriginals remaining in Mosman.

## 2 BALMORAL BATHS

The 1890s brought an increasing interest in public swimming and an increasing demand for better access and facilities, even though restrictions on open sea bathing were not lifted until 1903. In response to this new beach culture, Council constructed the Balmoral Baths in 1899. Leased to Robert Shearer they became known as Shearer's Baths, where men and women bathed separately. It is one of the few remaining harbour side baths in NSW. By 1912 an amateur swimming club was formed and in 1915, a group of local residents formed the Balmoral Beach Club, which has remained a sentimental part of Mosman to this day.



## 3 & 5 PROMENADE & ROTUNDA

The Great Depression facilitated some of the most extensive Local Government Works Programs undertaken in Sydney. Poorer areas directed unemployment relief work to essential public works, but wealthier Councils such as Mosman were able to further beautify the area through federal government grants. Initially, beach re-modelling was not universally admired and was cited as the reason why Mayor Buckle and Alderman Smith were not re-elected in 1932. The walkway, with the beach and harbour on one side and large Moreton Bay Figs on the other, has become a major characteristic of Mosman.



## 4 TRAM SHED

From 1913 a regular ferry service ran between Balmoral and Circular Quay on weekends, however, the harsh terrain of the area meant that Balmoral remained inaccessible for most Sydneysiders. When a tram line was established in 1922 crowds grew from 10,000 in that summer to 30,000 a few years later. The tram shed is one of the few remaining relics of the tramline.

## 6 BATHERS' PAVILION

The Bathers' Pavilion was opened in 1929 by Mayor Buckle. The design of the building is of a classical Mediterranean style, reflecting the architectural taste, construction economies and social mores of its day and remains predominantly intact. Council leased it to Mr. Shearer considering it may become a financial burden. It was used as a change room. In 1967, a tender was accepted for a restaurant and remodelling of the kiosk after a decline in the use of the change rooms, on the proviso they were maintained. The inclusion of a restaurant was to confirm Bathers' Pavilion as a new type of landmark.



## 7 THE STAR AMPHITHEATRE

The amphitheatre was built by The Order of the Star in the East, an offshoot of the Theosophical Society. Established in order to prepare the way for a new world teacher, the amphitheatre was built in 1923 as a venue for this teacher to address his audience. It was prophesied that he would enter the harbour walking across the waters of Port Jackson and rescue mankind from ignorance. In 1929 the order was dissolved and the amphitheatre was sold in 1931 and used for concerts and plays. Over the years it fell into disuse and in 1951 was demolished in favour of flats which are still standing.



## 8 CAMPS

During the 1870s - 1880s, Balmoral was renowned for its camps. These were used mostly by young men who worked in the city during the week. One such camp, known as the Artists' Camp, established at the northern end of Edwards Beach, included famous artists like Streeton, Daplyn and Livingston Hopkins.



## BEAUTIFICATION SCHEME

Mosman Council responded to Balmoral's growing popularity with a policy of land resumption in order to increase the amount of public open space. In the late 1920s, Council undertook an extensive public works program called the Balmoral Beautification Scheme which produced the Rocky Island Bridge, Promenade and Rotunda which were designed by Council's architect and building surveyor Alfred Hale. The latter two were funded by the State Government Depression Employment Projects.

