

ASSESSMENT OF

FRANK WALFORD PARK KATOOMBA

LAND SUITABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

MANAGEMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT ONLY

c. 1980²

1982 +

I N D E X

INTRODUCTION

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B.M.X. Track
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INTRODUCTION

Frank Walford Park is a large amphitheatre located to the west of the main Katoomba commercial and residential development. The land is owned in fee simple by Council, having been acquired for the provision of intensive recreational development.

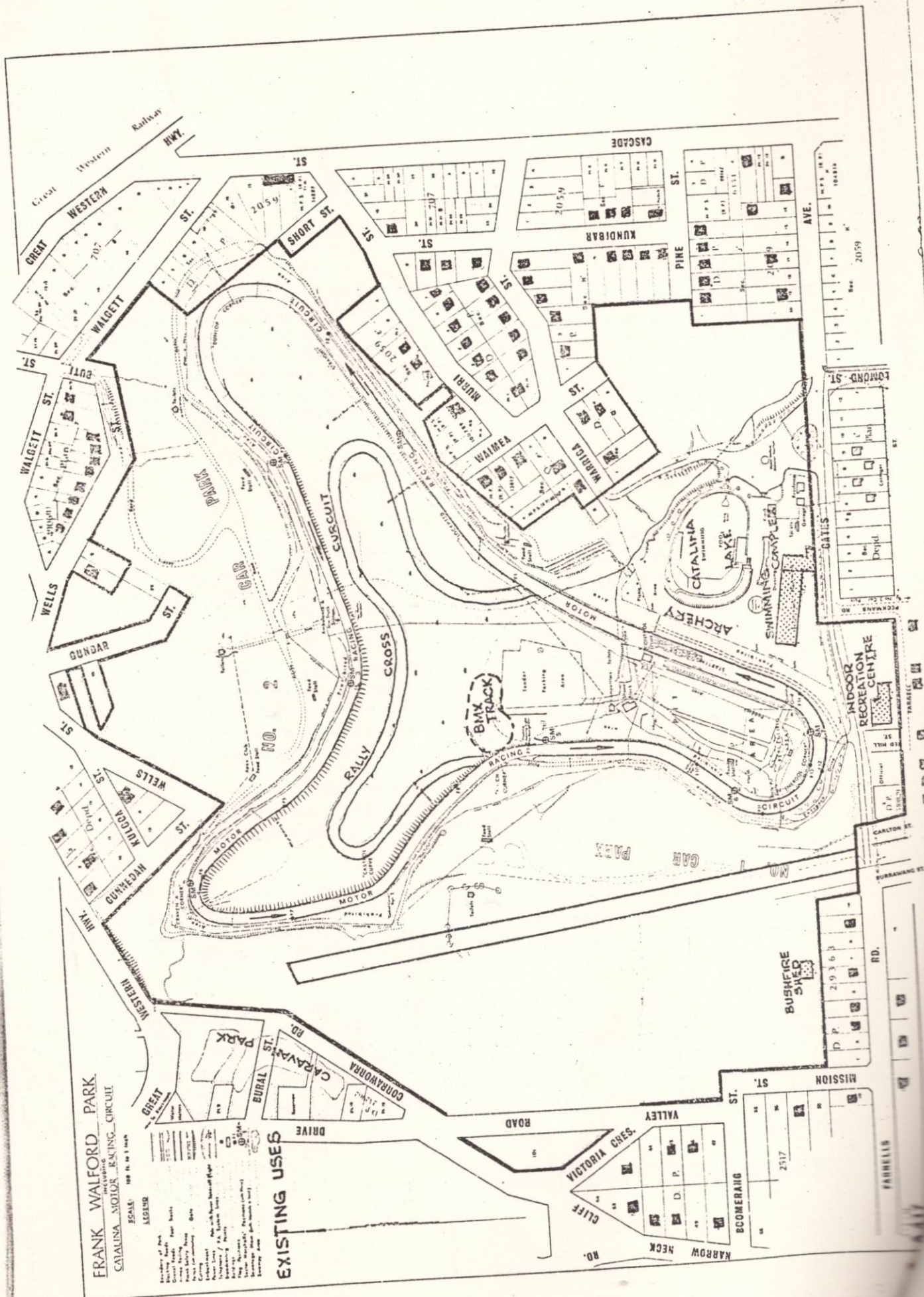
Traditionally, this area has attracted proposals for use as active recreation and the first action in this regard was the construction, in 1946, of an ornamental lake, fed by springs, in which was mounted a Catalina Flying Boat, hence the name of Catalina Park usually applied to the area. The lake was used for many years as Katoomba's only swimming pool, as the one at Leura Cascades was polluted. It was originally intended that playing fields, tennis courts and other recreational facilities would be constructed in conjunction with the ornamental lake, as a tourist attraction to the area.

The potential for such development was recognised by the Council of the day and the Catalina Pool was acquired, together with the surrounding lands within the amphitheatre. Consequently, the Catalina Racing Circuit was constructed by a group of local entrepreneurs and functioned from 1961 to the present time as a venue for motor car and motor cycle sports and car club rallies. In the meantime, the Katoomba Olympic Pool was constructed adjacent to the original ornamental lake and the Katoomba Indoor Recreation Centre was also erected in the vicinity.

In recent years, the potential of the site for recreation and cultural development has been the subject of a number of submissions by interested local people. Pressures have also been exerted on Council to upgrade the racing track for more concentrated use, due to the speedway facilities in the Sydney Region being absorbed by residential development. Similarly, tourist activity in the region has gained momentum and the provision of man-made attractions has become viable. Local residents have, however, shown concern for the possible increase in noise pollution and the destruction of the natural environment.

Considerable capital assets are involved in the developed area of the Park and, prior to further commitment of capital expenditure and increasing maintenance costs, Council has undertaken investigations to determine the ultimate management plans for the Park.

This assessment takes into account a variety of alternative uses and the environmental factors of the region, to resolve development principles and recommend actions and safeguards.



Climate:

Temperature range for this area is from mean maximum of 17°C down to mean minimum of 7°C.

Average rainfall is around 1400 millimetres per annum.

Winter snowfalls occur in this region but are usually light and infrequent.

The westerlies are the prevailing winds during the autumn, winter and early spring months. These are cold in winter and when prevailing in the summer months, have an extreme drying effect.

Physiographic structure of the Park provides a marked variation of climatic characteristics. Protection of the west and north faces of the area from the drying westerly/north-westerly summer winds and shading from the sun inhibits evaporation on these slopes and creates moist conditions throughout the year, as well as modifying the temperature range.

The high western ridge also protects the lower slopes of the majority of the Park. However, this factor tends to create a funnelling effect and concentrates the prevailing westerly winds onto the eastern slopes of the Park.

Water Budget:

The Park being situated in a natural amphitheatre, with ridges on the north, east and western sides rising some 30 metres above the level of the racing circuit, provides a collection area and focal point for surface run-off from surrounding residential areas. The contributing area is bounded by Narrow Neck Road, Great Western Highway and Katoomba Street. This area of catchment comprises approximately one-third (1/3) of the total catchment lands for the Katoomba Falls.

Swampy ground within the northern end of the racing circuit and above this on the slope, contribute greatly as a reservoir, storing for slow release water collected from the basin. This swamp controls the amount of water entering the creek and hence Katoomba Falls Cascades. Thus, acting as a sponge, it functions to regulate and purify water flow and to protect stream banks from erosion caused by high concentration of water and sediment run-off. Several creeklets to the east and west (some fed by head-water swamps) join the main flow below the Park, adding greatly to the concentration of water going into the Falls.

It is apparent that any development on slopes above the collection swamps will create serious erosion problems and increase surface run-off. It can be seen that sheet erosion is already occurring on the slopes leading up to the ridge on the northern and north-eastern sides of the Park, due to the combined effects of wind and water. These areas will need to be stabilised and re-vegetated. A major land slip occurred on "Dunlop Corner" and although investigations were undertaken to control this erosion, no action has been taken and the area continues to be of concern.

argument
against
disturbing
natural
&
slopes

It can be expected that a high concentration of pollutants occur in run-off from the surrounding built-up residential areas and surface run-off from roads. A great deal of turbidity also occurs by run-off from disturbed and scoured areas in the Park. Some evidence of pollution from sewer mains, which cross the Park, has been recorded, but this factor may have been corrected.

Although the swamp areas act as a stilling and settlement area for the run-off of surrounding areas, higher concentrations of pollutants and sediment will eventually degenerate these features and reduce their capacity to provide for natural control of water supply to the Katoomba Falls. Any pollution of these waters will eventually find its way to the picnic and tourist area of Katoomba Falls. Increased development of the Park must be modified by detailed consideration to eliminate any additional pollution and sedimentation.

Specific and detailed water flow measurements have not been made of the creek but it can be assumed that, due to the catchment area, at least one-third (1/3) of the water flow over Katoomba Falls originates in the Frank Walford Park area, principally by slow release from the ponding in the swamp areas, and these swamps must be preserved and protected.

*summit
must be
protected*

Detailed analysis will have to be undertaken of future development in relation to the swampland in the Park environs, in order to determine the impact on these areas and on the natural watercourse below. A factor that must be taken into consideration here is the likelihood of the creek being fed (in the location of the wetland) by natural underground springs, either directly through underlying rock strata or through upperlying rock strata in the form of a high water table.

Vegetation:

Predominant species in the belt of dry sclerophyll open forest to the western and northern side of the Park includes:

Canopy Trees (15-20 metres)

- Mountain Ash (E. Oreades)
- Sydney Peppermint (E. Piperita)
- Broad-leaved Peppermint (E. Dives)

Second Canopy Shrubs (1-3 metres)

- Broad Leaf Hakea (Hakea Dactyloides)
- Pine Leaf Geebung (Persoonia Pinifolia)
- Peach Blossom Tea Tree (Leptospermum Squarrosom)
- Hairpin Banksia (Banksia Spinulosa)