Green Regional Design: Philosophies, policies and products in the evolution of metropolitan open space in Sydney 1948-2008

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to investigate how and to what extent the provision of major open spaces has been integrated (or not) into the metropolitan planning process in Sydney over the last 60 years. There is a focus on three specific dimensions of this history: roles and influence of various agencies responsible for the implementation of open space; shifting values and concepts which influenced delivery of open space; and comparison of proposals for significant regional greenspaces against the parks and open spaces that eventuated. The analysis is based primarily on a review of statutory metropolitan planning strategies and annual reports of state planning departments and authorities. It is framed across three distinct periods of urban planning in Sydney: 1940s—1960s (a period framed by two robust strategic plans when the foundation of a metropolitan green web was activated); 1960s—1980s (implementation of 1968 strategic corridor thinking through to emergence of sustainability concerns in policy-making), and 1990s to the present (from early concerns for climate change through to the multivalent notion of green infrastructure).

Introduction
Contemporary concerns for sustainable urban form and the related issues of human and ecological health have renewed advocacy for the adequate and equitable provision of metropolitan open space. These concerns are supported by evidence from ecologists and social scientists demonstrating that connectivity of urban form, particularly open space, provides multiple benefits, including improved biodiversity, community cohesion, and physical health of humans, and reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Large-scale regional open space has long been valued as a quality-of-life resource for metropolitan residents, but different rationales have underpinned its advocacy and progress toward implementation has stuttered between missed opportunities and spectacular successes shaped and constrained by diverse cultural and
institutional frameworks. Sydney, for example, was bequeathed major reserves and national parks in the 19th century and thereafter has made faltering advances toward even a notional open space network.

This empirical paper is broadly concerned with how provision of major open spaces has been integrated (or not) into the metropolitan planning process in Sydney over the last 60 years. There is a focus on three specific dimensions of this history:

- Roles and influence of various agencies responsible for the implementation of open space;
- Shifting values and concepts which influenced the delivery of open space;
- Comparison of proposals for significant regional greenspaces against the parks and open spaces that eventuated.

The analysis is framed across several distinct periods of urban planning in Sydney: 1940s—1960s (a period framed by two robust strategic plans when the foundation of a metropolitan green web was activated); 1960s—1980s (implementation of 1968 strategic corridor thinking through to emergence of sustainability concerns in policy-making), and 1990s to the present (from early concerns for climate change through to the multivalent notion of green infrastructure). The significance of decisions taken in the late 1940s and late 1960s for comprehending open space planning in Sydney becomes evident.

1940s-1960s: The County of Cumberland Council
The County of Cumberland Council (CCC) was established in 1945 with the aim of preparing the first strategic land-use plan for the Sydney metropolitan region. Both the Council and the plan it produced were innovative; the planning scheme was the first statutory regional land-use plan for Sydney while the Council, comprising representatives of local government electorates, was a new type of authority, situated intermediate between local councils and state government. Its coordinative aspirations at times set the council against state level departments, whilst at times its regional outlook could be difficult to reconcile with the interests of its ultimate constituents. (Neutze, 1978).

Nonetheless, the CCC proposals for open space were a response to contemporary global and regional, rather than local, concerns. These included a rapidly growing population, a spreading suburban footprint, increased leisure time and access to automobiles, Sydney’s rising role as a destination for national and international tourists, and the knowledge and acceptance of the link between physical recreation and human health (Cumberland County Council, 1948, p.139; Winston, 1957, p. 45). The Planning Scheme for the County of Cumberland (PSCC), prepared by the Council in 1948 and approved in 1951, articulated three aims which reflected its regional outlook (Winston 1957, p. 39):

- coordination of land use;
- consolidation of development;
- conservation of natural and historical assets.
Open space was conceived as playing a critical role in achieving these aims and shaping the urban region. Its multiple roles included tempering the pressure of subdivisions, insulating disparate land uses, protecting scenic areas, articulating suburban sub-regions and providing recreational areas. The CCC typology of open space was broad and varied: open space included scenic and recreation parcels, productive land such as forestry reserves, agricultural areas, and institutional campuses, as well as land that separated built-up zones from each other. The five types of open spaces proposed - a county green belt, district open spaces, national parks and other major reserves (including foreshore scenic reserves), and rural areas - reflect this conceptual breadth, but even more importantly, initiated a comprehensive open space agenda across the Sydney metropolitan region.

The green belt
The green belt and district open spaces were novel elements for Sydney. The green belt was a central feature of the Planning Scheme, partly due to its projected size—128 square miles (332 km²), but also because of its primary role of containing urban sprawl. The CCC described it as ‘a girdle of rural open space encircling the urban districts and penetrating towards the centre between some of the outer districts, ensuring for all time ready access by urban populations to a countryside specially planned and maintained for their benefit’ (Cumberland County Council, 1948, p. 65). In reality, the green belt was a strip of open country on the outer fringe of the existing built-up area linking Ku-ring-gai Chase in the north to the (Royal) National Park in the south. Consisting primarily of grassland and scrubby woodland, its width and character varied with the terrain, with the more extensive tracts in open, undulating country with limited agricultural or scenic value (Freestone, 1992; County of Cumberland Council 1948, p.216).
Mostly in private ownership, it represented a little under 10% of the metropolitan (County of Cumberland) area.

The green belt was to be the antidote for ‘promiscuous urbanisation’ (Cumberland County Council, 1948, p. 129). It was conceived as a permanent barrier to suburban sprawl; that is, a check on the proliferation of premature, low density subdivisions. It would define the physical extent of the metropolis for the relatively modest target population in the PSCC, and was in effect an inner rural zone which would conserve rural land in production and preserve scenic landscapes. The primary basis of planning control in the green belt was a general prohibition against building on sites less than 2 hectares, considered the smallest area from which a livelihood could be obtained from full agricultural development (Freestone, 1992).

Many people, particularly developers and small landholders, interpreted the green belt as a government imposed restriction on development rights, and associated economic gains; as a result the green belt became highly contested. In addition, because the belt was adjacent to dynamic urban areas, it was highly vulnerable to growth pressures, and was steadily encroached upon. By 1957 16 km$^2$ was released for urban expansion; in 1959 the Minister for Local Government released a further 119 km$^2$, in effect abandoning the concept (Freestone, 1992).

The green web

The district open space system or the green web, proposed by the PSCC, was a network of open space within the area bounded by the green belt. The web was given the task of ‘preserving the identity of the urban districts, providing the means for physical recreation of district populations
and preserving much of the County’s best natural scenery’ (Cumberland County Council, 1948, p. 65). Comprising 22,000 acres (9 ha), it wove together patches of the existing open spaces lining Sydney’s dendritic river and waterway systems such as Middle Harbour, Lane Cove River, Wolli Creek, Cook’s River, Prospect Creek, Long Cove Creek, Duck River-Haslam’s Creek, and Iron Cove Creek. Unlike the green belt, this proposal responded clearly to landscape conditions, particularly topography, being largely comprised of land considered undevelopable. It also developed at a larger scale the incipient system described in the PSCC as the ‘singular great belt of open space’ extending from Bennelong Point on Port Jackson to Centennial and Moore Parks, and through to Botany Bay (Cumberland County Council, 1948, p. 137).

The green web proposal was also underpinned in principle by the normative standard of provision of 10 acres of open space per 1,000 people and a baseline size of 15 ha as an indicator of county significance (Cunneen, 1980, p. 114; Cumberland County Council, 1948, p. 136). A 1951 survey of open space based on these standards confirmed inadequate provision across the metropolitan area, poor distribution of types, and inappropriate siting of uses (Cunneen, 1980; Cumberland County Council, 1948, p. 136). The CCC marshalled this evidence to determine that the projected 30% population increase over the 25 year time frame of the Scheme would require an additional 9.5 square miles (25 km$^2$) of (local and district) open space plus 31 golf courses (Cumberland County Council, 1948, p. 136).

Although involving a relatively small amount of land, the district open space plan translated into an ambitious process of acquisition, particularly in the inner suburbs. The total estimated cost of the 1948 open space proposals - not including additional scenic spots - was £15 million (the
equivalent of $612 million in 2001), and assumed financial support from Commonwealth, State and local levels of government. When financial assistance was rejected outright by the Commonwealth, the required expenditure was reduced by two-thirds to £5 million ($204 m) by excising land categorised as built-up from the open space proposals. This left the sole category of lower value ‘vacant land’ and inevitably resulted in a significantly curtailed program of new open space development. It was however the key to state parliamentary approval of the Scheme in 1951, and led to arguably its most enduring outcome: an agreement whereby the cost of acquiring vacant land for open space, roadways and significant historic sites would be split 50:50 between local councils and the NSW State Government (Ashton, 1982, pp. 22-23). This agreement has been the basis of open space acquisition to the present day (Ashton in NSW DEP, 1982, p. 2).

Open space acquisition became one of the primary responsibilities of the CCC. By 1964, when it was superseded by the State Planning Authority, the CCC had spent close to £5 million ($92 million in 2001) on open space, approximately 70% of its total acquisition of land. In its 13 year history, the CCC had orchestrated the acquisition of significant parcels along the Georges River, in Bankstown, the Nepean River near Penrith, and large parcels of land in Middle Harbour, Galston Gorge and North Narrabeen. The incremental acquisition and development of recreational facilities along Duck River was hailed by the CCC as assembling the ‘Centennial Park of the west’. The CCC had also worked persistently, albeit opportunistically, to acquire small but significant parcels of harbour foreshore; open space reservations at Blue’s Point, Clifton Gardens, and Mann’s Point are all CCC legacies. From 1959, with the longevity of the Council clearly under threat, the CCC focus on the extension and establishment of even larger
green corridors of National Parks - along the Nepean, Georges, Lane Cove Rivers, and the upper reaches of Middle Harbour - signalled the CCC’s heightened concern for regional open space provision, and the need for continuity of some form of regional level administration. A proposal for Port Jackson National Park, one of the CCC’s most significant proposals, was made in 1963, on the eve of its dissolution.

1960s-1980s

In 1963 the NSW state government passed the State Planning Authority Act, which replaced the Cumberland County Council with a new state planning agency, the State Planning Authority (SPA). Structured to be more responsive to state government direction and positioned more effectively within the state bureaucracy, the SPA had a specialist division devoted to metropolitan planning. In 1968 the SPA produced Sydney’s second metropolitan plan, the Sydney Region Outline Plan (SROP), which rejected the green belt concept in favour of a robust, but flexible, framework for urban growth based on alternating corridors of transport and wedges of green (Spearritt and DeMarco, 1988).

In many ways, the SROP was a reflexive response to the weaknesses of the PSCC. Its proposed schema for urban growth was predicated primarily on the need to facilitate growth rather than to restrict it. The anticipated expansion of the urban area also represented new thinking about urban form, scale and structure and led to redefined boundaries of the metropolitan region. The plateaus to the north, west, and south displaced the green belt as a limiting factor. As a
consequence of this new and distant edge, urban growth was projected across the rural lands of the Cumberland Plain, and to the north and south to form a coastal conurbation. The potential detrimental effects of this expansion were offset through two significant innovations: the application of the corridor principle as a strategy for directing urban growth, and the introduction of urban release areas for planned new communities (Evans, 2008).

The SROP emphasis on an integrated approach to planning for housing, transport, utilities and recreation led to heightened concern for equitable access to and types of open space. Generally however, the SPA retained the PSCC notion of regional open space as an active component of urban form, and worked to shape the region by providing visual definition and green buffers. The key distinction was explicit application of the corridor principle to open space, and in particular the introduction of ‘special use corridors’, a new type of open space intended to encourage efficient movement of people, products and utilities across the metropolitan area (Evans 2008; State Planning Authority, 1968a, p. 53). Like the PSCC’s green web, the new corridor concept highlighted connectivity, but from a functional basis rather than the ecological basis implicit in the PSCC’s vision.

The SPA continued the policy of acquiring large parcels of land and extending existing recreation areas. Many of its acquisitions realised and extended the earlier proposals of the PSCC. For example, between 1963 and 1978 the SPA acquired land for parks along the Nepean River National Park, Sugarloaf Ridge in Middle Harbour, the Georges River and the foreshores of Sydney Harbour. The mechanism of acquisition was an extension of the CCC’s 1951 policy and formalised as the Cumberland Development Fund in the State Planning Authority Act in
1963. This allowed the SPA to move quickly to acquire land for open space (and roads) designated in both the SROP and on the same shared basis and with acquired lands eventually turned over to the relevant council or in some cases a state agency for management and development. A key difference was the extension of powers that also allowed the Authority to develop land (Ashton, 1982, p. 189).

Ironically, although predicated on a rejection of the Green Belt, the SROP in fact embraced and expanded many of the PSCC open space proposals. The SPA held up open space systems that had emerged from PSCC green web as exemplars, but (and quite significantly) without referring to the ‘web’ as the overarching framework for them. New recreation areas in Bankstown along the Georges River and the diverse, youth-oriented facilities along the Duck River were highlighted as evidence of the benefits of long-term open space planning and acquisition (State Planning Authority, 1968b, pp. 2-3). The SPA also followed through on the work initiated by the CCC on Sydney Harbour Foreshores, producing in 1967 the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Study Report which reflected the mounting concern for the protection of and access to waterfront areas.

The SPA also formulated what it claimed as four new open space proposals, but these also were effectively extensions of the PSCC. The key distinctions between the SROP and the PSCC were thus not in the proposals but rather in the strategies underpinning them. The SROP open space proposals shifted westward in focus, beyond the former green belt, and offered open space systems that were more clearly articulated than the extensive and idealistic zones put forward in the PSCC. As a group, and again like the CCC open proposals, the SROP open space proposals
had a strong focus on waterways, particularly the Georges River, and thus their inherently linear configurations readily aligned with the corridor principle.

The largest of these proposals in terms of land area was the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley/Regional Park. Hugely idealistic in scope, this has nonetheless resulted in fragmented realisation over time. The Penrith Lakes Scheme evolved from this proposal, along with Bents Basin Reserve in Penrith and Tench Reserve at Yarramundi (State Planning Authority, 1972, p.19; NSW Department of Planning and Treasury, 1988, p.11).

The second proposal followed the ridge running across the metropolitan area from Prospect Reservoir south-west to Campbelltown. Tracing the western edge of the urban area, the conservation of this ridge as open space would also protect the visual setting of Sydney (State Planning Authority, 1972, p. 19). The ridge also extended into the new city proposed at Camden, thus forming a green corridor; even more significantly, the ridge demarcated the boundary between Sydney’s largest catchments: the Georges’ River and the Hawkesbury Nepean. It also strongly echoed and overlapped small portions of the former green belt, and can be interpreted as a displaced version of it. Today, much of this area comprises the Western Sydney Parklands, which extends 27 km north to south and includes several significant regional recreational resources. It is anchored in the north by Nurrangingy Reserve, developed as a Bicentennial project, and within its perimeters are several Olympic facilities.

The third and fourth proposals were respectively for the conservation of the Georges River Gorge and Valley on the eastern side of the New City of Campbelltown, and for extensive
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parcels along the Georges River from Milperra to Chipping Norton. Both were extensions of the PSCC green web. Significant resources which emerged from these proposals included Georges River National Park and the Chipping Norton Lakes Scheme, the latter developed from the 1970s by a special purpose authority.

The SPA open space proposals presented were expressly about recreation and visual buffering, and each was advanced through the 1970s. The special use corridors, on the other hand, from their introduction in 1968 through to the 1980s retained an option for recreational use, which, in the absence of an overarching vision or strategy, left them vulnerable to opportunistic developments. The result today is that these lands have emerged as highly diverse green and grey corridors, with significant ecological, service and recreational resources (Evans, 2008).

The special use corridors were introduced as a network, averaging one kilometre in width, with the aim of facilitating the coherent and efficient expansion of metropolitan utilities. Like open space proper, they would serve as ‘wedges’ between the new urban areas and be available for recreation to the extent consistent with the primary needs of the public utilities. They also had potential to provide ‘parkway’ settings for future highways (State Planning Authority, 1968a; State Planning Authority, 1972, p. 18). With these strong overlapping, if not conflicting, uses in mind, it is not surprising that the special use corridors, initially presented as distinct from open space, became linked to it. By 1974, the SPA had incorporated the ridge open space system into its special use corridor category; resulting in a total of seven Special Use and Open Space Corridors in Western Sydney: Eastern Creek; Prospect; Horsley Park, Hoxton Park, and Minto and South and Ropes Creeks.
Much of the corridor land was in private ownership or long term leases, and much of it was productive. Some of it was under cultivation, some used for grazing; there were also private trot tracks, brick quarries and tips sprinkled throughout (Evans, 2008). In an effort to avoid the disputes that had plagued and ultimately undid the CCC, the SPA held two public enquiries into the corridors (Ashton, 1982, p. 190). The first of these, for the Horsley and Minto corridors, by planning consultant Walter Bunning in 1971 revealed no disputes and the recommendations for corridors were readily approved. The second inquiry on the five remaining corridors, by Professor Denis Winston, revealed numerous concerns focused primarily on the premise of setting a long term and large scale land acquisition process in the absence of a specific and designated use. Winston questioned the appropriateness of the corridor principle, citing reasons such as better locations for recreational use, unnecessary costs, and insufficient consultation and mapping (Winston Papers). His review also suggested several boundary changes to reduce costs and disruption to existing uses, as well as to establish more economic uses for the land in question (NSW SPA, 1974). Winston’s recommendations were swiftly overridden by the Minister, who firmly upheld the corridor principle. In effect this debate reflected the ongoing tensions between clamours for democratic representation and the need to exercise governmental authority for the future benefit of all (Conybeare, 1979).

In the late 1970s, the focus on the provision of open space shifted back to the inner urban area. There were two reasons for this: a research study published in 1975 demonstrated poor
distribution of ample space in the inner city; the other was the opportunity offered by the gradual closure of inner city industrial sites (NSW Planning and Environment Commission, 1975). The NSW Planning and Environment Commission, which replaced the SPA in 1973, initiated an Inner City Open Space Acquisition Program in 1977. Like the green web/corridor acquisition program set in motion by the PSCC and the SROP, the Inner City program drew on what was now known as the Sydney Region Development Fund to purchase designated parcels. By 1991, this program had supported several significant reclamation projects throughout the inner urban area, including Sydney Park, a 44 ha park in a former brick pit in St Peters, 5km south of the CBD. Brick pits in Burwood and Canterbury, both within a 15 km radius of the CBD, also became local parks and a park was created on former maritime industrial land at Mort Bay in Balmain, just west of the CBD (NSW Department of Planning, 1991).

During the tenure of the Department of Environment and Planning (1974-1979), significant changes for concepts and approaches to open space planning emerged from the growing concern for environmental degradation and corresponding legislation addressing these issues. State legislation in the 1970s included the National Parks and Wildlife Service Act (1974), the Heritage Act (1977), the Coastal Protection Act (1979), culminating with the Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP &A)Act (1979). The subsequent creation of agencies, particularly the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, expanded opportunities for long term development and maintenance of open space reserved in both the PSCC and the SROP. One of the first significant outcomes was establishment of Sydney Harbour National Park in 1975 which for the first time united several significant foreshore parcels under a single agency with a regional and conservation based agenda.
The EP & A Act also introduced a rigorous environmental focus to the planning process. During the 1980s, regional environmental studies were undertaken of open space systems across the Sydney metropolitan region. Examples include Penrith Lakes; Parramatta River; Sydney and Middle Harbour; the Macarthur Region, and the North West Sector. The studies established place-specific and environmental frameworks for future development.

The state also advanced an open space agenda focused on bush regeneration and ‘green’ links, first through establishment in 1983 of a new Metropolitan Greenspace Program; and secondly through the 1986 planning instrument known as Bushland in Urban Areas, which regulates the removal of indigenous plant species (NSW Department of Planning, 1991). The Greenspace Program directs state funds from the Sydney Region Development Fund to local councils to aid improvements to open space, mainly in the form of strengthening linkages between parks; it also has provided employment opportunities at the local level.

The legislation, policies and studies during the 1980s thus articulated an environmental, social and economic duty of care with regard to the development of open space in the metropolitan region, largely in the interest of implementing the 1968 metropolitan policy proposals. Key open space concepts that characterise the plans and policies of this time focused on restraining urban extension, encouragement of open space links, and development of open space in new growth centres. Sydney’s third metropolitan strategy, *Sydney into its Third Century* (NSW Department of Planning, 1988a), adopted an explicit policy of urban consolidation within the broader spatial framework of the 1968 corridor plan. The strategy reflected the mounting evidence of
environmental degradation, as well as the need to encourage the emerging new tourism and recreation economic sectors. It was quickly followed by two statements on open space: the 1988 New South Wales Open Space Strategy, and in 1991, Metropolitan Open Space. The latter summarised the existing framework for open space planning and management, but did not set out a new direction. The new proposals which emerged in the 1980s were catalysed largely by economic opportunities offered by the Bicentennial celebrations. Regional parks that emerged from Commonwealth and/or State funding include Bicentennial Park at Homebush Bay, now part of Sydney Olympic Park, the Mt Annan Botanic Gardens, created within the Eastern Creek to Campbelltown special use and open space corridor, and Darling Harbour.

1990s to present

Planning strategies in the 1990s were characterized by the language of sustainability: catchments, biodiversity, social justice and equitable access. The planning framework for the metropolitan region also expanded towards a polycentric ‘city of cities’ template (Department of Planning, 1998; Department of Planning, 2005). With regard to regional open space, the strong westward shift in population from the CBD to Parramatta and beyond was compromising equitable access. Open spaces, particularly the by now extensive and numerous national parks, continued to be valued as buffers between subregions of the metropolitan area. Likewise, open space continued to be valued as a driver of tourism and for its economic value, e.g. timber and water.

The significant changes that occurred had more to do with a rising recognition of the need for new facilities in new areas, and the need to develop a coherent approach to the management of
the special use and open space corridors, now largely in public ownership. For example, following state approval of the Western Sydney Orbital (now the M7 Westlink) on the western edge of the Eastern Creek to Campbelltown Special Use and Open Space Corridor, the NSW Department of Planning prepared the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan for the Regional Parklands (SREP 31). Gazetted in 2001, SREP 31 set out a framework for unifying the planning and management processes of what at the time was referred to as the Metropolitan Recreation Area. SREP 31 also established the role of NSW National Park and Wildlife Service in managing portions of the park, and for the first time in the history of this corridor, referred to it as a regional recreational open space. These aims focused on conservation and recreation, much like the state’s national parks, but they also recalled the 1948 and 1968 definitions of what open space can do in an urban context: the parklands would provide visual quality, recreation diversity and a break in urban development. In addition SREP 31 established the conservation of threatened species and ecological communities and the protection of water quality as two key roles of the parkland, thus marking a significant shift from the original intentions of these corridors (New South Wales Government, 2001).

SREP 31 reflects the fact that one of the strongest influences directing open space concepts in the 1990s was scientific evidence of severely depleted biodiversity in the Sydney region. The 1995 NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act mandated a role for the NSW National Park Service in the conservation of threatened species and endangered ecological communities across the state. Its maps of ecological remnants on the Cumberland Plain, completed in 2000, have been the basis of ecological restoration projects within several of the corridor spaces across Western Sydney. In the late 1980s, a not-for-profit group, Greening Western Sydney (GWS) initiated
several ecological regeneration projects in the corridors. By the late 1990s, their work had expanded to establish significant links between community-based ecological regeneration projects and improved social cohesion (Davies and Christie, 2001). In addition, the success of the GWS work in the Prospect to Campbelltown corridor so influenced official thinking that the ecological became the primary unifying component of the overall parkland which is over 5000 ha in size (URS, 2004).

Other significant achievements in open space planning in the 1990s are Sydney Olympic Park managed by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, and the incremental expansion of access and recreational areas on Sydney Harbour Foreshores through the activities of both the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, the latter a Commonwealth authority. Like Sydney’s open space corridors, and the parks to emerge from the 1948 green web, these initiatives have regional implications in terms of providing open space and articulating urban form; unlike the earlier parks, they have partly benefitted from federal funding. They offer lessons of long term planning, particularly with regard to the evolution of policies and legislation in response to emergent opportunities and concerns. They also present the persistent challenges of equitable access, sufficient funding for development, and the importance of developing creative and robust strategies for remediation and adaptable re-use. Comprising many sites and involving many levels and sectors of management, ultimately they both demonstrate the complexity of planning and managing large open spaces in the 21st century.

**Summary**
This review of planning for open space in metropolitan Sydney reveals that many of the significant greenspaces across the region derive from the 1948 Planning Scheme for the County of Cumberland. While ideas about open space expanded to include concern for ecological diversity and environmental health, in general terms they have changed little since the mid 20th century. The Sydney Region Outline Plan extended the earlier proposals to take in the newly defined urban region, and introduced a new type of corridor open space which articulated its proposed urban form. Even so, the corridor principle as applied to open space aligned strongly with the 1948 green web, which traced many of the region’s waterways.

Both the 1948 and 1968 proposals attempted to implement a system-based approach to open space. This may have been foiled in the 1970s as the government responded to urgent needs and opportunities presented by defunct industrial land, and in the 1980s as funding for Bicentennial celebrations shifted the focus to opportunistic individual projects and away from the larger conceptual framework of webs and corridors. In general then, from the mid twentieth century, metropolitan open space planning in Sydney has evolved from the original plan but has become more responsive to regional issues, and diversified in terms of form and management structure.
References


The Winston Papers, Sydney University Archives.