

GATEWAY TO THE WALSH BAY WALK

From 1910 until 2005, the public was locked out of Walsh Bay for their own safety and the security of goods being loaded and discharged. The adaptive reuse of the buildings and infrastructure of Walsh Bay to become a cultural, residential and retail precinct has now returned this part of the waterfront to Sydneysiders.

The 1665m long, self-guided Walsh Bay Walk has been planned to help you understand the intricacies of Walsh Bay when it was a working port, how it has been altered and reused, and its place in Sydney's cultural and natural heritage.

A numbered information marker like this one has been fixed at each stop on the walk. It includes directions to the next stop and a small map indicating 'points of interest' where artefacts, special views, photo opportunities and information about events from the history of Walsh Bay can be found.

NOTE:

The Walsh Bay Walk includes some very steep stairs and pathways.

- 1 STOP ONE**
On the Waterfront exhibition
An introduction to the natural and cultural heritage of Walsh Bay

 - Photographic history of the working harbour at Walsh Bay
 - Artefacts from the working life of the wharves
- 2 STOP TWO**
Out to sea
The construction of Pier 2/3

 - Original hardwood piling on open display
 - Panoramic harbour views from Balmain to Kiarabily (Kirribilli)
- 3 STOP THREE**
The public promenade
New public access along the waterfront created by the Walsh Bay redevelopment

 - Original shore shed architecture
 - Horse hitching rings
- 4 STOP FOUR**
Cultural pioneers
The adaptive reuse of Pier 4/5 in 1984 as a home for theatre and dance

 - 1985 Sulman Award for Architecture and RAA Award for a Recycled Building
- 5 STOP FIVE**
A new way of life
The new Shore Apartments

 - New construction below the waterline
 - Retained elements of original wharf architecture
 - Displays of heritage technology salvaged from the working wharves
 - List of industry awards won for the Walsh Bay redevelopment
- 6 STOP SIX**
Pier 8/9
Original pier designed with 3 levels and equipment specifically for handling wool exports

 - 'Dolphins' used to tie up vessels
 - Original gantry crane
 - Wool bale slide
 - Walsh Bay hydraulic pump
 - Accumulator and pump for hydraulic goods handling systems
 - Electric wool bale elevator
 - View of original Monier pre-fabricated concrete seawall at low tide
- 7 STOP SEVEN**
Towns Place
The site of Robert Towns' whaling and trading empire. Heritage buildings and archaeological investigations.

 - Wharf labourers' ablution block
 - Public weigh bridge
 - Reconstructed sandstone wall from Towns warehouse c 1860
 - Site of the 'bull ring' labour pick up point during the Great Depression
 - Artefacts displayed throughout the new building
 - Towns Place in 1865 - bronze model
- 8 STOP EIGHT**
Downhill task
The topography that influenced the multi-level design of Walsh Bay

 - View of Hickson Road, an industrial boulevard
 - Stairways that replaced the original horse ramps
 - Original plated and riveted bridge over Hickson Road
- 9 STOP NINE**
Parbury ruins
The archaeological investigation and display of an 1820s house

 - View of 1820s house ruins
 - Ferry Lane
 - Park with archaeological excavation
 - Hero of Waterloo pub
 - No 67 Windmill Street
- 10 STOP TEN**
Walsh Bay in detail
This high point reveals many details of Walsh Bay

 - Site of old Hickson Road boxing gym
 - New Sydney Theatre
 - Different bridge building techniques used to span Hickson Road
 - Heavy duty metal kerb rails
- 11 STOP ELEVEN**
Architectural heritage of the precinct

 - Sandstone wall revealing previous excavations
 - Parbury Park, site of original access to Parbury long shore wharf and stores.

OUT TO SEA

STOP 2 POINTS OF INTEREST

A Views across the harbour

Looking from far left to far right the significant geographical features are:

Balmain, named after William Balmain a surgeon on the First Fleet;

Melmel (the eye) was renamed Goat Island by Europeans who grazed goats there;

Balls Head, named after Lieutenant Henry Ball who discovered Lord Howe Island;

Warungareeyuh / Blues Point (with the single tower block), named after American sailor Billy Blue;

Gooveebahree / Lavender Bay (opposite), named after ferryman George Lavender;

Milsons Point, named after landowner James Milson;

and, to the far right (under the bridge), Kiarabily renamed Kirribilli.

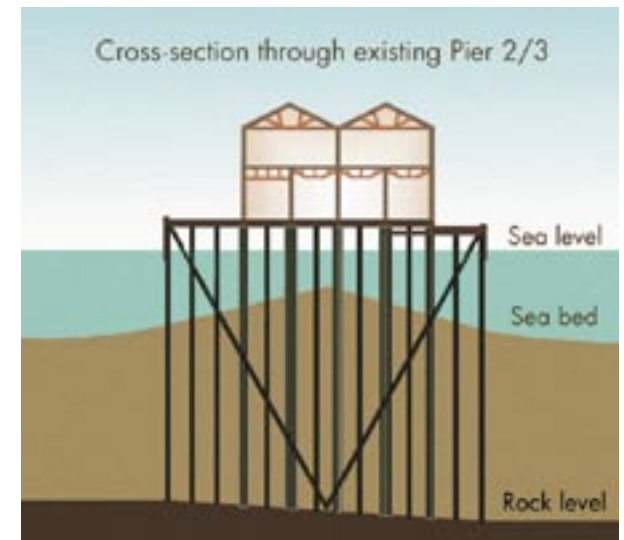
(if known or part of a dual name, the indigenous name appears first)

SOURCE: Geographical Names Board of NSW;
Barani - Indigenous History of Sydney City.
© 2002 Sydney City Council

B Original hardwood piling

Parts of Walsh Bay are 30 metres deep. The original wharves were supported on a total of more than 4000 wood piles of up to 40 metres length driven through the layers of silt and mud on the harbour floor into bedrock. Native turpentine (*Syncarpia laurifolia*) trees were used for their strength and natural resistance to seawater and decay. Piles were fabricated from two or three sections spliced and then 'fished' together with galvanised hoops.

The end of the pier is equivalent to a 40 metre high building and you can sometimes feel it sway when the tide changes.



A cross-section drawing of the Pier
Courtesy HPA

- 160 metres
- 18.5 metres
- 1 Stop 1 is in the breezeway of Pier 2/3
 - 2 You are at Stop 2 of the Walsh Bay Walk
 - 3 Stop 3 is back at the start of the public promenade



Tarra
(Dawes Point)

Coodyee
(Millers Point)

THE PUBLIC PROMENADE

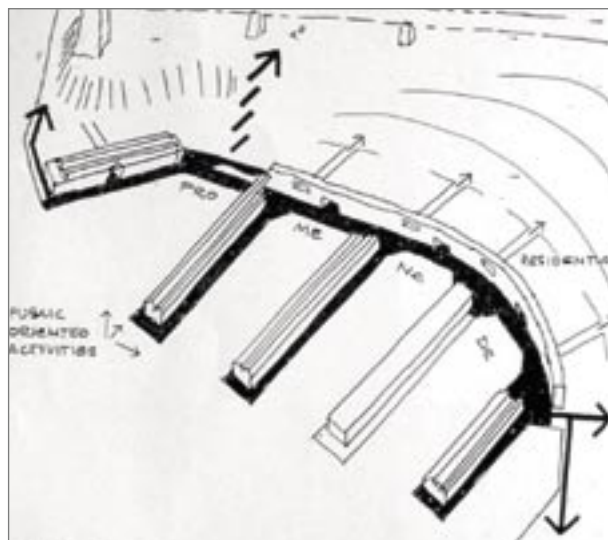
Metal gates at the entrance to each finger Wharf and the Shore-Shed buildings that ran along Hickson Road barred public access to the waterfront for more than 80 years.

STOP 3 POINTS OF INTEREST

A Shore-Sheds

These are the buildings that run between and across the ends of the main finger Wharves or Piers. Small vessels would tie up close to shore between the piers to discharge and load cargo to and from the Shore-Sheds. The Sheds also contained the gatekeeper's office and at one time immigration facilities.

The redevelopment of Walsh Bay has retained the original Shore-Sheds between Pier 2/3 and Pier 4/5 to demonstrate how a complete section of the original complex looked and worked for small and large cargo vessels.

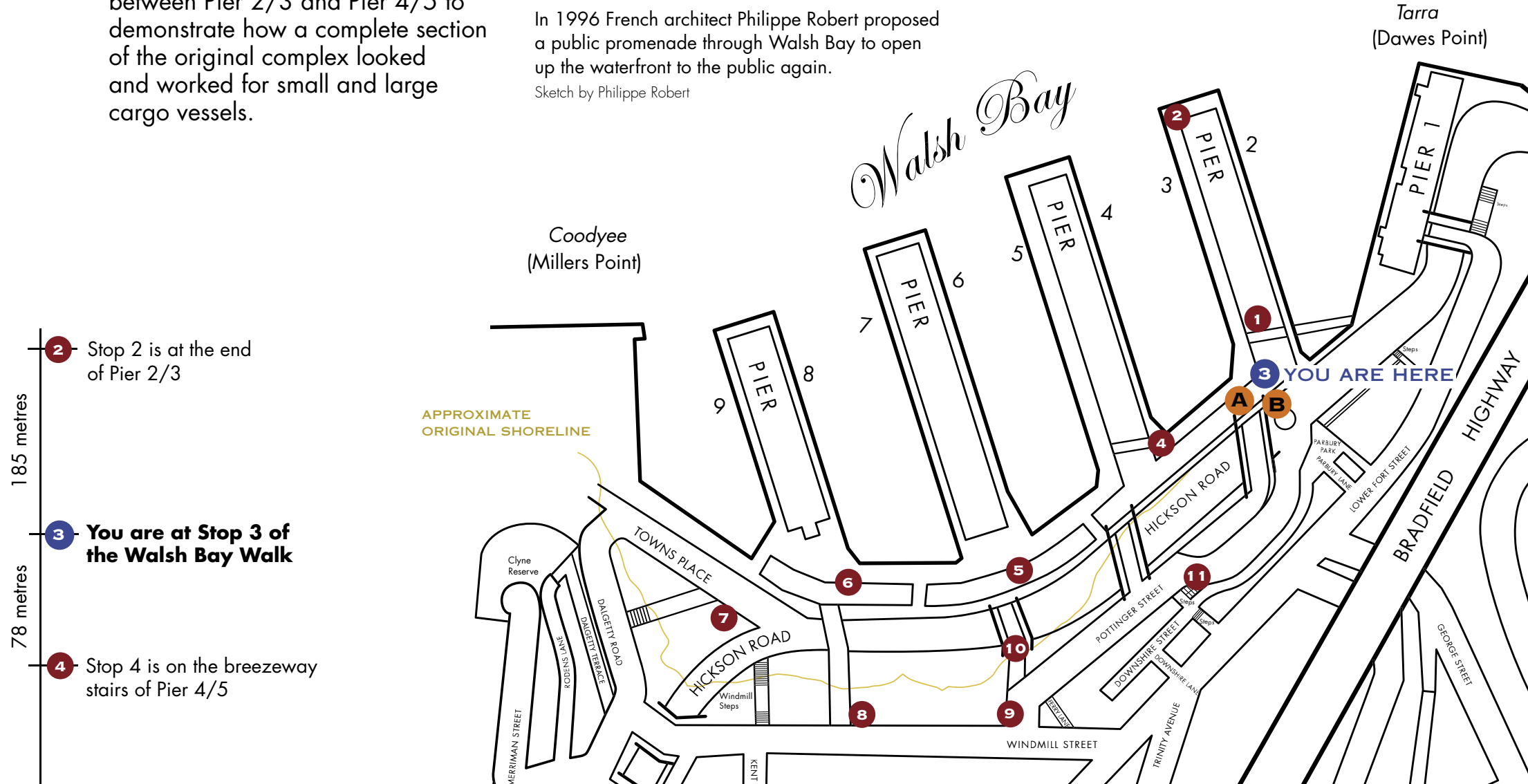


In 1996 French architect Philippe Robert proposed a public promenade through Walsh Bay to open up the waterfront to the public again.

Sketch by Philippe Robert

B Horse hitching rings

Teams of heavy horses were still being used to pull loaded wagons to and from the wharves in the early 20th century. Hitching rings remain in the Hickson Road façade of the Shore-Shed where horses were once tethered.



CULTURAL PIONEERS

When Walsh Bay stopped operating as a cargo facility in the early 1980s, the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings was gaining favour. NSW Premier Neville Wran decided that Pier 4/5 (the Central Wharf), should be redeveloped according to these principles, as a home for the Sydney Theatre and Sydney Dance companies.

STOP 4 POINTS OF INTEREST

A Treading the Boards

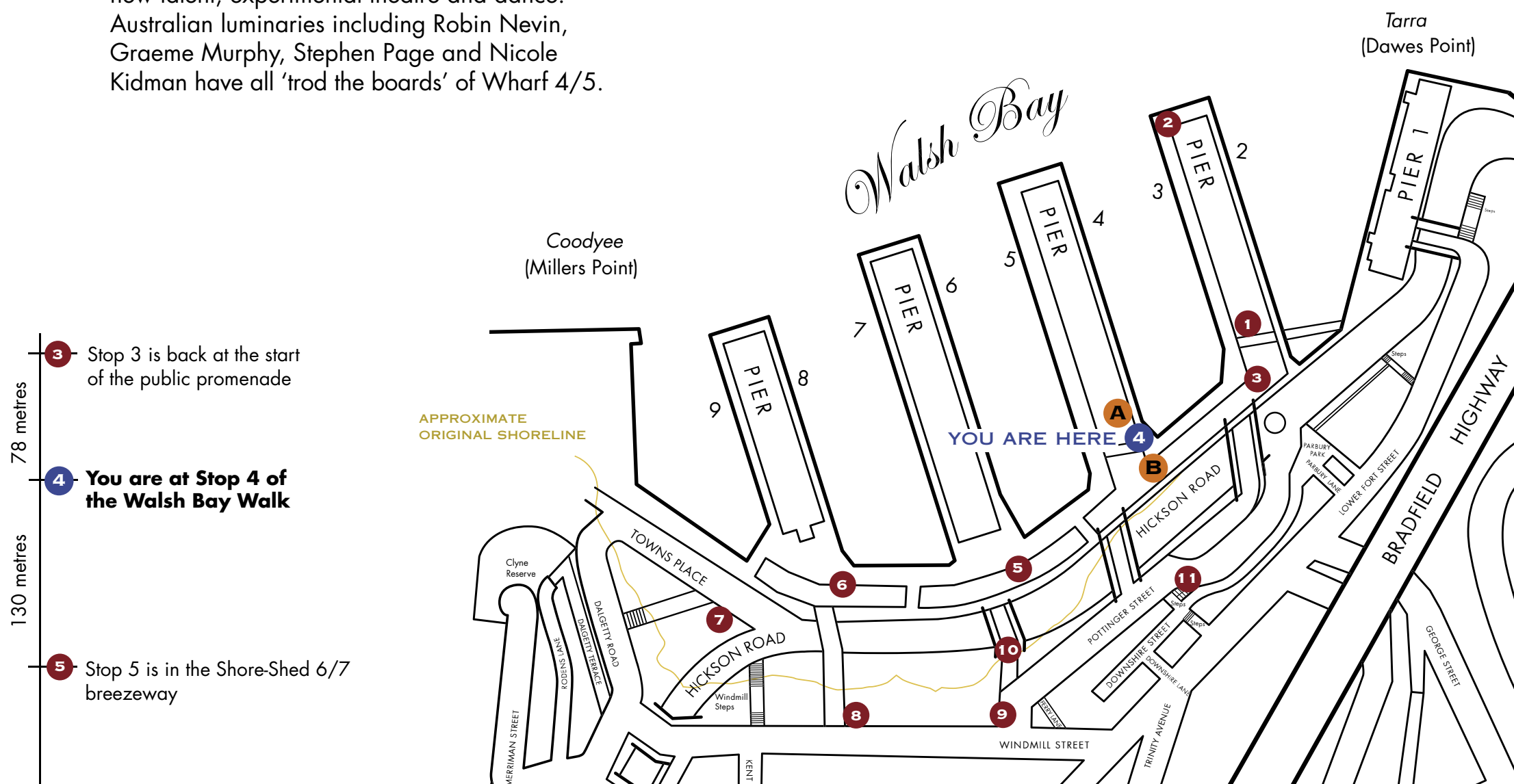
When the new Wharf Theatre opened in 1984, it received accolades for the innovative performances it hosted. In the wharf you will also find the Bangarra Dance Theatre founded in 1989, and the Australian Theatre for Young People.

The Wharf has become a breeding ground for new talent, experimental theatre and dance. Australian luminaries including Robin Nevin, Graeme Murphy, Stephen Page and Nicole Kidman have all 'trod the boards' of Wharf 4/5.

B Architectural merit

The redevelopment of Pier 4/5 received accolades for its adaptive reuse. On the wall near the Hickson Road entrance you will find the Royal Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter Sulman Award and President's Award for Recycled buildings.

Return to this point to continue the Walsh Bay Walk.



A NEW WAY OF LIFE

The combined ravages of termite infestation and exposure to saltwater slowly destroyed the structural integrity of some of the original Walsh Bay buildings to a point where saving them was not longer viable.

A masterplan for Walsh Bay by French architect Phillippe Robert included demolition of Pier 6/7 and its shore shed to be replaced by new residential buildings whose design recaptured the proportions and rhythm of the buildings they replaced.

STOP 5 POINTS OF INTEREST

A Echoes of the past

Materials from the original buildings have been salvaged and reused. Trachyte blocks indicate the original level of the pier deck. Supported by four timber pilings, they in turn supported storey posts that held the roof trusses. Some of the storey posts have been integrated into the new colonnade. The area of dark coloured concrete indicates where the original Pier-Shed met the Shore-Sheds.

B Underwater architecture

The design of Pier 6/7 includes a carpark built below the high water mark.

C Technology

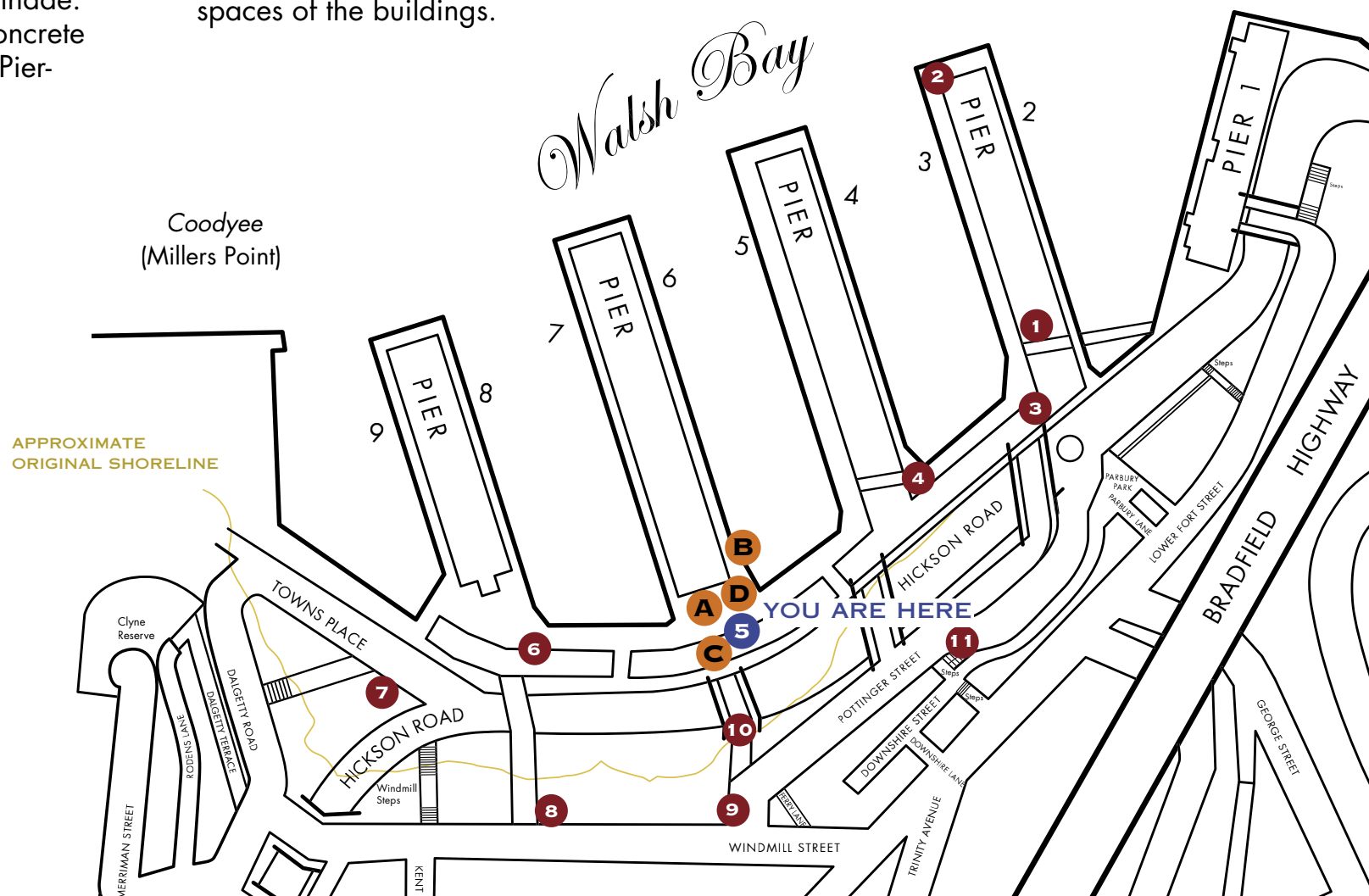
In the breezeway you will find heritage technology incorporated into the public spaces of the buildings.

D List of Awards

The recent redevelopment of the Walsh Bay precinct by the Walsh Bay Partnership has won more than 65 awards to date (Dec 2006) including, but not limited to, the Walter Burley Griffin award, the Lloyd Rees award for outstanding urban design and the Exemplars award.

Tarra
(Dawes Point)

- 130 metres
- 120 metres
- 4 Stop 4 is on the breezeway stairs of Pier 4/5
 - 5 **You are at Stop 5 of the Walsh Bay Walk**
 - 6 Stop 6 is in the Shore-Shed 8/9 breezeway

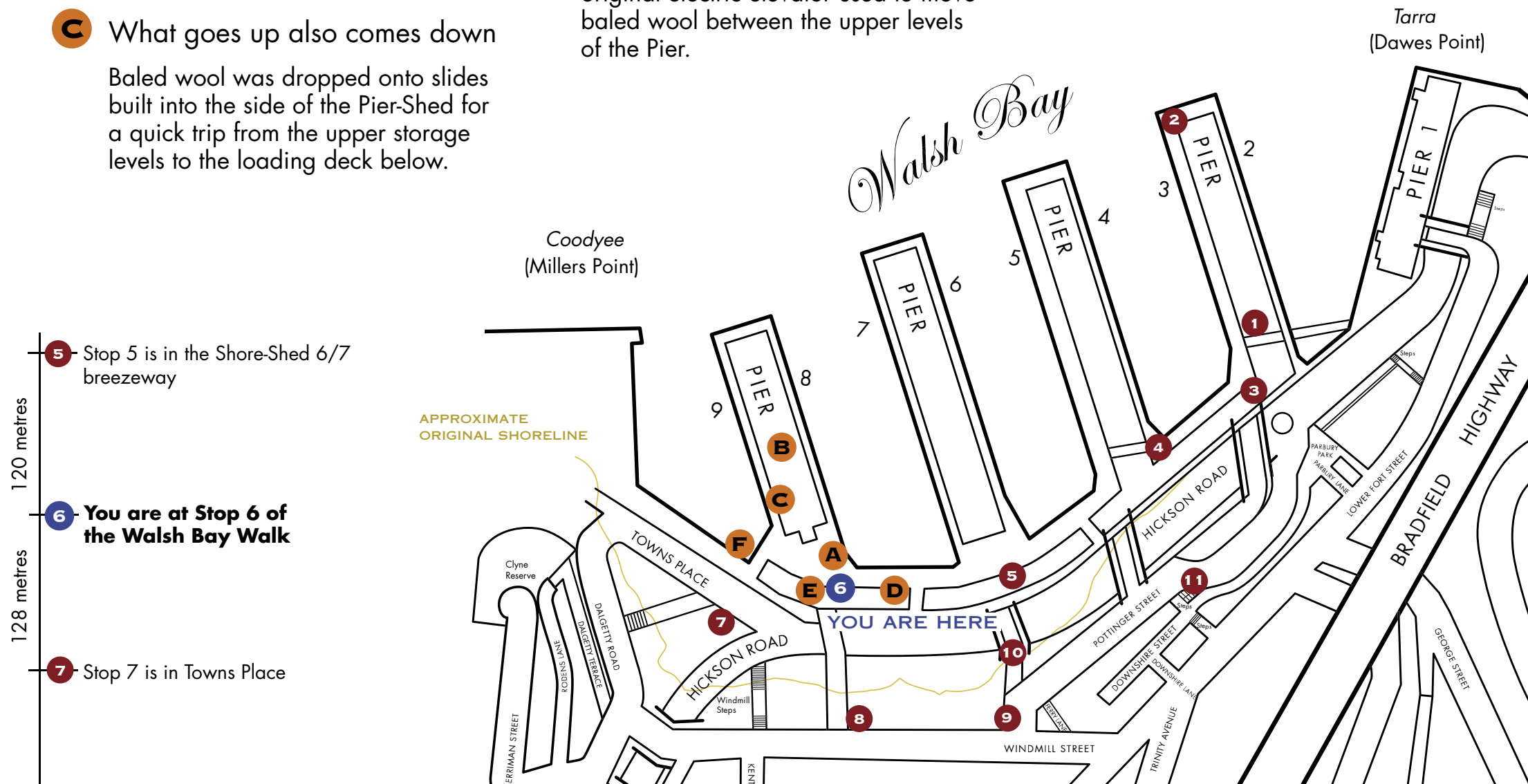


PIER 8/9

The only three level Pier-Shed at Walsh Bay was designed specifically for handling wool. The design exploited gravity and technology to speed the movement of baled wool through the building and onto ships. Today the Pier-Shed is reused as office space.

STOP 6 POINTS OF INTEREST

- A** 'Dolphins'
Used in tying up large vessels
- B** Wool handling equipment
In the centre foyer of Pier 8/9 you can see the overhead gantry crane once used to move wool bales, and the marks made by Wharfie's trolleys in the timber deck.
- C** What goes up also comes down
Baled wool was dropped onto slides built into the side of the Pier-Shed for a quick trip from the upper storage levels to the loading deck below.
- D** Hydraulic accumulator and pump (inside retail lot)
This equipment provided hydraulic power throughout the Walsh Bay Wharf complex.
- E** Wool bale elevator
Alongside the modern hydraulic passenger lift you can inspect the original electric elevator used to move baled wool between the upper levels of the Pier.
- F** Seawall
On your way to Stop 7 of the Walsh Bay Walk you may catch a glimpse of the original 'rat proof' Monier pre-cast concrete seawall when it's low tide. When rat-borne plague struck Sydney in 1900, decrepit wharves and sea walls were identified as likely breeding grounds for rats. The wall was built by the Sydney Harbour Trust as part of the reconstruction of Sydney's ports.



5 Stop 5 is in the Shore-Shed 6/7 breezeway

6 You are at Stop 6 of the Walsh Bay Walk

7 Stop 7 is in Towns Place

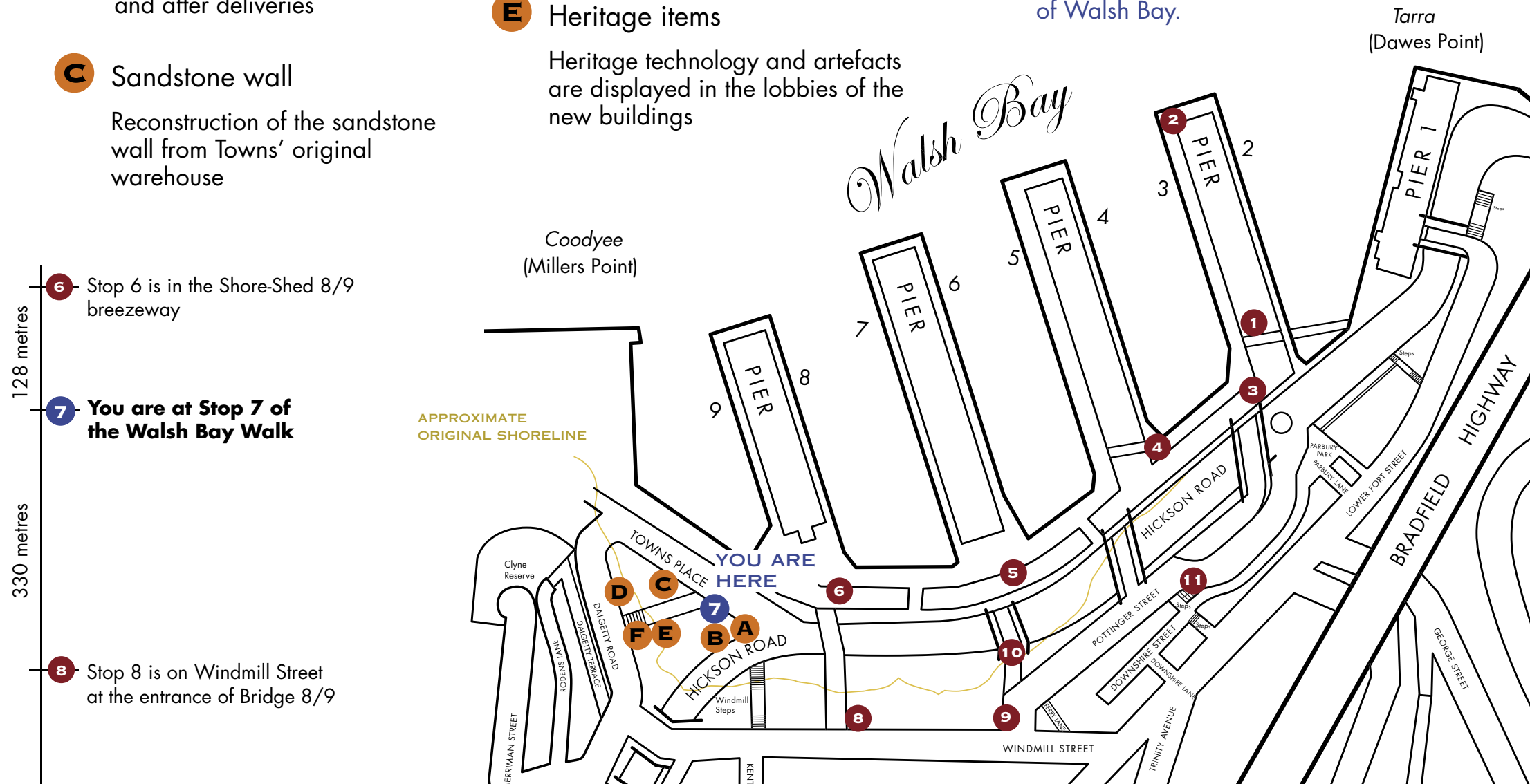
TOWNS PLACE

This was the site of Captain Robert Towns' Whaling and trading empire in the 1850s and 60s. Archaeological investigation has revealed the walls of his stone warehouse and uncovered artefacts from whaling and south-sea trade. At the 'entrance' to Walsh Bay, Towns Place was a pick-up point for labourers, and the site of an ablutions block and weighbridge.

An alternate route to Stop 8 is via the staircase through the centre of Towns Place Plaza where you will see heritage technology displayed in the new buildings.

STOP 7 POINTS OF INTEREST

- A** Ablutions block
Wharf labourers' could clean up here after a hard day's work
- B** Public weigh-bridge
Used to weigh vehicles before and after deliveries
- C** Sandstone wall
Reconstruction of the sandstone wall from Towns' original warehouse
- D** The 'bull ring'
The site of the 'bull ring' where labourers vied to be chosen for a day's work on the wharves during the Great Depression and when Hickson Road was part of the notorious 'Hungry Mile'
- E** Heritage items
Heritage technology and artefacts are displayed in the lobbies of the new buildings
- F** Bronze model of Towns Place
You can follow Dalgety Road to Stop 8 on the upper level of Walsh Bay. On your way you will see (within the building lobby) the architecture of Millers Point that influenced the design of new buildings in the redevelopment of Walsh Bay.



6 Stop 6 is in the Shore-Shed 8/9 breezeway

7 You are at Stop 7 of the Walsh Bay Walk

8 Stop 8 is on Windmill Street at the entrance of Bridge 8/9

DOWNHILL TASK

From here you can appreciate how the natural topography contributed to the multi-level design of the streets and wharves of Walsh Bay. The roadway from Windmill Street over Hickson Road to the third floor of Pier 8/9 was built in 1912. Prior to this it was a Winchcombe Carson & Co Wool Store and Showroom.

STOP 8 POINTS OF INTEREST

A Hickson Road

Good views down onto Hickson Road, for many years one of Sydney's widest roadways, an 'industrial boulevard' taking the natural wealth of Australia to the world.

B Stairways

Stairways between the upper and lower levels of Walsh Bay replaced 19th century cart ramps where teams of heavy horses once dragged cargo up to storehouses and down to the Wharves.

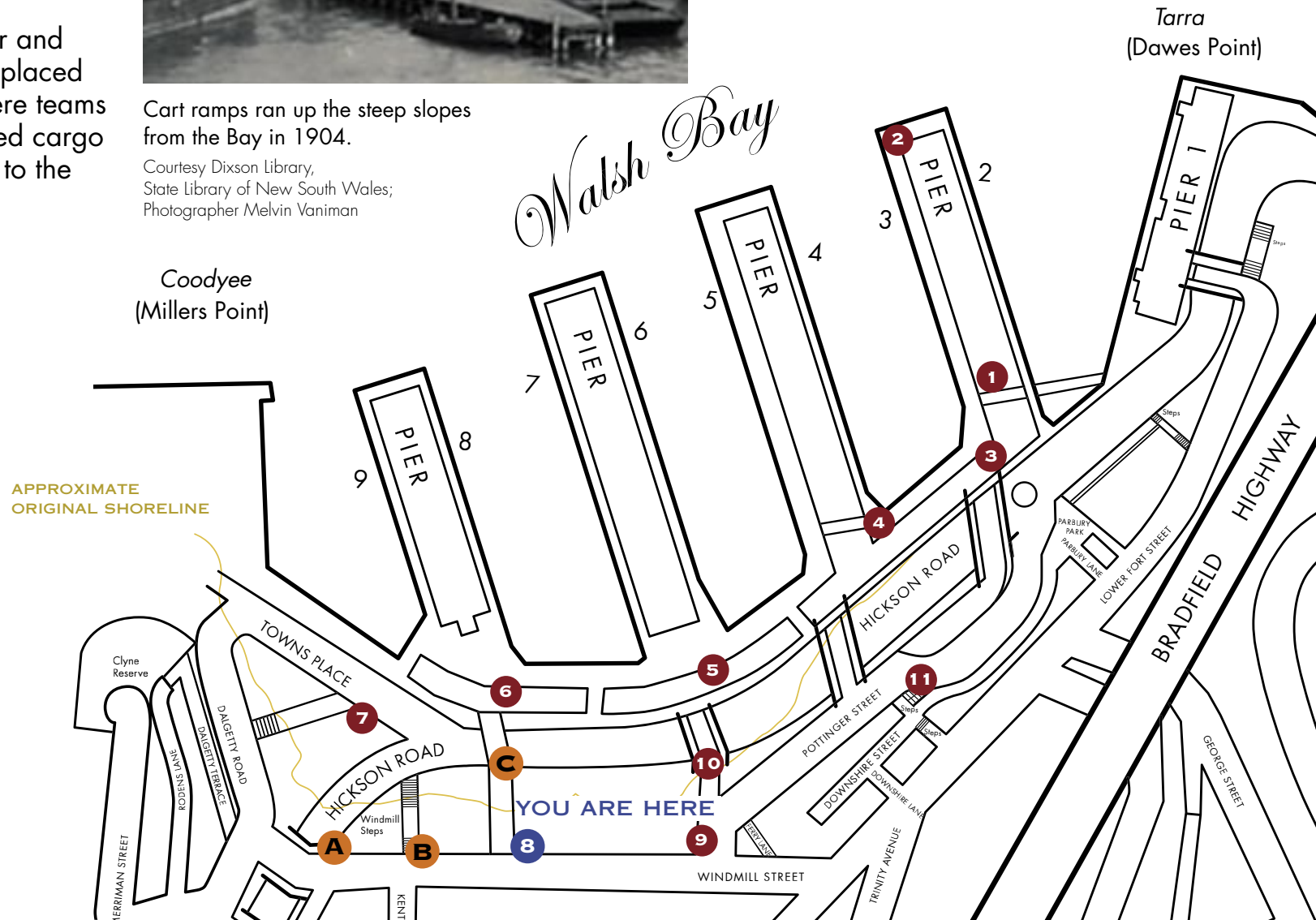
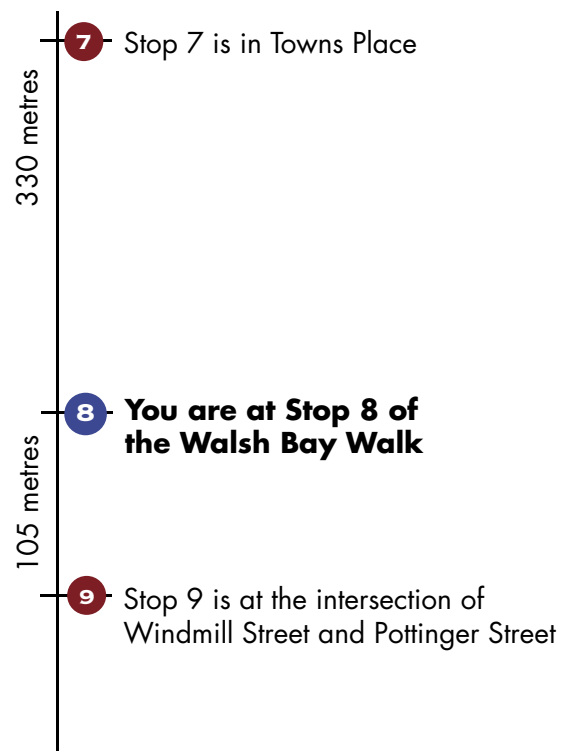


Cart ramps ran up the steep slopes from the Bay in 1904.

Courtesy Dixon Library,
State Library of New South Wales;
Photographer Melvin Vaniman

C Bridge

The original plated and riveted Bridge 8/9 built over Hickson Road in 1912.



PARBURY RUINS

Thorough archaeological investigation was carried out across the Walsh Bay redevelopment precinct. A wealth of 'finds' uncovered here include the remains of a cottage from the 1820s. You can view the ruins from the footpath or you can arrange an inspection by calling the Maritime Authority of NSW in advance on 93642003.

STOP 9 POINTS OF INTEREST

A Cart ramp

A cart ramp once ran from Windmill Street down to shore level (now Hickson Road). Bond Store 3 was built over the ramp and it continued to operate through the building until the 1920s. Bond Store 3 is now used to store theatre props.

B Remnants

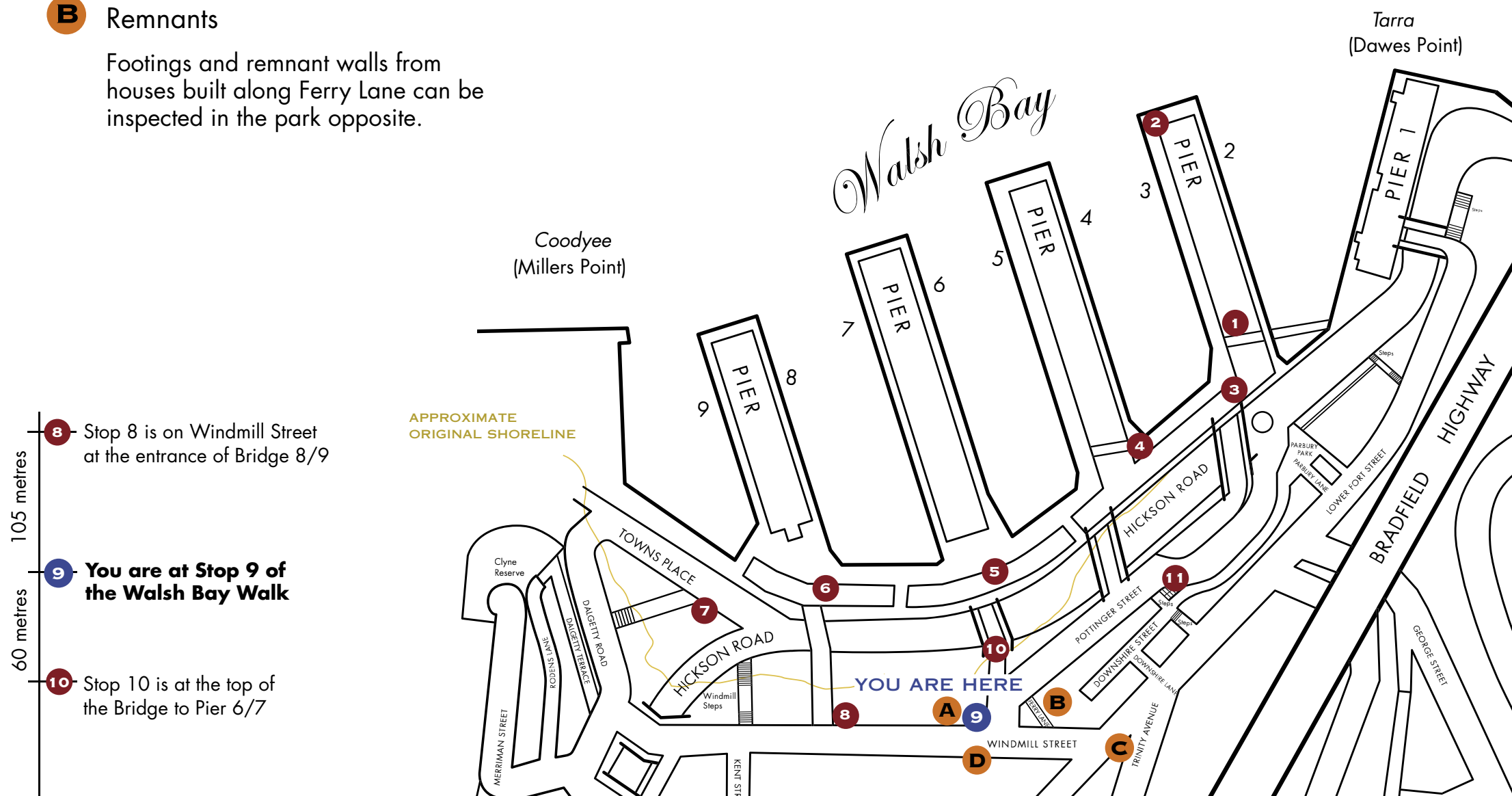
Footings and remnant walls from houses built along Ferry Lane can be inspected in the park opposite.

C Public house

The 'Hero of Waterloo' was built in the 1840s and vies for the title of Sydney's oldest pub. A 'secret passageway' once led from its basement to the harbour shore.

D 67 Windmill Street

No 67 Windmill Street is one of few remaining 19th century houses that survived demolition to make way for Pottinger Street in the early 1900s.



8 Stop 8 is on Windmill Street at the entrance of Bridge 8/9

9 You are at Stop 9 of the Walsh Bay Walk

10 Stop 10 is at the top of the Bridge to Pier 6/7

WALSH BAY IN DETAIL

This vantage point provides an overview of Walsh Bay.

STOP 10 POINTS OF INTEREST

A The Sydney Theatre

A visit to the Sydney Theatre (opened in 2004) reveals extensive reuse of architectural materials from previous buildings on the site (such as the Hickson Road Gymnasium and boxing ring) and displays of heritage technology.

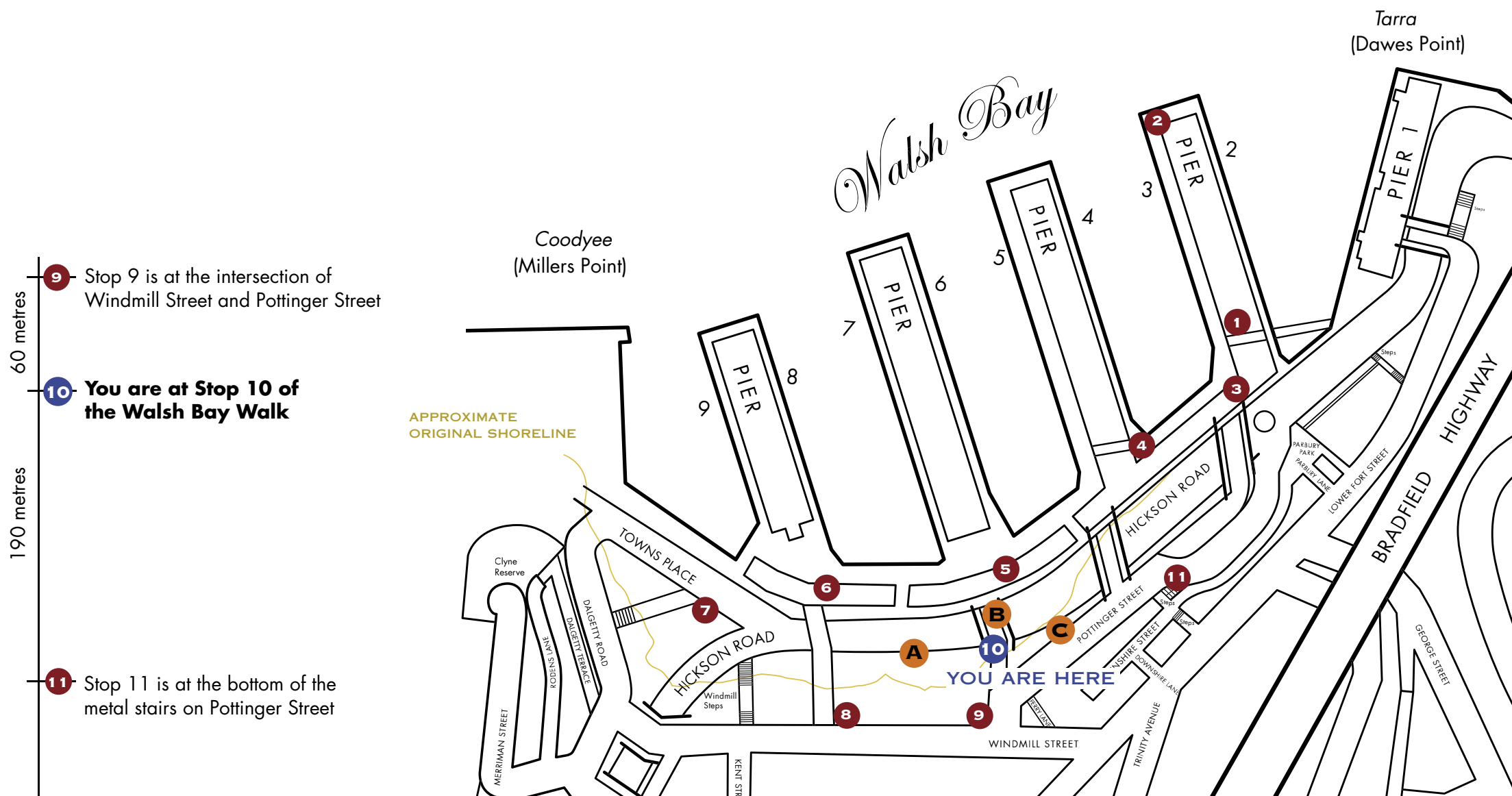
B Bridges

Bridges across Hickson Road represent different periods of construction and building techniques.

The viaducts from Pottinger Street were built over Bond Stores and across Hickson Road to the upper levels of wharves, as an essential part of Henry Walsh's design for moving cargo around Walsh Bay.

C Metal Rails

Metal rails were built into the roadside kerbs to protect them against damage by heavy vehicles.



ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

This is the last stop on the 1665 metre long self-guided Walsh Bay Walk. For many years this was a point of transition between the high ground and the shoreline, rich and poor, home and workplace.

STOP 11 POINTS OF INTEREST

A Backyards

The backyards of houses along Lower Fort Street once extended much further towards the shore. You can see how the excavation of Hickson Road and Pottinger Street cut them short and created cliffs.

B Parbury Park

Parbury Park originally provided access to the 19th century Parbury long shore wharf and stores located approximately where Pier 2/3 of Walsh Bay is now.

C Stairways

Stairways like this provided pedestrian access for workers from their homes above Walsh Bay to work on the wharves.

