

Productivity Commission
Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places

Submission

KU-RING-GAI

**CONSERVATION OF AUSTRALIA'S
ENDANGERED HISTORIC HERITAGE
PLACE**

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**KU-RING-GAI
CONSERVATION OF A HISTORIC HERITAGE PLACE**

AIMS OF THIS SUBMISSION:

1. To protect and preserve the unique Character* and Heritage Significance* of Ku-ring-gai through the recognition and gazettal of

- **Urban Conservation Areas*,**
- **Natural and built sites, and**
- **Other endangered places within the municipality.**

2. To seek a commitment from Government that heritage issues are given prime importance in decisions affecting urban development in Ku-ring-gai. At the present time the layers of Ku-ring-gai's history spanning centuries are being erased instantly. Conservation policies need to be put in place to protect these layers of history.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

***Character of Ku-ring-gai** is defined by

- Large indigenous and exotic trees whose canopies form the skyline, characterise the streets and dominate garden spaces throughout the whole area; and
- The unique presentation of private gardens which are given due importance in residential settings and designs.
- Remnants of indigenous forests and Blue Gum High Forests* within the municipality

All of these characteristics enforce the intimate **correlations** and interrelationships between the natural and built environments in Ku-ring-gai and define Ku-ring-gai's distinctive intrinsic and irreplaceable quality. These correlations and interrelationships are now severely threatened by disrespectful and rampant development.

***Heritage Significance of Ku-ring-gai**

The heritage of Ku-ring-gai comprises a rare blend of fine domestic architecture within a landscape of indigenous forests and exotic planting and gardens.

***Urban Conservation Areas**

Urban Conservation Areas are places in Ku-ring-gai which have been identified as of high significance and therefore worthy of conservation. The significance of the UCAs is their excellent visual quality, their interrelationship with the landscape, topography and setting, street and subdivision pattern, lot sizes and building setbacks, the architectural

quality of the built form and the use of building elements and materials. The site maps of the Urban Conservation Areas are attached to this submission

***Blue Gum High Forest**

A place characterised by a unique group of interdependent plants, from giant trees to tiny ground orchids. Original Blue Gum High Forests covered approximately 3720 hectares of the northern area of Sydney. Blue Gum High Forests occur nowhere else in Australia or the world. The Blue Gum High Forest in St Ives, comprising 18.5 hectares, constitutes half of the best remaining 1 % of the total area. It is also the largest and best-preserved remnant with its tall canopy trees, understorey shrubs, ferns and groundcover plants with over 180 plant species and over 75 different bird species recorded in the St Ives forest.

Abbreviations:

UCA - Urban Conservation Area designated as 'Precinct'

DLEP - Draft Local Environment Plan

DIPNR - Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Resources

KEY POINTS

- Ku-ring-gai is a significant 'natural environment of such scale and richness worthy of national recognition'.¹ It contains most of the last remnants of the Sydney Blue Gum forests in the Sydney bioregion that extends from Nelson Bay to Bateman's Bay and the coast to the mountains. It has the largest number of threatened species of flora and fauna in the bioregion for a local government area. It is noteworthy that Ku-ring-gai has similar numbers of bird and plant species as the entire British Isles. It has four National Parks: Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, Lane Cove National park, Garigal National Park and Dalrymple Hay Forest National Park which contains a rare remnant of the Blue Gum High Forest.² Within this environment Ku-ring-gai has evolved into a thriving residential community.
- Ku-ring-gai's natural resources include over 3,000 hectares or nearly 37% of the district, developed or undeveloped open space of which most is National Parks or other public parks or bushland. There are remnants of Aboriginal culture from the once local tribes of the Cameraygal and Guringai still extant in the parks. This 'green space', interspersed with built up areas and sympathetically integrated to be in harmony, gives the area its unique character.
- Ku-ring-gai is distinctive enough to compare favourably with other exemplary garden suburbs in England and America particularly Bedford Park in London, Letchworth in Hertfordshire, Oak Bluffs in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts and Forest Hills in New York. The distinctiveness of Ku-ring-gai lies in the fact that it was developed progressively throughout its history as the needs of the community grew, with input and interaction between residents, architects and development

¹ *Ku-ring-gai Heritage Study, 1987, p.16.*

² Travis McEwen Group, *Residential Strategy for KMC, March 2000, p.4.*

authorities, whereas the other garden suburbs have been built based on an overall design and planning by commissioned architects.

- The visual character of the area is established by the tendency for houses to be separate dwellings (91%) which are generally situated amongst a garden and tree-dominated landscape, often set back from the road, within tree-lined streetscapes. Families reside in most of the houses. The early houses were built close to the North Shore railway line. In certain areas the older established homes are progressively being demolished or renovated and replaced with family homes or multi-unit developments that are larger in proportion to the land they are built upon, due to private developer and government pressure to substantially increase the levels of local housing density.
- The community has a great awareness of environmental issues and is concerned about the environment, hence the residents' concern about the ongoing impacts from urban development on remnants of natural environment and on their immediate surroundings. The tree-dominated landscape, and the intangible benefits it provides are important to people living in the area.
- Ku-ring-gai offers a diverse range of housing choices - suitable for long-life residency where people of all ages and capacities have opportunities for suitable accommodation without having to move elsewhere. But the established landscape and visual character of the area need to be preserved and enhanced. Development of private and public land needs to be consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability. Any change in the urban environment of Ku-ring-gai should be responsive to the potential impacts on the natural and heritage environment and sensitive to the needs and expectations of the community.
- The tree-dominated landscape and the intangible but very real benefits it provides are important factors that determine why people choose to live in the area.
- The attraction of Ku-ring-gai has stimulated vigorous spec builder projects of pseudo-Victorian, Tuscan and Federation type houses. The availability of large blocks of land suitable for subdivision have also led to the development of multiunit residential blocks that are built on tight curtilages and setbacks and with minimal landscaping that are totally alien to the character of the area.
- But the established landscape and visual character of the area need to be preserved and enhanced. Development of private and public land needs to be consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability. Any change in the urban environment of Ku-ring-gai should be responsive to the potential impacts on the natural and heritage environment and sensitive to the needs and expectations of the community.
- `Within the next 20 to 30 years the landscape of Ku-ring-gai is not likely to be dominated by trees. Instead a new landscape of buildings and low-level exotic tree

canopy - with an intermittent sprinkling of taller trees in parks or roadsides - with a backdrop of urban bushland will be the dominant view.³

- The catchcries of developers can be heard loud and clear in Ku-ring-gai today: Quantity rather than quality. Demolition rather than adaptive reuse. Urban renewal rather than urban consolidation. Deconstruction rather than conservation.
- Ku-ring-gai has lost 20% of its tree canopy in the last nine years, 30% of its bushland is badly degraded, and its fresh water eco systems are degraded in most areas.⁴
- Demolition of homes and gardens, reduction in original lot sizes, removal of trees, unsympathetic and out of context residential development are causing deleterious changes to the visual character and intrinsic heritage values of Ku-ring-gai. Currently there is inadequate statutory protection for heritage items, Urban Conservation Areas, important streetscapes and valued amenities, due to non-gazettal and delays in listing of these heritage items, lack of qualifying restrictions in development control plans and flaws in planning policy.
- The present and most damaging threat is the residential strategy plan DLEP 194 by DPINR which is now transforming the area into one dominated by the built environment to the detriment of the natural environment. Consequently irreparable damage is being done to the integrity and intactness of Ku-ring-gai and encroach on the substantially tree dominated visual character of the municipality.
- Ku-ring-gai is 'a municipality of national and cultural significance for its fine collection of twentieth- century domestic architecture of such high aesthetic, historic, scientific and social values benefiting past, present and future generations.'
- The established landscape and visual character of Ku-ring-gai need to be preserved and enhanced. Development of private and public land needs to be consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability. Any change in the urban environment of Ku-ring-gai should be responsive to the potential impacts on the natural and heritage environment and sensitive to the needs and expectations of the community.
- Most important of all, any change in the built and natural environment of Ku-ring-gai should be implemented with the utmost respect of their history and heritage. This disrespectful attitude is evident in style of buildings and the manner in which buildings are now being built, squeezed into allotments barely big enough to accommodate their massive bulk and height. Instead of tree canopies and gardens we see concrete.

³ KMC 'Tree Management Discussion Paper', April 1998.

⁴ KMC finding in relation to 'Parks and Bushland Conservation Strategy', Publish Workshop, 8 June 1999.

- Ku-ring-gai is losing its unique characteristics with stereotype housing development. Why must it be developed like Chatswood or Hornsby or any other suburb? Government promised to provide housing choices for people wanting to live in Ku-ring-gai. The predominance of multi-unit, high-rise (5 or 6 storey development) compared to villas, townhouses or cottage type developments makes it evident that there really is no choice.
- The 28 UCAs in Ku-ring-gai were included in the list of Endangered Places in Australia by the Australian Council of National Trusts in 2000.

.....
Correlations and Interrelationships between natural and built environment of Ku-ring-gai

Characteristics of these correlations:

Symbiotic union
 Unique yet distinctive
 Poetic spaces
 Enriching consequences
 Valuable assets
 A sense of place

Threats to these correlations:

Damage and Destruction
 Neglect and abandonment
 Inappropriate management and maintenance
 Inappropriate development
 Inappropriate redevelopment

How to maintain

correlations:

Heritage Policies
 Conservation
 Adaptive re-use
 Urban consolidation
 Respect for the natural environment
 Quality design
 Quality choices in housing

.....
RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Federal Government through the Productivity Commission exercises its authority in advising the State Minister for Planning and the State government planning authorities of any matter that impacts on the heritage character of Ku-ring-gai.
2. That the Federal Government instructs the NSW Heritage Office to ensure that the designated State planning authorities are cognisant of all the heritage issues that are threatening Ku-ring-gai and the UCAs and that these heritage issues are all considered in a fair and non-prejudicial manner.
3. That the UCAs should serve as among the core elements to guide the development of any planning policy of Ku-ring-gai Council or Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Resources.

4. That any implementation of planning policy by Council or the State government should be withheld until the UCAs for which studies have been completed have been exhibited and gazetted.
5. That the existing character and visual quality of Ku-ring-gai as exemplified by the 28 UCAs should be conserved.
6. That future development must respect the environmental, heritage and neighbourhood character of Ku-ring-gai.
7. That new buildings must be of high quality design and fit into the environment with a net improvement over past practices and off-site impacts and complement the built heritage values of the area.
8. That more housing choices be offered to potential residents other than multi-unit, high rise developments of 5 and 6 storeys. Government should offer more affordable villas, cottage-type and town house developments such as the pioneering Pettit and Sevitt houses in St Ives.
9. That in the residential areas the space around buildings should have landscapes designed and/or maintained reinforcing the tree canopy of Ku-ring-gai. The natural environment around these buildings must be respected and conserved.
10. That Ku-ring-gai should maintain and restore its historical tradition of commissioning leading architects and landscape architects for its buildings. It is even more important that the quality of design is continued for future infill development. A recommendation of this Strategy is to implement a Design Quality Review System as recommended in the Draft Residential Strategy.
11. That the extensive tree canopy should be maintained and conserved to enable bio linkages with the surrounding National Parks to be conserved and maintained.
12. That the local environment issues concerning habitats of threatened flora and fauna species should demand that any future development be undertaken in an ecologically sensitive manner and which may justify restrictions to development in several areas.
13. That each individual development must result in a new environmental improvement (e.g. stormwater flow/quality and tree canopy protection - both fundamental to protecting biodiversity in Ku-ring-gai) and not further overload or tax the system.

HISTORY

Ku-ring-gai is a significant 'natural environment of such scale and richness worthy of national recognition'.⁵ It contains most of the last remnants of the Sydney Blue Gum

⁵ *Ku-ring-gai Heritage Study, 1987, p.16.*

forests in the Sydney bioregion that extends from Nelson Bay to Bateman's Bay and the coast to the mountains. It has the largest number of threatened species of flora and fauna in the bioregion for a local government area. It is noteworthy that Ku-ring-gai has similar numbers of bird and plant species as the entire British Isles. It has four National Parks: Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, Lane Cove National park, Garigal National Park and Dalrymple Hay Forest National Park.⁶ Yet it is a thriving residential community. Development east and west of the railway line clearly articulates the settlement pattern of Ku-ring-gai, evolving into areas of distinctive neighbourhood character, retaining important collections of houses complemented by extensive gardens, mature tree plantings and remnant stands of native vegetation.

Many books have been written about Ku-ring-gai's history, its architecture and natural environment; its picturesque quality and the notable residents that have lived and worked in its suburbs, among them: Sir John Sulman after whom two of the most prestigious awards in Art and Architecture are named, Eccleston du Faur, one of the earliest environmentalists who was responsible for the creation of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Mt Wilson, environmental activists Peter Garrett and Paddy Pallin, renowned academic and world-acclaimed camellia expert Professor E. G. Waterhouse of Eryldene, Professor A.L. Sadler, Professor of Oriental Studies at Sydney University, J.J.C. Bradfield, Sir Ernest Fisk, Charles E.W. Bean, founder of the National Trust, Annie Wyatt, Prime Ministers including John Gorton and Billy Hughes, Governor General Sir John Kerr, prominent men of the law including Clive Evatt, Justice John Lockhart and Walter Mullens Vindin, cricketer T.W. Garrett, aviatrix Nancy Bird Walton, tennis greats Tony Roche, Ken Rosewall and John Newcombe, authors and artists such as Lionel Lindsay, Grace Cossington Smith and Harold Cazneaux architects William Hardy Wilson, John Shedden Adam, Arthur Stanton Cook, Thomas Cosh, Leith McCredie and Russell Jack, musical impresario Charles Mackerras, media personalities Michael Willesee, Mike Carlton and David Koch, polemicist Hugh Mackay, men of business and industry including Howard Smith and the Gillespie brothers, renowned doctors and other notable professionals.

Ku-ring-gai is distinctive enough to compare favourably with other exemplary garden suburbs in England and America particularly Bedford Park in London, Letchworth in Hertfordshire, Oak Bluffs in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts and Forest Hills in New York. The distinctiveness of Ku-ring-gai lies in the fact that it was developed progressively throughout its history as the needs of the community grew, with input and interaction between residents, architects and development authorities, whereas the other garden suburbs have been built based on an overall design and planning by commissioned architects.

TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Ku-ring-gai was named after the Aboriginal tribe, Guringai. It is geographically located within the Sydney Basin, on an elevated plateau (150 to 213 metres above sea level) between the coastal lowlands to the east, the Cumberland Plain to the west, Hawkesbury River to the north and Sydney Harbour to the south. Ku-ring-gai sits on the ridge of an

⁶ Travis McEwen Group, *Residential Strategy for KMC*, March 2000, p.4.

undulating plateau which runs from the south east to the higher north west land and which drops away on either side into a series of valleys, many with steep sides. Ku-ring-gai has the highest rainfall in the Sydney region. Its creeks and watercourses drain into the three surrounding national parks, Middle Harbour, Hawkesbury and the Lane Cove Rivers.

Ku-ring-gai's natural resources include over 3,000 hectares or nearly 37% of the district, developed or undeveloped open space of which most is National Parks or other public parks or bushland. There are remnants of Aboriginal culture from the once local tribes of the Cameraygal and Guringai still extant in the parks. This 'green space', interspersed with built up areas and sympathetically integrated to be in harmony, gives the area its unique character.

DEMOGRAPHY

Ku-ring-gai has a population of approximately 106, 000 people (2001) of which nearly 30,000 were born overseas, coming from more than 31 different countries. Members of the community are articulate, participative, and expect the opportunity to have input into decisions that may affect them. Most of the residents are in the managerial, professional or clerical positions commuting outside the area to work. A substantial number are young families with young children enrolled in the many public and private schools in the area. 38% are retired, while only 2% are unemployed. The community is generally more affluent and articulate than the Sydney average. The main reasons many people come to or remain in Ku-ring-gai are a desire for open space, sporting opportunities, low-density residential areas and the less congested, more spacious, safe and healthy environment. The residents tend to regard their home as their refuge from their busy lives and so develop their properties accordingly. Passive recreation opportunities are extensive due to well-planned garden spaces and courtyards for leisure activities and containing swimming pools and tennis courts. Outside the homes are golf courses, other sporting facilities and ovals, the great expanses of bushland, walking tracks, and parkland. The community has a great awareness of environmental issues and is concerned about the environment, hence the residents' concern about the ongoing impacts from urban development on remnants of natural environment and on their immediate surroundings. The tree-dominated landscape, and the intangible but very real benefits it provides are important to most people living in the area.

RESIDENTIAL PROFILE

Ku-ring-gai evolved from a heavily timbered forest that, when cleared, became a key horticultural and fruit growing area for Sydney, then subdivided for residential development as urbanisation spread. Urban development was established on the principles of a 'garden suburb', promulgated by well-meaning prominent citizens forming Progress Associations. There are fine examples of both the remnant natural environment and the constructed built and landscape heritage of past eras. Streetscapes are recognised as significant elements of the local visual character. Many houses are protected and recognised in the Heritage Listing in the Council's Local Environment Plan. These include fine examples of Victorian, Federation, Interwar and houses of later periods all designed by prominent architects from the 1870s up to the present time.

Ku-ring-gai is a low density residential area with nearly 35,000 dwelling units (2001) spread over 5,400 hectares of private land. The visual character of the area is established by the tendency for houses to be separate dwellings (91 %) which are generally situated amongst a garden and tree-dominated landscape, often set back from the road, within tree-lined streetscapes. Families reside in most of the houses. The early houses were built close to the North Shore railway line. In certain areas the older established homes are progressively being demolished or renovated and replaced with family homes or multiunit developments that are larger in proportion to the land they are built upon, due to private developer and government pressure to substantially increase the levels of local housing density.

HISTORY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The first major suburban developments in Ku-ring-gai were stimulated by the completion of the North Shore Railway Line in 1901. The earliest houses in the newly created suburbs were built in the 'Federation' style by prominent architects of the period who were also residents of the area including John Sulman, Thomas Cosh and Howard Joseland. Departing from this style but nevertheless iconoclastic were the Shingle-style designs of John Horbury Hunt in Warrawee, the Mediterranean style villas of Frederick Glynn Gilling, the Georgian Revival cottages of Hardy Wilson and the minimalist Bauhaus inspired buildings of Harry Seidler and Sydney Ancher.

Prior to the development of subdivisions like those at Lindfield, Roseville and Gordon, the larger estates of Wahroonga and Turramurra, with their late Victorian, Queen Anne Revival or Free-style mansions, were complemented by orchards and farms and the small, typically timber cottages of the farm workers, sawyers, orchardists and labourers.

In the good quality Federation-style homes of the 1900s-1920s, Ku-ring-gai acquired its image of suburban idyll. In subsequent decades until after the Second World War, Ku-ring-gai continued to attract high quality domestic building designs and prominent architects. Bungalows strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts style were designed by James Peddle, the English cottage style by Leith McCredie and the more opulent Stockbroker Tudor designs by John Brogan were succeeded by the smaller picture-book type cottages of the 1950s.

A strong taste for Classic Revivalism was also discernible in William Hardy Wilson's residential designs for Sydney's prominent citizens. Mixing a reverence for Australia's Colonial Georgian Revival with the appreciation for the climatic suitability of the Mediterranean styles, Professor Leslie Wilkinson, F. Glynn Gilling and Augustus Aley built such houses that have become their signature styles. Distinctive departures from these types were the Art Deco and Spanish Mission houses seen interspersed with more conventional styles.

During the Interwar years of 1921 to 1933, the population in Ku-ring-gai increased by 45 percent from 19,209 to 27,931 with a 68 percent rise in the number of occupied dwellings, the proportion of brick to weatherboard being 5:1. The same sort of increase occurred from 1933 to 1947 when a further 43 percent of people moved into the district

bringing the total population to 39,874 and adding 3,564 houses. Even greater restrictions in the use of timber and fibro resulted in 3,182 houses being built of brick. Ku-ring-gai suffered less in the 1930s depression than other municipalities where development was much slower and during this period also had fewer residents unemployed compared with other suburban areas.'

The 'Modern' styles fostered by post-war austerity have their better quality representatives in Ku-ring-gai. The area attracted architects who were keen to build without disturbing the natural environment. Houses in the bush were built to the winning designs of Sydney Ancher and Harry Seidler. Eastern philosophies shaped the quiet and unobtrusive houses of Russell Jack and Ian McKay at Wahroonga and St Ives. Ken Woolley's courtyard designs for Pettit and Sevitt at St Ives were influential experiments that spawned Australia-wide imitation. Their simplicity and philosophy of economical configuration of spaces render these houses vulnerable to unsympathetic renovations.

The attraction of Ku-ring-gai has stimulated vigorous spec builder projects of pseudo-Victorian, Tuscan and Federation type houses. The availability of large blocks of land suitable for subdivision have also led to the development of multi-unit residential blocks that are built on tight curtilages and setbacks and with minimal landscaping that are totally alien to the character of the area.

Ku-ring-gai offers a diverse range of housing choices - suitable for long-life residency where people of all ages and capacities have opportunities for suitable accommodation without having to move elsewhere. But the established landscape and visual character of the area need to be preserved and enhanced. Development of private and public land needs to be consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability. Any change in the urban environment of Ku-ring-gai should be responsive to the potential impacts on the natural and heritage environment and sensitive to the needs and expectations of the community.

Ku-ring-gai is well endowed with public and private schools and as a consequence attracts a higher proportion of families with young children than other areas in Sydney.

Ku-ring-gai has 496 kilometres of roadways and 120 kilometres of footpaths. Public Transport is primarily by the North Shore Railway line that began construction in 1890 and completed c.1901.⁸

THE MAJOR IMMINENT THREAT TO KU-RING-GAI

State Government imperatives, derived from its town planning advice, environmental experts and demographic trends, require local governments to consider the better use of existing infrastructure and the potential to reduce the increase in pollution by providing more housing choice in selected locations especially near the rail stations and St Ives Centre. However, in Ku-ring-gai, these areas are precisely the areas where much of the beautifully designed heritage housing is located. Also, these areas are typically near the

⁸ 'History', *passim*, *Housing in NSW between the Wars* (also known as Inter-war Study) commissioned by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) to Robertson and Hindmarsh Pty Ltd in 1996. *s Ku-ring-gai's Plan for the Next 10-20 Years*, Draft, Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council, c. 1997.

Pacific Highway/railway ridgeline where the topography drops away either side towards the bushland habitat and tall forests which houses Sydney's largest variety of endangered and threatened species of flora and fauna. Stormwater runoff, sewerage overflows and other negative impacts from urbanisation are major issues in Ku-ring-gai because they affect the ring of National Parks and underlying suburban areas around Ku-ring-gai.

Demolition of homes and gardens, reduction in original lot sizes, removal of trees, unsympathetic and out of context residential development are causing deleterious changes to the visual character and intrinsic heritage values of Ku-ring-gai. Currently there is inadequate statutory protection for heritage items, Urban Conservation Areas, important streetscapes and valued amenities, due to non-gazettal and delays in listing of these heritage items, lack of qualifying restrictions in development control plans and flaws in planning policy.

The present and most damaging threat is the residential strategy plan DLEP 194 by DPINR which is now transforming the area into one dominated by the built environment. Consequently irreparable damage is being done to the integrity and intactness of Ku-ring-gai and encroach on the substantially tree dominated visual character of the municipality.

‘Within the next 20 to 30 years the landscape of Ku-ring-gai is not likely to be dominated by trees. Instead a new landscape of buildings and low-level exotic tree canopy - with an intermittent sprinkling of taller trees in parks or roadsides - with a backdrop of urban bushland will be the dominant view.’⁹

Ku-ring-gai has lost 20% of its tree canopy in the last nine years, 30% of its bushland is badly degraded, and its fresh water eco systems are degraded in most areas.¹⁰

Development cannot be stopped but there is no reason why the government cannot ensure that any development is of the highest standard of quality and is conceived with respect for what is historically and environmentally significant. This is not the case at present.

URBAN CONSERVATION AREAS

The investigation of the history of the development of the municipality of Ku-ring-gai, as evidenced by the 28 UCAs, and in comparison with other similar places in New South Wales and Australia, leads to the conclusion that Ku-ring-gai is ‘a municipality of national and cultural significance for its fine collection of twentieth-century domestic architecture of such high aesthetic, historic, scientific and social values benefiting past, present and future generations.’¹¹

It is significant for the collective value of high quality and intact houses in the 28 Urban Conservation Areas classified by the National Trust in 1997. There are an extraordinary number of heritage-listed items in Ku-ring-gai. Some of the houses in these Urban

⁹ KMC ‘Tree Management Discussion Paper’, April 1998.

¹⁰ KMC finding in relation to ‘Parks and Bushland Conservation Strategy’, Publish Workshop, 8 June 1999.

¹¹ KMC Heritage Study, 1987, p.16.

Conservation Areas have been given the highest heritage listings in the State. Currently there are 680 items (built items and landscape items) listed in the Ku-ring-gai LEP No. 1 Heritage Conservation 1989. The Heritage Study conducted by Godden Mackay Logan identified a further 380 built heritage items and 90 landscape items for consideration. The study also identifies 20 potential conservation areas which in places overlap the previously classified National Trust Urban Conservation Areas.

The 28 UCAs are significant for the evidence the municipality shows of early twentieth century planning and conservation philosophies, segregating residential areas from other urban uses. The subdivision patterns reflect the early initiatives of community leaders to use planning tools such as proclaimed residential districts to make and retain a domestic environment of recognised amenity, different from other local government areas with more varied land usage.¹²

The prevailing pattern of residential development in the UCAs is characterised by single dwelling houses addressing the street across an open front garden and providing a private rear garden. This pattern has enabled the landscape to flourish and provide the most significant characteristic of Ku-ring-gai - its tree cover. The consistency of the pattern, the abundant landscape and the relative cohesiveness of housing scale, form and style make the UCAs special.

The significance of the UCAs is their excellent visual quality, found in the landscape, topography and setting, street and subdivision pattern, lot sizes and building setbacks, the architectural quality of the built form and the use of building elements and materials.

The 28 Urban Conservation Areas in Ku-ring-gai and their significance:

In the time available to prepare this submission it has not been possible to fully describe the merits of the various UCAs, and we have relied heavily on 'Housing in NSW Between the Wars' a study for the National Trust of Australia (NSW) by Robertson & Hindmarsh Pty. Ltd. Feb 1996. In doing so, we recognise that we did not dwell upon the merit of much of the Victorian and Federation housing within many of the UCAs, nor the patterns of subdivisions which often remain virtually intact today.

Precinct 1 East Roseville: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows in the west section close to Babbage Road and two-storey 1930s and 1940s houses in the eastern section. The uniform appearance of each of the parts within the precinct is a result of their development within a single period. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area after the demolition of the original houses. The East Roseville Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 2 Roseville: consists of an area of predominantly single-storey 1920s bungalows on medium-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its development within a

¹² KMC Heritage Study, 1987, p.16.

single period as well as the almost universal use of face brick. The Roseville Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 3 Roseville: The precinct contains many fine examples of Federation, Inter-war and Californian bungalow housing styles complimented by fine gardens and leafy streetscapes. Little subdivision or redevelopment has occurred because the size of the lots did not allow for the resubdivision which characterised other areas. The precinct is distinct in its consistency of high-quality intact buildings predominantly from the Federation and Inter-war periods. These, combined with large mature private gardens and significant avenue plantings, help create aesthetically-harmonious streetscapes in spite of a few intrusive replacement buildings.

Precinct 4 West Roseville: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s bungalows. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its development within a single period as well as the almost universal use of face brick. Housing in the area consists predominantly of 1920s bungalows on medium-sized lots with Interwar period flats, shops, the railway station and a cinema being located on the Pacific Highway. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The West Roseville Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 5 East Lindfield: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows in the west section and two-storey 1930s and 1940s houses in the east section of the precinct. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its development within a single period as well as the almost universal use of face brick. Housing in the area consists predominantly of 1920s and 1930s houses on large-sized lots. There are only a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The East Lindfield Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 6 Lindfield: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s bungalows. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its development within a single period as well as the almost universal use of face brick. Housing in the area consists predominantly of 1920s bungalows on medium-sized lots with Federation style houses being located close to the railway line as well as 1920s shops being located in Lindfield Avenue. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Lindfield Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 7 West Lindfield: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s bungalows. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its development within a single period as well as the almost universal use of face brick. Housing in the area consists predominantly of 1920s bungalows on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations and intrusions into the area. The West Lindfield Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings

Precinct 8 Provincial Road, Lindfield: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s bungalows. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its development within a single period as well as the almost universal use of face brick. Housing in the area consists of 1920s bungalows on medium-size lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Provincial Road Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 9 Killara: consists of an area of residences ranging from single-storey 1920s bungalows in the northern section, two-storey flats near Killara Station, large 1920s and 1930s mansions in Stanhope Road, large 1920s and 1930s houses in the central section of the precinct and more modest 1930s and 1940s as well as post-World War II houses in the eastern section of the precinct. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of 1920s bungalows on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Killara Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 10 Culworth Avenue, Killara: consists of an area of residences ranging from single-storey Federation period and 1920s bungalows in the southern section, to two and three-storey flats near Killara Station and large 1930s houses in Marian Street. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Culworth Avenue Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 11 Killara Golf Links: consists of an area of residences ranging from single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows to single and two-storey post-World War II houses. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Killara Golf Links Precinct, particularly the integrated complex designed by Colin Brewster comprising entrance driveway, golf links, club house and the adjoining Dormie House, is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 12 Greengate Road, Killara: consists of an area of residences ranging from the Federation period, 1920s and 1930s bungalows and some post-World War II houses. The Greengate Hotel on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Greengate Road is one of the best, most intact examples of 1930s hotels in the Sydney region. There also some excellent 1920s and 1930s residential flat buildings on the Pacific Highway. The uniform

appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Greengate Road Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 13 Gordon: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Gordon Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings. Gordon Station is listed in the State Heritage Register.

Precinct 14 (No UCA listed)

Precinct 15 West Gordon: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The West Gordon Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 16 Pentecost Avenue, St Ives: consists of an area of single-storey and two-storey 1930s and 1940s houses. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Pentecost Avenue Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 17 Pymble: consists of an area of single-storey and two-storey 1930s and 1940s houses. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. The centrepiece is the housing surrounding Robert Pymble Park. The houses and park constitute an excellent example of good civic design. There are also excellent examples of individual houses of merit, including the Walter Burley Griffin-designed house on the corner of Telegraph Road and Graham Avenue. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Pymble Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 18 Avon Road, Pymble: consists of an area of single-storey and two-storey 1920s, 1930s and 1940s houses. The centrepiece is the landscape of Pymble Ladies College. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Avon Road,

Pymble Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings. Macquarie Cottage is listed in the State Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

Precinct 19 Bobbin Head Road, Turramurra: consists of an area of single-storey and two-storey houses designed in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. The precinct contains excellent examples of architect-designed houses such as the two adjoining Spanish Mission houses designed by G. Kenworthy on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Warrangi Street. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well-established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Bobbin Head Road, Turramurra Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 20 Ku-ring-gai Avenue: For almost its entire length Ku-ring-gai Avenue affords an excellent townscape comprised of mainly large two-storey mansions dating from around the turn of the century and set in generous gardens planted with a variety of exotic trees. Fine specimens of street trees, notably Brush Box, enhance the avenue. Five of the houses were designed by architects for themselves: Ferguslie by John Shedden Adam, The Terricks by Thomas Cosh, Cheppywood by John Spencer Stansfeld, Talagow by Arthur Stanton Cook and Ingleholme by John Sulman. Many of the original owners were important members of the Sydney's public, commercial and professional life at the turn of the century. The architecture is complemented by fine gardens, some original fences and gates and excellent street trees which combine to produce a richly verdant streetscape. There are a few alterations and unsympathetic intrusions in the area. Ingleholme is listed in the State Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate. Precinct 20 is under current review for upgrading as other several notable houses have been identified since 1984.

Precinct 21 Kissing Point Road, Turramurra: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s and 1930s houses. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well established, undulating landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Kissing Point Road, Turramurra Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings. One of the significant houses in this area is Ingalara, once the home of Sir John Kerr.

Precinct 22 Challis Avenue, Turramurra: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Challis Avenue, Turramurra Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 23 Warrawee: consists of an area of large single-storey and two-storey 1920s and 1930s houses as well as some large pre-Federation and Federation houses. The houses in this area were designed by prominent architects including Sir John Sulman, John Horbury Hunt, Leslie Wilkinson, Howard Joseland, Emil Sodersten, women architects Ellice Nosworthy and Eleanor Cullis-Hill, prominent North Shore architects/residents Leith McCredie, H.V. Vernon and Augustus Aley, and more contemporary architects including Glenn Murcutt and James Muir. The houses are built on large and landscaped allotments with well-maintained mature trees and gardens complemented by street plantings. Stone fences, particularly in Pibrac Avenue, also contribute to the rustic character of the precinct. The significance of this precinct is largely due to the setting in which the houses are placed, the principal elements in the area being the successful correlation between buildings and its landscape having mellowed through the years. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Warrawee Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings. Pibrac is on the Register of the National Estate and has been nominated for listing in the State Heritage Register. Kooyong at No. 55 Hastings Road is in the process of being listed in the State Heritage Register.

Precinct 24 Brentwood Avenue, Turramurra: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows with some notable Federation period houses at the south end of Cherry Street. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well established, undulating landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Brentwood Avenue, Turramurra Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 25 Heydon Avenue, Warrawee: consists of an area of large single-storey 1920s and 1930s bungalows as well as some large 1940s houses. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well established, undulating landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. The area is divided into two sections by the campus of Knox Grammar School which also contains excellent examples of Interwar institutional buildings. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Heydon Avenue, Turramurra Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Precinct 26 Mahratta, Wahroonga: consists of an area of single-storey 1920s, 1930s and 1940s houses with some post-World War II houses in the centre of the precinct. The precinct is named after the large, red brick Interwar mansion 'Mahratta' on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Fox Valley Road. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well established, undulating landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Mahratta, Wahroonga Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses,

their gardens and street plantings. 'Mahratta' has been nominated for listing in the State Heritage Register. Purulia is listed in the State Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

Precinct 27 Wahroonga East: consists of an area of large single-storey and two-storey 1920s, 1930s and 1940s houses as well as some large pre-Federation and Federation houses on extensive allotments. The houses in this area were designed by prominent architects including Howard Joseland, B.J. Waterhouse, F.Glynn Gilling, I'Anson, Bloomfield and McCulloch and H.V. Vernon. The houses are built on large and landscaped allotments with well-maintained mature trees and botanical gardens, some designed by Paul Sorensen and Tom Parramore. The mature street plantings on Burns Road makes it one of the most picturesque streets in Ku-ring-gai. Fine fences appropriate to the period also contribute to the rustic character of the precinct. The significance of this precinct is largely due to the setting in which the houses are placed, the principal elements in the area being the successful correlation between buildings and its extensive gardens and natural landscape having mellowed through the years. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Wahroonga East Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

Wahroonga East has been nominated for listing in the State Heritage Register as well as Craignairn and Mt Alverna.

Precinct 28 Extension to Wahroonga Precinct: consists of an area of large singlestorey 1920s bungalows as well as some large single-storey and two-storey 1940s and 1930s houses with some post-World War II houses. The uniform appearance of the area stems from its well established landscape. Housing in the area consists predominantly of houses on medium to, large-sized lots. There are a few unsympathetic alterations or intrusions into the area. The Extension to Wahroonga Precinct is significant in the way it epitomises the area and era in both the excellent, intact nature of its houses, their gardens and street plantings.

HERITAGE LISTINGS

There are an extraordinary number of heritage-listed items in Ku-ring-gai. Some of the houses in these Urban Conservation Areas have been given the highest heritage listings in the State and inclusion in the Register of the National Estate. Currently there are 680 items (built items and landscape items) listed in the Ku-ring-gai LEP No. I Heritage Conservation 1989. The Heritage Study conducted by Godden Mackay Logan identified a further 380 built heritage items and 90 landscape items for consideration. The study also identifies 20 potential conservation areas which overlap the previously classified 28 National Trust Urban Conservation Areas.

Present listings are included in the National Trust Register, RATA Register, State Heritage Register, Ku-ring-gai Council LEP, and the Register of the National Estate of the Heritage Council.

Proposed listings for heritage items in Ku-ring-gai are on the nomination lists of the Historic Buildings Committee of the National Trust.

The 28 UCAs in Ku-ring-gai were included in the list of Endangered Places in Australia by the Australian Council of National Trusts in 2000, after being nominated by the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc (FOKE).

In the 2000 Keep Australia Beautiful Council's (NSW) Metro Pride Awards, the NSW Heritage Office Cultural Heritage Conservation Award was made to FOKE for the project 'Heritage Watch Over Our Place of National Significance - Ku-ring-gai'.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: 'Ku-ring-gai, A Statement of Significance'

Appendix B: 'The Character of Ku-ring-gai'

Appendix C: 'Blue Gum High Forest: Here today, Gone

tomorrow' Appendix D: Visuals of UCAs 'Living in the Shadows'