

Pittwater Road Conservation Area Review - Summary of Comments

Initial comment period from 24 April to 12 June 2017 – 15 submissions and 26 nominations for the working group received on Your Say.

Any personal details or identifying words have been removed, as have any comments not related to the PRCA. Spelling mistakes have been corrected. There are topic overlaps in some of the themes.

What do you appreciate about the character of the PRCA? What makes it unique?

Character and feel

- I love the fact that Manly has character and is not a bland suburb full of buildings that all look the same. It is a historic suburb of Sydney and we should treasure this.
- The Conservation Area is an example of what people love about living in, and visiting Manly. It's a relatively quiet, mid-density residential area with enough local businesses such as shops, cafes, restaurants and bars, to sustain its residents and attract some visitors, but not too many to make it over-touristy and overcrowded. This combined with the preserved charm of a quintessential Australian beach side suburb is what makes it so special. Some of the streets have immense character and show how heritage can successfully be combined with the modern, and how residential can co-exist with commercial.
- I appreciate that the area has **character**. It is not bland like Dee Why. I like the fact that houses 100 years old (mainly well maintained or tastefully extended) are side by side with modern units.
- The character homes from the Federation and Edwardian era give Manly its distinct **character** and it is vital to preserve this, and protect it from inappropriate developments which destroy the character of the area.

History/Heritage

- I appreciate:
 - the beautiful aesthetic of Federation, Victorian and Edwardian domestic and in some cases commercial architecture
 - that the buildings are our valuable cultural and historical heritage
 - that they are irreplaceable being a touchstone to the history and identity of Manly
 - that they can be preserved for future generations
 - that the intended conservation area was thankfully spared the awful ugly high rise developments that took off in Manly, Dee Why etc in 1960s and 1970s. As a result the area is unique both for Manly, also for the northern beaches and suburban Sydney
 - as a result the area is truly of national significance
- I would like to see the unique and irreplaceable **heritage buildings** and zones of the iconic Manly area preserved for the future.
- Its relationship with the beach and the historical growth and formation of Manly

Architecture and Streetscape

- There are some wonderful examples of **architecture** in this area and as highlighted by the study map so far.
- The beautiful location and some of the buildings, including the terraces
- I also love the **landscaping** with the streets of Alexander, Pacific and Smith St and this is most important that we continue to maintain and preserve these areas.

Community Pride

- The conservation area is residential and a **community** of houses. We all take pride in our home and gardens as they have natural and cultural significance. It is unique being so close to the **beach** as well as the lagoon park, having large open areas and space.

What are the challenges to maintaining the character of the area?

Character not distinctive

- The Pittwater Conservation area is **not unique** - it is not an area of "distinctive character"! The area which has been "conserved" shows essentially no differences to areas outside the conservation zone. (Except where FSR and height restrictions have enabled multi storey development.). The fact that the zone is looking to be extended ironically supports this argument.
- The conservation area is overwhelmingly **heterogenous** - with a large range of property sizes and styles that have been built over the last c120 years - to the extent that it is very similar to the rest of Manly and neighbouring suburbs. Imposing a requirement to prove architectural 'uniqueness' adds unnecessary complexity and cost to all residents and is not factually correct.
- Given the character of the areas surrounding the zone are essentially the same of those in the zone - it does not represent value for money for residents or ratepayers.
- Challenge the statement that the area has a distinct character and should be treated differently to other areas.
- I don't think Manly has any so called "character" in the Conservation Area, especially towards the East ie. the beach. There's **nothing unique** about where we are. We are surrounded by new developments

Disagree with Conservation Area

- The conservation zoning should be removed not extended. It creates an **impediment** to simple property improvements (eg adding solar panels).
- Council should be ashamed of itself now belated trying to prevent the few houses left from keeping up with the rest of the areas. My house should be not penalised by not being able to change like all the houses and blocks of flats around me.
- The conservation zone creates an administrative burden on residents and should be **removed**.

- On my street ...there is no conservation left. I find it offensive that my property could be affected by something when the horse has well truly bolted. All the buildings across the road from me have been totally modernised. When I am now about to fix up my house - this is just victimisation.
- Manly property style is **not unique** and should not be referenced as such. There is significant **diversity** in situ. Planning rules and guidelines should be applied equally throughout the Council areas - Manly should have no different requirements to any other area. The Conservation zone should be removed.

Over Development/Unsympathetic development

- The challenges are clearly in trying to stop **overdevelopment** and knocking down of the old in favour of the modern. There are too many examples of overdevelopment currently being approved (look at most recent developments along North Steyne and some of the uber-modern and boxy houses that have been allowed to be built in some of the streets further back from the beach)
- I think this boat has long sailed.every building around us is **developed**. The closer you get to the beach, the more development exists. We are just going backwards in trying to force a certain character that no longer exists
- A large part of Manly's appeal lies in its lack of similarity to Dee Why, and left unchecked, I imagine Pittwater Rd could slowly become a long avenue of high apartments.
- A horrific amount of **large scale development** has been approved around us, in particular the eye sore development of **Stella Maris**. It is now becoming a three storey monstrosity of all different colours and materials. This in no way complies with the character of our street nor values it as predominantly residential. It is also creating so much noise, pollution and damage to our homes without any respect from the school. Stella Maris also cause a huge traffic problem in our street with cars constantly parked across my driveway and parked all over the road in chaos. Our street can't deal with anything more. We are also trying to stop another huge development around the corner of a child care centre on Pittwater Rd, creating more traffic, chaos and ugliness in our beachy, residential area.
- I moved to Sydney 30 years ago. I think Hornsby was good at managing growth by designating whole areas that could be replaced with units i.e. Waitara and the east side whilst keeping the **character** of the other districts. Kuringgai have failed. They allowed units everywhere mixed up with nice houses (or the Land & Environment Court did). This area of Pittwater Road must be preserved
- I personally do not want the developers bulldoze properties to make way for ugly developments, to maximise their profits. I lived in Europe for a long time, and the one thing I noted when I came back here, was how ugly all our new builds were, and no sympathy and respect for our heritage.
- Concern about it being **overdeveloped** and lack of **parking**
- Protection of the architectural heritage against property development
- It is important to keep low population **density**. Whenever developers are allowed to replace houses with units (and that's how they make money) the character of the area will be destroyed

- Property in Manly has become very expensive and there is a trend for new owners to demolish older residences, even when they can be superbly renovated, in order to maximize land usage. The most effective way to achieve this is to erect a rectangular concrete box-like structure which complies with the maximum height and floor-space restrictions.

Costs and restrictions to development/renovations

- Unfair **costs and restrictions** imposed on owners of properties to comply with heritage requirements, limited capacity to extend/ maximise use of very expensive blocks of land
- It is unfair to impose **restrictions** on houses in the area that are absolutely surrounded by modern developments. Any property on the beach side (East) of Pittwater Road should NOT BE in the conservation area. The area is prevalent with development and restricting existing dwellings is unfair and devalues the property itself. There is no heritage character here at all. Properties on the West side of Pittwater Rd have more heritage character and thus are more suited to be part of the Pittwater Rd Conservation Area
- I am concerned regarding the imposition of further **restrictions** or heritage status on properties in this area. Adherence to heritage restrictions impacts on the cost of repairs and maintenance. Complying with specific heritage building materials/ requirements can be more expensive and require more maintenance (eg timber windows versus aluminium) . Having to submit developmental applications to approve paint colours, fences etc that would not normally be required in a non-conservation zone property, is unfair. The need to supply heritage consultant reports for renovations also incurs unnecessary extra costs for owners. Council should consider concessions/ waiving application fees as these additional costs discriminate against owners of conservation zone properties (and heritage related grants are few and far between).
- I question how the **heritage assessments** of properties is conducted. Whilst a property may appear to have heritage significance from the outside, internally they can be in need of major structural and cosmetic repairs which would make it more financially viable to demolish/ rebuild rather than repair. Heritage properties may not be a particularly comfortable properties to inhabit (dark small rooms with timber windows which require lots of maintenance, chimneys take up potential storage or usable space, no private parking leaving vehicles at risk on the limited street parking available). Restricted capacity to extend upwards or outwards limits the property to a small number of occupants (eg couples rather than families) and results in poor rental income proportional to the costs of rates and land tax.
- **Less restrictions** should be placed on home improvements for existing residents and more scrutiny should be placed on eyesores like the petrol station.
- Any developments that **improve the aesthetics** or quality of the area should be allowed.
- Whilst I enjoy and value all that the 'original' houses and apartments add to Manly, I also feel that 100yrs ago people lived differently and made different demands of their housing. So, I suppose I'm interested in how the existing **feel** of the area can be retained, at the same time as allowing residents to make changes to their properties so they can live well in them.
- Houses have character from the outside for others to enjoy walking around but are not necessarily pleasant to live in. They are dusty, damp, dark, expensive to maintain, terrible trying to get a park nearby (not everyone can walk or catch public transport to work, social and children's activities).
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- All I ask is consistency, we all want to make the area as beautiful as possible for all. The council should show more **support** for current residents looking to **make improvements** and less support for big property developers and petrol stations.
- To correctly identify **historically significant characteristics** that are relevant to the area, rather than just choosing locations upon the age of build. Additionally, to try and steer new development towards the characteristics that are and were highly valued by the Conservation area in its formation.
- I believe the demolition of the character homes in Manly should be prevented by **heritage-listing** existing homes and only permitting renovations in-keeping with the style of Federation and Edwardian homes rather than demolish and rebuild strategies. It is not difficult to enlarge a home in a tasteful way rather than demolishing and rebuilding in the form of economical, box-structures.
- My main concern for the area is that the aesthetics and village feel are not being maintained. There are several structures in the heritage area that have been so rundown that they are in a complete state of delapidation. These terrible building states are probably due to too many **development restrictions** that make it impossible to improve a building in such a way that it increases the value of the property, which discourages owners from improving properties in the area.
- New developments should be townhouses or nice apartment blocks with cafes underneath, not petrol stations or supermarkets or the like.
- Keeping the older homes! With real estate prices so high of course the property owners need to make the most of their investment. Older homes need to be preserved where possible with sensitive renovations. **Guidelines and assistance** need to be offered to these property owners so they can make informed choices/decisions. Homes that are being built from new need their place too - we must start laying the foundations for aesthetically pleasing homes and buildings that will be representative of their own era in 100 years time, just in the same way that we are now starting to preserve homes from 100 years ago.
- Ensuring that the beauty and the heritage of the area is maintained and at the same time for owners and future purchasers maintain the originality and character, be allowed to sympathetically extend, renovate and refurbish properties of significant cultural value. To allow for modern day living.
- **Developments** are enabled elsewhere without the overhead and complexity that the Conservation requirements introduce to residents. The range of properties in situ include single residences, semi-detached, low level and high multi level apartments - nothing is 'characterful' in combination. It just represents the eras of building over the last 120 years.
- Given the **high cost of land** in the Manly area, owners of properties in the Pittwater Road Conservation area should be entitled to maximise their property. They should be permitted to make additions or renovations to their property, without undue restrictions and costs, to be able to live in a property that meets current expectations (ie has light, open living areas, is energy efficient, has lots of storage, multiple bedrooms/ living areas and access to private car spaces). It does not seem fair, nor good planning, to allow overdevelopment of the beachfront area then restrict property owners in the conservation area behind it. It is unfair to limit the development/ use/ income return for owners of properties that happen to fall in this area, (thus decreasing the potential value of the property), whilst simultaneously enforcing additional costs to maintain it and comply with heritage requirements.
- **Value for money** - does the zone represent value for money for ratepayers and residents.

- The major challenges are **economic and ignorance**. Why have a single storey old house instead of a multi storey building giving massive financial return in a beachside suburb - as has happened over and over again in Manly.
- Ignorance comes from greedy developers with scant regard for cultural heritage and from the decision makers who enable **developers** to have their way, as has happened in Manly forever.
- The area is a great microcosm of broader Manly, in terms of architecture, lifestyle and residential and commercial offerings. With property prices at a premium in Sydney and property owners wanting to maximize their investments, I feel it is imperative at this point in Manly's development, to ensure **planning controls** are sufficient to ensure future developments maintain those components of the area deemed worth preserving.

Development Applications (DA)/Controls

- Approving DAs that are clearly NOT in keeping with streetscape and general look and feel of the area, OR that are grossly over the allowed Floor Space Ratio
- The area must be strongly protected from loopholes that have allowed "Backpackers" to form within the Conservation areas, such as the Manly Bunkhouse, Pine st and the Outback lodge, Smith st. These exist via old existing rights based upon long term workers, but are solely for Backpackers. The DCP specifically does not allow such usage to exist in these areas.
- Retention and extension of the heritage area and compliance with **development applications. Businesses** having more responsibility with keeping their premises sympathetic to the area and are respectful that residents in this area have a right to a peaceful environment. Their residences are what attracts people to the area
- Urban Planning and design appropriate to the area and complementary to heritage listed properties. (Not currently done well by the previous Manly council)

Preservation of streetscape character

- I would like to see the heritage of the area preserved with development respecting this and the proximity to our beautiful beach. I also feel there is opportunity to "beautify" some of the **streetscape** particularly around the northern end of Whistler Street. Perhaps some consideration too for the cleanliness of the area as rubbish is often dumped and the gutters clogged.
- I am keen to see that the terraced dwellings and other old buildings in our area retain their unique **streetscape** that is PRCA. Many of these dwellings may be developed in the future and it would be great if redevelopment was done in such a way that the streetscape was maintained e.g. if the building was unsafe then maybe the facade could be retained. Some of the terraces in Steinton Street have been redeveloped in a very sensitive manner by building up but not affecting the streetscape.
- Street facing **fences** need to be addressed as there are too many high solid walls which discourage a community feel. When houses are hidden behind high solid walls there's a big disconnect for the passer by. These non-complying walls need to be addressed by Council. All front/street facing walls/fences should comply with the DCP and many do not.
- The rainforest **trees** planted a few years have been another great addition but I understand some shops with awnings objected which was a shame.
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- The **footpaths** on Whistler and Steinton look a mess and completely abandoned, again not maintaining the **aesthetics** of the conservation area.

Lack of consistency

- The council clearly has not maintained **consistency** with regards to the heritage area. Specifically, there are several structures which are clearly not in line with the heritage goals of the area (ie the **Caltex** on the corner of Pittwater and Steinton).
- As the petrol station is clearly in the mapped conservation area, the council needs to be more consistent. If heritage houses are expected to maintain their facades for the purpose of the feel of the area then the council needs to maintain the feel of that same area, which has not been done to date.
- **StarWash Carpark area** and any proposed developments that will shadow other residents of Smith Lane and not be in keeping with conservation values (as is already happening with past construction in this block).
- It seems odd to me that there are three petrol stations in that limited space. We surely only need one at the end there near Harris Food Markets and much better use could be made of those spaces.

Parking/ transport

- **Parking** for residents.
- Car parking is the big issue, of course as it is everywhere in Manly. Few of these old houses have driveways and car parking spaces. Interestingly, though, it's a good area in which to focus on public transport and cycling which would also add to the heritage aspect and help preserve these homes. Everyone can easily walk to the ferry, there are regular buses (too regular for some of us!) and we always need to encourage cycling.....(more detail on pros of cycling in submission).

Climate Change

- Climate change, global warming and rising seas are arguably the greatest challenge to the Pittwater Road Conservation Zone.
- We should be proud of our history not constrained by it - climate change and rising seas will require different thinking, thinking that may not be consistent with heritage conservation ideals.

Other General Comments (Interests and Concerns)

- I believe in the **heritage listings**, however there must be a good consultancy operation to ensure correct conservation.
- Flexibility in maintaining harmony between residents, commercial business, higher density housing and heritage
- **Developer Contributions** funds allocation from the new builds to contribute to improved lighting, footpaths, landscaping and safety aligned with both the new builds and the heritage listed properties.
- I know there was resistance to the **affordable housing** developments but we need those and, again, they don't dominate the landscape.