

4.3 BCP Area Strategies

The following is an analysis the BCP 26 Area Strategies, and their contribution to the research. What has emerged is a grouping of the Area Strategies as follows:

- C1 Containment and concentration of many of the enduring strands in the one Area Strategy. For the program these were limited to Ultimo / Pyrmont, Honeysuckle and Environs, Inner Melbourne and Rivers (Lynch's Bridge), Inner North East Suburbs, Brisbane and East Perth: **Category 1.**
- C2 Area Strategies that are dispersed - e.g. corridor projects - but which contain meritorious demonstrations of one or two of the enduring strands, for example, in conservation or landscaping. Examples were conservation at the Eveleigh Workshops and landscaping at Ascot Fields. These strategies serve to support and reinforce the lessons derived in Category 1, but the Strategies as a group are frequently not coherent in an urban design sense: **Category 2.**
- C3 Those Area Strategies that by their lack of relevance, minor significance or indifferent quality have little to offer the research: **Category 3.**

| State and Area Strategy | Visit | Category |
|--|-------|----------|
| NSW | | |
| 1 Ultimo - Pyrmont | yes | 1 |
| 2 Transit West | yes | 2 |
| 3 Eveleigh | yes | 2 |
| 4 Honeysuckle and Environs | yes | 1 |
| Victoria | | |
| 5 South West Corridor | yes | 2 |
| 6 Inner Melbourne and Rivers (Lynch's Bridge) | yes | 1 |
| 7 Plenty Road | yes | 2 |
| 8 South East Corridor | no | 2 |
| Queensland | | |
| 9 Brisbane - Gold Coast Corridor | yes | 2 |
| 10 Inner North East Suburbs, Brisbane | yes | 1 |
| 11 South Townsville Inner City Village | no | 2 |
| 12 Mackay Urban Consolidation | no | 2 |
| 13 Inala - Ipswich Corridor Brisbane | yes | 2 |
| Western Australia | | |
| 14 Bunbury | yes | 2/3 |
| 15 East Perth | yes | 1 |
| 16 City of Stirling | yes | 2 |
| 17 Perth Urban (Subiaco) | yes | 2 |
| 18 Fremantle | yes | 2 |

| State and Area Strategy | | Visit | Category |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------|---------------------|
| South Australia | | | |
| 19 | Southern Areas | yes | 2 |
| 20 | Elizabeth-Munno Para (Rosewood Village) | yes | 2 |
| 21 | North West Sector | yes | 2 |
| 22 | Western Area | yes | 2 |
| Tasmania | | | |
| 23 | Western Shores Hobart | yes | 2 |
| 24 | Inner City Launceston | yes | 2 |
| Northern Territory | | | |
| 25 | Darwin | no | 3 |
| Australian Capital Territory | | | |
| 26 | North Canberra | yes | 2 |
| Total | | 22 | 5 Category 1 |

From the preceding, there are five Area Strategies that provide the richest resource for this research and are now definite core studies. These are:

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1 | Ultimo-Pyrmont | NSW |
| 4 | Honeysuckle and Environs | NSW |
| 6 | Inner Melbourne and Rivers (Lynch's Bridge) | VIC |
| 10 | Inner North East Suburbs, Brisbane | QLD |
| 16 | East Perth | WA |

4.4 NSW Area Strategies

4.4.1 Ultimo - Pyrmont

4.4.2 Transit West

4.4.3 Eveleigh

4.4.4 Honeysuckle and Environs

4.4.1 Ultimo - Pyrmont Area Strategy

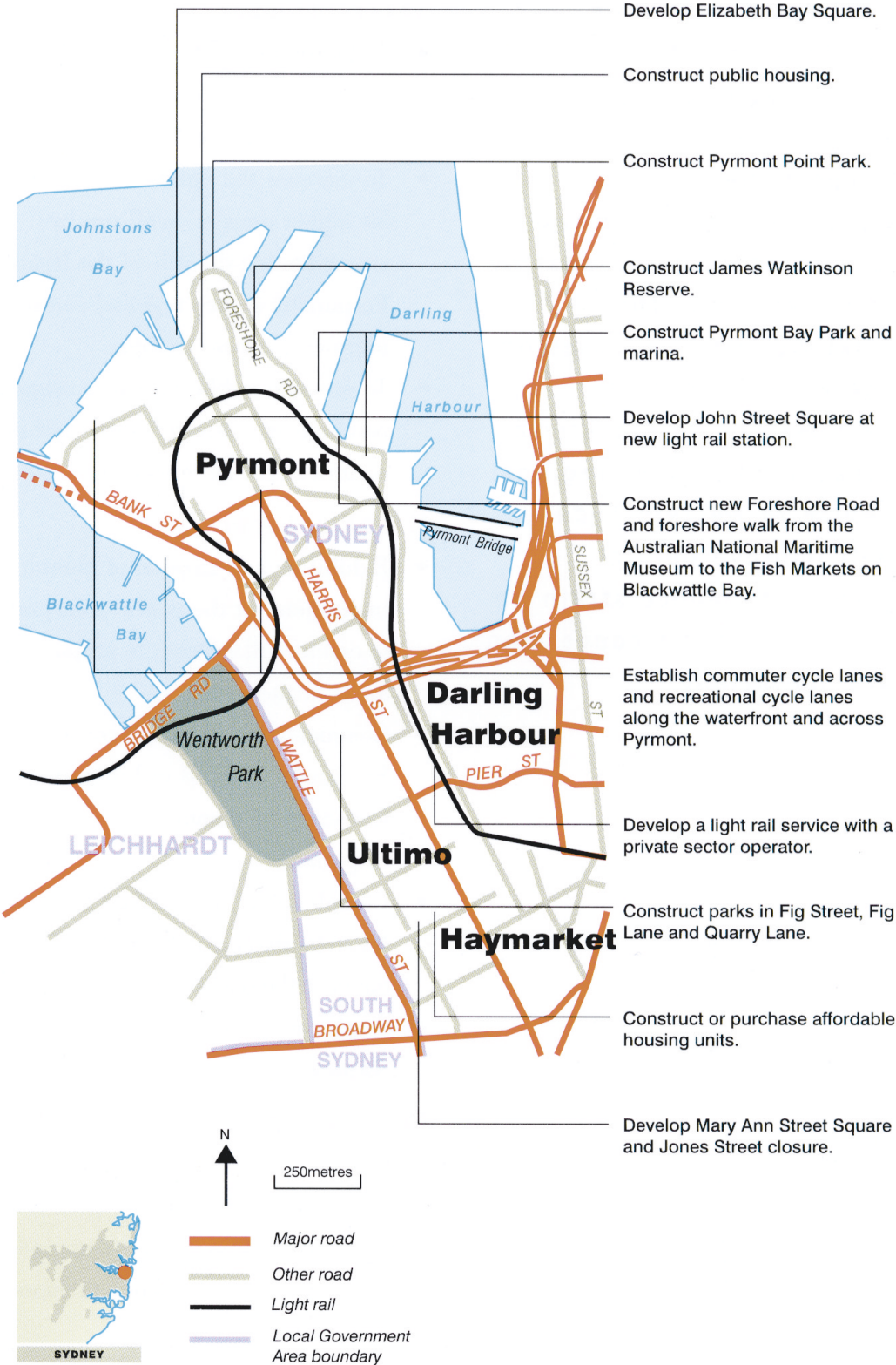


Illustration 4.11 Ultimo-Pyrmont Area Strategy map (Better Cities National Status Report 1995, p. 25)

4.4.1 Ultimo - Pyrmont Area Strategy

Background

Ultimo-Pyrmont is deeply embedded in the history of Sydney. Pyrmont in particular, had its origins in industry and associated wharfage. Industry included the handling and storage of wool, the CSR sugar processing works and wheat handling. The wharves provided transport for both goods and troop embarkation. The area was not simply confined to basic industry and the conveyancing of goods, but could boast of a powerhouse, fire station, public baths and a handsome bridge. Ultimo-Pyrmont is a study in the life and death of part of a city. The area is too close to the heart of the Sydney CBD, the land too valuable and present site too tired and abused to remain perpetuating industries that have in any case, chartered new ways of doing business. Its robust working class beginnings are being transformed, into predominantly middle and upper class habitation, commercial activities and recreation. The site is being cleaned of its contamination, and where possible its sandstone scars integrated into new works. The earlier heavy rail is gone, replaced by a state-of-the-art light rail. The transformation will soon be complete. Ultimo-Pyrmont is not the only BCP Area Strategy regeneration concerned with the waterfront, its infrastructure and industries; Honeysuckle (Newcastle) and East Perth are two others. The scale of Ultimo-Pyrmont's rebirth should not be under-estimated as its 300 ha site constitutes Sydney's most significant urban renewal project. The project is identified by a diverse range of housing and, for Australia innovative public transport, in the form of light rail. Whilst the various reports vary markedly in their figures, it is projected that over a 20-30 year period the area will receive somewhere in the range of 15,000-17,000 residents and that a possible work force of between 40,000-50,000 will eventually be accommodated in the Ultimo-Pyrmont precinct. The Ultimo-Pyrmont Area Strategy is a Category 1 project.

Objectives

Employment objectives:

- 'Provide opportunities for employment generating activity to meet regional and local needs in areas which have traditionally provided employment;
- provide a wide range of employment types;
- provide opportunities for people to live and work in the same location, and
- take full advantage of a locality with good access to employment, recreation, city centre facilities and the regional public transport network.' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 23)

Residential intensification:

- 'Significantly increase the residential population, and
- adopt mechanisms which provide affordable housing in those areas with support facilities and amenities.' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, pp. 24-25)

Land use mix:

- 'Provide a range of uses within the precinct which are compatible, are interrelated and add interest, diversity and vitality;
- allow uses which will support a full range of services and infrastructure;
- allow for the extension of continuous and direct public access along the foreshore, and

- develop a comprehensive network of public paths, streets, squares, and open spaces that integrate existing and future development and adjoining areas.' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 24)

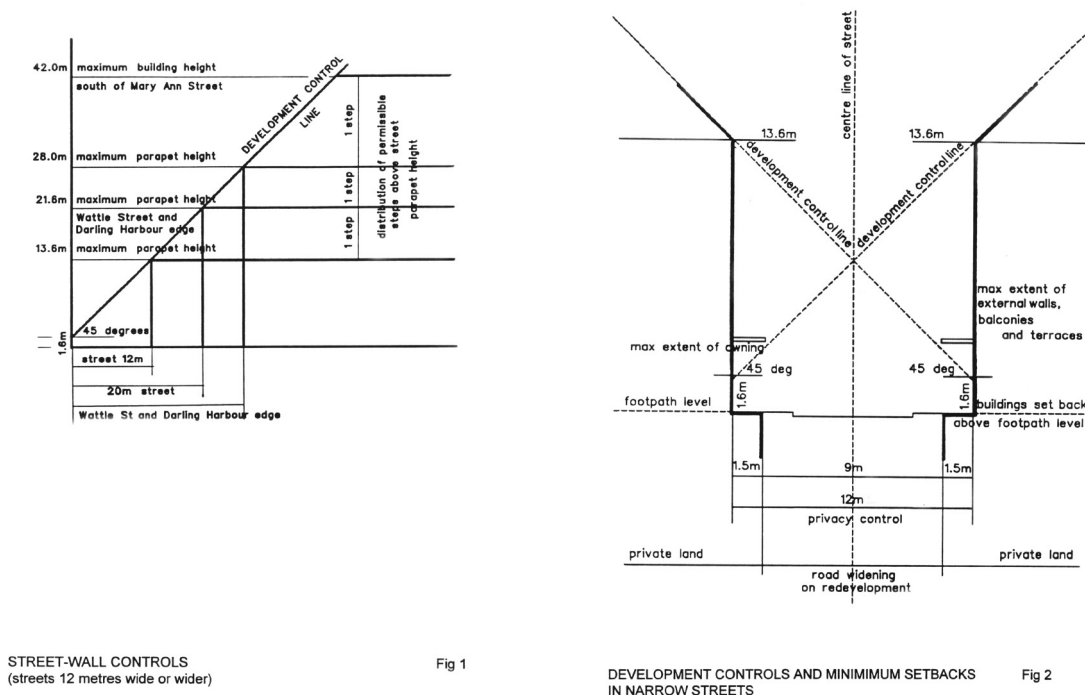
Urban design evaluation

In Part 1- Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct of the New South Wales Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West* under *Urban Design*, pp. 7-8 are the basic principles for height, scale, bulk and finish of buildings. These brief references receive a more detailed extension in the *Urban Development Plan For Ultimo - Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update* in Section 3 on built form (New South Wales. DUAP, 1999, p. 15).

The principles and controls relating to built form are directed at securing high quality of both public domain and living and working environments on private land. This is achieved by:

- providing a transition between city and suburbs;
- enhancing the distinctive character of sub-precincts;
- widening the choice of living and working environments;
- encouraging interesting activities at street level;
- achieving a high quality of environmental quality and amenity on both private land and in the public domain, and
- protecting and enhancing views.

This Section continues to develop principles for building envelopes, street frontages, street walls, heritage related controls, internal courtyards and rear boundaries and corner articulation. Figures 1 and 2 (*Urban Development Plan For Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update*, pp. 19 and 21) share a common geometric basis with the 1.6 metre boundary set out height to the beginning of the 45 degree development control line. The street corner design controls are shown in Figure 4 (p. 24). These guiding controls together with those of maintenance of privacy and the preserving of heritage buildings items and places are the basic tools for fashioning urban design form of this Area Strategy. From observation, they have in the main, proved to be useful tools to comprehensively and successfully guide the development to date, given that many works are still in a construction phase. (*Illustration 4.12*) (5)



STREET-WALL CONTROLS (streets 12 metres wide or wider) Fig 1 DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS AND MINIMUM SETBACKS IN NARROW STREETS Fig 2

Illustration 4.12 Urban Design Controls (Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update pp. 19 and 21)

Buildings and their grouping

There is a plethora of building initiatives in this Area Strategy, which makes detailed evaluation for this particular site demanding. The generic forms of courtyards, street frontage runs and free-standing towers all prevail, and as might be expected, some are handled better in design terms than others. The overall comment is that had the individual buildings been required to adhere to a more disciplined external colour palette, vocabulary of materials and possibly in some matters of detail, then the agglomeration now present might have been visually less restless, more of-a-piece and accordingly, more harmonious in terms of its collective massing.

Public domain

The public domain, streets and footpaths apart, consists essentially of two different configurations. A continuous redevelopment of the waterfront and a 'patchwork' of smaller and separate parks and squares, scattered within the body of the redevelopment site. (*Illustration 4.13*)



Illustration 4.13

Public Domain Framework - Recreation (Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999, Map 15. p. 73)

The waterfront public domain of Pyrmont Point Park extends from The Maritime Museum site in Darling Harbour around the northern extremity of the Pyrmont Peninsular where it meets Bridge Road in Blackwattle Bay. At the upper level, and overlooking Pyrmont Point Park is Giba Park, a cliff top belvedere which gives panoramic views of Sydney Harbour and surrounding areas. This arc of waterfront public domain embraces, in addition to Pyrmont and Giba Precinct Parks, the individually developed Blackwattle Bay Foreshore, Distillery Hill, Pyrmont Bay and community precinct parks.

This contiguous development with its sweeping lawns, plantings of palms, provision for informal ball games and works of art - including a wave operated beam sculpture - provides a diversity of recreation outlets for the public.

The Precinct Parks (designated P) are designed to be flexible spaces reinforcing the existing landscape features and maximising public access to waterfront and views. 'These parks are important open spaces for residents, however they are also important parks in terms of Sydney Harbour' (*Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update*, p. 72). In the hierarchy of public domain spaces there are, in the second tier, Precinct Squares that are conceived of as places to meet. These spaces are more urbane in character, frequently paved and defined by their surrounding built form. These spaces include Elizabeth Bay Square and Fishmarket Square. In the third level there are some eleven listed community parks and squares (designated C) which are designed to answer some of the community's social and recreational needs. At a fourth level there are some 15 listed Local Squares and Parks (designated L) whose purpose is to, 'respond to place and need on a local intimate level.' (*ibid.* p. 77). Examples of such a response include areas that provide passive recreation, playground facilities, space for outdoor eating and viewing. Given the many constraints of the site, particularly those of the steep terrain, the public domain provisions are well conceived, thoughtfully designed and well distributed throughout the development. Whilst it has been argued that the open space ratio per person is one of the lowest in Sydney (*SMH* 28 June 1993) it is difficult to see how the present total area provision could have been greatly increased beyond its present allocation.

Safety and security

The site has such a mix of activities and complexity, that any detailed evaluation would demand an extended study in its own right, but what was observed was that the stepped terrain abetted informal surveillance. In terms of access for people with disabilities a number of principles were established to be integral with the design process. However, there are many forms of disability, including those of visual and aural impairment, mobility, age and intellectual difficulties, and accordingly, it is necessary to acknowledge the inescapable conclusion, that 'access provisions for them are often mutually exclusive.' (*Urban Development Plan For Ultimo - Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update*, p. 83).

Activity

Whilst there was a dominant thrust in the development for housing, many other activities were envisaged and encouraged in this Area Strategy. Such other activities included retail and commercial. Further subdivided, retail activities included shops, food outlets, recreational and tourist facilities, local supermarkets and neighbourhood services, with the preferred location for these activities along Harris Street and in neighbourhood precincts. Commercial also embraced office-based enterprises. In addition, the area encourages recreational and leisure pursuits. Such broadly based activities assisted in the promotion of Ultimo-Pyrmont as self-sufficient, reinforcing the concept of containment and strengthening a sense of community.

Conservation and heritage

Conservation and heritage requirements to be met at Ultimo-Pyrmont are covered in the New South Wales. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (SREP) No 26 - City West under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, in particular Division 6 - Heritage conservation and SCHEDULE 4 - HERITAGE ITEMS. Division 6 includes such matters as heritage items and conservation areas, conservation plans and potential archaeological sites whilst SCHEDULE 4 lists some 106 items for retention. Although the extensiveness of the required heritage retention is seemingly all pervasive, it is in fact diffused throughout the site and does not outweigh the new development. On the contrary, it fits in sympathetically and does much to enrich the character of the redevelopment.

Landscape

One of the major contributions made by the landscape is in street trees and planting. Careful consideration was given to establishing objectives and principles and evolving a strategy for the three character zones of the area, namely the waterfront, Pyrmont and also Ultimo. The particular objectives of tree planting in parks, squares and streets were to:

- ameliorate the impacts of traffic - atmospheric, visual and acoustics;
- provide positive environmental impact - air quality, stormwater run-off, shade;
- define spaces, hierarchies of space and uses of spaces within the peninsula;
- reinforce character precincts and character zones within precincts, and
- provide scale, form, texture and colour. (*Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update*, p. 89)

The illustration Map 19 Street Trees and Planting (*ibid.* p. 92) indicates the role such planting achieved in contributing to the above objectives. (*Illustration 4.14*)

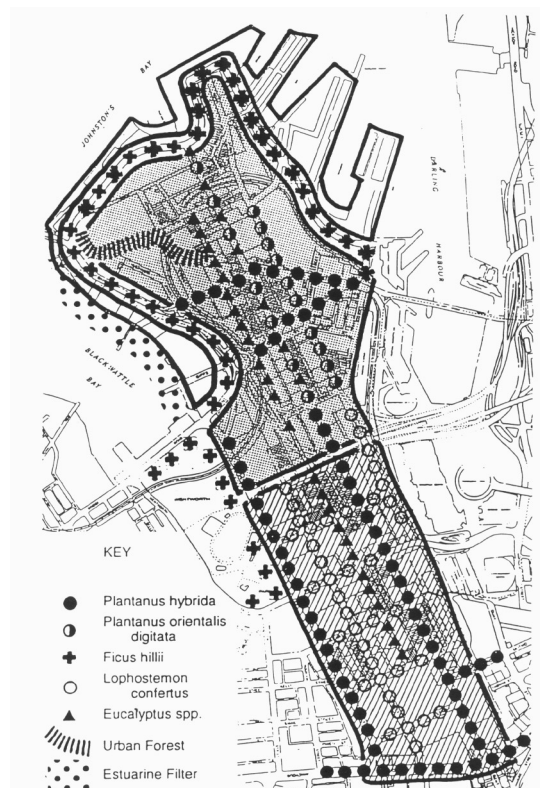


Illustration 4.14

Street Trees and Planting (*Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Map 19*, p. 92)

Environment

The long spinal axis of the site is marked by Harris Street and establishes the street grid orientation of the area. Whilst Harris Street is not oriented true north - it is close to NNW - it determines a favourable building and view orientation. The environmental issues to be attended to in any development on the site are clearly spelt out, together with their minimum acceptable criteria, in Section 7 of the document *Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 update* and include such essential considerations as wind and reflectivity impacts; solar access to public open space and private communal open space and development near major noise sources. The satisfactory addressing of such issues is essential to any development, but particularly so in a dense development as at Ultimo-Pyrmont. Attending to these issues has long been a requirement of development applications lodged with the City of Sydney. In general terms attention to matters such as protection of windows from the sun with overhang, hoods and shutters has received reasonable attention, particularly so in the award winning Point Apartments development and evident in the earlier Hilltop Way Terrace apartments designed by Sir Leslie Wilkinson. (*Illustration 4.15*)



Point Apartments



Hilltop Way Apartments

Illustration 4.15 Point Apartments and Hilltop Way Apartments

Both provide excellent examples of shuttered windows which have clearly had some influence, even if limited, on recent development. A number of affordable housing developments including the Meriton Apartments in Pyrmont Bridge Road and, at the luxury end of the scale, the Lend Lease apartments adjacent to the water front, have not availed themselves of these provisions and it is reasonable to question what penalty this incurred in additional air conditioning requirements.

Ecological response

Much of the site required remediation from its previous industrial processes, and indeed the sweet sugary odour of CSR's now defunct activities still lingers. All development is required to

observe both principles and controls in a number of ESD issues including the following: energy conservation, the efficient use of water and earth, waste minimisation extending to its avoidance, biodiversity and the shunning of materials and processes that endanger species and habitats together with the planting of indigenous species encouraging habitat extension.

The requirements extend into human health in the avoidance of toxic materials, electromagnetic radiation, the remediation of contaminated sites and the maximising of ventilation and solar access. Air pollution minimisation is sought through reduced private transport, and the use of low embodied energy materials, and buildings capable of adaptation in the long term are encouraged.

Circulation

Issues of circulation were comprehensively considered ranging in magnitude from a light rail passenger system through to the needs of recreational cyclists. Detailed but pared-down parking for motor vehicles, controlled through minimum and maximum provisions, were also carefully considered. A primary consideration was to reduce reliance on private transport through encouraging the use of public transport, including light rail and bus together with support for walking and cycling modes. The control requiring on-site parking within developments to be provided below ground level, within buildings, or screened in the interests of street level activities and safety is commendable. The following Maps 16, 17 and 18 indicate the care and detailed attention provided to pedestrian circulation, access for people with disabilities and cyclist circulation both commuter and recreational. Given the steep terrain, the obvious desire to minimise alterations to the existing street grain, the substantial increase in density, provisions for circulation, access and parking have been capably considered and executed to date. (*Illustrations 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18*)

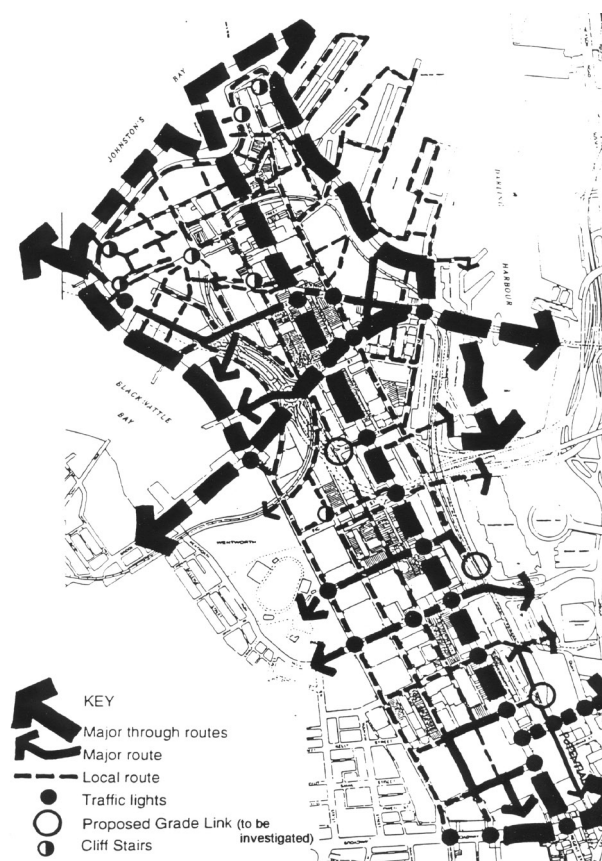


Illustration 4.16

Pedestrian Circulation (Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Map 16, p. 80)

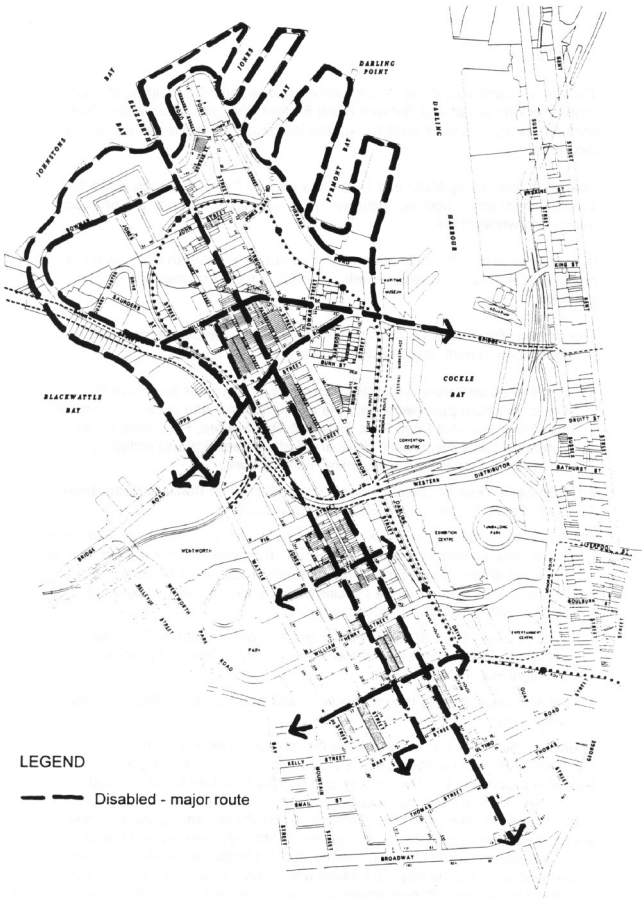


Illustration 4.17 Access for People with Disabilities (Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Map 17, p. 84)

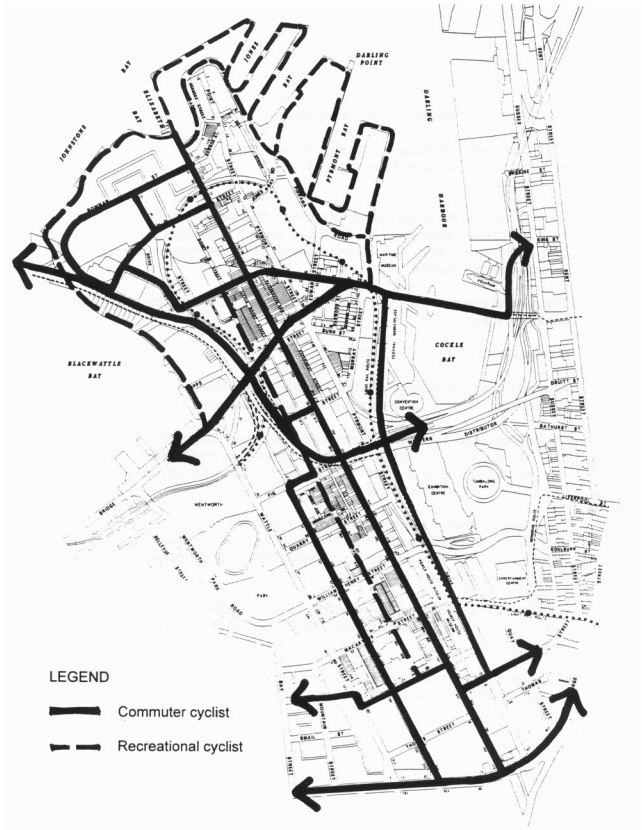


Illustration 4.18 Cyclist Circulation (Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Map 18, p. 87)

Public art

Whilst public art is nowhere near as abundant as the area could visually support, those pieces that exist particularly along the waterfront park, and visible from the belvedere Giba Precinct Park are bold, appropriately scaled to their setting and finely constructed.

Social

One of the most significant social initiatives in the Ultimo-Pyrmont Area Strategy was the focus on the provision of affordable housing at 68-80 Mary Ann Street, Ultimo and 54-64 Macarthur Street, Ultimo. This requirement was provided for in *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West Part 4 - Affordable Housing in the Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct*, the income thresholds for participation set out in Part 55.

The gross incomes of such households fall within the following ranges of percentages of the median household income for the time being for the Sydney Statistical Division according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Very low income household | less than 50% |
| Low income household | 50 or more but less than 80% |
| Moderate income household | 80 - 100% |

Part 56 continues:

- 1 Affordable housing is to be created and managed in the Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct so that a socially diverse residential population representative of all income groups is maintained within that Precinct.
- 2 Affordable housing is to be made available to a mix of very low, low and moderate income households.

The report *Affordable Housing, Revised City West Affordable Housing Program, adopted 21 July 1996*, (Department of Urban Affairs) is designed to be read in conjunction with *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West as amended*, and pursues in detail matters of: principles, policy, funding, administration and amendment. The Report continues, (p. 2):

1.3 What is Affordable Housing?

The term affordable housing conveys the notion of reasonable housing costs in relation to income (National Housing Strategy, 1992). The National Housing Strategy advocates that housing costs for low income households, totalling approximately 25-30% of gross household income should be adopted as a reasonable measure of affordability. Within the context of the City West Affordable Housing Program, the aim is to provide dwellings which are affordable to very low, low to moderate and moderate income households. (Appendix A details the basis of income thresholds and indexing principles). Table 1 outlines target household income.

Table 1. Target Household Income

| Target group | Gross household income p.a. 1995 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Very low income | <\$20 581 |

Low to moderate income \$20 582-\$32 930

Moderate income \$32 931-\$49 394

Affordability is closely linked with both the appropriateness and quality of the dwellings for its residents. In this regard, the City West Affordable Housing Program aims to provide dwellings which respond to housing needs. In physical terms, the standard of dwellings are to be consistent with the average standard of contemporary development in the area. (p. 2)

The progressive outcome of planned development of residential and mixed use areas through the provisions of the New South Wales. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West* (New South Wales 1995) in this Area Strategy was reported in the Achievements section of *The Report*, Vol. 1 p. 24 as follows. "This included innovative measures, such as "inclusionary zoning" to create 600 units of affordable housing for low and middle income groups in Ultimo-Pyrmont. Two hundred units had been completed by June 1997 ... the 600 units of affordable housing represents between 6%-7% of total stock (i.e. private market, affordable and public housing and about 8% of housing provided over the life of the project will be either affordable or public housing." (Williams, P. 1997, p. 17).

Peter Williams in 'Inclusionary Zoning and Strategic Planning' in *Australian Planner*, Vol. 34, no. 1, 1997, p. 17, concisely summarises the nature of inclusionary zoning. 'Thus inclusionary zoning may be simply defined as zoning provisions which require the mandatory inclusion of certain uses, development or facilities in identified new developments proposals, as a precondition before any consent may be granted by a consent authority.'

Management processes

Control and guidance of this initiative, possibly the most extensive redevelopment in Australia's urban history, is being achieved through many resource documents and processes, but essential interrelated key documents must include the following:

- *Agreement Between The Commonwealth of Australia and New South Wales Concerning the Implementation of the Building Better Cities Program (undated).*
- *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West under the Environmental Planning Act 1979 1992-564 with amendments 1995 - No 681 and 1997, No. 622.*
- *New South Wales. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1999, Urban Development Plan For Ultimo - Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update Prepared in accordance with Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West Adopted by the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning on 10 June 1999.*

This plan was prepared in terms of Clause 36 of the above document Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West under the Environmental Planning Act 1979 1992-564 with amendments 1995 - No. 681 and 1997 No. 622.

- *Lend Lease Development. 1997. Lend Lease Pyrmont Site Master Plan Adopted by the Minister 23 October 1997 Incorporating Amendment No. 1 McCaffery's Hill and Distillery Hill Precincts Adopted by the Minister 30 December 1997.*
- *New South Wales. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. Affordable Housing, Revised City West Affordable Housing Program, adopted 21 July 1996, Department of Urban Affairs.*

Conclusion

The *Urban Development Plan For Ultimo - Pyrmont Precinct 1999 Update* was found to contain, in a fragmented form, some or part of the enduring strands adopted for this research. This discovery was made quite independently of establishing the enduring strands, but the parallels, such as they exist, provide support for the evaluation process adopted for this research. The following comparison table indicates the parallels.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Enduring Strands | Table of Contents <i>Urban Development Plan For Ultimo - Pyrmont Precinct 1999</i> |
| Buildings and their grouping | <i>Built Form (Part 3)</i> |
| Public domain | <i>The Public Domain Principles and Strategy (Part 10)</i> |
| Safety and security | Partially covered in Part 10 |
| Activity | <i>Sustainable Residential Development (Part 5)</i> <i>Retail, Business and Neighbourhood Strategy (Part 6)</i> |
| Conservation and heritage | Referred to in Part 3 |
| Landscape | Incorporated in Part 10 |
| Environment | <i>Environmental Issues (Part 7)</i> |
| Ecological response | <i>Ecologically Sustainable Development (Part 8)</i> |
| Circulation | <i>Access, Parking and Circulation (Part 9)</i> |
| Public art | Reference in <i>Character and Detail (Part 4)</i> |
| Social | Limited reference to Human Health in Part 8 and access and parking for people with disabilities Parts 9 and 10. There is no reference in this document to affordable housing. |
| Management processes | The document is the management process |

By any measure Ultimo-Pyrmont is a substantial undertaking and in most ways a success. As in a number of the other Area Strategies, housing design is disappointing and its attendant response to environmental issues indifferent, as referred to in other case studies of the Area Strategies.

4.4.2 Transit West Area Strategy

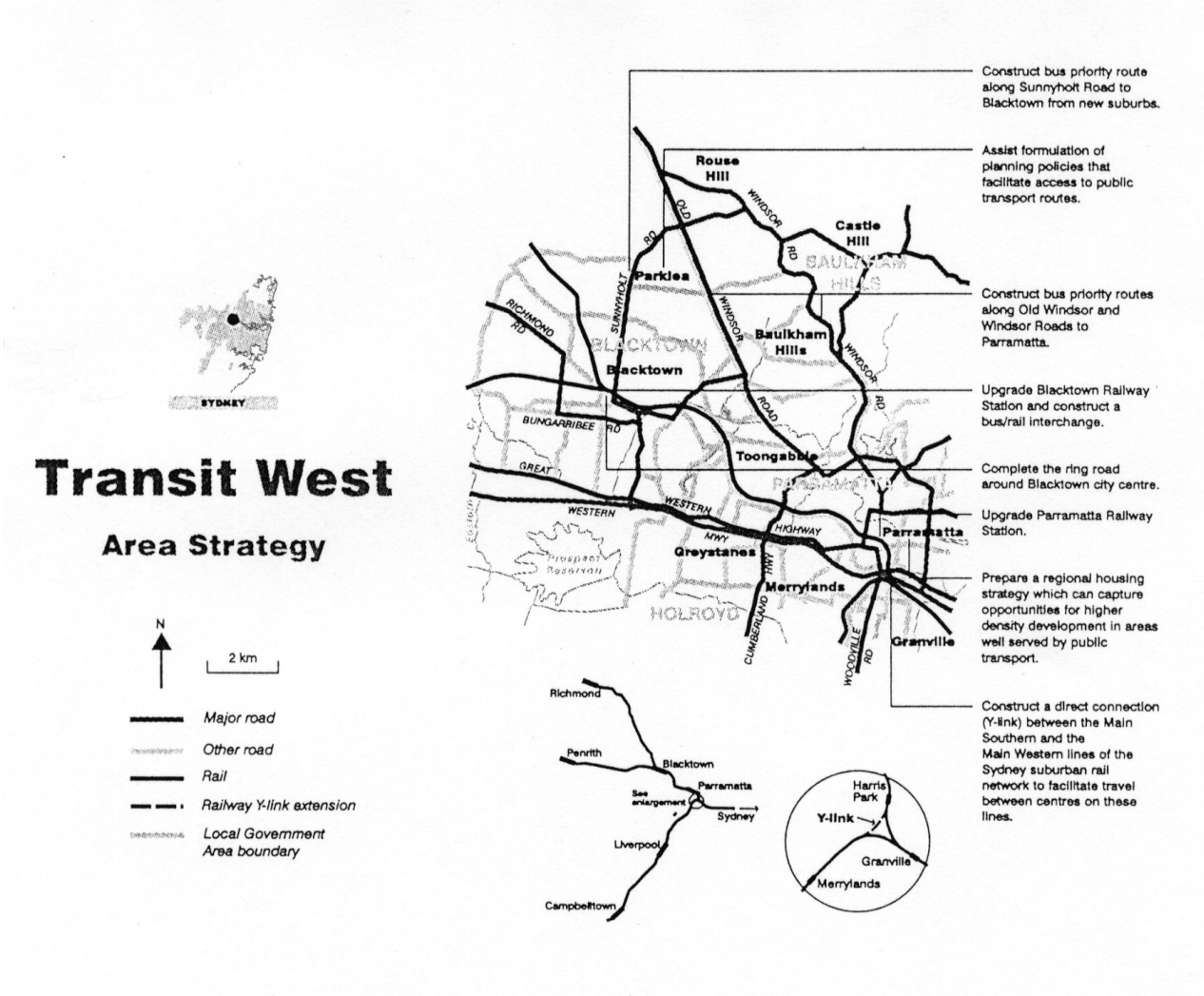


Illustration 4.19 Transit West Area Strategy map (The Report Vol. 1 facing page 26)

4.4.2 Transit West Area Strategy

Background

It is anticipated that the population of Sydney's west will rise to about two million by the year 2011 (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 25). The Transit West Area Strategy consisted of a number of public transport initiatives to improve access to Blacktown and Parramatta. Such improvements were mooted not only to ease road congestion but strengthen the employment potential of these centres and their strategic role in Sydney's growth. Transit West Area Strategy is a Category 2 project because of its specialised nature.

Objectives

- 'To facilitate growth of Parramatta as a major employment centre - Sydney's second Central Business District (CBD);
- to improve access to the employment and commercial opportunities in Parramatta and Blacktown which will have the largest employment areas in Western Sydney;
- to facilitate increased uptake of residential land for higher density dwellings by strengthening the role of Blacktown and Parramatta CBDs and improving access to them;
- to achieve a 50 per cent mode split for public transport in the Parramatta sub-regional centre, to promote public transport usage by residents of Western Sydney development areas and prevent emergence of a pattern of car dependence in these areas, and
- to develop innovative dedicated bus priority measures as a model for other areas.' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 25)

Urban design evaluation

Transit West Area Strategy is a highly dispersed initiative involving issues of transportation, access and increased uptake of residential land for higher density housing. Because of its dispersed nature it is a Category Two project with only individual and isolated examples available for urban design evaluation within the context of this research. The examples selected from this Area Strategy are the Blacktown and Parramatta rail-bus transport interchanges.

Blacktown rail-bus interchange

Buildings and their grouping

The cascading forms make this building a dominant and unified architectural statement.



Illustration 4.20 Blacktown rail-bus interchange

Public domain

The entire interchange is predominantly one of a public domain apart from the Rail Authority's dedicated areas and any concession areas.

Safety and security

Safety and security measures have been well attended to, particularly in regard to issues of transparency and sightlines, with these extending to the lift installations. Access is clear and definite.

Activity

The activity is solely concerned with moving people safely and expeditiously.

Conservation and heritage

This evaluation criterion is not applicable to this project.

Landscape

Apart from some modest potted platform planting, a long-held tradition of earlier station masters, the immediate precinct is devoid of any landscaped treatment, either integrated or stand alone.

Environment

The sense of shelter from both sun and rain imparted by the curved cascading forms is well conceived.

Ecological response

In an age concerned with conservation of resources, and hence embodied energy, it is unfortunate that steel is the dominant material of construction in the interchange. The query, however, begs the question as to what other versatile material would serve the purpose so well. There is no visible evidence that the considerable quantity of rain water from the roof expanse and also the areas of hardstand was being turned to any recycled purpose.

Circulation

The interchange is its own island of detailed circulation and there was no evidence, or reason, to consider this did not work efficiently.

Public art

Apart from the profusion of signs there was no evidence of public art, nor the traditional posters associated with rail and rail-bus interchange stations.

Social

The interchange is conceived predominantly, if not solely, as a 'people-mover' and hence softening influences of colour, landscape and public art, even if contained to posters, were obviously considered redundant to its basic purpose.

Management processes

The management process of an interchange is the safe, and efficient movement of people, and as Blacktown followed this well proven model, it too exhibited these characteristics.

Conclusion

Whilst the interchange may function well it is singularly lacking in any concession to landscaped works, public art, use of colour and acknowledgment of ecological imperatives.

Parramatta rail-bus interchange (upgrade)

Buildings and their grouping

The design vocabulary of the glazed platform roofs in a pitched steel supporting framework is welcoming in terms of admitting natural light to the platforms, but curiously at odds with the non-transparent roofs of the Blacktown Station interchange which admit an abundance of natural light without resorting to glazing. It is assumed the Rail Authority was looking for variety in the design of its station upgrades. (*Illustration 4.21*)



Illustration 4.21 Parramatta rail-bus interchange

Public domain

The entire interchange is predominantly one of a public domain apart from the Authority's dedicated areas and any concession areas.

Safety and security

Safety and security measures have been satisfactorily attended to particularly in regard to sight-lines, with these partially extending to the lift installations. Access is clear and definite.

Activity

The activity is solely concerned with moving people safely and expeditiously.

Conservation and heritage

This evaluation criterion is not applicable to this project.

Landscape

A modest contribution bordering on the insignificant.

Environment

The sense of shelter from rain has been achieved but one wonders if the inclined glass roofs will satisfactorily inhibit glare to passengers waiting for trains.

Ecological response

In an age concerned with conservation of resources, and hence embodied energy, it is unfortunate that steel and glass are the dominant construction materials of the interchange.

Circulation

Pedestrian circulation was clear and unambiguous.

Public art

Apart from the profusion of signs there no evidence of public art, nor the traditional posters associated with rail and rail-bus interchange stations.

Social

The interchange is conceived predominantly, if not solely, as a 'people-mover' and hence softening influences of colour, landscape and public art, even if contained to posters, were considered redundant to its basic purpose.

Management processes

This criterion is not applicable as the sole management process is the safe and efficient movement of people which lies within the jurisdiction of the Rail Authority.

Conclusion

Whilst the interchange may function well, it is singularly lacking in any concession to landscaped works, public art and acknowledgment of ecological imperatives. The employment of a vibrant colour palette redeems what might otherwise be yet another station, and again this is curiously at odds with Blacktown Station with its unrelieved off-white forms.

4.4.3 Eveleigh Area Strategy

Background

The Eveleigh Railway Workshops enjoy world heritage status. In their time they were regarded as Australia's most extensive and advanced railway workshops. Like other technologies, in this case steam, their usefulness declined and they became surplus to Government requirements. The workshops have now experienced a successful rebirth to become an Advanced Technology Park (ATP) by utilising links between three nearby universities and industry. The universities comprise the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales and the University of Technology, Sydney. The purpose of the ATP is the creation of employment in knowledge-based industries and scientific research and in seeking commercial outcomes for such research and development. The ATP occupies some 14 ha of the greater Eveleigh site of 52 ha, the remaining 38 ha being given over to housing, community facilities and commercial enterprises, all of which are part of the Program's Area Strategy. The Eveleigh Area Strategy whilst containing a variety of initiatives, has primarily been evaluated in terms of the ATP, and is therefore a Category 2 project.

Objectives

- 'To facilitate a mutually supporting cluster of high knowledge intensity industries through the creation of an Advanced Technology Park;
- to redevelop other government surplus land as this becomes available for other uses including housing;
- to effectively conserve state and nationally significant heritage items from the NSW railways system as these are released from the State Rail Authority;
- to utilise a Residential Business zone with development controlled by performance standards together with a masterplan, a heritage conservation plan and a social impact assessment, to ensure that these standards are met;
- to provide new community open spaces and physical and social facilities, including child care, associated with the Advanced Technology Park for the benefit of a wider community;
- to maximise the potential of the proposed air link concept for a public transport interchange between Kingsford Smith International Airport and Redfern Station;
- to create opportunities for residential and related development such as serviced apartments, hotel, student accommodation and affordable housing;
- to encourage the development of cultural activities, including those that cater for the local Aboriginal community, and
- to provide through-site pedestrian/cycle access to Redfern Station.' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, pp. 28-29)

Urban design evaluation

Buildings and their grouping

The ATP occupies sensitively adapted industrial buildings of the late Victorian and early Federation periods in a strongly defined heritage precinct. As the buildings have been neither extended

nor their external appearance altered they have been unified to form a coherent ensemble by extensive brick-paved linking plazas. Outside of the ATP there are commercial buildings, medium density housing and a 60-place child care centre together with recreational open space.

The disciplined coherence of the ATP is not as evident in the other building groups, particularly that of housing. Whilst the new commercial buildings are generally of fresh and incisive design, housing design falls short of the mark. (*Illustration 4.23*)



Illustration 4.23 Commercial buildings

The masterplan for housing anticipated up to 100 affordable housing units and 123 three- to four-storey private residential buildings at a density of 68 units per hectare on 20 parcels of land. 'In the medium term the housing will be managed by community housing associations, in line with the objective of expanding the NSW Government's community housing sector' (*The Report, Vol. 1, p. 30*). The four-storey medium density housing is remarkable for its overworked and visually disappointing elevational treatment. (*Illustration 4.24*)



Illustration 4.24 Four-storey medium density housing

The single and two-storey medium density housing, whilst not in the same visually disappointing category as the private housing, nonetheless carries the appearance of bland council estate housing with the occasional applied device such as sun hoods to relieve the visual tedium. Housing is the least well designed of all the building groups in the Eveleigh Area Strategy. (Illustration 4.25)



Illustration 4.25 Single and two-storey medium density housing

Public domain

The carefully considered public domain of the ATP is described in Landscape. The public domain for the other elements of the Area Strategy consists predominantly of recreational open space and circulation routes for vehicles and parking, cyclists and pedestrians.

Safety and security

The visual openness of Eveleigh provides good sightlines for informal surveillance. The absence of dense shrubbery limits places of concealment and entrapment with the exception of the foliage on the linear acoustic mound parallel to Henderson Road and that associated with single and two-storey housing, both situations failing to meet the required standards of this criterion.

Activity

The activity central to the Eveleigh Area Strategy is the ATP situated at the centre of a triangle formed by the three collaborating universities. The ATP is also only a few minutes away from the Central Business District (CBD) and about twelve minutes from the Sydney Airport (*Australian Technology Park*, p. 8).

Through the links of the three participating Universities and TAFE the ATP tenants have access to 15,000 qualified staff, 120,000 students plus the resources and infrastructure of these leading educational institutions. The three participating universities provide a ready supply of engineers and scientists, and access to Australia's best research facilities. Twenty five per cent of Australia's university related R&D budget is managed by these universities. These universities have world class strength in ten generic technology areas around which the ATP is building clusters of companies.

ATP programs include:

- School of the Future - yet to be realised;
- Science and Engineering Centre;
- TAFE Skill Centre; and
- Advanced Manufacturing Centre. (6)

The programs already generated at the ATP include from Sydney University alone, The Optical Fibre Technology Centre, The Biomaterials Science Research Unit and The Centre for Proteome Research. ('Sydney on fast track to technological future' October 1996, in *University of Sydney Gazette*, pp. 24-25)

Conservation and heritage

A primary objective within the development of the Australian Technology Park (ATP) was the conservation of items of state and national heritage significance. This meant not only the conservation of buildings but also the interpretive value of processes and activities that occurred within the work environment. In particular, 'Eveleigh contains machinery which enables interpretation of various technologies used in the development of railways in NSW'. (New South Wales, DUAP. 1996. *Better Cities. A Newsletter for Eveleigh*, No. 6, March 1996, p. 1). Items of heritage significance were identified in the *Sydney Regional Environmental Management Plan. No 26 - City West (SREP 26)*. The existence of SREP 26 in turn led to the preparation of conservation management plans in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter. The major adaptive reuses were the original Works Manager's Office to the International Business Centre, the New Engine Shop to the National Innovation Centre and the Locomotive Workshop Building to areas for lease. The Conservatorium of Music currently occupied a considerable space in the Locomotive Workshop Building whilst its existing Macquarie Street accommodation was being greatly enhanced and extended. (*Illustration 4.26*).



International Business Centre



National Innovation Centre



Locomotive workshop - exterior



Locomotive workshop - interior

Illustration 4.26

Landscape

The Stage 1 Landscaping works creating the public domain successfully maximises pedestrian amenity with the inclusion of items of diversionary interest in a walk of its length. Reference to the illustration indicates a strong and definite sense of entry to the ATP from the Redfern Railway Station which continues on into the site as a broad path down to the circular Manager's Plaza (*Illustration 4.27*) and then on to the extensive Innovation Plaza. Whilst one might query the preponderance of brick paving to these generous plaza areas, given the existing dominant use of brick in the heritage structures of the National Innovation Centre and the Locomotive Workshop Building, the case can be argued either way. One view is that the adoption of brickwork in the Plaza reinforces the already dominant use of brick in the buildings, but also is a strong and enduring material sympathetic to the potent images of rolling stock. One can also argue that there exists already a surfeit of brick and a lighter material both in colour and texture with soft landscaping would have provided a welcome foil to the existing omnipresent brickwork. The writer supports the latter view.



Illustration 4.27 The Plaza

From the Innovation Plaza one continues down the major pedestrian link of Mitchell Way. Just before Mitchell Way reaches an activity elbow and alters direction there is a Garden Street entry which is a major vehicular and cyclist entry to the ATP. At the elbow there is an ephemeral water feature with a stormwater energy dissipater. The elbow space is therefore both a detention basin and an informal sports oval. The route changes direction and runs parallel to Henderson Road. There is a public entrance at Henderson Road for pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles providing access to the oval. Immediately after this entry there is a small sports field containing a tennis court, a basket / multi-use ball park and a practice ball park. The walk continues on to the child care centre and adjacent housing development. (Illustration 4.28)

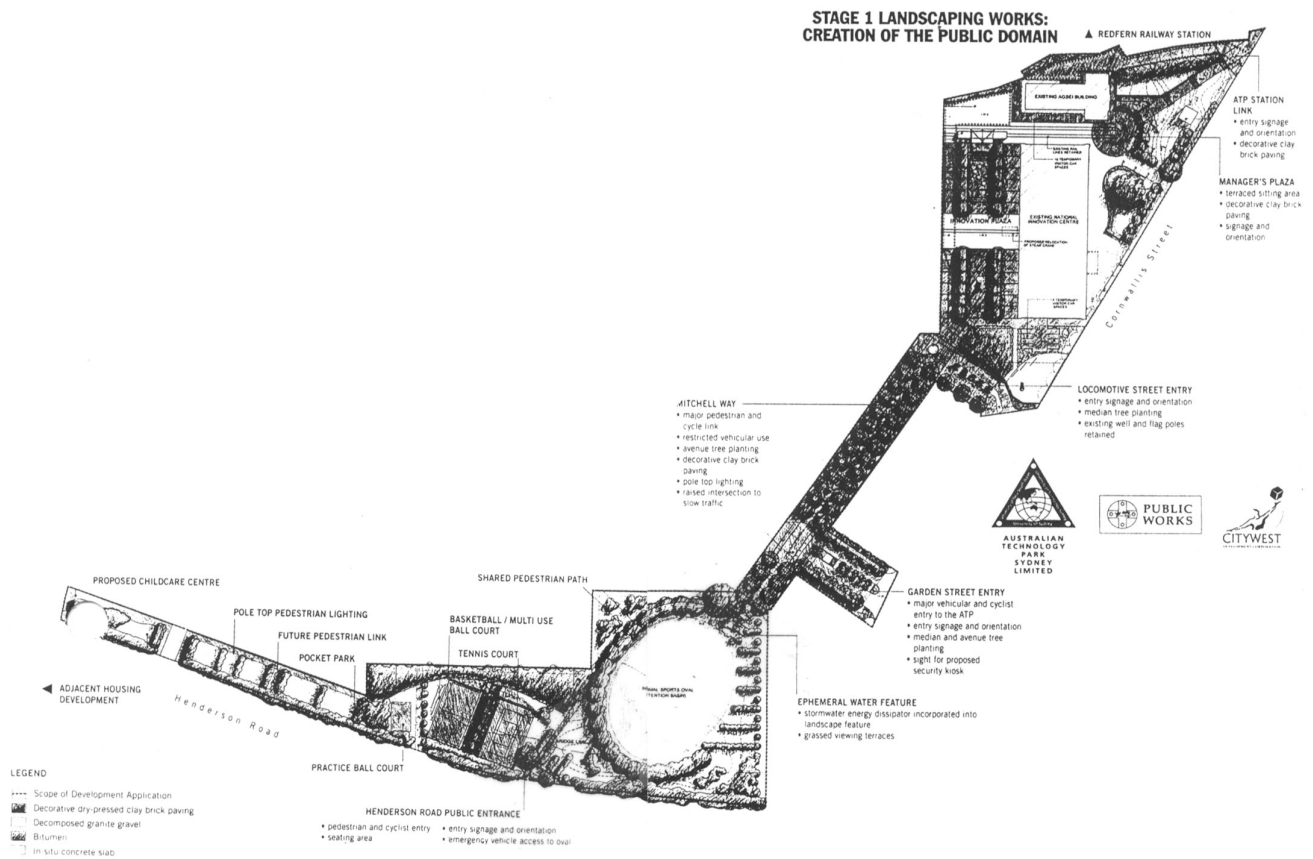


Illustration 4.28

Landscape and site plan - (NSW, Department of Planning. 1995. *Building Better Cities - A Newsletter for Eveleigh No 5 March 1995, pp . 2-3*)

Environment

Both the fabric and positioning of the existing ATP heritage buildings allowed little scope to address matters of orientation and the application of corrective measures as in protection from sun, wind and rain. However, given the massive 18 inch thick brick walls, and their inherent thermal inertia, together with the small window openings and the opportunity to enhance the roof insulation in the adaptive reuse of these heritage buildings, these concerns are relatively slight. Also, the objective of keeping to a minimum any alterations in appearance to the existing external facades precluded the obvious incorporation of applied compensating measures such as sun shading.

Ecological response

In the National Innovation Centre and its adaptive reuse by inserting two additional atrium floors within the single storey structure, ridge vents were retained for natural ventilation providing a situation where air conditioning was not required in public spaces, and limited to office spaces for commercial imperatives. (*Architecture Bulletin*, November 1996, p. 15) The existing roof lights were also retained providing natural light into the structure and supported by supplementary artificial lighting. Whilst the National Innovation Centre was adapted by a team of private sector design consultants - Crawford Partners Architects Pty Ltd and Project Manager Public Works - it provided the design approach for Public Works with the rehabilitation of the Locomotive Workshop Building.

As well as focusing on energy efficiency, the ecological response at Eveleigh addressed several other issues, in particular the inevitable decontamination of the land resulting from its previous and prolonged industrial occupation, the improvement in transport and pedestrian circulation and the implementation and adherence to policies of waste-minimisation. (Hundloe, T. and McDonald, G. 1997, p. 107) An ecological bonus in retaining the existing heritage buildings, apart from their intrinsic worth both historically and in terms of their space provisions, was the massive retention of embodied energy.

Circulation

The pedestrian movement issues of increased safety and comfort in the greater context of the ATP, the University of Sydney, Redfern and Redfern Station were addressed in the *Redfern Station Planning Study 1995*, prepared by Devine Erby Mazlin and Colston Budd. (7) The study also outlined the detailed implications for pedestrian access and control to and from the Redfern Station to the above destinations. However, the major remodelling of the station has yet to occur to initiate this pedestrian movement network. The ATP Stage 1 public domain landscape works maximises pedestrian amenity and provides items of interest in a walk of its length as outlined in Landscape.

Public art

There is little or no public art in the sense of specially designed works of art for the ATP and its setting, yet there are artefacts for the public's edification in a vital sense in the retention of selected railway industrial heritage. Examples include the elevated steel water tower at the ATP Redfern Station entrance and the heavy machine tools and equipment available for public view on entering the Locomotive Workshop Building.

The retention of internal crane beams being clear spans across structural bays running the length of the building are also very much part of the industrial artefacts, as too are the elegant paired cast iron structural columns. The concentric circled brick paved Manager's Plaza echoes the time honoured symbol of the wheel and railways.

Social

The Eveleigh project met with strong community opposition, best exemplified by some of the comments at the time (Turvey, F. Darlington's Residents Group, n.d., *Blot on the Landscape, The Advanced Technology Park, The Local Community, And The State Of Public Education*, n.p.):

'The State Government imposed the ATP on Eveleigh without any of the usual consultation and planning. Now they're trying desperately to make the shoe fit, even if it means cutting off a few toes. It won't work, and the community knows that even if the Government refuses to admit it.' (Ald Anne-Maree Whittaker, South Sydney Council)

'Darlington residents well know the violent techniques used by the University's agents to acquire space and extend its exclusive enterprises in the name of education facilities. They were responsible for the annihilation of a self-sufficient community - residents were dispersed and deprived of appropriate amenities and support services. Those who remember Darlington's history must resist these latest collaborative proposals which will only increase the power of these powerful institutions.' (Fred Turvey, Darlington's Resident's Action Group)

'The problems Aboriginal communities face are not those of economic growth, but social problems - health, unemployment, living standards, insecurity, education, our future. The ATP suits non-Aboriginal people's egos - it has no consideration for the indigenous people. They're trying to isolate our Redfern community - build all around us and we're just a black hole. What happened to the great Australian dream?' (Margaret Vincent, Redfern Aboriginal Enterprise)

The indictments continue, and there is a dismaying gulf between the positions taken by the above other community groups compared with the perceptions of the ATP such as:

- 'The ATP is a jewel in the crown of NSW;
- The ATP is the saviour of Redfern;
- The ATP is serving as a model for the Victorian Docklands Project.' (8)

The last mentioned, the Victorian Docklands Project, has drawn a considerable degree of adverse comment for its *laissez-faire* market-determined approach to planning.

Whilst in the spirit of education there were on site training programs, involving some 47 indigenous people in bricklaying and allied trades, the outcome was less than satisfactory. Although the course ran for twelve weeks none of the trainees went beyond seven weeks even though they reached the required skill of 300 bricks per day. (9)

The above examples are too scant to provide a base to construct a case, but they do indicate that massive urban intrusions can leave in their wake both a real and perceived sense of displacement and anger by the local residents at being, to all intents and purposes, disregarded.

Management processes

Of the various procedures instigated for the Eveleigh Area Strategy there can be no doubt that the *Sydney Regional Environmental Management Plan. No 26 - City West (SREP 26)* made a substantial contribution to the preservation of the built and manufacturing heritage, if not, it seems, the cultural and indigenous heritage of the area.

Conclusion

Whilst new commercial buildings, heritage and landscape work at Eveleigh deserve praise, the project's response to the environment, public art and particularly social issues, for reasons outlined, was indifferent. Housing design was disappointing for reasons of either blandness or excessive working of the elevational treatments.

4.4.4 Honeysuckle and Environs Area Strategy

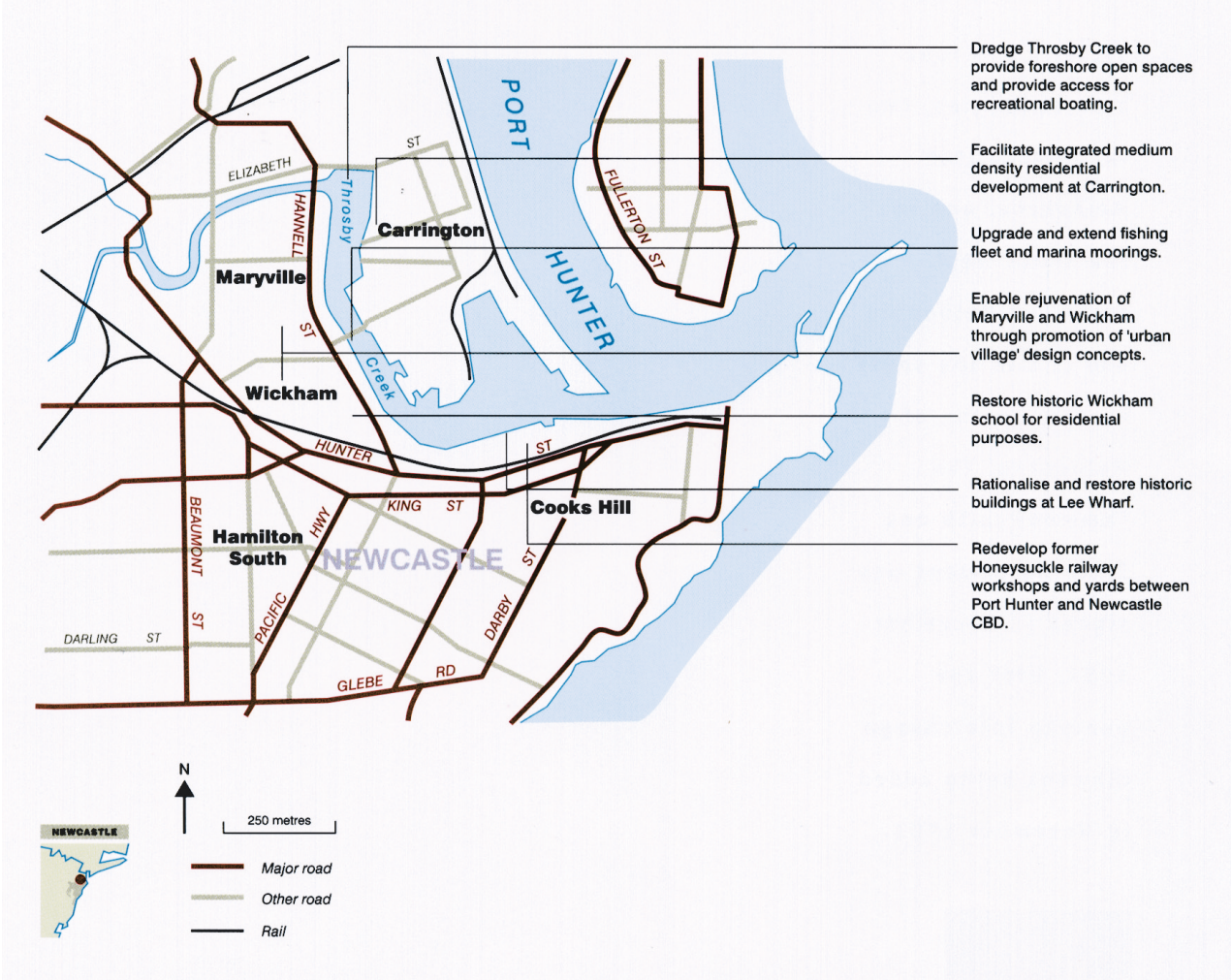


Illustration 4.29 Honeysuckle and Environs Area Strategy map (Better Cities National Status Report 1995, p. 29)

4.4.4 Honeysuckle and Environs Area Strategy

Background

The parallels between Honeysuckle (Newcastle) and Ultimo-Pyrmont are visible. Similar circumstances prevailed and declined in both places. In the case of Newcastle primary industry in coal mining and its shipment and the manufacture of steel and the associated infrastructure of rail and wharfage identify its heavy industry kinship with Ultimo-Pyrmont. In considering the decline of Honeysuckle, the Area Strategy concentrated on the rejuvenation of inner Newcastle, which had experienced a protracted decline in population, employment and economic activity. Over the decade from 1981 to 1991 the inner city population had declined by close to 25% from 47,000 to 36,000. (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 26). Housing was an essential part of the Program but the focus was also on the development of the waterfront with its disused port and railway land. This land, in the heart of the city, was seen as an agent for change in the rejuvenation of Newcastle's role as the centre of the Hunter region for commercial, retail and recreational activity. For reasons explained below Honeysuckle and Environs Area Strategy is a Category 1 project.

Objectives

- 'To revitalise the city's CBD and to develop the city into an effective capital of the Hunter region;
- to develop a mix of affordable and other housing choices;
- to stimulate and reinforce development on adjacent land areas;
- to improve employment opportunities and to diversify the economic base of the city and the wider region;
- to improve the quality of life within the CBD and inner suburbs and to open up community access to the harbour foreshore and enhance the attractiveness of the city;
- to facilitate an improved use rate of existing capacity within public transport and other infrastructure in the city's CBD and inner suburbs, and
- to encourage reduction in car usage by local residents.' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, pp. 26-27)

Urban design evaluation

Because of the dispersed nature of activity at Honeysuckle and the difficulty in discerning how it might eventually come together as a coherent and legible urban environment, it is reasonable to see it as a Category Two Area Strategy. However, because of its very difficulties in getting it 'all together' it prompts an instinctual as much as a clearly objective response, that given time, it will consolidate into a coherent outcome and therefore is evaluated as a potential Category 1 Area Strategy. The difficulties this redevelopment experienced were several. There was the repeated criticism that, 'there is not much to see, it's all in the ground.' This alludes to the perceived misunderstanding of earlier participants in the Area Strategy, who it seems, did not understand the nature of the Program and spent a considerable portion of the funding on infrastructure. Another difficulty is that Newcastle is a marginal commercial market. Whereas Ultimo-Pyrmont, adjacent to Sydney's CBD, can attract eager developers, Newcastle does not enjoy this privileged commercial status. Further difficulties include the railway lines, in fact many railway lines, that divide the city from the foreshore.

Also, the general decline of economic activity in the area, particularly with BHP's move to shut down, led to the inevitable reduction in disposable income of those no longer employed in its steel works, and to depressed sales figures.

Yet for all of these concerns, the undertaking still continues on, self-funded from land sales, as the original funding has long since ceased. (10)

The separate initiatives at Honeysuckle, that have yet to be woven into a collective whole, present an almost bewildering array, and include:

- the construction of the new Cowper Street bridge over Throsby Creek;
- Throsby Creek dredging and reclamation;
- progressive refurbishment of the Marina precinct for both commercial fishermen and recreational vessels. The Marina provides direct access to the Hunter River, the Harbour and the open sea. Associated with the Marina are envisaged seafood markets, restaurants, aquatic club and outdoor dining;
- the restoration of Lee Wharf Buildings and the Railway Workshops collectively contributing to a waterfront centre;
- a new Bus Interchange;
- the adaptive reuse of Wickham School with two- to three-storey courtyard student housing directly behind, and further along Bishopgate Street at its intersection with Railway Street, an affordable two-storey housing development;
- the contiguous Hannall Street - also described as the Maryville/Wickham housing precinct - located between Hannall Street and Throsby Creek;
- the Carrington residential precinct, and
- the Fig Tree housing development in association the Hamilton Bus Station and the provision of an innovative stormwater management technology.

These disparate components are referred to individually in the following evaluation.

Urban design evaluation

Buildings and their grouping

There are a number of coherent building groupings that make their modest contribution to the overall integration of this Area Strategy. These are: the restored and adapted Wickham School with the courtyard housing directly behind; the Fern Place housing together with its ingenious and adjacent bus wash; the Railway Workshops even though the pattern of their placement lies in their industrial antecedents. Potentially, and as a future prospect, the list may include the Marina when fully developed and also hopefully the Maryville/Wickham housing. Beyond these examples there was nothing else encountered that added an individual contribution to the coherence of the Area Strategy.

Public domain

There are almost as many public domains as there are separate projects, outlined above. The three that are important to this evaluation include the two that run along the western bank of Throsby Creek, namely the Maryville/Wickham Residential Precinct north of the Cowper Street Bridge and the Marina Precinct south of the bridge. Further south again, towards the harbour, lies the third precinct, the waterfront centre or Civic Heritage Area.

Maryville / Wickham Residential Estate

At the time of the field research the housing had not yet commenced, the sites being defined by the contractors' mesh fencing, but the public domain was established as a reserve of lawns and juvenile trees running parallel along the western bank of Throsby Creek. A broad path, of unremitting Cartesian purity presents a single vanishing point means of travel for the pedestrian, cyclist or dog walkers. (*Illustration 4.30*)



Illustration 4.30 *Landscape*
Maryville - Wickham residential estate

The reasons for this completely insensitive solution of a simple component of urban design is unknown and is difficult to fathom. The only redeeming aspect is that in terms of the CPTED principles the sightlines are excellent but this in no way excuses the initial design violation.

The Marina

Whilst some Marina works had proceeded at the time of the field research the development of the public domain still remains dormant. Although a vibrant number of activities are envisaged for this precinct, it will also provide safe pedestrian and cyclist paths from the northern extremity of the Maryville/Wickham residential precinct, through the Marina to the Waterfront Centre.

The Waterfront Centre

Although much of the existing waterfront has experienced an earlier regeneration, separate from the BCP, the Waterfront Centre still has to find its resolution as a public domain. The area originally conceived as a cove, by bringing water into an artificial basin, has been abandoned. (*Illustration 4.31*) (11)

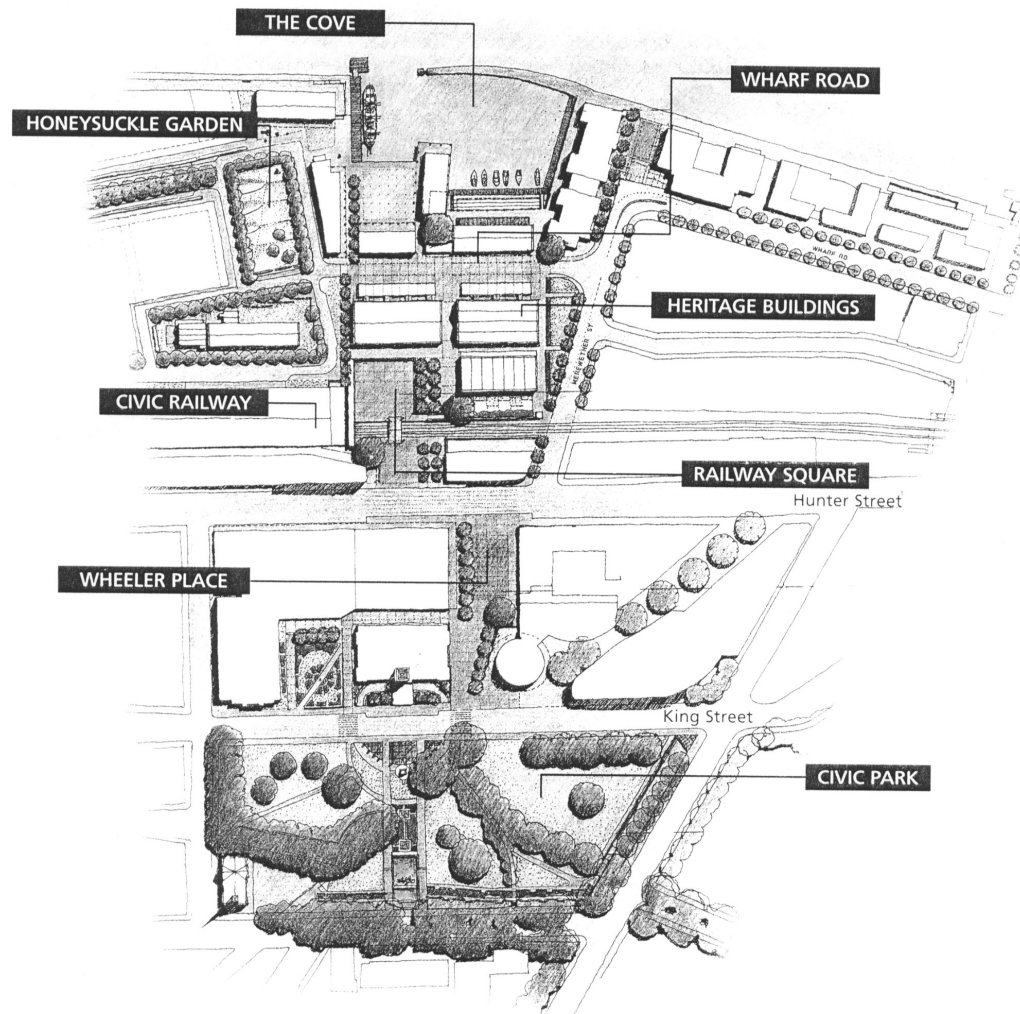


Illustration 4.31 Proposed waterfront centre Newcastle (Honeysuckle Newcastle)

The area was also conceived as an 'entertainment area' but now awaits the advent of cinemas and a hotel to realise this vision. Such is the nature of urban design that in order to achieve realisation, changes and other options frequently need to be pursued, but not by way of providing excuses for compromise in the quality of the final urban design outcome. (Refer Part 1 Section 1.2.3 under *Economics*).

Safety and security

Because of the diversity of activity and the incompleteness of much of it, it was not possible to evaluate all the separate initiatives in terms of safety and security. Of the developments that have been completed, appropriate measures were perceived to have been taken to meet the requirements of this strand.

Activity

This section on urban design evaluation has outlined a wide range of activities at Honeysuckle. As in many of the Program's Area Strategies housing of the population was a primary concern, and in this regard Honeysuckle is no different, this being the most pervasive activity and therefore dominant in the evaluation. Activities other than housing have, in the main, been referenced in other sections of this Area Strategy evaluation. Housing at Honeysuckle occupies several locations with frequently different accommodation types, in response to the needs of the different occupants such as families, students, the elderly and the financially disadvantaged. The housing groups are:

Carrington Housing

The Carrington housing estate is on the east bank of Throsby Creek and adjacent to an artificially formed mound, built from materials from a disused railway site, and somewhat pretentiously named Mount Carrington. The precinct is the work of Mirvac Projects Pty Ltd and is composed of a mix of single and two-storey housing predominantly red brick with tiled roofs and trim elements in the prevailing mock Federation style. Given the potential housing possibilities for such a site, the result is exceedingly disappointing. The most generous comment that can be passed about the estate is that it probably meets the limited expectations from developer-driven estate housing. (*Illustration 4.32*)



Illustration 4.32 Housing at Carrington

In Victoria Street also at Carrington, there are some NSW Department of Housing aged persons units, which architecturally are better and socially more relevant than the discouraging Mirvac contribution. (12)

Wickham Urban Village

The Wickham area has been conceived as an urban village, 'and provides a framework to integrate the urban renewal of Wickham and the West End with the Honeysuckle redevelopment.' (New South Wales, DUAP, HDC & NCC. 1995. *Building Better Cities Newsletter for Honeysuckle and Environs*, No. 7, October 1995) It is also the subject of a concept and strategy study (Newman, P. & Dawkins, J. 1995).

It is reasoned that the mix of light industry and housing can be fashioned into a pedestrian and transport oriented urban village. The urban village concept has received support from number of other Council shared studies and initiatives which include (New South Wales, DUAP, HDC & NCC. 1995. *Building Better Cities Newsletter, Honeysuckle and Environs*, No. 7, October 1995, p. 7):

- 'transport link study to review the issue of the proposed Stewart Avenue overpass and the Hunter - Hannell Street link generally;
- Wickham Streetscape and Traffic Calming Strategy;
- West End Strategic Development Plan;
- Landscape Strategy;
- Various catalyst housing projects, and
- various planning urban design work and the subsequent staged release of land on the adjoining Marina, Cottage Creek and Maryville/Wickham Precincts of the Honeysuckle redevelopment.'

As well the village will be characterised by the following: (New South Wales, DUAP, HDC & NCC. 1994. *Building Better Cities Newsletter for Honeysuckle and Environs*, No. 5, October 1994, p. 1)

- 'mixed uses (i.e. housing, employment, shops, community facilities, etc) enabling the area to be much more self contained than residential suburbs;
- pedestrian character and have a human scale with most activities within walking and cycling distance;
- provision of good public transport links to other areas of the city and region allows residents to live in the village without a car or be much less dependent on a car;
- high quality well located public spaces for recreation and community activities (eg. residential or pocket parks), and
- design innovation, including heritage sensitivity, energy efficient buildings waste management and traffic calming.'

Despite the plausible arguments for the Wickham Urban Village, it cannot yet be seen to be emerging convincingly from the existing and new raw materials, although the concept is generally aligned with the identifying characteristics for an urban village as presented in the East Perth evaluation, and repeated here, as:

- compactness, so that the village can be traversed by foot in a reasonable time - say fifteen minutes;
- a distinct identity, so that the limits of the village are easily understood in a visual and functional sense;
- a diversity of land use - residential, commercial, shopping and community - aimed at a high degree of self activity contained within the village, and the creation of activity aimed beyond normal business hours; a diversity of housing types, emphasising higher than average densities.
- opportunities for leisure as well as living and working;
- a high quality public realm, including adequate parklands, well designed and maintained streets and footpaths;

- public transport links to the city centre and other parts of the metropolitan region; more economic use of both social and physical infrastructure, and
- creation of opportunities for community development.

As is the case with much of Honeysuckle, only time will tell if the various initiatives, such as the Wickham Urban Village, come to fulfilment.

Immediately behind the Wickham School, now restored and adapted to student housing, is a new two- and three-storey student housing development running parallel to and between Bishopgate and Grey Streets. The housing is of contemporary design, successfully employing simple domestic forms, material and colours. (*Illustration 4.33*)



Illustration 4.33 Student housing at rear of Wickham School

The configuration is one of internal courtyards simply landscaped making this a pleasing residential urban development. At the intersection of Bishopgate Street with Railway Street is further single and two-storey affordable housing, but of a different design and constructional quality to that adjacent to Wickham School. These particular houses bear the hallmarks of a dubious materials selection, assembled with indifferent detailing, both faults counter to the interests of long term maintenance. The built forms are mean, as too are the private open spaces, enclosed with their warped timber slat fencing. Cost constraints may have dictated the design and built outcomes of this housing, and if so, it is not unreasonable to ask, in the interests of the long term occupant amenity and life cycle maintenance costing, whether the housing should have been deferred until funding had improved. (*Illustration 4.34*)



Illustration 4.34 Affordable housing

Maryville / Wickham housing

At the time of the field study, work had not commenced on this estate.

Figtree Place

Figtree Place is a 27-unit community housing project of predominantly single and two-storey housing in the Newcastle suburb of Hamilton. The individual houses are a pleasing visual gaggle of modern forms and colours that combine cheerfully to form a modest but welcoming estate. (*Illustration 4.35*). The project incorporates an innovative storm water management scheme. (Refer Ecological response.)



Illustration 4.35 Housing at Figtree Place

Conservation and heritage

Important heritage works at Honeysuckle include the adaptive conversion of Wickham School to student housing, the restoration of the Lee Wharf Buildings for commercial purposes and the painstaking and detailed heritage recovery work on the Railway Maintenance Workshops. (*Illustration 4.36*).



Lee Wharf buildings

Wickham School

Illustration 4.36



Railway maintenance workshops

Illustration 4.36

The National Trust-listed railway workshop buildings, once an essential part of the Great Northern Railway's operation, include fine examples of the Victorian Romanesque style. 'The buildings are known as the Permanent Way Store (1882), Locomotive Boiler Shop (1886), New Erecting Shop (1920), Blacksmiths Machine Shop (1882), Locomotive Machine Shop (1875) and the Divisional Engineers Office (1883).' (*Building Better Cities Honeysuckle and Environs Newsletter*, No. 6, May 1995, p. 3). Despite the buildings having resisted two earthquakes, considerable engineering effort and expense during the restoration process went into stabilising and strengthening the external fabric, both walls and roof, in anticipation of any such future eventualities. The spaces between the buildings have been paved and punctuated with rows of martialled bollards to guide traffic.

A selected elevation has a tensioned fabric skillion covered way appendage, and whilst not entirely in keeping with the austerity of the individual buildings and their grouping, it does soften the overall appearance and enhance pedestrian amenity. (*Illustration 4.37*)



Illustration 4.37 *Fabric awning, railway maintenance workshops*

The railway workshops at Redfern might have benefited from similar considerations. The warm brick colour and the reduced scale of the Newcastle workshop buildings, when compared with the dark and forbidding scale of those at Redfern, are simple and instructive lessons in scale. The former is much friendlier in terms of human scale than the latter, and hence is a further reason why the landscaped works at Redfern and the ATP could have taken a different design route to the one chosen (*refer Eveleigh - Landscape*). Collectively, the railway workshop buildings are a

welcome and integral component of the foreshore area in terms of both built and cultural heritage. It is a pity that some of these buildings, now restored, have no assigned activity, and await their purpose within a broad range of possibilities with a 'cultural' or 'community' focus.

Landscape

The landscape works at Honeysuckle, whether part of private or public domains, present an unexceptional set of familiar solutions to common situations. That is not to say that any of the landscaped solutions are intrinsically poor, with the exception of the public domain to the Maryville/Wickham residential precinct as described in 'Public domain', but neither do they lead in a design sense and set the pace for what is to follow, nor do they follow with any sense of design conviction either. There was nothing found of any particular merit to warrant further design evaluation.

Environment

In terms of protection from sun, wind and rain all the housing precincts inspected have made some gesture in this direction, consistent with the particular architectural style adopted for each individual estate. Wickham School housing, directly behind the school, went beyond sun hoods to integrate energy conscious design which is referred to in the following section, Ecological response.

Ecological response

Whilst site decontamination, including dredging to restore underwater flora and the utilisation of embodied energy in heritage buildings and other measures, command attention as responsible ecological actions, the small site water management study at Figtree Place captures attention for its cleverness in a local application, but equally for its potential utilisation in many other allied situations elsewhere. Briefly, the system utilises domestic roof runoff water for the bus washing operation next door and operates as follows: (*Illustration 4.38*)

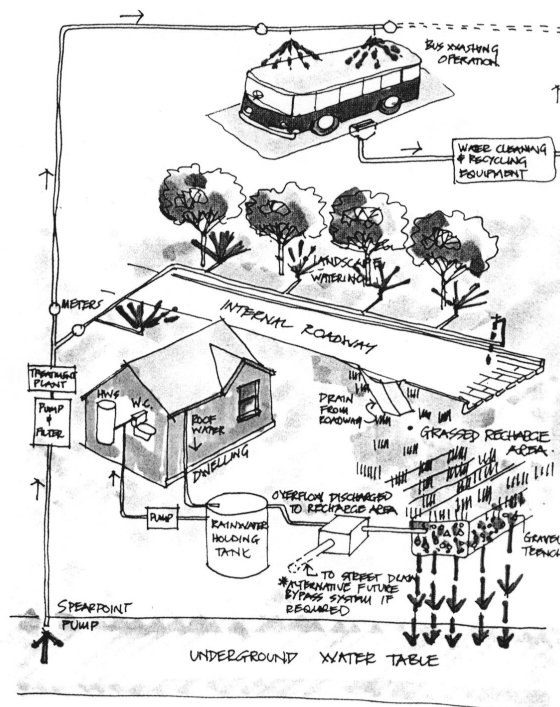


Illustration 4.38 Water Management at Figtree Place (*Figtree Place Total Water Management, p. 3*)

- 'all roof water runoff from groups of residences is diverted into underground rainwater tanks from which supply to hot water services and toilet systems (is) drawn;
- overflow from rainwater tanks discharges to gravel filled trenches that recharge ground water;
- overflow from gravel filled trenches, the main internal carriageway and miscellaneous paved areas passes to central area where water polishing and subsequent ground water recharge takes place;
- the runoff collection/treatment/recharge system is designed to handle all storms without overflow, up to 1 in 50 year rain event for Newcastle.
- groundwater drawn from a single production well (is), following colour removal using activated carbon filtration, used for all open space irrigation including household gardens,
- groundwater drawn from the single production well (supplies) the vehicle as facility at the adjacent State Transit Authority Bus Depot, replacing mains water supply at a rate of approximately 2000kL per annum.

Environmental Benefits

The project demonstrates the opportunity for significant water savings without sophisticated technology. The reduced surface discharge from the site also demonstrates opportunities to reduce local flooding and improve urban stormwater quality.

- mains water consumption (is) reduced;
 - one bedroom residence 11% (reduced performance due to limited (roof area on one bedroom residences)
 - two bedroom residence 40%
 - three bedroom residence 45%

The following benefits have been calculated based on the 'Total Stormwater Management System' design.

- complete replacement of 1,700 kL per annum of mains water used by the adjacent Bus Depot for bus washing.
- overall, annual mains water consumption in Figtree Place and the bus washing facility of about 2,210 kL compared with conventional use of 5,552kL. This represents a 60% reduction.
- in an average year, some 900 kL of stormwater runoff will discharge from the site to the street drainage system compared to 5,400 kL for conventional stormwater treatment an 83% reduction.' (Figtree Place - Total Stormwater Management, p. 3)

Other ecological initiatives include:

The Wickham School housing has 'been designed to specific energy efficient design criteria. Elements of design include: internal climate control using zoning, orientation, thermal mass, sun control devices and insulation in the walls and roof - cross flow natural ventilation.' (Honeysuckle Development Corporation. *The Honeysuckle Redevelopment Newcastle - Ecologically Sustainable Development & Urban Renewal*, n.d.) Also plantation and forest managed timbers have been used in construction. 'The Carrington residential precinct, collects stormwater in natural filtration basins prior to discharge into the river system. This initiative has minimised local flooding problems caused by high tides and heavy rains' (*ibid.*). Further initiatives include the restoration of the Lee Wharf buildings, the Honeysuckle Railway Workshops and the Wickham Public School which are referred to in the section Conservation and heritage. Apart from the important endowment of these restored buildings to the repository of cultural heritage, their reinstatement to other

uses is a substantial retention of embodied energy. A contribution to biodiversity conservation was 'the rehabilitation of Throsby Creek in conjunction with the Hunter Catchment Trust (promoting) the return of fish and the regeneration of the mangroves and their sensitive ecosystems.' (*ibid.*).

Circulation - Throsby Creek bridge

In a macro circulation sense the new Throsby Creek bridge, whether funded as part of the Program or from other sources, adds a welcome contribution in assisting circulation. However, along the Harbour the perennial problem of the multiplicity of railway lines remains a serious impediment to the free flow of pedestrian movement on a broad front from the city to the waters edge. This situation will demand adequate resolution in the future. A 3.5 km foreshore pedestrian route is a component of the Area Strategy to link Carrington, Hannell Street, Cottage Creek and Honeysuckle precincts to Newcastle CBD.

'Residential consolidation and intensification areas are located to take full advantage of their proximity to public bus and rail services and infrastructure' (*ibid.*) and whilst it is claimed, 'a comprehensive network of public walkways, streets, squares and open spaces integrate existing and future development with adjoining areas' (*ibid.*) this will need considerable advancement to become strongly legible.

When this happens it will bring the whole Area Strategy together. At present the existing circulation patterns do not appear to have been markedly modified and modifications will be required to assist in the legibility of the desired Wickham Urban Village.

Public art

Public art has inherent problems in being perceived in the visual cacophony of many modern urban environments. It either has to dominate the other visual demands, by size, colour, controversy of theme, whimsy of subject matter, or run the risk of being seen only by those interested enough to look out for it. It is not all that long ago, but certainly prior to the modernists and their pronouncements on the decadence of architectural ornament, that public art in the enrichment of fine public and private buildings was, in a very real sense, always present as a backdrop, and further enhanced by public sculpture even given the latter's limitations of themes and placement. A brief reflection on the cities of Paris, Prague and Florence and many others bear evidence of public art as a constant presence. Now public art is back on the agenda and wishing to recover its integrated presence again. The journey is not necessarily an easy one. Honeysuckle is perhaps an example of this general difficulty. The wholly commendable brochure publication produced by the Newcastle City Council (1997), *Community, Art and Urban Revitalisation - Environmental Art and Townscape Projects for Inner Newcastle* has proposals and executed examples for the Carrington Centre, Islington Village, Wickham Urban Village, Throsby Creek Gateway - Hannell Street Bridge and Maryville - and Throsby Creek Cycleway. Yet to the degree that these works can be found, the overall outcome is one of a cheerful and somewhat earnest artistic spottiness.

The problem is not simply Newcastle's; it is widespread and the contemporary equivalent of public art as a constant and integrated backdrop as it once was, has yet to be rediscovered, or as a worse outcome consciously rejected, and for reasons that would need some explaining. To an observer then, the works of art that engage attention at Honeysuckle are some finely conceived sculpted bollards, a sculpture called 'The Beacon' at the western base of the new Throsby Creek bridge by Geoffrey Bartlett and a tiled mural with a coastal theme on a wall of the Bus Interchange. (*Illustration 4.39*).



The Beacon



Bus interchange

Illustration 4.39 *Public Art*

This certainly does not comprise a surfeit of public art.

Social

The most important objectives for the Honeysuckle Area Strategy, in social terms were:

- to revitalise the city's CBD and to develop the city into an effective capital of the Hunter region, and
- to improve the quality of life within the CBD and inner suburbs and to open up community access to the harbour foreshore and enhance the attractiveness of the city.

Any indication for this Area Strategy in terms of a successful social outcome, or at least a partially successful outcome, should be referred back to these objectives. The answer is that the overall development is progressively approaching these objectives, but full evaluation must await the completion of the various separate projects. Until that time Honeysuckle remains unfulfilled.

Management processes

Two of the most important documents to sustain urban design into Newcastle's future are the New South Wales. DUAP and NCC. *Development Control Plan 40* and the *Building Better Cities, Newcastle Housing Design Manual - Prepared for Architects, Builders, Designers and the Community*, July 1995. From discussions with senior staff involved in the project, the latter document was produced to simplify the housing design as AMCORD was found to be too complex. The difficulties experienced with AMCORD on several of the Area Strategies is taken up in Chapter 5, Summary and Conclusions.

Conclusion

In urban design terms Honeysuckle, for all its BCP initiatives, deserves better recognition than it currently enjoys. However, until it is unified and by 'a comprehensive network of public walkways, streets, squares and open spaces integrat(ing) existing and future development with adjoining areas' (*ibid.*) it will remain a collage of individual initiatives with an overall indifferent legibility.