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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and study area

Perumal Murphy Alessi, Heritage Consultants were commissioned by Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council to undertake an additional heritage conservation area peer review of the Pymble East and West area.

Numerous studies have been conducted in Ku-ring-gai over many years to determine heritage conservation areas. Recent studies in the area include:

- 2008 Ku-ring-gai Town Centres HCA Review by Paul Davies;
- 2010 North HCA Review by Paul Davies; and
- 2013 North HCA Peer Review by Sue Jackson-Stepowski and Carste Studios.

These studies relied on early work done by the Naitonal Trust in association with Robertson and Hindmarsh and various studies completed by Godden Mackay Logan between 2002 and 2005.

On 26 November 2013 Ku-ring-gai Council resolved to seek additional peer review of the Pymble East and West areas which were generally located about and included several existing heritage conservation areas.

Figure 1.1 Plan of the study area (in blue).
(Source: KMC).
1.2 Methodology of the review

This review has been undertaken in accordance with best practice and standard guidelines outlined in the Heritage Manual produced by the Heritage Branch of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. The overall basis of the review also relies on the principles and terminology contained in *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, known as *The Burra Charter*.

The history and development of the area has been previously undertaken and is well documented. In addition to a review of previously prepared material some additional research was undertaken using sources listed below.

A physical inspection of the identified area and immediate surrounds was undertaken. The inspection was undertaken on foot, street by street. Each property was viewed and rated as being a “contributory”, “neutral”, or “detracting” item to the particular streetscape and area.

The “contributory” items in particular were marked up on a plan of the area and used to define and confirm the recommended boundaries of the proposed area. A table of contributory and neutral items has been included in this report.

A summary of the history and development of the area, description, assessment of significance and other details were entered on a standard State Heritage Inventory form. A draft form was forwarded to Council for review.

1.3 Documentary & photographic sources

A review of the following reports was undertaken as part of the project:

- *Ku-ring-gai Heritage and Neighbourhood Character Study*, Godden Mackay Logan Keys Young (2001);
- North HCA Review by Paul Davies (2010); and
- Heritage Data Forms for; Pymble Heights HCA (C8A), Fern Walk HCA (C9), Orinoco Street HCA (C10A), Pymble Avenue HCA (C11) (KMC 2013).

Additional documentary information was also sourced from the Mitchell and Ku-ring-gai Local Studies Libraries, NSW Land and Property Information Office, RTA aerial photographs (1943) and Sydney Water Plan room.

Area plans were supplied by Ku-ring-gai Council. Contemporary photographs included in this report, unless otherwise stated, were taken by Luisa Alessi of Perumal Murphy Alessi, Heritage Consultants, in December 2014, specifically as part of the review.

1.4 Limitations

The history and development of the area has been well documented and covered in the previously prepared reports. Due to time constraints it was not considered necessary to rework or expand the historical outline, however, a summary has been provided.

The study area was confined to the previously identified area with some context also reviewed. The assessment of the quality and condition of each of the properties is based on an external inspection from the public domain. Buildings that are not visible from the public domain such as those occupying battleaxe blocks were not assessed. This in particular has limited the findings of the review, as there are a large percentage of such blocks in the Pymble West area.
1.5 Authorship & acknowledgements

The review has been completed by Luisa Alessi of Perumal Murphy Alessi, Heritage Consultants.

Luisa is a graduate architect with 19 years experience in the heritage field. She has worked on a number of review projects for a range of local Councils and authorities, including a number of projects for Ku-ring-gai Council and is familiar with the area. She has prepared numerous Heritage Assessments, Statement of Heritage Impact reports, Conservation Plans and Conservation Management Plans for both the private and public sector.

The author would like to thank KMC staff for their assistance with this project.

1.6 Basis of the assessment & conclusions

As noted above the review of the proposed area included an external inspection of each of the properties in the nominated area and immediate surrounds and context in order to verify and establish the conservation area boundaries. Mapping of the “contributory” items assisted the definition of the area boundaries.

The identification of contributory items is based on the style, condition and integrity of each property and how it relates to the historical development and identified cultural significance of the area. This process is consistent with standard heritage practice and guidelines. The visibility and visual contribution and presentation to the streetscape and area in particular were also noted.

A fairly wide range of stylistic variations of Federation, Inter-war and Post-War period buildings are visible and contribute to the character and significance of the area. The buildings range from modest to substantial scale residences which reflect the changing economic situation throughout the 20th century and the ever changing attitudes to housing and architectural styles within the community. The influence of improved rail and road infrastructure is also generally evident in the area. This evolution has continued to the present with a number of highly modified and new houses also located in the area. These are generally considered to be “neutral” as they do not relate to the predominant early to mid 20th century development of the area.

Many of the identified contributory items within this study are aged between 80 and 100 years old. Buildings of this age are rarely completely intact in their original form, fabric and style. It is recognised that modifications and additions are often necessary to allow the continued use of the building in a modern age. Consideration has been given to this requirement for change and the contributory items have been assessed with the consideration of the degree of change and its impact on the historical and visual character of the item and its contribution to the area when viewed from a public place.

The Pymble areas also include a high proportion of Post-war and later buildings from the 1960s and 1970s, some of which are good representative examples of their respective styles and have been incorporated as they represent the ongoing development of the area. Changes such as rendering or painting of original face brick work are not necessarily considered grounds for exclusion if stylistic features and early form, character and details remain evident. It was noted that these buildings generally also respond to the natural features of the area and are also set in garden settings which overall contribute to the visual character of the streetscape and area.

The notable feature, particularly in the Pymble West area is the retention of a sense of the early topography and planting of the area. The streetscapes retain remnant Blue Gum Forest and other native trees and evidence of water courses which have impacted on the form of the street, subdivision pattern and siting of buildings but overall enhance the built environment.
2.0 The Pymble East & West areas

2.1 Background

A summary of the history and development of the area has been provided to Council in the format of the standard Standard Heritage Inventory (SHI) form.

The study areas of Pymble East and West are divided by the Pacific Highway and North Shore Railway line corridors which roughly run parallel and follow a ridgeline extending through Pymble. The areas generally developed and were subdivided within the early land grants which occurred from the 1820s. The earliest subdivisions in the study area occurred in the 1890s following the opening of the railway which played a major role in the development of the area. The expansion of the rail and road networks resulted in successive waves of development.

The study area referred to as “Pymble East” is located within two neighbouring early land grants: Robert Pymble’s 600 acres grant of 1823 and Rosedale, DD Mathews 800 acres grant of 1838. These two grants extended north from Lane Cove Road (now the Pacific Highway). Pymble’s grant covered the area to what is now Allara Avenue, North Turramurra and was also bounded by Station Street and Merrivale Road to the east and alignment of Fairlawn Avenue to the west. Mathews grant extended north to Killeaton Street, St Ives, and east to Rosedale Road and Park Avenue, Gordon, and was later bisected by Stoney Creek Road (now Mona Vale Road).

The part of the study area referred to as “Pymble West” is located within land grants to William Lysett (Orinoco Street), Richard Wall’s 60 acre grant of 1821 to its west (generally about Pymble Avenue), part of Thomas Jenkins 20 acres granted in 1853 to its south also William Wright’s grant (Avon Road); Archibald McColl’s grant (Beechworth Road) and a small part of L Gordon’s grant (Golfers Parade).

Both areas were used for timber getting until the 1840s. Stoney Creek Road (now Mona Vale Road) and Telegraph Road were used by Mathews to access his sawmill on Cowan Road, St Ives. The timber getters opened up the area for orchardists who occupied the area by the 1850s, however, the area remained largely undeveloped to the 1890s.

It was the establishment of the North Shore Railway Line which proved to be the catalyst for major development along the railway line. Major subdivisions of the area began in 1879 in anticipation of and as a result of the establishment of the North Shore Railway line (completed in 1890). Pymble’s two sons had subdivided the area closest to Lane Cove Road after 1856, however, these remained large, “rural” sized allotments. Robert McIntosh, an orchardist, obtained part of both Pymble’s and Mathew’s grants including land to the west of Station Street and also land further east and to the north along Telegraph Road. But by the 1880s William McKeown and James McMahon were also major landholders in the area who took advantage of the coming of the railway. The first subdivision of McKeown’s lands, the “Roseville Estate” subdivided in 1891 created Roseville Avenue (now Wellesley Road) within section A and section B located to its north east, on the eastern side of Stone Creek Road and north of Plum Street (now Woodlands Avenue). The subdivision was later amended to include smaller and more “residential” sized allotments.

The alignment of Merrivale Road marks a track through Pymble’s grant. Alma, Station, Church and Fern Streets, also Woodlands, Bromley, Knowlman and Narelle Avenues and Riddles Lane all mark allotment boundaries relating to the pre-1890 period. Estates subdivided before 1900 were re-offered for sale until 1910, until most of the lots were sold. After 1910 some major holdings were further subdivided. Stoney Creek (Mona Vale) Road also developed from a track to a major access road which also influenced the development along its length.
A similar pattern developed in the Pymble West area where early land grants were conveyed and later subdivided into large portions before the more "residential" sized allotments were created in the 1890s and early decades of the 20th century. The main north-south roads also generally followed the boundaries of the original grants and estates, however, were also influenced by the lay of the land, which generally falls from the ridge along the railway corridor and what is now the Pacific Highway with water courses, creeks and gullies and remnant Blue Gum forest predominating the area.

It is perhaps due to the rugged topography and character of the area that development remained slow and generally occurred in stages. Expansion of the road and rail network, particularly duplication of the railway line in the early 1900s and electrification in 1929 resulted in further subdivision and land releases around these times. The area remained heavily treed and only pockets of houses had been developed by 1943, however, it would appear that the need for additional housing in the Post-war period produced another wave of development.

Today both areas are notable for their Federation, Inter-war and Post-war housing stock generally located in garden settings. Pymble West area retains a strong sense of its early natural character and is bounded by forest (Sheldon Forest) and remains heavily treed. The area also features Pymble Ladies' College which was established in 1916 and is also bounded to the south by the Avondale Golf Club which was established by the founders of the College, a group of prominent businessmen who purchased over 200 acres of rugged bushland adjoining the College and in 1926. The street and subdivision pattern in both areas significantly reflect the topography and boundaries of the neighbouring original land grants and blocks which remain discernible, however, these are now overlaid by some land amalgamations, re-subdivision and formation of battle-axe blocks particularly in the Pymble West area which took advantage of the larger, long sites on the main north-south roads.

2.2 Significance

As assessment of the cultural values of the area has also been outlined on the completed SHI form provided to Council.

The significance included on the forms are as follows.

The Pymble East study area is of local historic and aesthetic significance retaining streetscapes of good, high quality and mostly intact, representative examples of single detached houses from the Federation, Inter-war and Post War periods constructed following the late 19th and early 20th century subdivisions and establishment of the North Shore Railway line in 1890. The street alignments and subdivision patterns significantly reflect the early boundary lines and connections between the early estates and subdivisions north of what is now the Pacific Highway and railway corridor. The predominant early 20th century development of the area also reflects the evolution of rail and road networks and particularly improvements of the rail network in the late 1920s and 1930s. The early patterns generally remain discernible, however, are now overlaid with subsequent land amalgamations and subdivisions with reflect the ongoing growth and development of the area. The built context is enhanced by the natural topography, street proportions, grassed verges, street trees and individual garden settings which greatly contribute to the visual and aesthetic character of the area.

The Pymble West study area is of local historic, aesthetic and technological significance retaining streetscapes of good, high quality and mostly intact, representative examples of single detached houses from the Federation, Inter-war and Post War periods constructed following the late 19th and early 20th century subdivisions and establishment of the North Shore Railway line in 1890. The street alignments and subdivision patterns significantly reflect the early boundary lines and connections between the early estates and what is now the Pacific Highway and railway corridor and were also influenced by the natural topography and elements which have contributed to the pattern and stages of development.
The predominant early 20th century development of the area also reflects the evolution of rail and road networks and particularly improvements of the rail network in the late 1920s and 1930s. The early patterns generally remain discernible, however, are now overlaid with subsequent land amalgamations and subdivisions with reflect the ongoing growth and development of the area. The built context is enhanced by the natural topography, rises and inclines, creeks, reserves and remnant Blue Gum Forest which provides a significant backdrop and also by the street proportions, grassed verges, street trees and individual garden settings which greatly contribute to the visual and aesthetic character of the area. The topography and layout of the area, also watercourses and remnant Blue Gum forest significantly provide evidence of the early character of the area.
3.0 Recommendations

The area features a number of heritage listed items, however, the area should be recognised as a conservation area with some minor adjustment to the boundaries. The original block boundaries and early subdivision patterns remain visible and areas generally retain good and intact early to late 20th century building stock and development enhanced by garden settings, wide street proportions, street trees and plantings and remnant native trees and planting, elements synonymous with the Ku-ring-gai area.

The area should continue to include reserve areas and deep grassed verges and remnant Blue Gum forest to protect, reinforce and enhance the values of the place.

No highly detracting elements have been identified. Some “borderline” were observed, however, the natural character of the area, garden and streetscape setting, particularly in the Pymble West area have negated any visual impacts.

There are a large proportion of battle-axe properties which do not generally make any visual contribution to the streetscape and area. Some, however, have been identified as potentially retaining early building stock and should be investigated.

Pymble East (refer to Map 4, Figure 3.1)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street name</th>
<th>Contributory Nos.</th>
<th>Neutral Nos.</th>
<th>To be investigated Nos.</th>
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<td>Alma Road</td>
<td>3-5, 9, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 27</td>
<td>7, 11, 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Station Street</td>
<td>1A, 3, 4A, 6, 8, 8A, 10, 18</td>
<td>12, 14, 16, 16A</td>
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<td>King Edward Street</td>
<td>2, 6, 1, 3, 7, 17, 19, 25, 27, 29</td>
<td>4, 8, 9, 15, 21, 23 &amp; 37 Grandview Street</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mocatta Avenue</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Wellesley Road</td>
<td>15, 17</td>
<td>19, 19A, 21, 21A</td>
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<td>41, 43</td>
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<td>Hope Street</td>
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Figure 3.1 Mark up plan Map 4 showing contributory items.
Pymble West (refer to Maps 1, 2 & 3)

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<th>Street name</th>
<th>Contributory Nos.</th>
<th>Neutral Nos.</th>
<th>To be investigated Nos.</th>
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<td><strong>Myoora Street</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Kimbarra Road</strong></td>
<td>3, 7, 9, 11, 23, 25, 2, 10A, 12, 19 &amp; associated reserve</td>
<td>1, 5, 15, 17, 19, 21, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 16</td>
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<td><strong>Ashmore Avenue</strong></td>
<td>5, 9, 11, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 22, 24</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lawley Crescent</strong></td>
<td>6, 8, 10, 14, 1, 7, 9</td>
<td>2, 4, 10A, 12, 16, 16A, 16B, 18, 18A, 18B, 18C, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50</td>
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<td><strong>Linden Avenue</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Allawah Road</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Avon Road</strong></td>
<td>1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 29, 35, 37, 41, 53, 57, 63, 67 &amp; Pymble Ladies’ College</td>
<td>1A, 15, 27, 31, 33, 39, 43, 45, 45A, 47, 49, 51, 53A, 55, 50, 61, 65</td>
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<td><strong>Avon Close</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lonsdale Avenue</strong></td>
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Pymble West continued (refer to Maps 1, 2 & 3)

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<th>Street name</th>
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<th>Neutral Nos.</th>
<th>Uncharacteristic Nos.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Golfers Parade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courallie Avenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultowa Road</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.2 Mark up plan Map 1 showing contributory items.
Figure 3.3 Mark up plan Map 2 showing contributory and uncharacteristic items.
Figure 3.4 Mark up plan Map 3 showing contributory items.
4.0 Attachment

Completed SHI forms.