



Ku-ring-gai Council

# Gordon Recreation Ground Landscape Masterplan

Adopted 12 June 2018



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# Part 1: Background

## Introduction

Ku-ring-gai Council has developed a Landscape Masterplan for Gordon Recreation Ground which will prioritise works over the next 10 years.

Gordon Recreation Ground is classified as a District Park because of its size, location and large areas of public recreation space, and its unique landscape character and heritage.

The Landscape Masterplan aims to conserve, protect and enhance the landscape character of Gordon Recreation Ground while improving the amenity and aesthetics of the park.

The Landscape Masterplan is to give consideration to:

- upholding good stewardship of the parkland;
- improving access to the park for all users and community groups;
- improving opportunities for community recreation, leisure and enjoyment;
- preserving and retaining the distinctive landscape character that acknowledges heritage, history and the remnant vegetation community;
- maintaining, improving and embellishing existing park facilities and buildings whilst balancing the demands on the facilities;
- integrating sustainable and environmental principles into park design;
- risk assessment and crime prevention through environmental design;
- on-going maintenance of the park and long-term viability;
- an implementation program for the development of the park including resource implications, estimated costs and priorities;
- focussing Council resources to the areas that will deliver the greatest benefit to our residents, and;
- providing a holistic approach to design that allows for improvements to occur in stages as funding becomes available.

The Landscape Masterplan is a long-range document identifying priorities for improvements over the next 10 years. It will be monitored on an annual basis and reviewed as required.

### What is a Landscape Masterplan?

A Landscape Masterplan is a plan that is developed after analysing existing site elements and features, considering community and stakeholder consultation and determining the functions of a site. Opportunities, conflicts and constraints are identified in the development of an overall plan to guide the long term management of the park. The Landscape Masterplan is a strategic document that enables Council to work in stages as funds become available to revitalise the parkland and make the most of the established landscape character and the area's rich history.

Council's Landscape Architects have prepared this plan in consultation with residents and stakeholders to determine the need for upgrade works and allocation of priorities for funding future staging of works.

### The Vision for Gordon Recreation Ground

Gordon Recreation ground will be a generously treed District Park with a range of active and passive recreation opportunities and have a landscape character that respects and maintains the area's rich cultural heritage and ecology.

## Location

Gordon Recreation Ground comprises 1 hectare of parkland running between Werona Avenue and Rosedale Road, approximately 200m south-east of Gordon Railway Station.

Due to its close proximity to the Railway Station and Gordon Town Centre, and it being bounded by land zoned R4 High Density Residential to the north and south, Gordon Recreation Ground has a large catchment of users including residents that live adjacent and also those passing through on their way to the Station. As more high density development occurs nearby, patronage of the park is expected to increase.

Heritage Conservation Areas surround the park and provide an important cultural and built heritage context that contributes to the park's 'sense of place'.

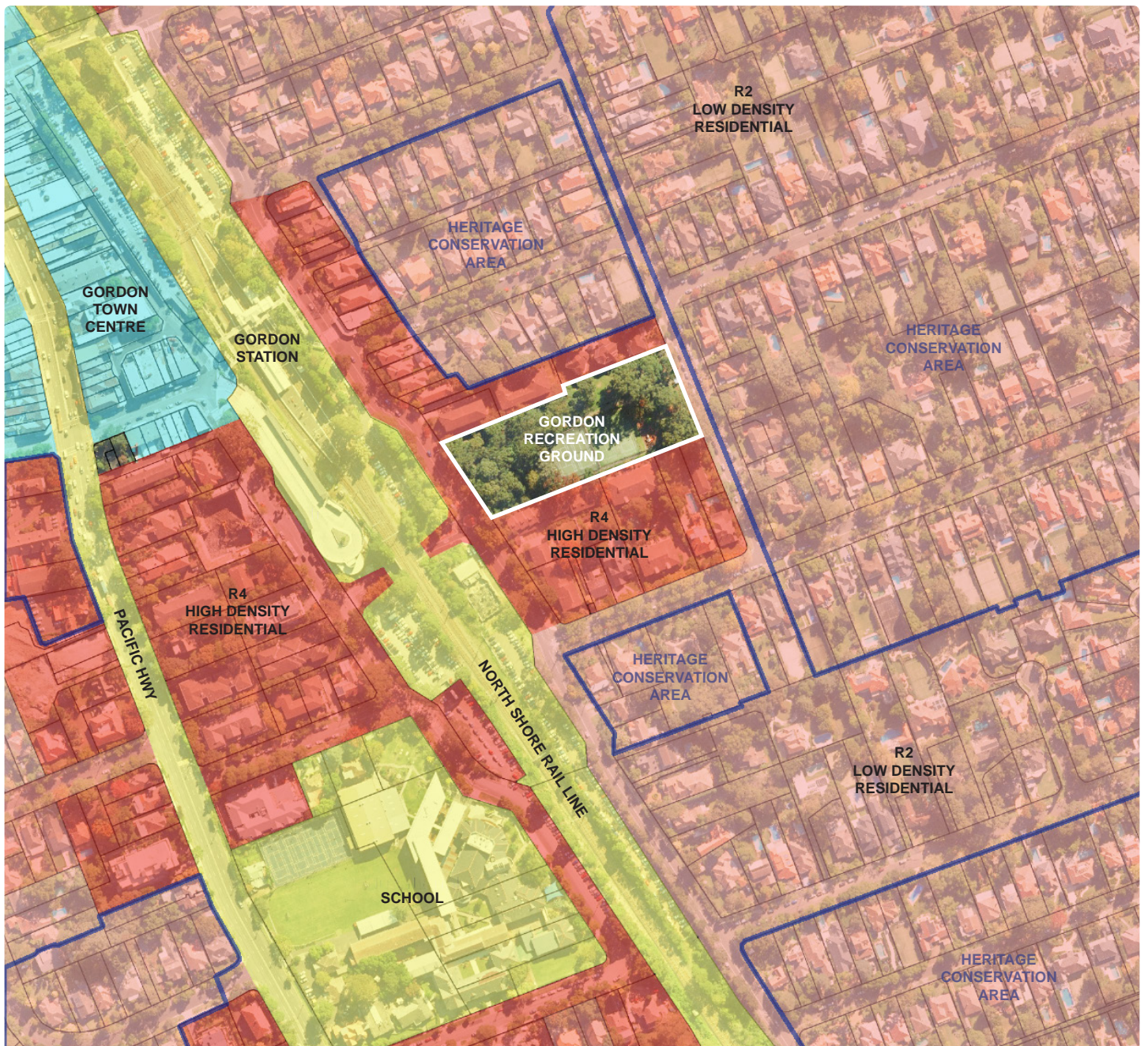


Figure 01 - Locality and Zoning Map

## History and Heritage

The suburb of Gordon was developed adhering to the ideals of the 'Garden City' urban design movement of the early 20th century which promoted suburban housing situated close to rail lines with access for residents to nearby parkland and bushland.

The land for Gordon Recreation Ground was acquired by Council and opened in 1922 with tennis courts and a selection of children's play equipment. The layout, landscape and architectural style of Gordon Recreation Ground is an example of a 1920s semi-formal public park with a mixture of large remnant trees, feature trees fashionable for the era and gardens of exotic flowering plants.

An architectural competition was held to design entry gates, a children's summerhouse and a tennis and bowling pavilion for a proposed bowling green within the Recreation Ground. A local architect from Gordon, John Berry of Wilson, Neave and Berry architects won the competition. In 1923, the western gateway to Werona Avenue was the first structure to be completed and the remaining buildings and bowling green were proposed to follow. With the onset of the Great Depression, these proposals were never constructed.

The Recreation Ground became a popular place for gatherings and public recreation. A series of landscape embellishments were carried out in 1935 to accommodate the park's increased patronage. These works included the construction of gravel paths in the layout of the current path network, the planting of flowering garden beds, the formalising of a children's playground area, and the construction of low fencing to the Werona Avenue frontage.

The need for an amenities block for the users of the tennis court was acknowledged by the Council and designs were drawn up for toilets, change rooms and a kitchen. The current Tennis Pavilion structure was completed in 1936.

Architectural heritage consultants were commissioned by Council in September 2016 to review the heritage significance of the Tennis and Gateway Pavilions and prepare a Conservation Management Plan to guide the ongoing management of the structures. It is considered that the Gateway and Tennis Pavilion structures are of Local Heritage Significance.

A summary of the Conservation Management Plan's conclusions is outlined in the following recommendations:

- There is an opportunity to restore the Gateway Pavilion to its original 1923 appearance which will enhance its cultural significance.
- Large trees close to the Gateway Pavilion are causing damage to the structure and tree removal works are required.
- There is an opportunity to enhance the cultural significance of the Tennis Pavilion whilst being sympathetic to adaptive re-use of the internal spaces.
- Universally accessible toilet and amenity facilities should be provided.

The Gateway Pavilion and the Tennis Pavilion together help define Gordon Recreation Ground as a heritage setting and their conservation, restoration and adaptive re-use will enhance that setting and contribute to the enjoyment of the park for many years to come.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 02- Site photo c. 1930<sup>2</sup>

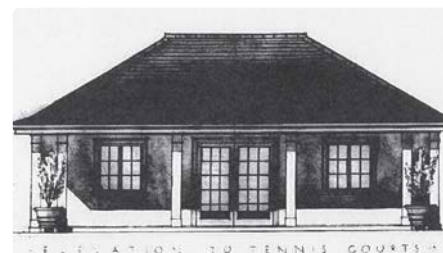


Figure 03 - Tennis Pavilion architectural drawing<sup>3</sup>



Figure 04: Newspaper article about park opening<sup>4</sup>

1. Phillips Marler (2017) *Gateway Pavilion and Tennis Pavilion at Gordon Recreation Ground Conservation Management Plan*

2. NSW Planning and Environment Commission (1975) *Sydney Region Open Space Survey*

3. Wilson, Neave & Berry architects (1922) *Elevation to Tennis Courts*, Collection of architectural plans of Wilson, Neave & Berry 1909-1937, State Library of NSW

4. Unknown (1922) Gordon Recreation Ground, *Sydney Morning Herald*, p.11. Available at <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16027386>

## Landscape Character

Landscape character is defined as the distinct elements and features of a landscape. Landscapes evolve over time as a result of both natural and cultural processes and the Gordon Recreation Ground contains a number of distinct remnant ecological features and exotic plantings that help establish a unique sense of place.

The tennis courts and adjacent children's playground provide the main areas of activity in the Recreation Ground. A large area of the park is comprised of grass and large remnant trees which provide generous shaded areas for informal recreational activities. Garden bed areas with colourful, flowering plants such as camellias and gardenias provide a distinctive aesthetic to the park and reinforces the park's heritage as a typical example of an early 20th century formal park layout. Generally the turf and garden areas are well defined by paths and sandstone edging but there are some areas around the perimeter where the areas are less clearly defined due to a lack of garden edging.

Arboricultural consultants were commissioned by Council in October 2016 to review the condition and significance of the 113 trees within or adjacent to Gordon Recreation Ground. Many of the large trees within the park are remnants of the original vegetation community that existed prior to the development of the area. These trees are characteristic of the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest which is identified as an endangered ecological community, and is listed as a critically endangered community in the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)*. Generally the trees were found to be in good condition and of high landscape significance. A large tree adjacent to the Gateway Pavilion was considered to be structurally unstable and this tree was removed in April 2017.

A variety of seating is located throughout the park, adjacent to activity areas and scattered throughout the grass areas under shade trees. The furniture is a mixture of styles and many are inaccessible for user's with limited mobility.

Paving treatments in the park are a mix of sandstone flagging around the Gateway and Tennis Pavilion structures and at entry points to the park, and coloured concrete with raised edging along the main pathways. The paving is generally in adequate condition and provides access to most areas in the park however there is no fully accessible route through the park to link major site elements. Areas of sandstone paving and concrete are cracking and becoming uneven and kerbing to both edges of the pathways limits accessibility for prams, wheelchairs and patrons with limited mobility to broader areas of the park. An upgrade of the paving network and increased seating along these paths would improve recreation opportunities and accessibility for the park's users.

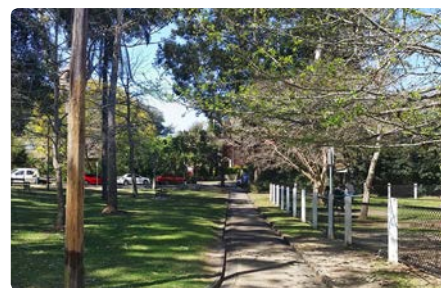


Figure 05 - Existing path adjacent playground



Figure 06 - Existing Tennis Pavilion



Figure 07 - Existing central path



Figure 08 - Existing Gateway Pavilion



Figure 09 - Existing Tennis Courts

## Lighting and Safety

Lighting is provided in the park along the pathways but due to the large distances between the poles and the existing mercury vapour light fittings, lighting levels are inadequate to provide a safe pedestrian environment at night.

Lighting design consultants were commissioned by Council in October 2016 to evaluate the existing lighting levels and formulate a lighting plan to improve amenity and security. The design proposes an increased number of poles along the main pathways. The installation of LED light fittings would also provide an improved illumination performance while reducing energy consumption.

The paved area with existing shelters and seating adjacent the tennis courts has poor visibility due to its enclosed landscape setting. Complaints of anti-social behaviour at night and excessive noise have been reported at this location.

The tennis courts are not currently lit in the evening.

## User Groups

While the majority of visitors to the park are informal, casual visits, the existing tennis courts attract a number of regular user groups.

Since 1980, Gordon Men's Tennis Club has been playing tennis on the two artificial grass courts on Saturday afternoons. The tennis pavilion has historically been used by the Club for many years with no formal agreement in place. Ravenswood School for Girls hire the tennis courts via the school allocation process with bookings for training on Mondays in term 3 and competition on Saturdays in term 4.

The current Ku-ring-gai Council Plan of Management for tennis courts does not permit the lease or license of courts within Ku-ring-gai Council. The majority of hirers book once a week from 1 to 4 hours and they are on a permanent / annual hire agreement. All other hirers make casual bookings. Of the total hours the courts are available, they are booked for approximately 10% of the time. There is a significant percentage that utilise the courts without a booking as the tennis courts are unlocked at all times.

Gordon Recreation Ground is the venue for one recurring annual event. The park is the starting point for a 'Ride2Work Day' event held in October which attracts a large number of cyclists and recreational riders.

Gordon Recreation Ground is designated as a District Park due to its size and central location adjacent the transport node at Gordon Station. Currently the park's playground does not meet the desired requirements of a District Playground due to the limited play equipment and the lack of complementary facilities immediately adjacent the playground such as shelters, drink fountains and seating. An upgrade of the playground is required to diversify play opportunities and promote the park as an important recreational spot for the local community.

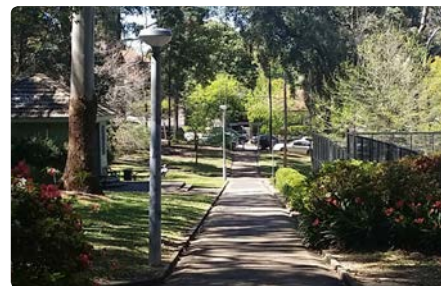


Figure 10 - Existing light pole



Figure 11 - Existing shelter area setting



Figure 12 - Existing playground





## Community Consultation - 2018

The Gordon Recreation Ground draft Landscape Masterplan was reported to Council at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 12 December 2017 and Council resolved to place the draft Landscape Masterplan on public exhibition to enable further community consultation.

The draft Landscape Masterplan was publicly exhibited from 29 January 2018 to 1 March 2018. A total of 1684 letters were distributed to notify local residents that the draft Landscape Masterplan was available for viewing online or in person at the Council chambers. The exhibition period was also advertised on Council's website, social media pages and in the North Shore Times. 55 submissions were received during the exhibition period which represented a 3% response rate.

Some of the items raised during the public exhibition period were:

- Additional basketball and netball line marking and posts, and lighting for the playing courts were not supported by a large number of respondents.
- A number of respondents requested outdoor fitness equipment and a greater range of play equipment that catered for an older age group.
- Additional shelters, seating and tables were requested.
- A number of respondents believed the playground should receive a higher funding priority.

The following amendments were made to the draft Landscape Masterplan in response to public feedback received:

- The proposed basketball and netball line marking and posts, and lighting for the playing courts have been removed.
- The playground has been amended to include a range of equipment that caters to a wider variety of age groups.
- Outdoor fitness equipment and a table tennis table are proposed adjacent the tennis courts.
- Additional shelters and seating areas have been proposed.
- The funding priority has been reorganised to give greater priority to a playground upgrade.

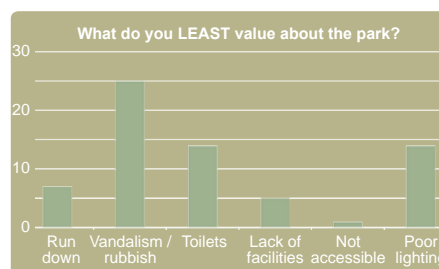
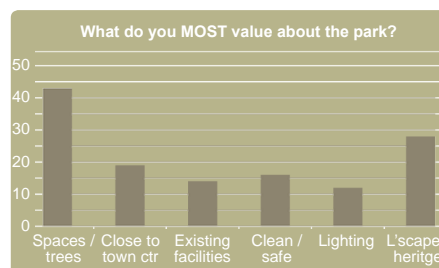
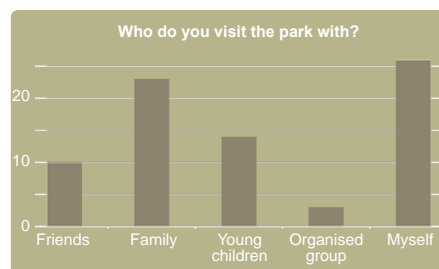


Figure 15 - Word cloud generated from 2018 community feedback. The size of the word indicates frequency of use.

# Part 2: Opportunities and Constraints

## Circulation and Views



- A** Provide park name and information signage at key access points to the park in a style complementary to the existing Tennis and Gateway Pavilions.
- B** Maintain view corridors to Tennis and Gateway Pavilions to reinforce unique landscape character and heritage.
- C** Open up views and improve access to existing seating area to increase safety and security.
- D** Review and rationalise existing vegetation along boundaries to neighbouring properties to provide improved aesthetic backdrop to park.
- E** Upgrade path system and remove kerb to improve accessibility. Retain sandstone paving and replace any uneven pavements.
- F** Investigate additional pathway link to tennis courts and playground to create a continuous accessible path network.
- G** Review and rationalise existing informal path connections with adjacent properties.
- H** Review maintenance and service vehicle access points to minimise damage to grass areas and gardens.
- I** Realign existing entry paths away from existing large trees to minimise future damage from tree roots and to increase playground area.
- J** Investigate opportunities to provide accessible parking bay to Rosedale Road frontage.

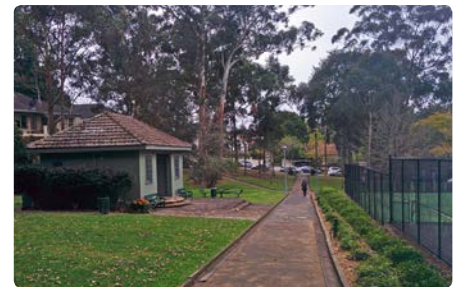


Figure 14 - Maintain views to heritage structures

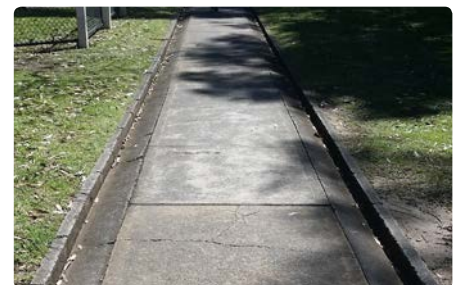


Figure 15 - Upgrade path network

## Structures and Furniture



- A** Undertake restoration works to Tennis Pavilion to conserve existing built heritage. Investigate opportunities to integrate accessible toilet facilities.
- B** Undertake restoration works to Gateway Pavilion to conserve existing built heritage, repair damage and provide heritage interpretation opportunities.
- C** Investigate fencing opportunities to street frontages in keeping with existing heritage and landscape character.
- D** Review and rationalise the location and style of existing seats, tables and bins to increase passive recreation opportunities and improve accessibility.
- E** Remove existing shelters, improve access to the area, open up sightlines to increase safety, and provide additional recreational opportunities.
- F** Upgrade existing playground to provide an inclusive space with a greater variety of play opportunities sited within a fenced area.
- G** Investigate opportunities to provide accessible toilet facilities adjacent to the playground area if retrofitting of Tennis Pavilion is not feasible.
- H** Refurbish timber pergola structure as required and embellish its surrounds with flowering vegetation.



Figure 16 - Review furniture locations and styles



Figure 17 - Upgrade playground

## Services



- A** Install new light poles and LED light fittings to increase safety and security, and improve energy efficiency and visual aesthetics.
- B** Remove existing overhead power supply cable to Tennis Pavilion and place underground to improve views to heritage structure.
- C** Investigate opportunities to upgrade stormwater drainage system and improve pedestrian safety and aesthetics.
- D** Remove the existing bubbler from seating area and relocate along main pathway. Provide a bubbler to playground area.



Figure 18 - Upgrade and provide more lighting

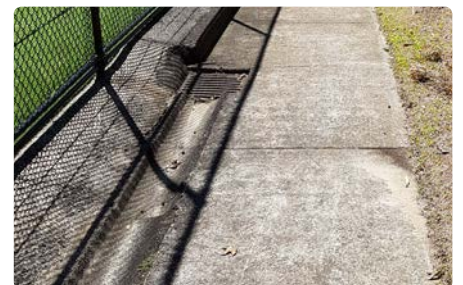


Figure 19 - Upgrade drainage system and trip hazards

## Trees and Vegetation



- (A)** Remove trees and stumps identified by arborist as causing damage to Gateway Pavilion. Provide replacement planting in appropriate locations.
- (B)** Remove existing large shrub vegetation to rear of shelter and seating area to improve sight lines and security.
- (C)** Review and rationalise existing planting bed and replenish with appropriate flowering species in keeping with landscape heritage.
- (D)** Review and rationalise existing vegetation along boundaries to neighbouring properties to provide improved aesthetic backdrop to park.
- (E)** Upgrade edge treatments between grass areas and garden beds to aid in maintenance and weed control.
- (F)** Remove existing street tree plantings under power lines on Rosedale Rd. Provide replacement plantings setback from frontage to avoid overhead lines.
- (G)** Review and embellish vegetation to existing arbour to highlight park entry.
- (H)** Retain existing healthy trees including remnant Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest specimens.



Figure 20 - Retain unique landscape character



Figure 21 - Improve sightlines to seating area

# Part 3: The Masterplan

## LEGEND

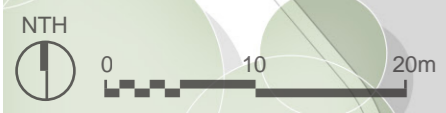
- L** Install new light poles and LED light fittings to increase safety and security, improve energy efficiency and visual aesthetics.
- D** Install new accesible drinking fountains at key locations adjacent activity areas.
- ST** Review seat locations and relocate as required to maximise passive recreation and accessible seating opportunities.
- Install new picnic tables and seating with shelter near activity areas and adjacent accessible paths.
- B** Install new bin enclosures in key locations adjacent activity areas and park entry points.
- F** Investigate fencing opportunities to street frontages in keeping with existing heritage and landscape character.
- Retain sandstone paving and repair as required to improve accessibility.
- Install new coloured concrete path with decorative saw cuts to existing path network to improve accessibility.
- Install secondary concrete path network to improve accessibility between activity nodes.
- Review and rationalise existing planting beds and edging and replenish with heritage appropriate flowering species.
- Retain existing open grass areas.
- Existing tree to be removed.
- Proposed replacement tree planting.
- Accessible pathway.

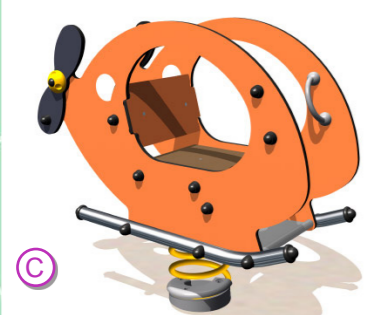


REFER MASTERPLAN SHEET 2

## KEY

- (A)** Undertake restoration works to Gateway Pavilion to conserve existing heritage and remove existing trees and stumps causing damage.
- (B)** Remove existing large shrub vegetation to rear of seating area to improve sight lines and security. Provide accessible path to seating area and tennis courts.
- (C)** Remove existing shelters and review seating to increase safety. Provide table tennis table and outdoor fitness equipment.
- (D)** Undertake restoration works to Tennis Pavilion to conserve existing built heritage. Investigate opportunities to integrate accessible toilet facilities.
- (E)** Review and rationalise existing garden beds, edging and access to adjacent properties.
- (F)** Provide new picnic seating, shelters and BBQ facilities to turf area.
- (G)** Upgrade existing playground to provide an inclusive space with a greater variety of play opportunities sited within a fenced area.
- (H)** Investigate opportunities to provide accessible toilet facilities adjacent to the playground area if retrofitting of Tennis Pavilion is not feasible.
- (I)** Remove existing street trees constrained by powerlines and provide replacement tree plantings away from wires.
- (J)** Formalise service vehicle entry points to reduce grass wear and erosion.
- (K)** Provide an accesible car space adjacent to the park and playground.





- KEY**
- (A) Explorer giant climbing dome with rope bridge, ladder offering climbing, hanging, sliding and socialising opportunities.
  - (B) Four-way springer encouraging multiple users to interact and play at once.
  - (C) Helicopter themed springer providing back and side support.
  - (D) Rotating carousel able to accommodate multiple users and users with limited mobility.
  - (E) Two-bay swing which includes a birds nest swing, standard and toddler swing seats for multiple users.
  - (F) Hill embankment slide constructed into modified existing slope on site.
  - (G) Sandstone fort with carved sculptural elements for climbing and imagination play.
  - (H) Un-prescribed nature play area / inclusive space with sensory planting and sculptural play elements.
  - (I) Seat.
  - (J) Picnic table setting with shelter.
  - (K) Bubbler with tap.
  - (L) Picnic table setting.
  - (M) Grass run about area.
  - (N) Playground fence.
  - (O) Retaining wall and raised planter bed with sensory plantings.

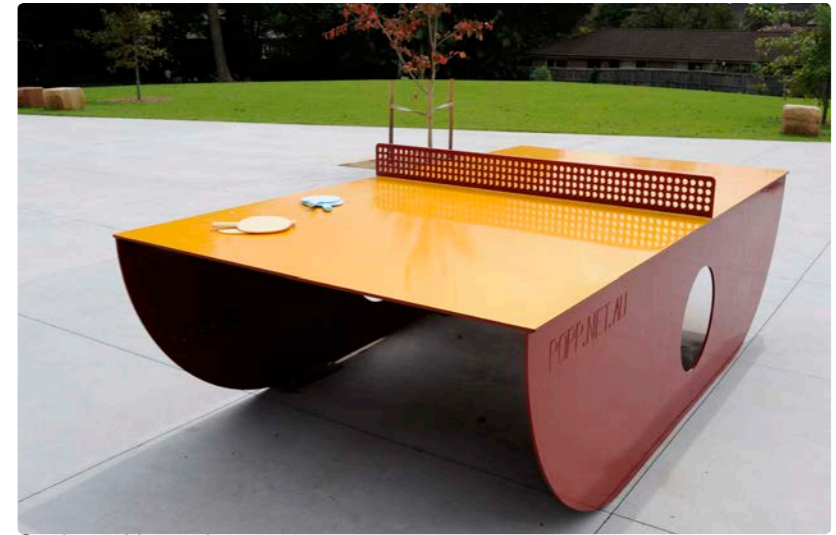




Coloured concrete with decorative sawcuts to main paths



Pole top LED lights to main paths



Outdoor table tennis



Sandstone flagging to Pavilions and park entries



Seating in a style sympathetic to the park's heritage



Accessible bubbler with tap



Picnic shelters in a style sympathetic to the park's heritage



Indicative outdoor fitness equipment





## Financial Considerations

Adopted District Park Landscape Masterplans are used in the preparation of the Parks Development Program in Council's Delivery Program and annual Operation Plan. Each Masterplan is expected to be implemented over a 10 year period, subject to funding.

The Landscape Masterplan provides Council with a long term guide for the management of Gordon Recreation Ground. It will enable staged works as funding becomes available, with the knowledge that all projects are in keeping with, and will contribute to, a long term vision for the park. Some works are of an operational nature and can be completed within existing recurrent budgets. Other works would be subject to current Council Contributions Plans, future capital works and/or grant proposals.

The actual financial commitment resulting from this Landscape Masterplan is dependent on competing priorities and funding availability, including recurrent budget, contributions plans, external grants, and potential partnerships with stakeholders, service clubs and local businesses.

### Ten Year Item Funding Priority

Higher Priority	Indicative Costs
• Lighting Upgrade	\$ 250,000
• Playground Upgrade	\$ 450,000
• Pathways Upgrade	\$ 300,000
Medium Priority	
• Tennis Pavilion Refurbishment / Accessible Toilet	\$ 575,000
• Gateway Pavilion Refurbishment	\$ 75,000
Lower Priority	
• Seating and Furniture Improvements	\$ 60,000
• Fencing and Signage Works	\$ 50,000
• Edging, Tree Management, Planting Refurbishment	\$ 50,000
<hr/>	
INDICATIVE TOTAL COST	\$ 1,810,000

### What are Contributions Plans?

Ku-ring-gai Council's Contributions Plan 2010 and s94A Contributions Plan 2015 takes a consolidated approach to providing infrastructure as a result of new development, authorising proportional contributions from new development towards the provision of infrastructure for that development.

The plans also identify situations where Council must provide a contribution on behalf of the existing population where new infrastructure will meet demand arising from the community as a whole.



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