



Ku-ring-gai Local Character Background Study

Broad Local Character Areas Character Area Statements

As Adopted by Council in June 2021

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View east from Roseville Station

Executive Summary

SJB have been engaged by Ku-ring-gai Council (KC) to undertake research and identify Broad Local Character Areas for the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area (LGA).

This work is in response to the Ku-ring-gai Local Strategic Planning Statement (KLSPS) Planning Priority K12. The objective of this priority is to manage change and growth in a way that conserves and enhances Ku-ring-gai's unique visual and landscape character. There are four Actions related to this Planning Priority (KLSPS, page 94) as follows:

Action 1 - Define Ku-ring-gai's unique visual and landscape character through community engagement

Action 2 - Undertake a Local Character Study in accordance with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Local Character and Place Guidelines February 2019. The study will include investigation of areas of special landscape, views and vistas, visual quality, topography and the Urban Forest (including bushland, tree canopy, street trees, gardens). It will also consider Green Grid links and biodiversity corridors.

Action 3 - Implement recommendations from the Local Character Study

Action 4 - Prepare Local Character Mapping for LEP Overlay and Local Character Statements for DCP in collaboration with Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

This Background Study is primarily focused on the analysis and identification of Ku-ring-gai's physical characteristics, relating to Action 1, noted above. The study is intended to provide the basis for further research into 'local character' in the future. It is important to note that this study does not include a detailed examination of the social and cultural characteristics of the LGA, which is sought in the Department of Planning Infrastructure and Environment's (DPIE) Local Character and Place Guidelines, 2019.

Preparation of a Local Character Study, as per Action 2, including 'desired future character statements', will be the subject of a future study and further community engagement.



Broad Local Character Area Statements

Broad Local Character Area Statements

1.1 Local Character Areas

Understanding and interpreting the cluster mapping, number of Broad Local Character Areas (LCAs) have been identified. Areas shown together share similarities in their physical and measurable characteristics. A total of eight (8) Broad LCAs are proposed:

1. Green Fingers
2. Ku-ring-gai Ridge and Centres
3. Northern Plateau
4. Western Slopes
5. West Pymble
6. Lower West
7. Lower East
8. North Turramurra Table

The ecological zone (shown hatched) is an area of dense bushland which contributes significantly to the character of Ku-ring-gai, especially to areas directly adjacent.

This zone includes parts of Ku-ring-gai Chase, Garigal and Lane Cove National Parks administered by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services. It also features limited built form, significant existing biodiversity protections and land use restrictions outlined in Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 (KLEP 2015).

Due to existing protections which acknowledge and maintain the existing character of these areas, the ecological zone has not been included as a Ku-ring-gai Broad Local Character Area.

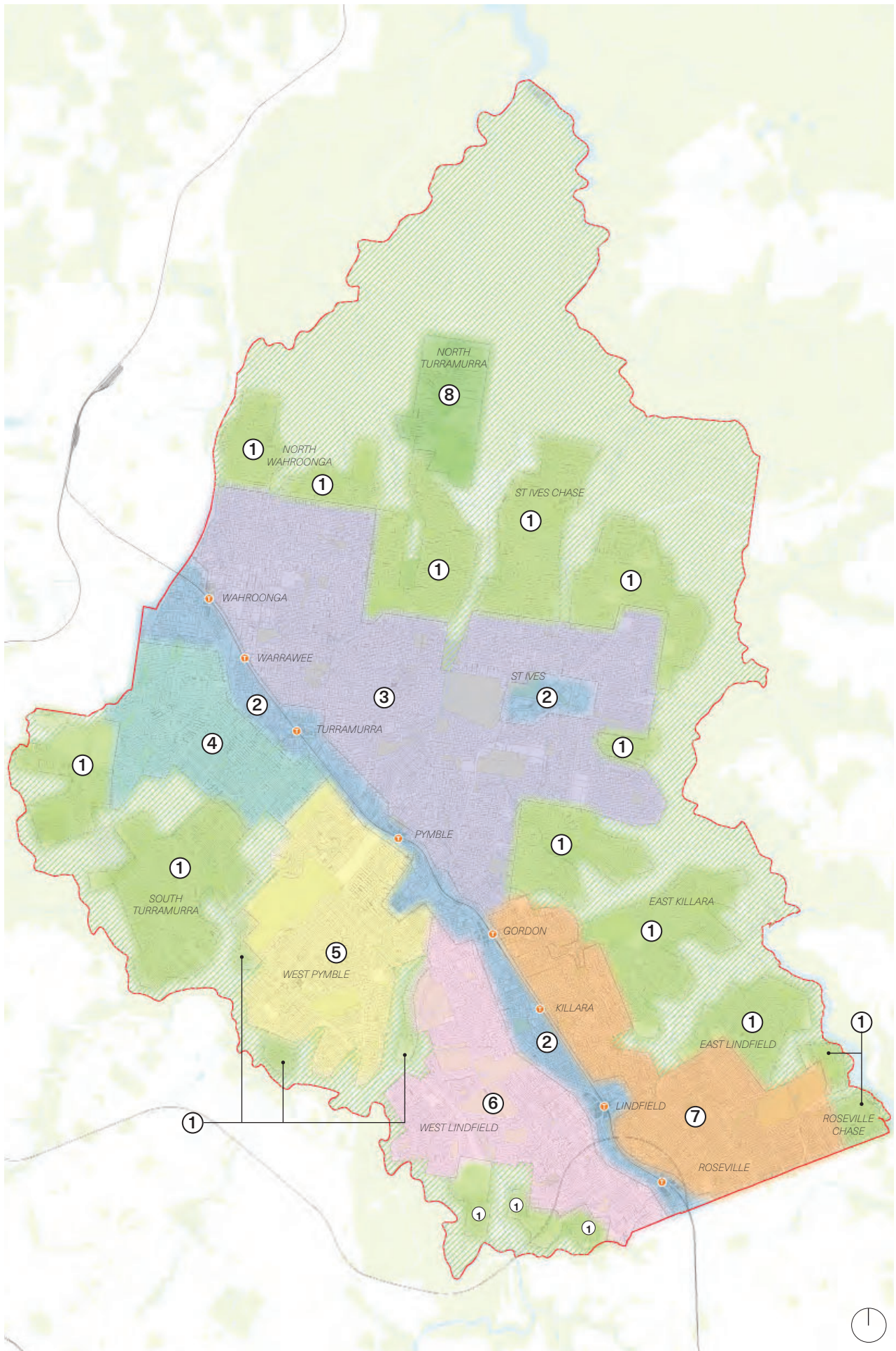


Figure 01: Local Character Areas

Broad Local Character Area Statements

1.2 Green Fingers Character Area

Local Character Statement

The *Green Fingers Character Area* includes a number of suburbs located on the periphery of the LGA, surrounded by the unique and beautiful bushland of Ku-ring-gai. These areas are located along ridgelines that extend out towards Lane Cove, Garigal and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Parks. The dense vegetation, Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark and Blue Gum High Forest hold significant social, environmental and economic value to the community. Refer to Figure 10 - Character Area Location Plan.

The street pattern and built form has a close relationship to the topography and landscape setting of these areas. Flatter areas along ridgelines tend to have more consistent built form and street patterns. These areas have more recently been the focus of redevelopment and the delivery of new homes. Topography falls steeply along the edges of the *Green Fingers* towards densely vegetated gullies. These edges feature more diverse and unique housing styles and street patterns that follow the topography and take advantage of views across valleys.

By virtue of being set within dense bushland, the outlook in these areas is layered with mature trees and vegetation.

The *Green Fingers* are predominantly residential in nature, supported by small neighbourhood centres that provide day-to-day services. Generally co-located with local parks, community facilities or playgrounds, they serve as important community focal points and provide opportunities to meet and gather outside of the centres along the Pacific Highway and Mona Vale Road.

There are some larger institutions located in the *Green Fingers Character Area* including the Sydney Adventist Hospital in Wahroonga, CSIRO Lindfield and the Lindfield Learning Village located on the former UTS Lindfield Site. These institutions take advantage of areas of flatter topography away from the rail/Pacific Highway corridor which is more constrained and under pressure to deliver other uses.

Key Characteristics

- Limited access
- Extends into important bushland
- Habitats for endangered and vulnerable fauna and flora on edges and gullies extending into parks and other vegetation
- Many mature trees
- High bushfire prone zone
- Flatter along ridge-line
- Steeper slopes away from ridge-line
- Streets follow topography
- Diverse built form and styles

Key Features

- Rose Seidler House
- Sydney Grammar Preparatory School
- Killara High School
- Lindfield Rollers Bowling Club
- Echo Point and Marina
- CSIRO Lindfield Site
- Sydney Adventist Hospital



Figure 02: Character Area Location Plan



Figure 03: Tip of West Pymble



Figure 04: St Johns Avenue adjacent Gordon Golf Club



Figure 05: East Killara



Figure 06: East Lindfield



Figure 07: North-East Gordon and South of St Ives along Eastern Arterial Road



Figure 08: A Gully in East St Ives bound by Grevillea Avenue and Melaleuca Drive



Figure 09: North-East of St Ives , north of Woodbury Road and Ayres Road and East of Acron Road



Figure 10: Southern extent of North Turramurra and East Wahroongah



Figure 11: St Ives Chase north of Mudies Road



Figure 12: CSIRO Lindfield and Bradfield Road, UTS Ku-ring-gai and south-western parts of Lindfield and Roseville



Figure 13: West end of Turramurra and South Turramurra and parcels along The Comenarra Parkway west of Avondale Golf Club



Figure 14: Sydney Adventist Hospital and western extent of Wahroongah



Figure 15: North Wahroongah north of Boundary Road



Figure 16: Roseville Chase and areas east of Roseville Gold Club

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Broad Local Character Area Statements

1.3 Kur-ring-gai Ridge and Centres Character Area

Local Character Statement

Formed around the rail/Pacific Highway corridor and St Ives Local Centre, the *Ku-ring-gai Ridge and Centres Character Area* holds the main retail, commercial and residential intensity within the LGA. It is characterised by increased density and diversity of built form and land use. This character area has important social and economic value to Ku-ring-gai.

This Character Area includes the primary movement corridors which run through the LGA. It is an area with which residents interface on a daily basis. The Ku-ring-gai Ridge is dominated by the busy Pacific Highway, which effectively separates the town centres into east and west sides. On either side of the highway and rail corridor are hubs of activity in peak hours, before and after school hours, as well as the weekend.

Accommodating diverse land uses, buildings in this area have larger footprints and greater height than built form across the rest of Ku-ring-gai. This character area features the majority of medium and high-density housing within the LGA, leveraging amenity provided by proximity to arterial roads, public transport, shops and schools.

The Ku-ring-gai Ridgeline is flatter than surrounding areas. The town centres retain a significant mature tree canopy however much less than compared to the rest of Ku-ring-gai. Streets tend to be more varied and accommodate more street planting as they radiate from the rail and Pacific Highway corridor.

Key Characteristics

- Higher density and population
- Larger buildings
- Commercial and medium/high density residential
- Less tree canopy cover
- Follows major ridge-line
- Dominated by the Pacific Highway and Rail Line
- Retains a high level of heritage buildings reflecting development from the advent of the rail in the late 1800's and Inter war period

Key Features

- Turramurra, Gordon, St Ives and Lindfield Local Centres
- Pacific Highway and North Shore rail line
- Ravenswood School for Girls
- Pymble Business Park
- Ku-ring-gai Town Hall and Council Chambers
- Knox Senior School Academy
- Masada College
- Abbotsleigh
- Numerous primary schools

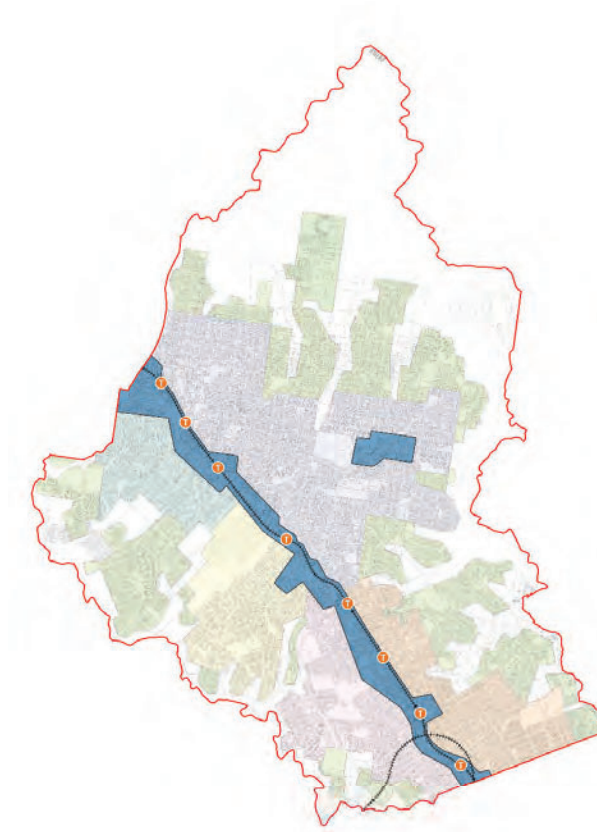


Figure 17: Character Area Location Plan



Figure 18: Warrawee to Turramurra Centres along Pacific Highway



Figure 19: Pymble and Gordon Centres along Pacific Highway



Figure 20: Killara to Roseville Centres along Pacific Highway



Figure 21: St Ives centre

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Broad Local Character Area Statements

1.4 Northern Plateau Character Area

Local Character Statement

The *Northern Plateau Character Area* is located to the north of the rail and Pacific Highway corridor and includes areas of Wahroonga, Warrawee, Turramurra, Pymble and St Ives. This character area is characterised by single detached houses set within consistent street layouts and regular subdivision patterns. This underlying structure was established as part of the subdivision of former agricultural lands, that took advantage of the area's flat topography.

While still highly vegetated in comparison to other areas of Sydney, it has limited tree canopy coverage compared to other areas of Ku-ring-gai. This is a result of historical tree clearing for agriculture. A mix of trees and vegetation line long and straight streets framing distant views.

The *Northern Suburbs Character Area* features a number of sportsfields which are important places for community gathering. These include Turramurra Memorial Park, Karuah Park, Kent Oval and Bannockburn Oval. Highly utilised on weekends for community and youth sport, these places are not only valued by residents of Ku-ring-gai but are attractors for visitors from outside the LGA. They are complemented by large stands of mature trees which reinforce the prominence and value of landscape within Ku-ring-gai.

Well connected to the Local Centres of Gordon, St Ives and Turramurra for retail and commercial services, the *Northern Plateau Character Area* remains predominantly residential. There are however, neighbourhood centres located along primary roads providing smaller scale day-to-day services within closer proximity of homes.

Key Characteristics

- Flatter land
- Mostly low density residential
- Consistent street layout and subdivision
- Less tree canopy cover compared to other residential areas
- Bounded by the Pacific Highway to the east and Mona Vale Road to the south
- High level of architecturally significant 20th Century dwellings, subject of a Modern Heritage study
- Areas of high conservation status containing some of the last remnants of critically endangered ecological communities of Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest.

Key Features

- Wahroonga Public School
- Knox Grammar Preparatory School
- Brigidine College St Ives
- St Ives Public and High School
- Dalrymple-Hay Nature Reserve
- Pymble Golf Club
- Turramurra Memorial Park

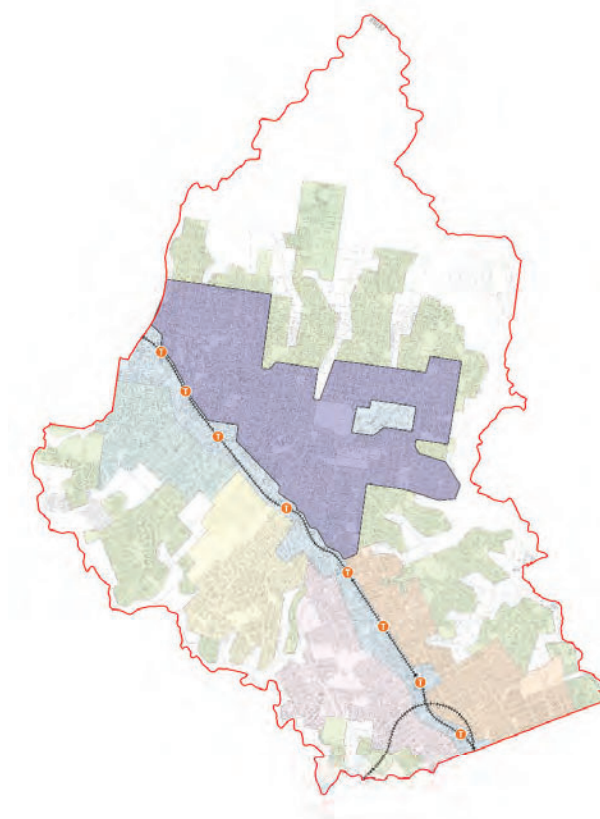


Figure 22: Character Area Location Plan



Figure 23: North east of Wahroongah, Warrawee and Turramurra



Figure 24: North east part of Pymble and Northern part of Gordon



Figure 25: St Ives (excluding St Ives Centre)

Broad Local Character Area Statements

1.5 Western Slopes Character Area

Local Character Statement

The *Western Slopes Character Area* includes areas of Wahroonga, Warrawee and Turramurra to the south of the rail/Pacific Highway corridor. This area has a close relationship to bushland and is characterised by very high tree canopy coverage. Trees and vegetation in this character area are visually prominent, establishing built form as a secondary recessive feature of the area. Flatter areas in the north fall away to incredibly steep topography to the south-west, a feature that lends this character area its name.

The significance and environmental value of the native flora and fauna of this character area is acknowledged under the Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 (KLEP 2015) which marks a significant portion of the character area for biodiversity protection. The topography and dense vegetation also creates a cool microclimate.

While areas in the north of the character area have a more consistent street layout and less varied topography, the complexity of the environment in the south has led to more variation in the street layout and built form. The very steep topography had led to more unique and diverse built form and a street layout that conforms to the topography.

Key Characteristics

- Very high tree canopy cover
- South to south-west aspect creates cool moist micro climate that supports very tall trees vegetation and fauna habitat
- High levels of biodiversity
- Steep slopes and varied topography
- Diverse built form
- Area contains architecturally significant 20th Century dwellings

Key Features

- Browns Field
- The Glade Reserve
- Twin Creeks Reserve and Track
- School of Practical Philosophy, Wahroonga

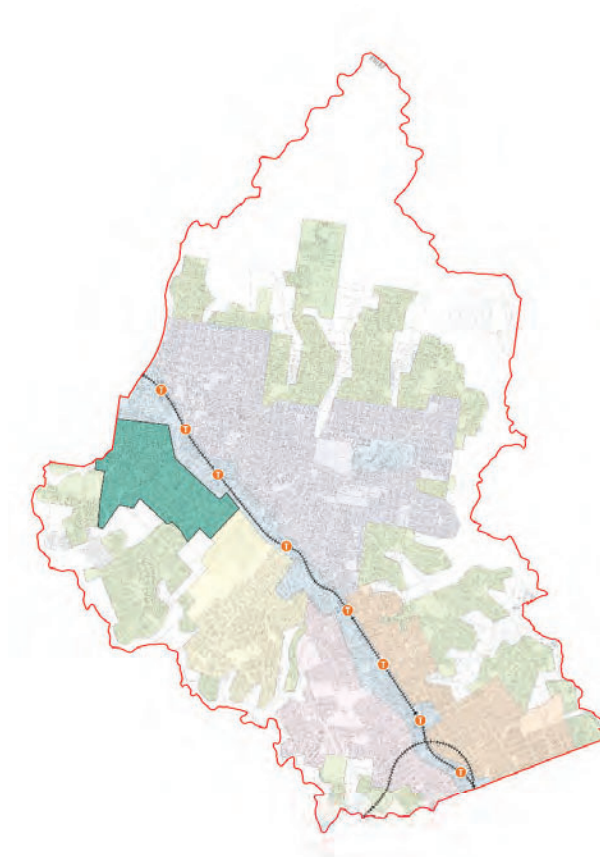


Figure 26: Character Area Location Plan



Figure 27: Middle extent of Wahroongah, Turramurra and Pymble

1.6 West Pymble Character Area

Local Character Statement

The *West Pymble Character Area* includes areas of Pymble, West Pymble and Gordon West, south of the rail corridor. While Ryde Road separates Gordon West from the rest of the character area, similarities in setting and built form unify it with areas to the north-west.

The character area includes Avondale Golf Club, Pymble Ladies College and Lofberg Oval.

With a direct interface with Lane Cove National Park, the character area has a strong connection with the surrounding bushland and creeks which contribute to its leafy setting. Additionally, Avondale Golf Club, Pymble Ladies College, Lofberg Oval also contribute significant stands of mature trees to the area.

Critically endangered communities of Sydney Ironbark-Turpentine Forest and Blue Gum High Forest are prevalent across the *West Pymble Character Area*, located both along streets and at the rear of lots. Its significance and environmental value is acknowledged under the Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 (KLEP 2015) which marks portions of this character area for biodiversity protection.

It is a predominantly residential area characterised by single detached houses in a garden setting. This character area has a mix of different streets, laid out along ridge lines in the north where topography is steepest and as a patchwork of small grids in the south where there is less variation in topography. This part of the character area was developed and subdivided in a piecemeal fashion from the early 1900s through to the 1960s.

Key Characteristics

- Varied street layout and subdivision
- Flat land on ridges
- Development has not formed around gullies
- Consistent built form
- Exceptional bushland context and critically endangered ecological communities and fauna habitat
- Significant environmentally sensitive area

Key Features

- Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre
- West Pymble Public School
- Gordon West Public School
- Avondale Golf Club
- Pymble Ladies College
- Sheldon Forest is a 5.5 ha reserve which has high conservation status and contains some of the last remnants of the critically endangered Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest in the Sydney Basin.

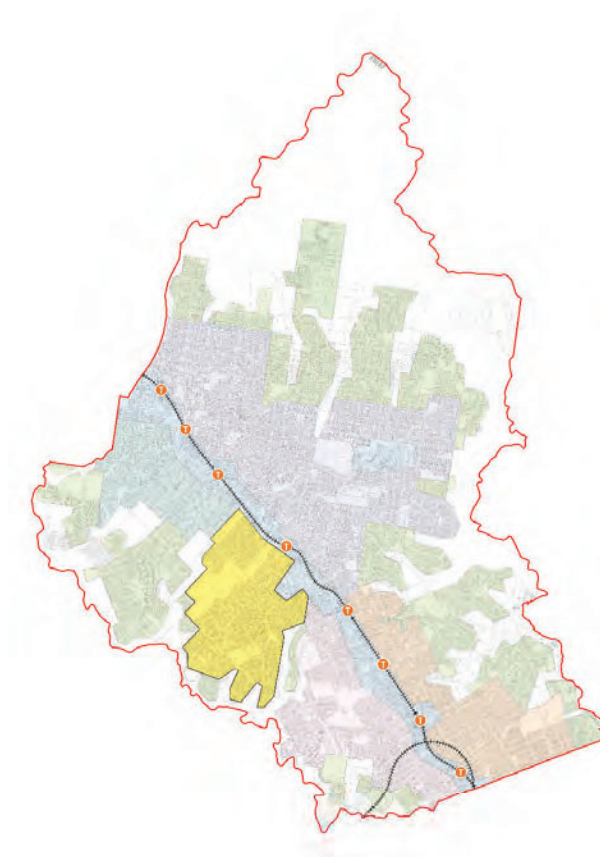


Figure 28: Character Area Location Plan



Figure 29: Western extent of Pymble and West Pymble

1.7 Lower West Character Area

Local Character Statement

The *Lower West Character Area* includes areas of Gordon, Killara, Lindfield and Roseville to the west of the rail/Pacific Highway corridor. This area is characterised by large single detached dwellings set out on streets laid predominantly perpendicular from the Pacific Highway. The street layout is distorted around heavily vegetated gullies and golf courses which form barriers to movement in the northern portion of the character area.

The character area interfaces with high density residential, retail and commercial development along the Pacific Highway and has a direct connection with Lane Cove National Park to the west.

Items of heritage significance and areas of heritage conservation are highlighted within Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 (KLEP 2015). Development within these areas are generally intact examples of Federation and Inter-war housing and subdivision delivered from the mid-1800s to early 1900s. It includes grand homes set within large lots with manicured private gardens.

Key Characteristics

- Streets run perpendicular to Pacific Highway
- Low density residential area with large houses
- Close to and includes multiple golf courses
- Edges to high density and low density residential, and bushland
- Dense tree canopy and significant bushland that supports biodiversity and habitat
- Areas of heritage significance
- Highly undulating topography that falls away quickly from the Pacific Highway ridgeline to Lane Cove River

Key Features

- Killara and Gordon Golf Clubs
- Killara Public School
- West Lindfield Sport and Recreation Area
- West Lindfield Shops on Moore Avenue

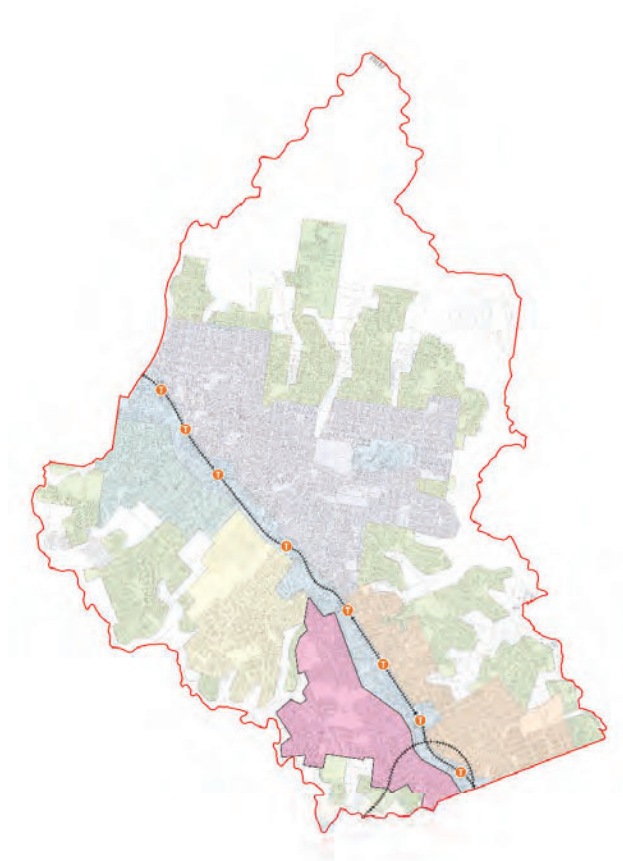


Figure 30: Character Area Location Plan

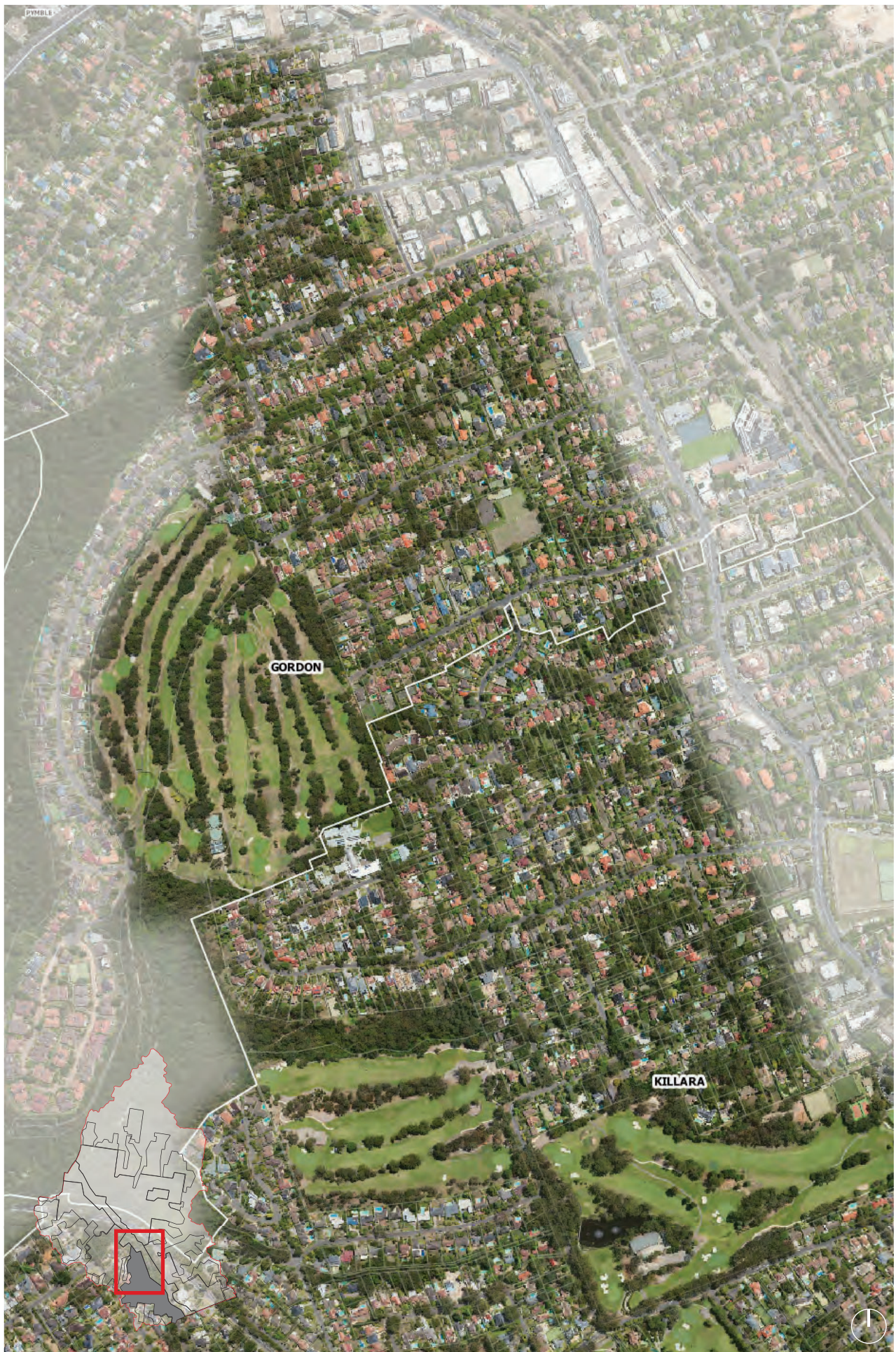


Figure 31: Gordon and Central extent of Killara west of Pacific Highway including Gordon Golf Club



Figure 32: Killara and Lindfield west of Pacific Highway including Killara Golf Club



Figure 33: Lindfield and Roseville west of Pacific Highway

Broad Local Character Area Statements

1.8 Lower East

Local Character Statement

The *Lower East* includes areas of Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon, east of the rail/Pacific Highway corridor.

This area is largely acknowledged as having heritage significance as large portions are designated as heritage conservation areas (HCAs) under Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2015 (KLEP 2015). Its significance generally relates to Federation and Inter-war housing and subdivision delivered from the mid-1800s to early 1900s. Detached houses on large lots within a garden setting feature heavily in the north of the *Lower East*. Complemented by mature well-planted streets, these areas are synonymous with the idea of the idyllic and leafy North Shore.

While as the northern extent of the *Lower East* is almost entirely covered in heritage conservation areas, the southern portion has less coverage and features more diversity in built form quality, style and age of stock. While heritage conservation areas in the south of the *Lower East* also possess consistent street planting similar to the north, interstitial areas feature reduced and variable street planting.

Key Characteristics

- Streets run perpendicular to the Pacific Highway
- High amount of heritage items and HCAs
- Consistent street layout reflecting the urban development of the early 1900's;
- Large residential lots with considerable private open space
- Many houses with pools and tennis courts
- Archbold and Eastern Arterial Roads bisect this area as a major traffic artery
- Dense tree canopy
- Undulating topography that drops away quickly from the Pacific Highway to Middle Harbour
- • Excellent areas of flora and fauna habitat

Key Features

- Eryldene Historic House and Garden
- Roseville College
- Roseville Park and Oval
- Roseville Golf Club
- KOPWA and Lourdes Retirement Homes
- Numerous nursing homes and seniors housing
- Newington Preparatory School Lindfield
- Ravenswood School
- Swain Gardens.

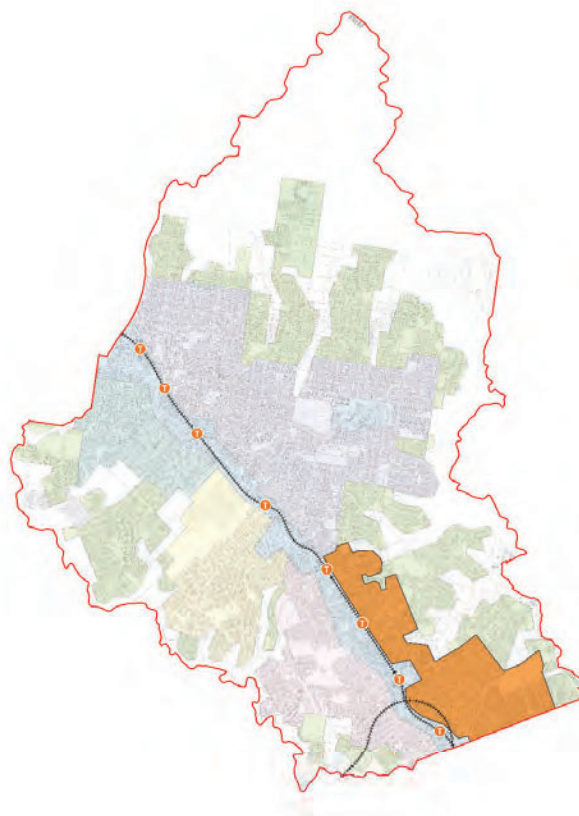


Figure 34: Character Area Location Plan



Figure 35: Eastern extent of Gordon, Killara and Lindfield, east of Pacific Highway



Figure 36: Eastern extent of Lindfield, Roseville and western parts of East Lindfield and Roseville Chase

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Broad Local Character Area Statements

1.9 North Turramurra Table

Local Character Statement

The *North Turramurra Table* is located in the north of the LGA on the edge of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. While it shares some similarities to the *Green Fingers* character area, such as its location and close relationship to bushland, it is exceptionally unique in the diversity of its built form, variation in street layout and subdivision pattern. The area is still however, predominantly residential in use.

The area has a mix of large lot residential developments with densely packed dwellings, large properties with limited development, parks, a high school and a high voltage power line corridor which runs from the north-west to south-east.

Despite being surrounded by bushland, unlike the *Green Fingers* the topography here is flat and was historically used as agricultural land. This has created a stark and straight demarcation between National Park and development.

Key Characteristics

- Isolated with limited access
- Large amounts of open space with limited tree canopy
- Consistent built form on large lot developments
- Surrounded by bushland
- Flat land
- Very varied and inconsistent street layout
- Less tree canopy coverage in residential areas

Key Features

- North Turramurra Golf Course and Recreation Area
- Lady Davidson Private Hospital
- Ku-ring-gai High School
- Numerous nursing homes and seniors housing

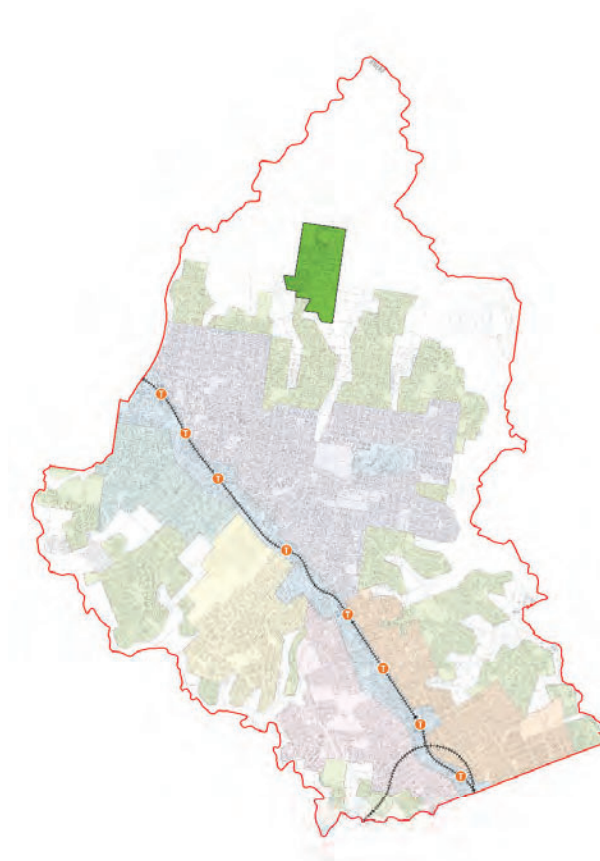


Figure 37: Character Area Location Plan



Figure 38: Northern extent of North Turramurra including North Turramurra Golf Course and recreation area

A large, stylized tree graphic in a light beige color, spanning the right side of the page. The tree has a thick trunk and many branches, each ending in a dense cluster of small, pointed leaves. The background is a solid dark grey.

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