

# Our suburb, our future



Aspirations of Dulwich Hill  
residents in relation to  
Inner West Council's new  
local environmental plan

February 2019



# Introduction

Located about 8km to the west of Sydney's CBD, Dulwich Hill is a primarily residential suburb which is part of the Inner West Council area.

Dulwich Hill was first developed as a residential suburb from the late 19th century, when rail and tram lines first serviced the suburb.

Dulwich Hill has three shopping centres. The main shopping precinct is centered around the intersection of Marrickville Rd and New Canterbury Rd, with other retail areas near the railway station and also at the suburb's western boundary alongside Hurlstone Park.

The suburb is serviced by a light rail line, which in the future will also form part of an active transport and open space corridor running from the Cooks River to Sydney Harbour.

From 2015 to 2018, Dulwich Hill residents undertook a community campaign against the NSW Government's plans to rezone large sections of the suburb to allow high-density residential apartments, as part of the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor.

This campaign culminated in the NSW Government's decision in July 2018 to hand strategic planning powers in the suburb back to Inner West Council. The council has two years to create a new local environmental plan (LEP) for the entire council area, including Dulwich Hill.

This report seeks to outline the views and aspirations of Dulwich Hill residents, to inform the LEP process. It is based on a survey of 75 residents undertaken at the Dulwich Hill Village Fair in 2018, along with the insights of Save Dully members.

This report has been circulated for feedback among Save Dully's 1000 Facebook followers and around 250 members on our email subscription list, before being finalised.

Some of the views in this report may be contentious. It is not possible to accurately reflect the view of every resident in the suburb. However, overall, this report aims to reflect views which have been received from the community to date.

# Our residential character

Residents clearly embrace Dulwich Hill's existing lower-density housing and are concerned about the demolition of this housing for higher density uses. In response to our survey, residents said they loved the suburb's "character and charm", "heritage, Federation-style homes" and "old buildings".

This means that residents are likely to oppose planning changes which damage the existing residential fabric of the suburb.

The majority of Dulwich Hill residential areas are covered by a low-density zone and it would be appropriate for this zone to remain.



Consett St homes - weatherboard and brick



Beach Rd single fronted Federation style cottages



Durham St - traditional Federation style homes



Art deco unit block in Ewart St



Weatherboard home in Hercules St

While traditional brick Federation housing forms a large part of Dulwich Hill's charm and character, there are many other housing styles which make a positive contribution to the suburb.

For instance, migrant communities which settled in the suburb from the 1950s have adapted original Federation housing in their own style. Original weatherboard homes and Victorian terraces dot parts of the suburb, while art deco unit blocks can be found near Dulwich Hill railway station.

There are also a range of low-rise apartments (generally no higher than three stories) set in former industrial areas.

This range of housing has been delivered through steady, incremental and contributory change, guided by local planning.



Miniature Lebanese fur tree statues on the fence of a home at Macarthur Parade



Adaptions on original Federation housing in Kintore St

# Newer developments we like

When pressed on the question of new developments that they like, many residents either say they don't like any of the recent developments or nominate recently-built small-scale developments in retail areas or former industrial areas.

For instance, residents indicated they were happy with the design and scale of the GPO development on the corner of Dulwich St and New Canterbury Rd, but very unhappy with the large Sydney Tools store at the base of this building.

This feedback indicates that there may be further opportunity to allow new mixed-use developments along retail precincts, including New Canterbury Rd.



Views were mixed about the Cooperage development, with some residents arguing it was too big while others felt it revitalised a retail area



Residents were happy with the low-scale redevelopment of former industrial areas around Williams Parade



Residents think the GPO development on New Canterbury Rd is well-designed, but resent the Sydney Tools shop at the building's base

# Newer developments we don't like

There is strong negative community feedback about a number of recent developments, particularly in relation to their height and density but also their poor-quality design outcome.

There is the potential for the council's planning controls and development assessment process to better reinforce the need for design quality in new projects. There is also the need for the council to ensure transparency in its development assessment work, particularly when a matter has been referred to the Land and Environment Court.

## Wardell Rd boarding house

This seven-storey development at 244 Wardell Rd was approved by the Land and Environment Court in 2012, after being refused by Marrickville Council.

The council refused the project in the wake of concerns about the number of storeys, the internal amenity of some proposed boarding rooms and building design. The building is in a prominent location, being at the crest of a steep hill. This means it has a significant skyline impact on southern Dulwich Hill.

Unfortunately, the building's design is widely regarded as unimaginative and bland, which does nothing to contribute to the urban environment. It is widely reported as a local eyesore.

Although the council was not the final consent authority for this project, it is clear that the council was unable to sufficiently influence a good design outcome on the site, and also did not identify the very real design problems as part of the assessment process.



In the wake of the construction of the boarding house development, former Marrickville mayor Jo Haylen in 2013 announced the formation of an Architectural Panel to deliver better design outcomes across the municipality.

# Arlington Grove

The Arlington Grove development is, in general, despised by the local community. The development is completely out of character with its surroundings, due to its excessive bulk and height and its poor-quality design.

The development's bland north-facing eight-storey wall dominates the southerly view from Johnson Park, and in doing so severely damages the ambience of, and outlook from, this important piece of open space.

The development's strange emotionless brick facade and planter boxes facing Grove St also clash with that street's decorative late 19th century and early 20th century housing

Finally, the building's monotonous brown colour is completely at odds with its surroundings and means the development is widely-regarded as an eyesore.

In fact, Federal MP Anthony Albanese has publicly described the building's design as looking like 'Stasi headquarters', in reference to the uninspiring building occupied by the secret police of the former East German regime.

The development was approved in 2014 by the Sydney East Joint Regional Planning Panel, which included both council and NSW Government representatives, following an assessment by the former Marrickville Council.

The outcome at Arlington Grove has illustrated the need to better involve the community in the planning and development assessment process, and to strengthen design quality outcomes in the new LEP.



# Sydney Tools site

The street-level retail outcome at the Sydney Tools site is regarded as highly unsatisfactory by the Dulwich Hill community. The original approval for the site, at 429-449 New Canterbury Rd, was to deliver a row of nine shops.

These shops were expected to create a varied and interesting local shopping experience, akin to a Parisian retail boulevard. Instead, Sydney Tools was successful in obtaining consent for a modification application to turn the row of shops into one single large hardware shop..

The assessment process for this site was not transparent. The council refused the modification, but then appeared to agree with the single shop outcome when the matter went before the Land and Environment Court. This was despite the fact that the Marrickville development control plan restricts new shops to a 12m width. The new shop frontage is well over 50m.

To make matters worse, Sydney Tools then installed a garish red awning and shopfront sign on the site, which the council contends is unauthorised. The outcome at the Sydney Tools site is contrary to the community's aspirations to have unique local shopping experiences, and design outcomes which contribute to the area's character.



The community was promised a row of differently-branded shops, as this artist's impression shows



The final outcome is one single shop



A close-up of the final outcome

# Heritage and character protection

While Dulwich Hill does have heritage conservation areas and items, there is no question that heritage planning in the suburb is less than adequate and requires a fresh examination.

The last comprehensive review of heritage in the suburb (and indeed the former Marrickville LGA) happened in 2008.

As part of the community campaign against the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy, this lack of planning for heritage became apparent.

Many historically important homes, buildings and precincts across the suburb would have demolished, if it had not been for the community campaign against the strategy. The next two pages includes a list of 'Dully icons' identified by the community as being threatened by the strategy, because they had no statutory protection.

The LEP represents an opportunity to gather the lessons learned from the community campaign, and to re-examine the heritage question.

Under NSW planning law, homes which are not heritage item or in heritage conservation areas are fair game for development.

For instance, the NSW exempt and complying development code introduced from 2008 allows a homeowner to avoid having to seek council approval to demolish a home, if this home is not in a heritage area or a heritage item. Instead, the homeowner can seek automatic private certifier approval for this demolition. This has made it far more difficult for a council to intervene to save a locally significant home from demolition (see The Boulevard case study on page 13).

The LEP represents an opportunity to remedy this situation, through a new fine-grain heritage analysis which considers both new heritage items and precincts.

In saying this, the concept of heritage protection can be contentious. While some property owners support heritage protection, others are concerned it will unnecessarily limit their ability to expand or re-build. There are many misconceptions about heritage protection, and a lack of useful information to support discussion and consultation on the issue. This negative reaction can sometimes make authorities fearful of proposing new heritage protections.

To overcome this, it would be helpful for the council to ask the community to nominate new heritage items and areas, and in doing this present the trade-offs of increased heritage protection as an information resource to help with this nomination process. A positive community reaction may make the council more comfortable when proposing heritage controls.

This report recommends a three-pronged approach to the heritage question:

- Examining closely the 'icons' identified on the following two pages
- Undertaking a fresh, fine-grain analysis of heritage in the suburb
- Requesting the community to nominate items and areas which should be protected, to help give an indication to the council of areas where there is strong support for heritage protection.

## Baptist Church, Macarthur Parade

According to its official history, the Dulwich Hill Baptist Church on Macarthur Parade was erected in 1925.

The church was described as “a credit to all concerned, a noble edifice, ready to be dedicated to the highest and most sacred use”. The church included seven memorial windows, of which four were in memory of soldiers who had died in World War I.

The church was designed by architect Walter Leslie, who also designed St Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral group at South Dowling St, Paddington. This Cathedral group is listed as a State heritage item



## Former maternity hospital in The Parade

There's a grand Federation home on the corner of The Parade and Terrace Rd. The home is something of a local landmark, being on an elevated corner.

The home has an interesting background in that there are many references to it being used as a private maternity hospital – known as Nurse Gee's hospital – in the 1920s and 1930s. This illustrates the rich history of the Dulwich Hill area. By the 1950s, there are newspaper references to it being a private residence.

## Macarthur Parade bungalows

In 1914, the estate of the Sefton Hall mansion at Macarthur Parade was subdivided.

In 1917, the first of the six substantial, Californian bungalows were constructed. Today, four of these homes stand side-by-side in pristine, original condition. Their impressive style is unique in Dulwich Hill. They share the block with the tallest building in the street, the historic Baptist Church.

John Thomas Ness (1871-1947), an influential figure with important historical associations resided at Number 11, 'Valcourt', from 1934 until his death in 1947.





Weatherboard house in The Parade



Intact row of weatherboard homes from 21 to 29 Kintore St

## Weatherboard homes

Dulwich Hill has an interesting range of weatherboard homes, which in some areas make a significant contribution to the streetscape. This is particularly the case in streets such as Hercules, Beach, Consett, Terrace and Kintore St (however there are examples in a number of other streets).

Little is known about the history of these homes, including why weatherboard was chosen as a building material, at a time when brick Federation home construction was predominant.

These homes are particularly vulnerable to a 'knock down and rebuild' mindset.



## Uniting Church

The Dulwich Hill Uniting Church in Constitution Rd was opened by local MP John Ness in 1929. It currently has a Pacific Islander congregation.

It makes an important contribution to the local streetscape.

## Greek Church in Hercules St

One of Dulwich Hill's most distinctive buildings is the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Unmercenaries in Hercules St, which is thought to be around 40 years old and was hand-built by the area's local Greek population. It has pretty blue-topped belltower.

This church represents the only Sydney diocese of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece. This church severed communion with the main Greek Orthodox Church in 1935 over the acceptance of a revised calendar by the main church.



# Other heritage studies

The council submissions to the two NSW Government urban renewal strategies (released in 2015 and 2017) identified areas of high streetscape value and potential new heritage items, which were under threat of being rezoned for development. The council should closely study these previous submissions as part of the preparation of its new LEP.

In addition, the NSW Government in 2016 and 2017 undertook a heritage review of a limited number of streets in Dulwich Hill, including Durham, Hercules, Consett, Terrace Rd, Wardell Rd and Ewart St.

Although Save Dully never understood why the government only conducted a heritage review for a limited number of streets in Dulwich Hill, rather than all streets, there were some positive outcomes from this work. For instance, Ewart St, bounded by Ness Avenue and the railway line, was proposed as part of this review as a heritage conservation area. The site had originally been earmarked for four-storey buildings.



Area of Ewart St suggested by NSW Government for heritage protection



## Historic home was just a few days from demolition when it was saved

In March 2018, the owner of a historic home at 73 The Boulevard, Dulwich Hill, sought to obtain private certifier approval to demolish the home for a proposed unit block development.

The application would have been automatically approved as complying development within 14 days, had it not been for the quick-witted actions of a neighbour who commissioned a heritage analysis of the property and was able to convince Inner West Council to quickly issue an interim heritage order to protect the property. This order was later upheld by the Land and Environment Court.

The interwar bungalow was notable for its ornate interiors. The near-death experience for this house illustrates two problems.

Firstly, the fact that the home was placed in a development zone, without being identified as a heritage item, illustrates a breakdown in heritage analysis in the suburb. Secondly, the fact that the home had the potential to be demolished via a private certifier shows that homes right across the council area are at risk of being demolished, at the stroke of a certifier's pen, if they are not located in heritage conservation areas.





BEFORE: The historic cottage at 77 Old Canterbury Rd, Lewisham



AFTER: Project-style home now built in its place

## Generic project home replaces historic home at Lewisham

The fate of a pretty historic home at Lewisham underlines the danger of inadequate planning controls and assessment processes when it comes to new residential projects.

A development application to demolish the home at 77 Old Canterbury Rd, Lewisham, and replace it with a generic project home design, was lodged with Inner West Council in late 2016. The site is outside of Lewisham's heritage conservation area.

The council's development assessment process has allowed the construction of a new home which in no way reflects or complements the existing historic streetscape or locality.

While this case study is for a housing site outside of Dulwich Hill, it does outline the danger of not adequately protecting, and planning for, historic streetscapes in Dulwich Hill, along with not putting in place and enforcing controls to deliver complementary new homes.

# Dulwich Hill's green corridor



The new council LEP represents an opportunity to create a genuine urban green corridor in Dulwich Hill, which builds on the long-standing vision of a GreenWay between the Cooks River and Iron Cove.

The 5km **Cooks River to Iron Cove GreenWay** is now coming to reality, with funding allocated to the project from the NSW Government and Inner West Council. Detailed concept plans were placed on public exhibition in 2019.

The GreenWay will see new cycling and walking paths, open space embellishments and ongoing bushland regeneration being put in place on former transport land adjacent to the light rail corridor, including in Dulwich Hill.

This investment is a very welcome outcome, which follows many years of community campaigning. However, the LEP represents an opportunity to expand the GreenWay vision out from the rail corridor area and into the surrounding neighbourhood.

Fortunately, there are a host of existing local and State strategic plans and resources in place to help bring this idea to life. For instance, the original **GreenWay masterplan**, released in 2009, also included the concept for an environmentally-focussed street network – also known as trellis streets.

Trellis streets are designed to be people and wildlife-friendly. They include lush verge plantings, wider footpaths for safe walking and cycle paths or traffic calmed streets. Water sensitive urban design using raingardens and their treatments reduce local flooding and filter stormwater that eventually runs into the Cooks River.

Trellis streets create habitats for small birds, bees, butterflies and other wildlife for biodiversity conservation. Trellis streets also reduce the urban heat island effect, which NSW climate projections shows will become more intense in coming decades.

This green corridor vision is also supported as part of the **Sydney Green Grid** project, which lists the implementation of the GreenWay as a high priority and is specifically supported by the Eastern Sydney District Plan.

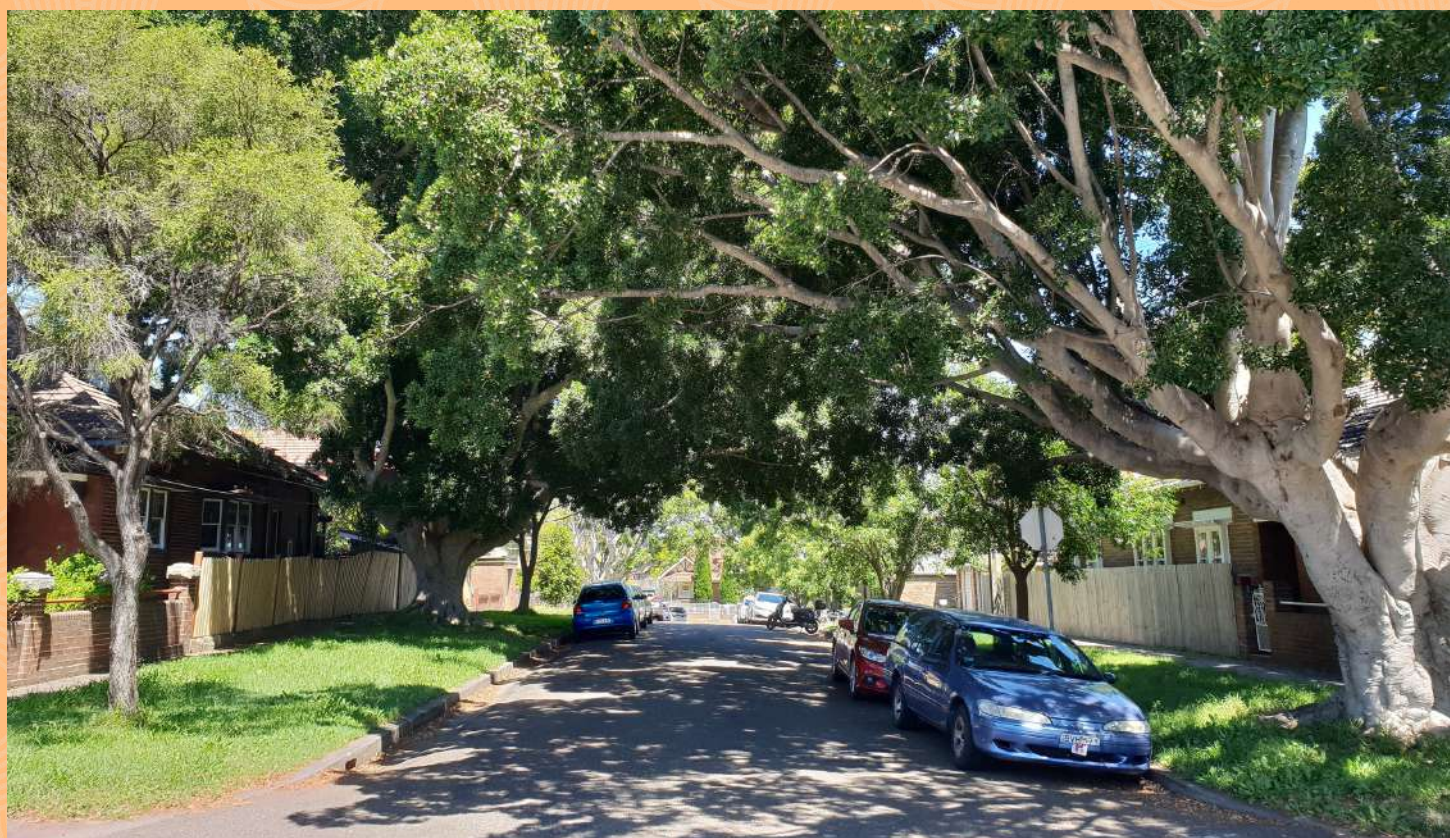
It also includes mapping showing private and public land in Dulwich Hill, alongside the light rail line, as being part of a Biodiversity Investment Opportunities Map, where it says there should be a focus to “connect biodiverse areas and apply planning and zoning provisions to protect corridors.”

“Corridors aim to provide ecological connectivity, to facilitate the movement and dispersal of native flora and fauna across the landscape,” the Green Grid report states.

“Connecting biodiverse areas is particularly important in the face of climate change. Investigate opportunities to enhance native biodiversity in Green Grid corridors to help expand the urban forest to achieve canopy cover targets.”

Such protection could help to protect urban forest areas which exist on private land, including bushland on vacant low density land in the block bordered by Macarthur Parade, Beach Rd, Hercules St and Kintore Rd, and on the rear of sites on the eastern side of Hercules St.

In addition, the **Tennyson Street Subcatchment Plan** prepared by Marrickville Council and the local community in 2009 takes a close look at the waterways in the southern section of Dulwich Hill. It recommends that water sensitive design be introduced to new development and moves at taken to naturalise existing waterways.



*Grand street trees in Margaret St*

Finally, the existing **Marrickville Local Environmental Plan (LEP)** (gazetted in 2010) and complementary Development Control Plan also reflects a small part of this broader GreenWay vision by putting in place measures to protect Dulwich Hill's colony of native long-nosed bandicoots. These bandicoots have been listed as an endangered species since 2008.

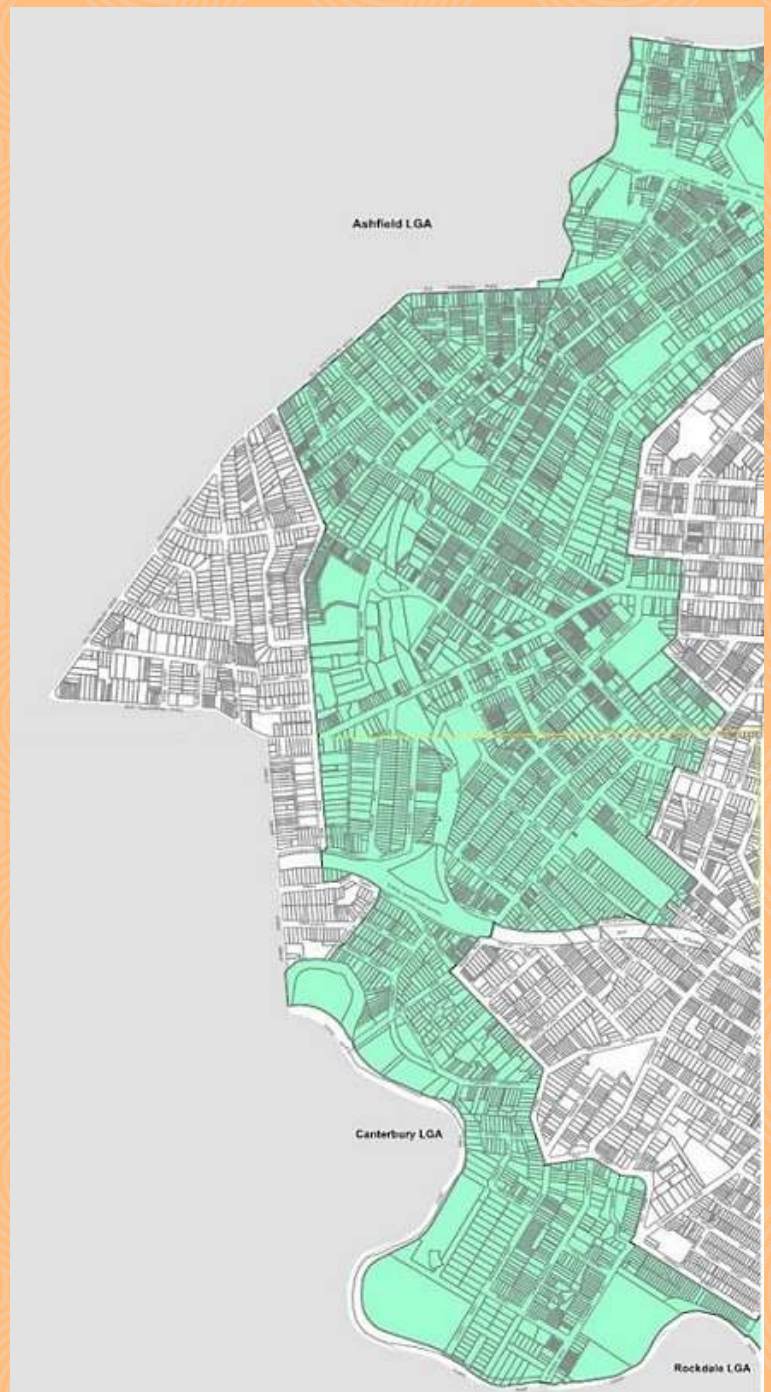
The LEP contained a mapped biodiversity corridor, while the complementary Development Control Plan (DCP) had a mapped "bandicoot protection zone". In these mapped areas, developers are required to take special effort to avoid or minimise impacts on terrestrial biodiversity.

Marrickville Council's guide to planning in the bandicoot zone, for instance, states that "disturbance to 25 per cent or more of a site may impact on existing or potential bandicoot habitat". This reflects a major study in 2010 which found that bandicoots live in the under-floor areas of historic houses and in nearby natural foraging habitat, including in backyards.

Unfortunately, a recent study by the University of Sydney has reportedly found no evidence of a current Inner-West bandicoot population. However, it should be noted that the colony does currently remain listed and that this is not the first time the colony has disappeared from public view – only to return at a later time.

Bandicoots had regularly been seen in the suburb up until the 1960s, before disappearing and then re-emerging in 2002. This gives some hope that the colony will return to the suburb, if the right framework is in place.

It should also be noted that maps recently released by NSW Office of Environment and Heritage identify canopy and urban heat vulnerability across Greater Sydney. The Inner West Council area needs to increase canopy cover to achieve the canopy targets in the Green Grid and reduce heat vulnerability.



*Mapped biodiversity corridor  
in council LEP*

## **Future vision for the GreenWay corridor**

In conclusion, there is an opportunity to build on the strategic planning work outlined above to improve the urban environment and deliver a broader urban green corridor vision in Dulwich Hill.

The vision could support the regeneration of the bandicoot colony, in part through retaining existing biodiversity and low density residential zoning protections in the Marrickville LEP.

Careful management of residential development is required, given that the Office of Environment and Heritage citation for the inner-west long-nosed bandicoot makes it clear that “loss of shelter sites from residential development” is a threat to the species.

There is also the opportunity, following community consultation, to put in place planning provisions which support other environmental enhancements, such as tree canopy preservation and growth, the water sensitive urban design, active transport and healthy waterways.

# Local and unique retail precincts and meeting places



Marrickville Rd, Dulwich Hill

Residents enjoy Dulwich Hill's 'village vibe' and local shopping opportunities. The suburb's main shopping area is well-known for its interesting range of fresh food options, including a gourmet butchery and French, Italian and Mexican delis.

Other aspects of interest including a range of cafes and restaurants, a Gleebooks and an emerging giftware and jewellery precinct on New Canterbury Rd. In recent times, there has been moves to introduce later-night venues, including small bars.

Community feedback indicates that residents are keen to experience unique – not generic – shopping. The large Sydney Tools store is broadly seen as both an eyesore and an affront to this local shopping experience, particularly given the local community was originally promised a range of smaller shops on this site.



Sharon Little from Jacob Little Home and Giftware Store on New Canterbury Rd

The new LEP represents an opportunity to strengthen council planning controls to reinforce the need for new redevelopment projects in retail areas to deliver small-scale local shops, and to encourage live music and small bars which add vitality and night-time activity.



Amazing selection of cheeses at French deli, The Larder



Colourful display outside Lady Gnarbo Florist in New Canterbury Rd

*Photos on this and previous page are by Stuart White*

While they may not be able to be solved through the new LEP, there are a number of issues which need to be addressed in the main shopping area. The council's footpath tiles appear to be repeatedly dug up and replaced with unsightly asphalt as part of telecommunications works. This is undermining the appearance of the town centre. Inner West Council may not have the power to control this, but could advocate for an improved approach where its original footpath is replicated in any works.



Footpath damage in Marrickville Rd

Separately, the appearance of laneways running to the south off New Canterbury Rd could be improved, particularly Caves Lane which has very heavy pedestrian traffic. This lane is dominated by large garbage bins. While there is clearly a need to support the business community, it is questionable whether permanently leaving bins in a laneway is a sustainable long-term solution.



Garbage bins in heavily trafficked laneway off New Canterbury Rd

# Need for careful planning on Hercules St industrial site

A developer-initiated rezoning proposal has been lodged for a current low-scale industrial site at Hercules St, opposite Dulwich Hill public school.

The rezoning proposal seeks to rezone the site from light industrial to business development, with a proposed maximum building height of nine storeys. It is proposed for 156 units to be placed on the site. In November 2018, the Department of Planning supported the rezoning being placed on public exhibition. Inner West Council will be the exhibiting authority.

The community has, as yet, not had the opportunity to have it say about the proposal, nor been involved in any discussions about planning for the site. The former Marrickville Council spent two years having secret discussions with the developer about the site, after initially receiving the rezoning proposal. The lack of transparency in planning for the site is a significant concern.

Despite the site being in a sensitive location opposite the primary school, artist's impressions released by the developer show the development will be at its most intensive and highest opposite the school. This has led to legitimate privacy concerns from parents, along with concerns that the school's top oval will be badly over-shadowed from 2pm (including when it is used for after school care).

There is strategic merit in urban renewal at this site, given it is currently rundown and is opposite a light rail stop. However, the proposed development is way too high and poorly-orientated and should be reduced to three storeys on the Hercules St frontage and up to five storeys on the New Canterbury Rd frontage.

This is in line with the council submission in relation to the site in response to the government's Sydenham to Bankstown Strategy (which advocated for 5-6 storeys on the site).

Furthermore, the site should be considered concurrently with the LEP, with any dwellings from the rezoning going towards the council's LEP housing target. By doing this, there is an argument that the suburb is making a housing contribution and therefore existing residential areas should be preserved from redevelopment.

An affordable housing contribution on the site is also important, as is heritage protection of the Greek Church (see Heritage and Character Protection section of this report).



Proposed development site on Hercules St opposite Dulwich Hill public school



Artist's impression of the proposed development (school site is in the bottom left hand corner of the image)



Artist's impression showing the project's overshadowing impact at 2pm in mid-winter

# Diversity and culture



Residents value Dulwich Hill's diversity – both cultural and social – and are keen for this to continue. There is a concern from some residents that the suburb has the potential to become “too homogenised”, undermining its traditional character as being home to people from a range of backgrounds and incomes.

A number of affordable rental housing apartment buildings in single ownership have, in recent years, been converted into higher-priced strata title developments, so the units can be sold to the highest bidder.

The council could play a role to advocate to the NSW Government to better protect this existing housing, including through setting more appropriate levies for strata conversion. There is also a potential role for the council to undertake a more rigorous assessment of these proposals (see case study of Osgood Avenue development below).

In addition, there is a desire from the community for new developments to make a contribution to the area's affordable housing stock.

# Osgood Avenue affordable housing unit block

The eviction of affordable housing residents from 11-13 Osgood St, Marrickville West, and the building's conversion into "industrial chic" apartments, illustrates the need for the council to be more vigilant protecting existing low-cost housing.

The four-storey block at the site, with 46 one-bedroom units, was built in 1960. Between May 2016 and April 2017, rents ranged from \$240 to \$260 per week, well below the suburb's median rent at the time.

However, in August 2017, developer Marana Developments received council approval to convert the block from single ownership and instead strata subdivide and upgrade each of the units, so each unit can be sold to the highest bidder.

The property was marketed as anything but affordable housing. It was being promoted as a "transformed building" which represents "industrial chic in the Inner West" and defines "the meaning of modern urban style", with black tapware, stone kitchen benchtops and quality European appliances.

Inner West Council assessed the application against the Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP), which includes planning provisions to protect existing affordable housing.

Inner West Council supported the application, despite the fact it did not appear to meet a number of the SEPP's key provisions. The SEPP states that a consent authority needs to consider whether there is "sufficient comparable accommodation" in the nearby area for people being evicted from the block, before approving an application. A vacancy rate of less than 3 per cent is an indicator that this test cannot be met.

Despite the vacancy rate being below this figure at the time of DA lodgement, Inner West Council still approved the application through because the developer had given cash incentives for tenants to leave the building and find alternative accommodation. By doing this, the council is encouraging other developers to use similar tactics to clear buildings.

In addition, the SEPP's formula allowed the developer to pay a contribution for just 14 out of the 46 bedrooms lost, leading to a total contribution of just \$386,000 to the Family and Community Services Department. This is a relatively meagre amount of money, which is unlikely to be able to fund many new social housing units and there is no requirement for this money to be spent in the Inner West.

This is because it was assumed these 14 units would be converted to owner occupier status (in line with owner occupier rates in the surrounding area) and the remaining units would be rented below the council area's median rental amount and therefore would remain affordable.

The council report concluded: "The remaining 32.2 units out of the 46 affordable rental units will be affordable after the development." It is yet to be seen whether this will be the case, but given the building's marketing some doubt can be cast on this claim.

This case study illustrates the need for Inner West Council to be more vigilant in using its statutory assessment powers when considering applications. At the very least, this may help in getting greater affordable housing contributions when buildings are upgraded. It also illustrates the need for the council to consider advocacy to the NSW Government to create more stringent policies to protect existing affordable rental housing.



Affordable housing unit block at Osgood Avenue, Marrickville West - photos taken before conversion and as tenants are being evicted

# Seaview St carpark opportunity



The Seaview St carpark at present - rundown and unattractive PHOTO: Stuart White

The Seaview St carpark precinct could play an important role delivering a number of community objectives, including a vibrant retail centre, affordable housing, local shopping, an improved public domain and environmental sustainability outcomes.

The council could consider beginning a conversation with the residential and business community about the site. Part of this conversation could involve a discussion about the concept of moving public carparking underground, or absorbing it into new buildings, to allow precinct masterplanning. This conversation could then lead to a design competition for the site, to elicit the best ideas.

The carpark site itself provides an important role serving the village centre but is rundown and dirty, and does not effectively integrate with surrounding private property.

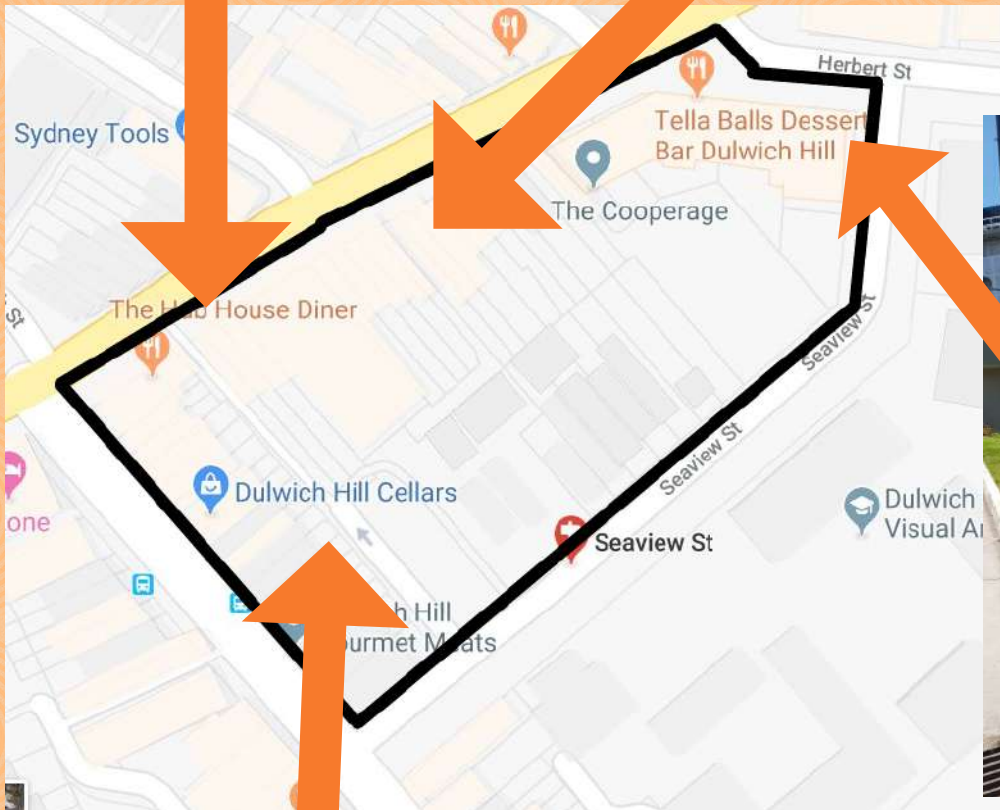
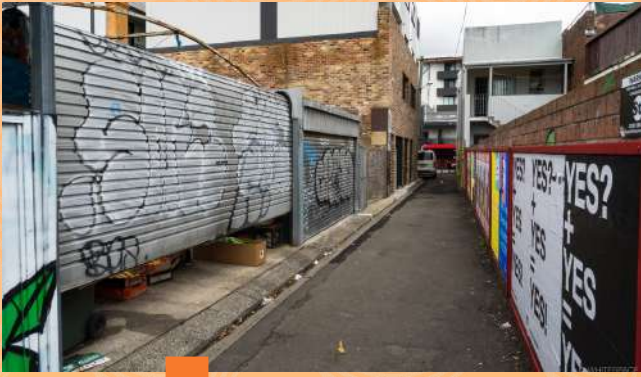
The council's existing planning controls for the site (primarily outlined in a development control plan) were developed many years ago without broad community input and don't outline a comprehensive vision or contemporary planning approach for the site.

There is the opportunity for the council to consider implementing a community-led place-based design approach for the Seaview St carpark, in which the site's constraints and opportunities are carefully analysed and considered. This would include looking at the potential for:

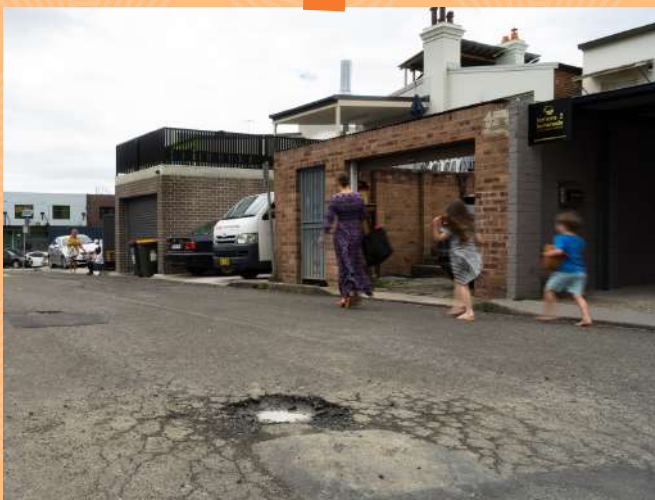
- A new public square
- Delivery of affordable and social housing
- Retention and protection of heritage features
- Activation of the rear of existing shops and laneways entering the site
- Water and energy preservation and delivery of biodiversity gains

Residents have made clear to Save Dully that, as part of any place design, there is a strong desire to retain parking to support the ongoing vitality of the retail precinct.

Existing uninspiring laneways leading to the carpark could be upgraded and activated



Unused and wasted open space could be activated



Potential to activate rear of shops, including into a public square



Neighbouring properties could be incorporated into development site

# Broader regional planning issues

While the demise of the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Strategy in July 2018 was a major community victory, more work needs to be done to save historic suburbs along the corridor from excessive development and poor transport outcomes.

Given this, Save Dully in January 2019 came together with Save Marrickville and the Sydenham to Bankstown Alliance to outline a number of important decisions that need to be made to complete 'unfinished business' in the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor.

The report 'Unfinished Business in the Sydenham to Bankstown Corridor' makes four requests of the NSW Government:

- Remove the former urban strategy for the Department of Planning's website
- Remove Sydenham to Bankstown as a major urban renewal corridor in strategic plans
- Stop any developer-led rezoning reviews in corridor suburbs which rely on strategic plans
- Don't sign the contract for the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro before the 2019 State election

Importantly, for the LEP process, we believe it is not appropriate for Inner West Council to treat the Sydenham to Bankstown as a place for significant urban renewal.

You can find the document at [www.savedully.com/unfinished-business-in-corridor](http://www.savedully.com/unfinished-business-in-corridor)



### Unfinished business in the Sydenham to Bankstown Corridor

the local environmental plan (LEP) review process as suggested in the council's submission."

Mr Roberts said he had also asked the Department of Planning to complete a 'high-level principles-based strategy' in collaboration with the councils to 'provide a framework for proposed development'.

In addition, across 2017 and 2018, the community had raised concerns about the significant noise, traffic, heritage, vibration and commuter travel impacts caused by the construction of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro. This led to another major backdown in June 2018, when the government announced that plans to remove existing station platforms and buildings would be scrapped and proposed shutdown periods reduced.

**What still needs to be done**

While the above announcements are a welcome move, there's still a lot of unfinished business which needs to be addressed before we can truly say the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor has been saved.

You can find this list of unfinished business on the following pages. The implementation of this list will allow Inner West and Canterbury Bankstown councils to be unimpeded in their work to deliver locally-appropriate planning, and to ensure that hasty and inappropriate decisions are not made on the Metro before next year's State election campaign.

This list has been supported by the Save Dully and Save Marrickville Residents' Action Groups and the Sydenham to Bankstown Alliance (which represents a range of resident and community groups along the corridor).

**The story so far**

Between 2015 and 2018, the community mounted a major campaign against the NSW Government's Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Strategy.

This strategy would have forced some 100,000 new residents into the 13 km long corridor. It prescribed areas for new high-rise development, which would have replaced historic low-density suburbs and important employment and cultural areas with towers up to 35 stories. Some new precincts were likely to be even denser than Hong Kong.

In July 2018, Planning Minister Anthony Roberts announced that the government, given the community backlash, would no longer pursue this strategy and he was instead allowing local councils to lead strategic planning in the corridor.

For instance, Mr Roberts' letter to Inner West Council said: 'The State Government welcomes the opportunity for council to lead the planning for the relevant parts of the corridor as part of

# Conclusion

While Dulwich Hill has survived the proposed Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Strategy, it remains a suburb at the cross-roads. Some of the current issues include:

- The new Metro line is still proposed for the Bankstown Line, which is likely to continue development pressure on the suburb. There is at least one large redevelopment proposal underway (the Hercules St industrial site).
- A number of recent developments in the suburb have been of an extraordinarily poor design quality, which has detracted from the streetscape.
- The suburb has not had a proper heritage review for at least a decade, and many worthy streets and items remain totally unprotected from demolition.
- The suburb is becoming increasingly less diverse, given the destruction of existing affordable housing and lack of new affordable housing.
- Parts of the suburb's main shopping centre, including the Seaview St carpark and New Canterbury Rd corridor, appears rundown and could be revitalised.
- There has been a lack of transparency as to how major decisions by the council were made, including agreeing to the Sydney Tools shop and to the rezoning proposal at Hercules St.

Inner West Council's new local environmental plan represents an important opportunity to address some of these issues.

This report outlines a potential way forward, which includes protecting the charm and character of existing residential areas while acknowledging that Dulwich Hill could part its part delivering new housing - including affordable housing - in areas such as the Seaview St carpark and the Hercules St industrial site.

The report also supports strong protection for our important local shopping experiences and to enhance the suburb's important environmental qualities.

# Summary of our recommendations

1. Protect existing, low-density residential fabric of our suburb
2. Examine development and place-making opportunities in existing retail areas, including beginning a conversation with the community about, and initiating a design competition for, the Seaview St carpark
3. Ensure that any redevelopment proposal on Hercules St is lowered in height and intensity (particularly alongside school) and ensure that development contributes towards suburb's LEP housing target, provides affordable housing and protects heritage on site
4. Conduct a fine-grained heritage analysis and encourage community nominations for new heritage items and areas.
5. Strengthen controls and resourcing to deliver high-quality design in new developments.
6. Ensure the LEP contains controls to prevent the amalgamation of smaller shops (as has happened on the Sydney Tools site) or delivery of 'big box' retail shops.
7. Better protect existing affordable housing and look for opportunities to deliver additional affordable housing, in a way that respects local character.
8. Use the Greenway corridor as a springboard to support a green corridor through the suburb, including through maintaining existing biodiversity and density protections
9. Improve the transparency of the council's development assessment processes, particularly during consideration of developer-initiated rezoning proposals or when matters are before the Land and Environment Court.
10. Not treat Dulwich Hill's section of the Sydenham to Bankstown Corridor as a place for regionally-significant urban renewal and instead ensure modest community-led local planning takes place

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Save Dully thanks Stuart White for assisting with photography for this report. Stuart's details are below:

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