



Revised DRAFT Berala Village Centre Study

July 2014

BERALA VILLAGE STUDY

Revision	Date	Trim No.	Document Name
A	2011		Preliminary Draft Berala Village Study
B	February 2012		Draft Berala Village Study March 2012 (Exhibiton)
		T015850/2012	Parts 1-2
		T015864/2012	Parts 3-5
		Txxxxxxx/2012	Appendices 1-3
C	July 2014		Revised Draft Berala Village Study July 2014
		T059799/2014	Parts 1-2
		T059384/2014	Parts 3-5
		T059386/2014	Appendices 1-3 (unchanged)
		T059394/2014	Appendix 4

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

- identify opportunities to revitalise and improve Berala;
- inform Council's strategic planning, particularly Council's Delivery Program, and inter agency initiatives;
- bring together information which will inform the future upgrade of Berala's main street area; and
- consider which building types and heights are suitable for Berala in the future.

This study also addresses the resolution of Council on 12 May 2010 which stated.....

'.....That Council resolve to immediately prepare a planning study of Berala Town [sic] Centre and the surrounding Berala residential area to determine what opportunities exist to revitalise the town centre and to provide new residential housing opportunities in the surrounding area'.

The study has been further updated to address Council's resolution of 20 March 2013 [Item 069/13] which stated.....

'.....That Council undertake a further study of the B2 commercial zoning area of the Berala Town [sic] Centre and surrounding area'.

In addressing this second resolution of Council, specialist consultants, Hill PDA, were engaged by Council to undertake a broad economic analysis of the Berala Village Centre and surrounds. The consultant study is included as Appendix 4, and is summarised in Section 2.13 of this study.

- Part 1** defines the study area and purpose of the study. It also provides local and regional context for the study.
- Part 2** describes the Berala village study area as it currently exists. This section includes a brief profile of the demographics of the study area, as well as the existing planning controls. It also includes physical elements such as existing land use, building form and character, topography, landscaping, access and movement, heritage and public domain, and the opportunities and constraints these present.
- Part 3** details the consultation workshops undertaken as part of this study. It also outlines the outcomes of this consultation.
- Part 4** brings together the opportunities and constraints identified in Part 2, and the findings of the community workshops outlined in Part 3 in a concise analysis of issues. This section makes recommendations about how these issues can be addressed. Importantly, it demonstrates how these recommendations align with the broad outcomes in Council's *Community Strategic Plan*.
- Part 5** summarises the likely anticipated change for Berala over the next 5-10 years and highlights the priority recommendations.

1.2 Link to Council's Integrated Planning Framework

The Berala Village study has been undertaken to address the following key outcomes identified in Council's *Auburn City Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023 (CSP)*:

- **high quality urban development** (CSP theme: Our Places)
- **attractive public spaces and town centres** (CSP theme: Our Places)
- **promotion of community pride** (CSP theme: Our Community)

The *Auburn City Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023* is the centrepiece of Auburn City Council's Integrated Planning Framework. It sets the broad strategic direction for Council's annual Operational Plan and 4 year Delivery Program. The Delivery Program sets out the projects and initiatives Council will run over a 4 year period to work towards achieving these outcomes. It also contains indicators against which progress can be measured.

To address these CSP outcomes and this Council resolution, this study also incorporates relevant findings of previous studies of Berala undertaken by Council, consultants, and the community.

1.3 Study Area

Description

The Berala Village study area (Figure 1 over page) consists of the following key components:

- a. the village centre core and surrounding area: the area within a 400-600 metre radius of Berala Railway Station
- b. the main street area: the land zoned B2 Local Centre. The majority of Berala's main street area is located along Woodburn Road on the north western side of Berala station and railway line. The remainder is located on the south eastern side of the station, along Burke Avenue.

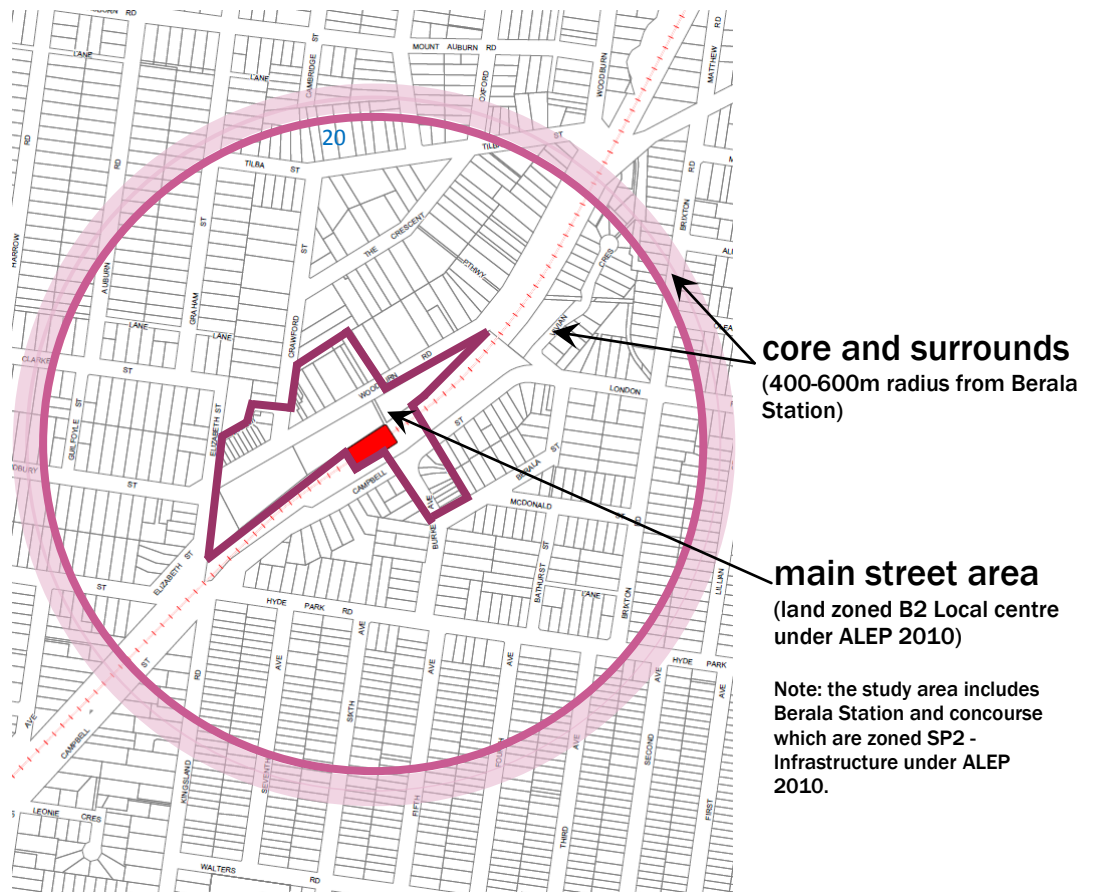


Figure 1: Berala Village Study Area

Study Area Rationale

The study area of a 400-600m radius centred on the railway station was selected to ensure consistency with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's (DP&I's) classification of centres across metropolitan Sydney. This classification of centres was established in the *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036* and the former *Metropolitan Strategy: City of Cities – A Plan for Sydney's Future 2005* (refer also to Section 1.3).

Berala is classified as a village centre under this hierarchy. Village centres have a radius of 400-600m, which translates to a 5-15 minute walk. The 400-600m radius of the study area is centred on Berala station, which is consistent with the DP&I's approach (refer also to Section 1.3 of this study).

A radius of 400-600m around Berala station is also considered an appropriate area of focus for this study, as this is primarily Berala's 'walking catchment'. A walking catchment of a centre is the area from which people can be expected to walk to the centre's services, shops and public transport¹. Areas within walking catchments of centres of all sizes will become increasingly important over the next 5-10 years. It is these areas where there is greatest potential to minimise car use to access shops and services, and where demands for greater opportunities for housing choice are likely to occur².

¹ Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036, Department of Planning

² Centres Design Guideline (draft) 2011, Department of Planning

1.4 Local and Regional Context

Local Context

Berala is a predominantly residential area, with a small main street area adjacent to a railway station.

Berala is named from an Aboriginal word meaning musk-duck. Development of Berala as a European settlement dates from 1885, when the first public auction of land took place. Berala Station was opened in 1912, located slightly northeast of the existing station embankment. In the 1920s the first public school and post office in Berala were established, and Berala station was rebuilt in its present location on the then Lidcombe to Cabramatta line³. The most significant development in Berala occurred from the interwar period onwards, and particularly during the 1940s-1970s. The late 1960s saw the construction of 3 and 4 storey walk-up flats, followed by town houses and more recent housing dating from the 1980s onwards.

A similar study of Regents Park Village centre is being simultaneously prepared by Council.

Berala

- located in central western Sydney approximately 16 km west of the Sydney CBD.
- surrounding suburbs include Lidcombe to the north, Rookwood to the east, Regents Park and to the south, and Auburn and to the west.

³ *Berala, Place of the Musk Duck* Edmund Perrin, Local History Librarian

Regional Context

The *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036* sets the NSW Government's overall direction and targets for metropolitan Sydney for the next 20 years. Of the nine key strategic directions outlined in this plan, the following two directions are most relevant to this study:

- Growing and Renewing Centres (strategic direction B): this direction seeks to concentrate activity, including shops, services and housing, in centres which are well served by public transport.
- Housing Sydney's Population (strategic direction D): this direction seeks to achieve a mix of housing types which suits a range of lifestyle and lifecycle needs, particularly within the walking catchment of centres of all sizes. It also seeks to improve the quality of new housing, including infill development.

The *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036* also outlines a hierarchy of centres which provides a common framework for understanding centres and defining their functions and roles (Figure 2). Berala is identified as a village within this hierarchy. Villages are defined as the area within a 400-600m radius from a centre (typically a station, main street, or commercial area) which equates to a 5-15 minute walk to the shops. The key differences between centre types are the amount and type of employment and retail services⁴. Villages typically consist of a group of shops and services for daily shopping such as a supermarket, hairdresser and a take-away food shop.

By comparison, Auburn and Lidcombe are identified as town centres within this centres' hierarchy. Olympic Park-Rhodes is classed as a specialised centre and Parramatta is a regional city.

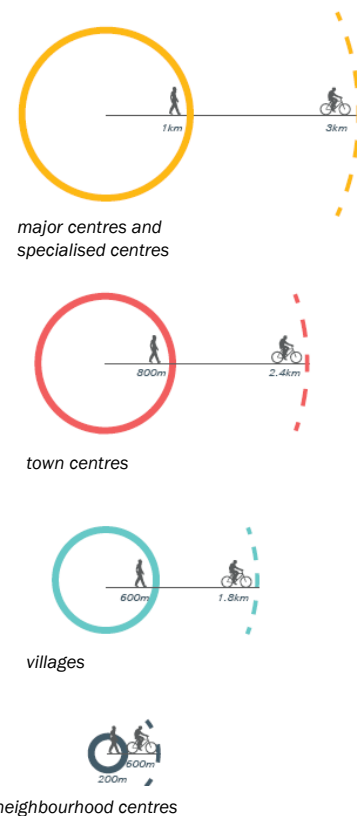


Figure 2: Walking and cycling catchment size for each centre type as outlined in centres' hierarchy in the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 (Source: *Centres Design Guidelines (DRAFT)*).

⁴ *Centres Design Guideline (draft) 2011*, Department of Planning

1.5 Previous Studies and Consultation

The key findings of previous studies and consultation undertaken of Berala and with Berala residents are summarised below. Although some studies were conducted some time ago, many of the issues raised remain relevant to this study. These findings from previous studies are analysed in Part 4 of this study, together with the findings from the research, fieldwork and community engagement undertaken as part of this study. Part 4 of this study also makes recommendations as to how these issues can be addressed.

Community Priorities Survey 2010 and 2012

The Communities Priorities Survey was a professional telephone survey of 1,000 randomly selected residents across Auburn City. It was conducted in July 2010 by a specialist consultant, Micromex Research, on behalf of Council. The survey sought to measure community satisfaction with Council's service delivery in a broad range of areas. The survey was also undertaken in 2012, also with a random sample of 1,000 respondents.

The survey participants provided a statistically valid cross section of the Auburn Community. As the suburb of Berala represents approximately 15% of Auburn City's population, the number of Berala residents randomly selected to participate in the survey (145) comprised 15% of the total survey participants.

In both 2010 and 2012, Berala survey participants were less satisfied with Council's childcare services (significantly lower level of satisfaction than respondents from other suburbs), aged care, youth programs and activities. They were most satisfied with Botanic Gardens, Council libraries, festivals, events and facilities, and availability and maintenance of sports grounds.

When asked a series of questions about their neighbourhood and Auburn City, Berala participants indicated they felt part of their neighbourhood. Figure 3 (opposite) provides a summary of the key factors influencing community satisfaction across Auburn City as a whole, and a summary of the most important services identified by Berala survey participants.

In 2012, Berala survey respondents also indicated a greater level of satisfaction with the suitability of local shops, reflecting the recent Woolworths development.

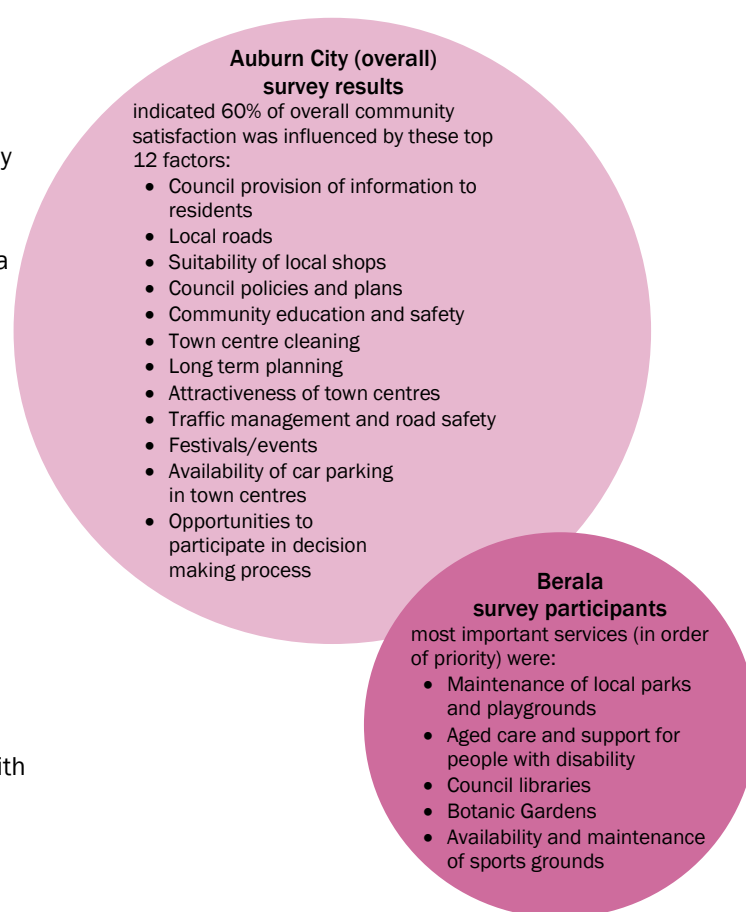


Figure 3: Community Priorities Survey 2010 and 2012: key influences of community satisfaction; and important services for Berala

Community Strategic Plan

A series of community forums were held in 2009-2010 during the preparation of the Auburn City Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Council's 10 year strategic plan. The purpose of these forums was to engage with people in the community about what they saw as important for the future of their suburb and Auburn City as a whole. These community aspirations were used to shape the broad outcomes in the CSP. During this process, participants were also asked to identify key social, economic, environmental and civic issues affecting their suburb and Auburn City. The issues identified at the Berala forum are summarised in Figure 4 below.

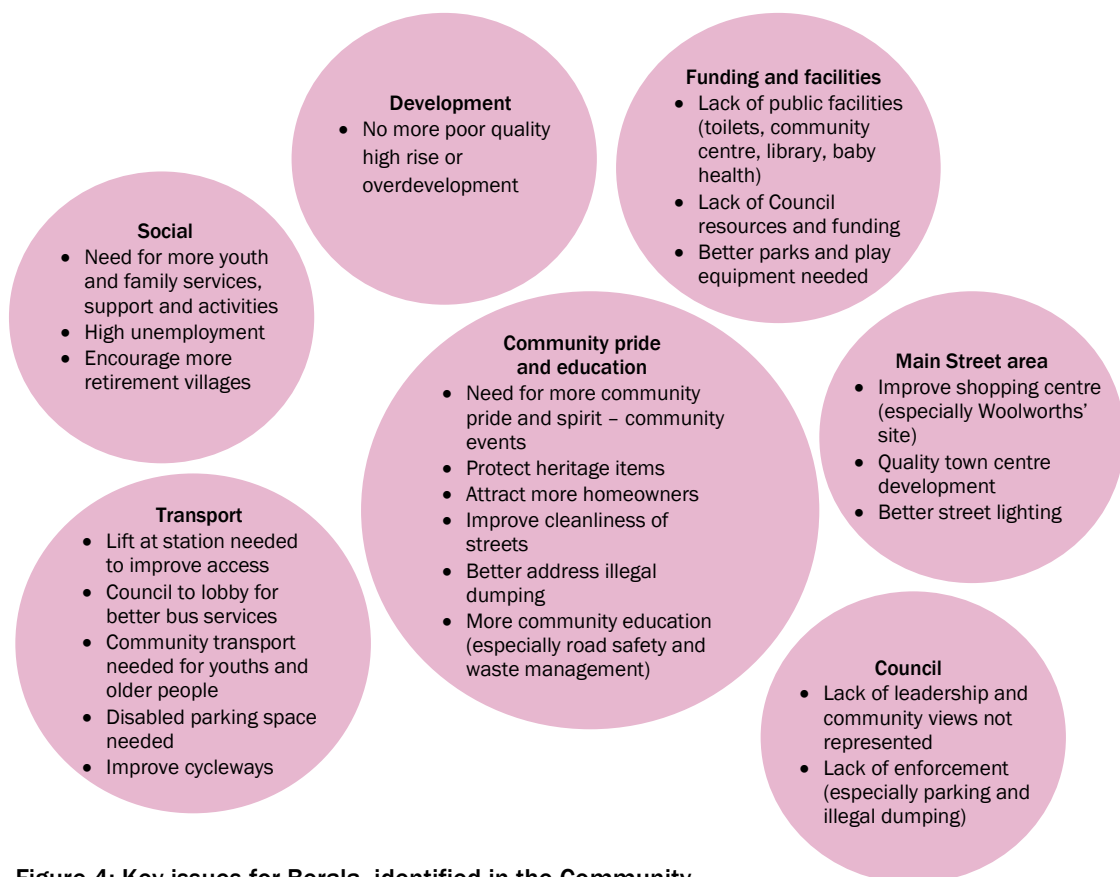
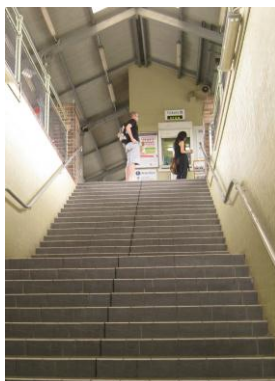


Figure 4: Key issues for Berala, identified in the Community Strategic Plan Community Forums during 2010



People for a Better Berala 2003

In December 2003, a subcommittee of the local resident action group, *People for a Better Berala*, undertook a small survey of 110 respondents (including committee members). The survey questionnaire asked participants about their vision for Berala generally, and for Berala's main shopping street. It also asked about preferred building heights, and what public services and facilities are needed in Berala. A summary of the results is provided in the adjacent Figure 5.

Note: Council had no role in the preparation of survey content, survey administration or analysis of this survey.

Berala Community Safety Audit 2001

In October 2001, a community safety audit of the Berala main street area was undertaken by the Auburn Community Safety Committee (Auburn City Council and Flemington Local Area Command). The findings of this audit and implications for this study are detailed in Section 2.11 of this study.

Vision: a peaceful, residential village atmosphere.

Maximum building heights of 2-3 storeys were generally preferred by participants.

Priorities in terms of services/improvements included:

- Banks
- Cleaner streets
- Disabled access at Berala Station
- Better security
- More street lights
- Public toilets
- More parks and reserves
- More garbage bins
- More seats/street furniture
- A library and community centre
- A mother/children's facility
- Community gardens
- Youth facilities
- More bike tracks

Figure 5: People for a Better Berala Resident Action Group Survey 2003 - Outcomes

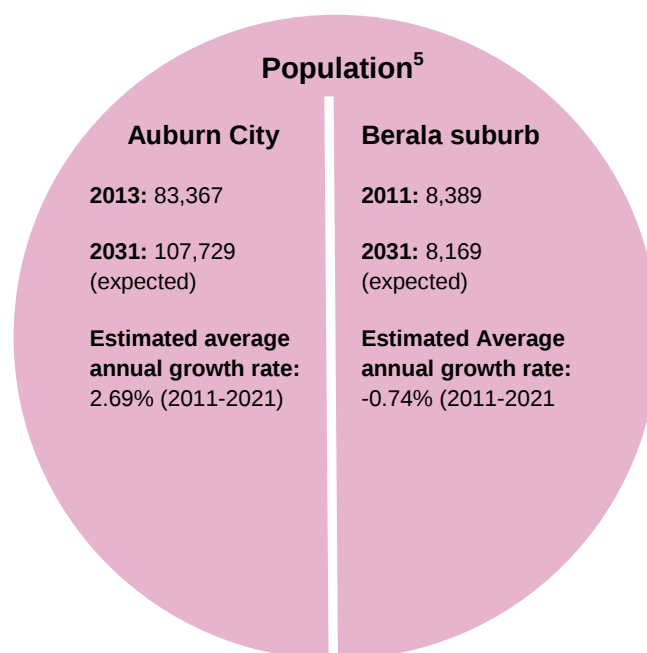


2. BERALA TODAY

2.1 Key Demographic Characteristics ⁵

This section analyses key data from the 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census, comparing the suburb of Berala to Auburn City⁶ as a whole. Population forecasts prepared by *forecast id* have been used as an indication of the likely change in the population of Berala that can be expected over the next 10-15 years.

- **Population** – At the 2011 Census, Berala had 8,389 residents. Berala's population is forecast to be approximately 8,170 by 2021. Berala has a slower anticipated annual growth rate compared to Auburn City, which is anticipated to grow by 2.69% annually between 2011 - 2021.
- **Age structure** - Census data from 2011 indicate Berala has a higher proportion of people in the 70-84 year age group (6%) and a smaller portion of people in the over 25-34 age group (17%) than Auburn City, where the 70-84 and 25-34 age groups comprise 4.8% and 20.5% respectively. Otherwise, the population age structure of Berala and Auburn City are very similar.
- **Household structure** - The predominant household structure in Berala is couples with children (43%), followed by couples without children (18%). This is slightly higher than Auburn City where couples with children comprise 40%, and couples without children comprise 20%. *Forecast.id* indicates there is likely to be an increase in single person households in Berala by 2031.
- **House ownership** - 2011 Census data indicated there are similar percentages of renters (36%) and home owners (31%) in Berala. A further 26% were purchasing their own house. By contrast, Auburn City had a lower proportion of home owners (24%). The percentage purchasing a property (31%) and renting (37%) was slightly higher than Berala.
- **Dwelling type** - 2011 Census data indicated that 54% of people in Berala lived in detached houses, 36% lived in medium density dwellings, and 9.8% lived in high density dwellings. Auburn City had a lower percentage of people living in detached houses (49%) and in medium density dwellings (23%), and a higher percentage of people living in high density housing (28%). The biggest change in type of dwelling between 2006 and 2011 was in medium density housing, significantly increasing from 16% to 36% in Berala.



⁵ All current figures are from the 2011 ABS Census. All forecast figures (i.e. 2021) are from the Auburn City Community Profile profile.id prepared by *forecast id*.

⁶ Auburn City means all suburbs within the Auburn Local Government Area

Origin and Language

Auburn City
(2011)

Country of origin

China 11.3%
Vietnam 4.5%
South Korea 4.2%

Total overseas born 57%

Language spoken at home

Arabic 10.7%
Cantonese 9.9%
Mandarin 9.2%
Turkish 6.7%

Berala suburb
(2011)

Country of origin

China 13%
Vietnam 9%
Phillipines 2.4%

Total overseas born 55.3%

Language spoken at home

Cantonese 16.7%
Mandarin 10.5%
Arabic 8.6%
Vietnamese 4.4%

Households

Auburn City

Number of households

2011 24,575
2021 32,808



Average household size

2011 3.09 people
2021 2.84 people



Number of dwellings

2011 24,631
2021 37,487



Berala suburb

Number of households

2011 2,710
2021 2,946



Average household size

2011 3.11 people
2021 2.86 people



Number of dwellings

2011 2,861
2021 3,011



Age structure

Auburn City

2011 age group with most people: 35-49 yrs

2021 age group with most people: 35-49 yrs

2021 population under 17 yrs: expected  by 20% (3,550)

2021 population over 60 yrs: expected  by 36%(3,526)

Berala suburb

2011 age group with most people: 35-49 yrs

2021 age group with most people: 35-49 yrs

2021 population under 17 yrs: expected  by 10.8% (-235)

2021 population over 60 years: expected  by 18% (245)

Household type

Auburn City

2011 most common household type: couple families with dependents (40%)

2021 largest  expected: single person households, comprising 19% of all households (14% in 2011)

Berala suburb

2011 most common household type: couple families with dependents (43%)

2021 largest  expected: single person households, comprising 18% of all households (15.5% in 2011)

Source: All current figures are from the 2011 ABS Census. All forecast figures are from the Auburn City Community Profile profile.id prepared by forecast id.

2.2 Physical Environment

Topography

Berala is approximately 24m above sea level. The topography of the Berala study area is predominantly flat and low lying.

Flooding

Figure 6 shows the flood affected area within the Berala study area. *Auburn LEP 2010* requires that all development proposals within the flood planning areas must satisfy Council that they do not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity and character of the area.

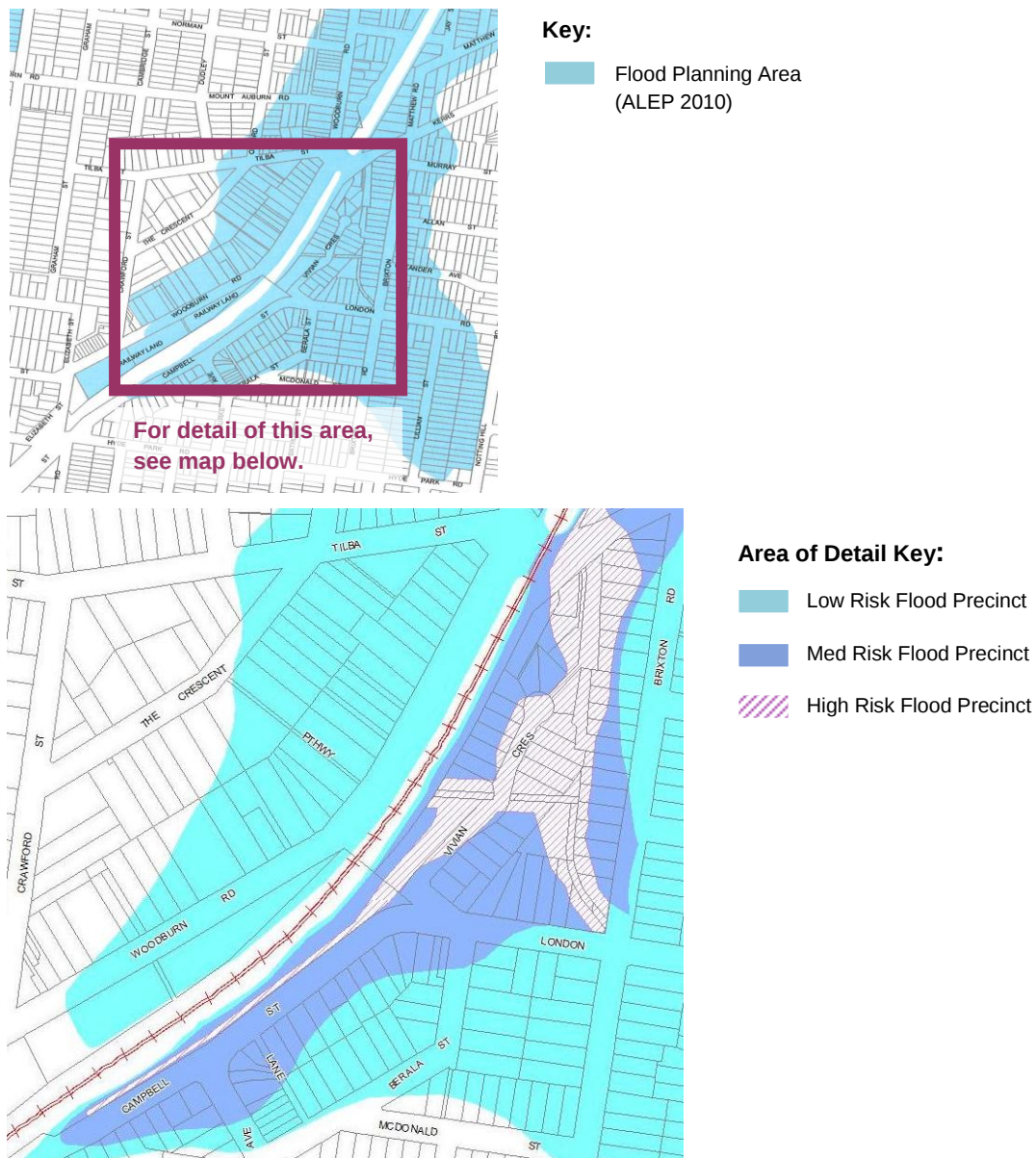


Figure 6: Flood Prone land within the study area

Landscape features and Views

Street trees are planted along most of the streets within the Berala study area. Figure 7 shows Berala's existing tree canopy, and identifies the location of some of the more notable trees within the study area. It also identifies areas lacking trees and greenery.

The trees within the study area of varied size and types/species, with the tallest being approximately 9m high. The trees framing Lidbury Street (identified as an environmental heritage item under ALEP 2010) create a particularly impressive vista. The wide, straight residential streets and the relatively flat topography, results in relatively uniform vistas along the remainder of the study area's streets.

Council has prepared and exhibited a *Draft Auburn City Council Tree Policy and Framework Plan* (December 2011). This policy framework seeks to promote sound and consistent tree management across Auburn City, retain trees of value and set the direction for Auburn City's future tree population and planting. This policy will assist the implementation of Council's forthcoming *Tree Strategy and Street Tree Masterplan* in 2012.



Figure 7: Aerial Photo (2011) showing existing tree canopy in the Berala study area

Acid sulphate soils

The entire Berala study area is affected by Class 5 Acid Sulphate soils under ALEP 2010 (Figure 8). Acid sulphate soils (ASS) generally occur in flat and low lying locations.

Class 5 acid sulphate soils a low impact category of acid sulphate soil. This category of acid sulphate soil is not considered to be a significant development constraint. In addition, no land within the study area is within 500 metres of a Class 1, 2, 3 or 4 acid sulphate soil (which can present development constraints).

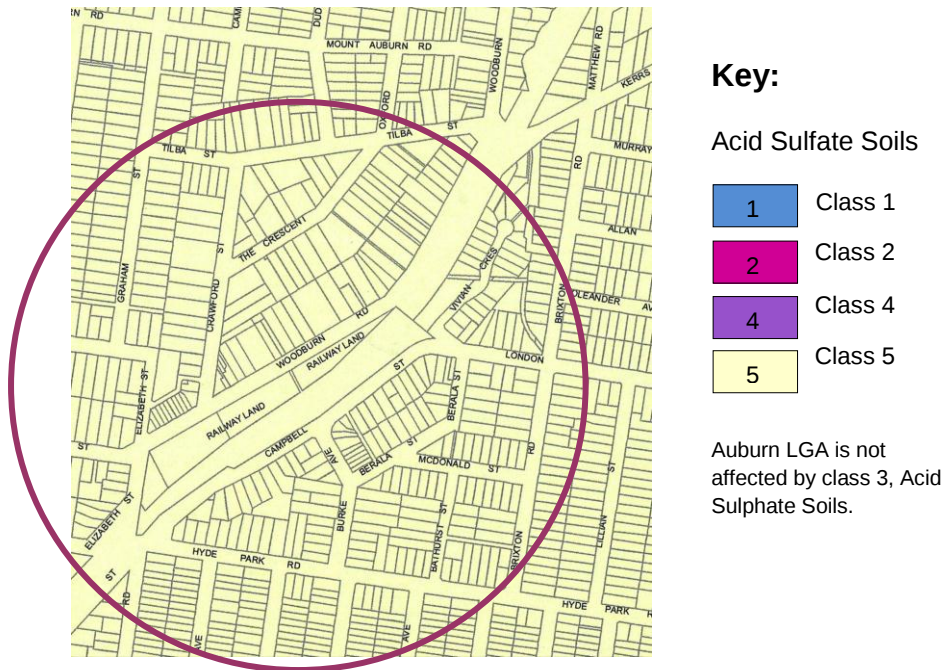


Figure 8: Acid Sulphate soil within the study area

a. Residential area (core and surrounds)

2.3 Existing Planning Controls - Residential

The key planning controls applying to the Berala village study area are contained in Auburn *Local Environmental Plan 2010 (ALEP 2010)* and Auburn Development Control Plan 2010 (ADCP 2010). Planning controls contained in State policies (such as State Environmental Planning Policies) may also apply to different types of development within the study area.

The key provisions from *ALEP 2010* are summarised in this section. *All prospective applicants should refer directly to ALEP 2010 for the detailed development controls in full.*

Zoning

Figure 9 shows the zoning of the study area under ALEP 2010. The area immediately north of the main street is zoned R4 High Density Residential. Land zone R3 Medium Density is located to the north, south and west of the R4 and main street areas, with land zoned R2 Low Density Residential beyond. The broad types of development permitted within these zones are outlined in Figure 10 below. The railway line and Berala Station are zoned SP2 Infrastructure (Berala Railway Lands). Open space such as parks and playgrounds is zoned RE1 Public Recreation. (Refer to Section 2.7 for details about the main street area).

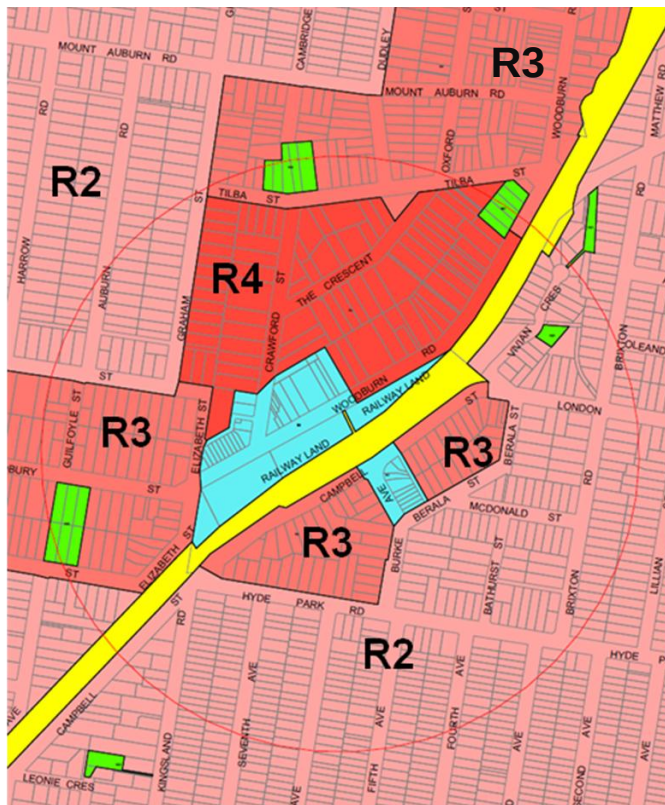


Figure 9: Study Area Zoning

(source: ALEP 2010)

KEY

R2 Low Density Residential	B2 Local Centre
R3 Medium Density Residential	RE1 Public Recreation
R4 High Density Residential	SP2 Infrastructure (Berala Railway Lands)

Residential zones - broad types of development

R2 Low Density Residential zone

- Detached single dwellings (2 storeys)
- Dual occupancy dwellings – attached or detached (2 storeys)
- Secondary dwellings (ie. granny flats) (2 storeys)

R3 Medium Density Residential zone

- Detached single dwellings (2 storeys)
- Dual occupancy dwellings – attached or detached (2 storeys)
- Secondary dwellings (ie. granny flats) (2 storeys)
- Villas / townhouses (2 storeys)

R4 High Density Residential zone

- Villas / townhouses (tends to be 2 storeys but are allowed 4 storeys)
- Residential flat buildings (4 storeys)

Maximum Building Heights

The maximum height of buildings in the R4 High Density Residential zone is 18 metres (*20 metres on corner sites – refer to Council's website for details about corner sites – Planning Proposals FSR PP-3/2010). In the B2 Local Centre zone the maximum building height is 14 metres. The rest of the study area has a maximum building height of 9 metres, (refer to Figure 10).



Figure 10: Maximum building heights within the study area (refer to ALEP 2010 for detailed development controls)

Floor Space Ratio

As shown in Figure 11, the floor space ratio (FSR) within the study area is as follows:

- R4 High Density Residential Zone: 1.7:1 (*and 2:1 on corner sites (refer to Council's website: Planning Proposals FSR PP-3/2010 for details about corner sites);
- R3 Medium Density Residential Zone: 0.75:1; and
- R2 (Low Density Residential): no floor space ratio control (refer to figure 9 for location of R2 zoned land).
- B2 Local Centre zone: 2:1 (refer to Section 2.7 for details).

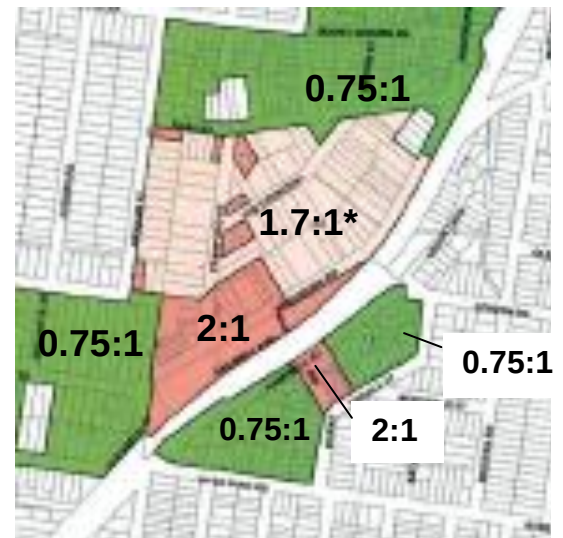


Figure 11: Maximum floor space ratio (FSR) within the study area (refer to ALEP 2010 for complete and detailed development controls)

Lot size and site coverage

ALEP 2010 specifies minimum lot sizes for residential subdivision and development. This is to ensure that individual lots are of adequate size to accommodate residential development which is consistent with relevant development controls including setback, landscaping, overshadowing and privacy. The minimum lot size for subdivision of R2 zoned land is 450m².

Auburn DCP 2010 contains requirements for dual occupancy lot sizes. A minimum lot size of 450m² and a minimum lot width of 15m are required for an attached dual occupancy. A minimum lot size of 600m² and a minimum site width of 15m are required for detached dual occupancies.

ADCP also contains requirements for maximum site coverage (ranging from 65-75%), and minimum deep soil zone area (30%).

2.4 Land Use and Subdivision Pattern

Land Use

The Berala study area consists of predominantly detached dwelling development. There is a small area characterised by older 1940s-1970s two and three storey residential flat buildings, located between Woodburn Road and Tilba Street, immediately north of the Station. There are a few small parks zoned (RE1 Public Recreation) within the study area. Berala Public School has one of the highest primary school student populations in NSW).

Subdivision Pattern

The Berala study area is subdivided into a grid-like pattern with some irregular shaped blocks at the centre of the study area, in response to the alignment of the railway line. The lot sizes in the north of the study area are slightly larger than the lot sizes in the south of the study area. Figure 12 (opposite) shows the strata subdivision pattern within the study area. The majority of strata subdivided lots are occupied by residential flat buildings.

The railway line runs diagonally through the study area. The subdivision pattern provides relatively direct access from each block to the main street area. Strata subdivided lots are interspersed with non-strata subdivided lots within the study area. The NSW Department of Housing owns a small number of lots within the study area.



Figure 12: Strata Subdivision within the Study Area
(source: Dwelling target Analysis, 20 October 2009)

2.5 Built Form and Character

Building type, age and condition all have a significant influence on the *existing* character of an area. Planning controls, subdivision and land ownership patterns, and lot size can all influence the *future* character of an area. The significance of these attributes is outlined in Table 1 below.

Attribute	Importance
a. building type	influences the look and feel of a streetscape. It gives an indication of the mix of housing types and the housing choice available within an area.
b. building age	- building age (together with property market forces, and other attributes of an area) can be a key influence in how likely an area or lot is to undergo redevelopment or revitalisation. In this study, buildings were classified according to 4 broad periods of development: - pre 1940s - 1940s-1970s - 1980s-2000 - Post 2000
c. building condition	influences streetscape character. It can also influence how likely a lot or area is to undergo redevelopment.
d. description of each block	provides an understanding of the village's existing built form (including building age and condition), character, and landscaping
e. existing LEP controls including Height, FSR, Heritage, flooding and acid sulphate soils	outlines existing development controls and other factors which may influence or constrain future changes to the area
f. lot size and average site coverage	gives an indication of amount of private open space, existing density, and subdivision pattern
g. existing strata subdivision pattern and other land ownership	can indicate possible constraints and/or opportunities for future development within an area

Table 1: Factors influencing existing and future character of an area

Building type, age, and condition (a., b. and c. in the table above) were each mapped separately (refer to Figures 13-15 on the following pages). Attributes d. - g. in the table above were summarised in an analysis of each block. This analysis has been used throughout the preparation of this study.

Built form and character within the study area

The Berala village study area is predominantly residential with a small, traditional main street area. The Berala study area, together with areas such as Auburn, Canterbury, Bankstown, and Fairfield, forms part of Sydney's "fibro belt"⁷. These areas were developed between 1940-1970, in the first major post-war, low density wave of development which occurred in Sydney. These areas are often characterised by single family dwellings, some of which is nearing the end of its life cycle⁸.

Figures 14-16 on the following pages provide an indicative illustration of the building type/height, and approximate age and condition within the study area. Together these characteristics form a picture of the built form and character within the study area.

North of the railway line

The area north of the railway line has mix of residential flat buildings, town houses. The residential flat buildings are a mix of two and three storeys with basement parking, and two storeys with ground floor parking. The flat buildings were predominantly built during the 1950s and 1960s, with a few examples from the 1980s. The condition of these flat buildings varies from poor to excellent, with a number of older flat buildings considered to be in medium condition.

The detached housing north of the railway line is a mix of 1-2 storeys. This housing dates predominantly from the 1940s-1970s era, with examples of newer housing (circa 1980s and post 2000s) interspersed amongst the older housing. Older houses are typically made of fibro and weatherboard materials, and the newer houses are typically made of brick. As with the flat buildings, the condition of the detached housing in this area varies from poor to excellent.

South of the railway line

Development on the southern side of the railway line is completely residential, with the exception of a small block of shops along Burke Avenue. The residential land is zoned R2 - Low Density Development or R3 - Medium Density Development. Housing is predominantly single detached dwellings, with a small number of townhouses/villas and 2-3 storey units. Similar to the northern side of the railway line, the houses date predominantly from the 1940s-1970s, with newer development (circa 1980s and post 2000s) interspersed the older houses. Likewise, the housing stock condition ranges from poor to excellent condition. Condition does not always correlate with age and there are examples of older houses which have been renovated and are in good or excellent condition.

⁷ Randolph, B

⁸ *ibid*

Figure 13: Berala—Building Type and Height



Figure 14: Berala—Building Age



Figure 15: Berala—Building Condition



2.6 Heritage

The items of local heritage significance within the Berala study area identified below:

- The Brush Box street trees along Lidbury Street: planted in 1920s during the interwar period, have local social and aesthetic heritage significance. They are the defining element in this streetscape.
- Berala Railway Station is an item of State archaeological significance. It was opened in 1912 and is typical of many suburban stations of that era.
- Berala Public School heritage significance is derived from its buildings, which are an excellent example of late Federation suburban school architecture. It is an item of local significance.
- Grey Box Reserve Auburn is significant as a continuing seed source of the original indigenous vegetation of the area and recognition by the local community in the establishment of "Grey Box Reserve". This reserve lies just beyond the study area boundary and is of local significance.

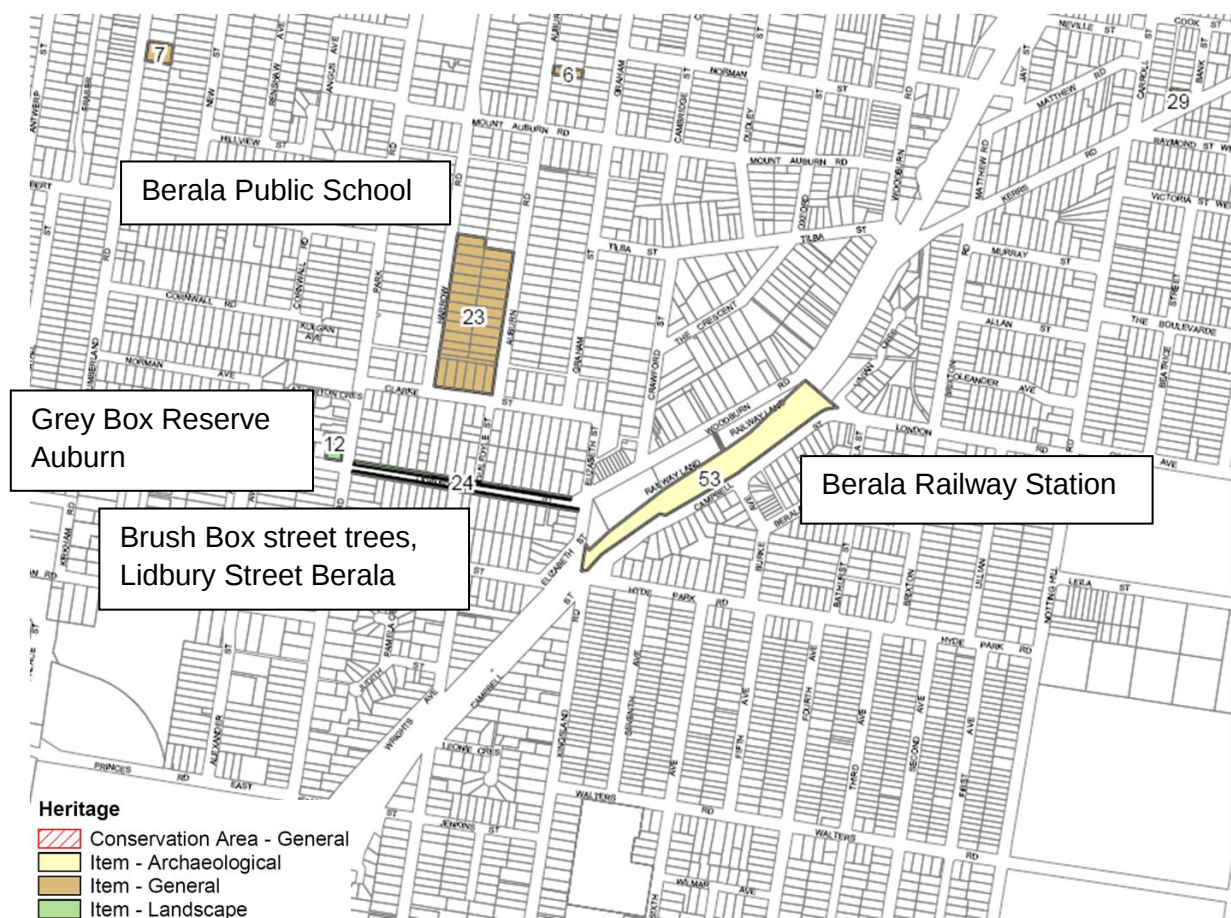


Figure 16: Heritage Items

b. Main Street Area

This section describes the existing situation in Berala's main street area. It includes key existing planning controls, access and movement, retail mix, public domain, and safety. This section also details the methodology used to collect data on each of these aspects.

Main Street Area Analysis

Our local centres and their main streets are some of our most familiar places, where many of our daily activities take place. The attractiveness, cleanliness and accessibility of local centres, together with the mix of shops has a significant influence on how often people visit them. The key attributes identified and observed in Berala's main street area, and their relevance to this study is outlined in Table 2 below.

Attribute	Importance
h. access and movement	study of accessibility issues is relevant for future public domain upgrade, as well as giving an indication of how well connected the village centre is to other centres
i. existing retail mix	in addition to the range of existing shops, this illustrates whether any types are missing. A good mix of local shops and services is a key factor for well patronised main streets.
j. footpath conditions and general ease and convenience of pedestrian movement	will guide future public domain upgrade
k. existing street furniture location	can indicate possible constraints and/or opportunities for future development within an area
l. locations with higher pedestrian activity within the main street area	this can guide planning for future public domain upgrades

Table 2: Key Attributes within Berala's Main Street Area

2.7 Main Street: Existing Planning Controls and Built Form

Berala's main street area is zoned B2 Local Centre. The railway line and station are zoned SP2 Infrastructure (Berala Railway Lands) under *ALEP 2010*. The B2 – Local Centre zone allows a range of retail, business, entertainment, and community uses that serve local needs (refer to *ALEP 2010* for full details).

The maximum permissible building height within Berala's main street area (B2) is currently 14 metres. Berala's main street area currently has a maximum floor space ratio (FSR) of 1.4:1.

Berala's main street is a small traditional main street with 1, 2 and 3 storey developments, and some shop top housing. Land uses within the main street area (including Burke Avenue on the southern side of the railway line) include a mix of retail and personal services such as hair salons, medical services, butcher, bread shop, and a supermarket.

2.8 Access and Movement

This section includes existing public transport, pedestrian circulation and access, parking and traffic within the study area.

Public transport

Train

Berala Station, situated between Woodburn Road (northern side) and Campbell Street (southern side), is located on the Bankstown and Inner West lines. Berala Railway Station is a local heritage listed item in the *Auburn LEP 2010*. Berala Station is approximately 18km from Central Station.

Trains on the Bankstown line run approximately every 20-30 minutes throughout the week. Trains on the inner west line (Macarthur-Museum) generally run every 30 minutes.

Bus

The Berala study area is served by bus route 908 through Veolia Transport (refer to Figure 17 below). This route runs through Bankstown, Sefton, Regents Park, Berala, Auburn, South Granville and Merrylands. The bus service in the Berala area during the peak times (6.30 am to 9.00 am) from Monday to Friday runs almost every half hour, and then the service is run once an hour from 9.00 am to 6.30 pm. On Saturdays, the bus service is provided every hour from 8.14 am to 5.14 pm. There is no bus service in Berala on Sundays.



Route 908

Monday to Friday

Service during the peak times (6.30am to 9.00am) is almost every half hour, and then once an hour from 9.00am to 6.30pm.

Saturday

An hourly service from 8.14 am to 5.14 pm.

Sunday

No service.

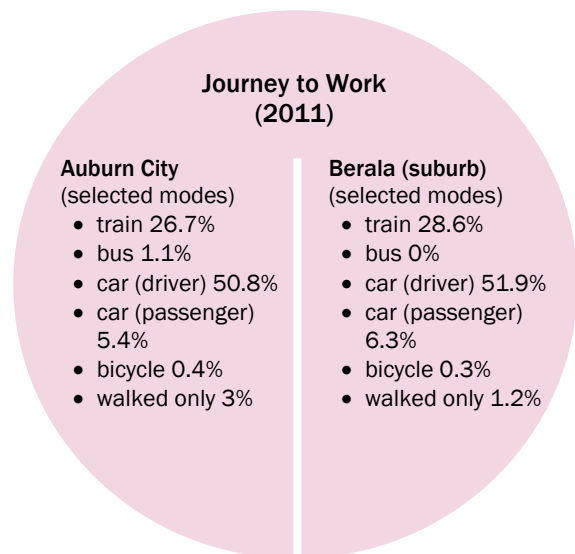
Figure 17: Existing Public transport routes through Berala

Journey to Work

At the 2011 census approximately 50% of people in the suburb of Berala drove to work. This was by far the most common way of travelling to work, and reflected the percentage for Auburn City as a whole (also 50%). Train was the second most common method of travelling to work, with Berala and Auburn City having approximately 29% and 27% of people travel to work by train respectively.

Bus travel to work was very low in both Berala and Auburn City as a whole.

A small percentage of people in Berala (1.2%) walked to work; with Auburn City have a slightly higher percentage (3%). Cycling to work was very low in both Berala and Auburn City as a whole.



Pedestrian Circulation

Berala's street layout provides relatively direct pedestrian connections between the main street and its surrounds. The pedestrian underpass at the station provides an important link between the northern and southern sides of Berala.

The block bound by Crawford Street, The Crescent, Tilba Street and Woodburn Road is a large, irregular shaped block, with a mid-block pedestrian path. This pedestrian link is particularly important as it links The Crescent with the shops and station at Woodburn Road. However, this pedestrian pathway is in relatively poor condition, with an uneven surface and poor lighting.

Observations during the preparation of this study have identified that the key places where pedestrians currently tend to cluster are at both ends of the train station pedestrian tunnel, and in front of the newsagencies. It is anticipated that the opening of the Woolworths supermarket will generate more pedestrian traffic within Berala's main street area.

Parking

Within Berala's main street area there is a mix of ½ hr and 1 hr parking on both sides along Burke Avenue, along Crawford Street and Woodburn Road. The recent Woolworth development includes over two levels of basement car parking with approximately 360 parking spaces.

There is currently no commuter parking provided at or near Berala station. On the southern side of the Berala village study area, Commuters Park along Campbell Street and Berala Street, which have no timed parking restrictions. Along Woodburn Road, the section of the road where the parking limitations do not apply is used by commuters to park their vehicles for the day.

Vehicular Movement

Berala village study area has mostly local residential roads. Woodburn Road is the major road that passes through the village centre. There is no traffic count data available at Council to indicate the average daily traffic, speed of vehicles and number or percentage of trucks using this road. Observations undertaken as part of this study and advice from Council's Engineering section have not identified any major traffic issues within the study area. Occasional passing of heavy vehicles through Woodburn Road have been noted. A

parking survey was undertaken by Council in July 2009, before and after the closure of the commuter car park along Woodburn Road. No major parking related issues were or identified as part of this survey.

2.9 Retail Mix

Berala's main street area includes butcher shops, fruit shops, grocery shops, hairdressers, pharmacies, a small post office and newsagency, and a supermarket. There are currently no banks in Berala. Figure 18 below illustrates the retail mix of Berala's main street area.

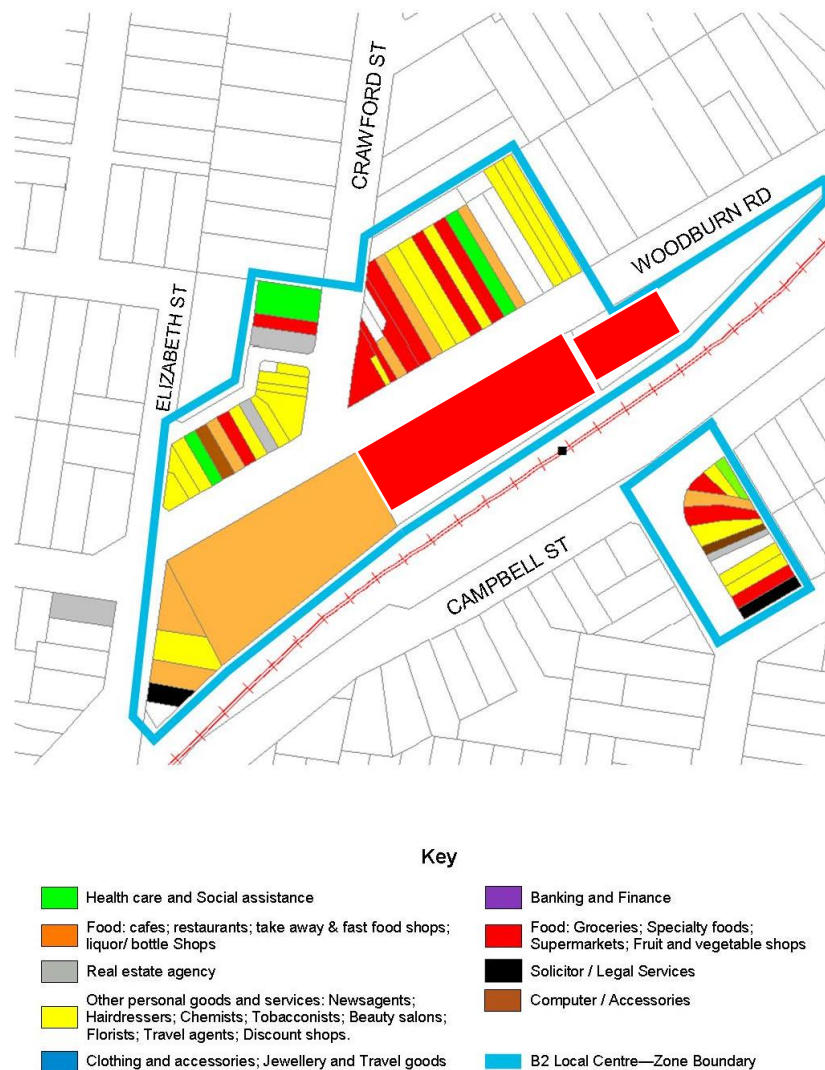


Figure 18: Existing Retail Mix

2.10 Public Domain

The public domain encompasses all the publicly owned spaces including streets, parks, reserves, footpaths, plazas and squares, and pedestrian underpasses. It can be thought of as the shared public spaces between buildings. The public domain is also considered to include privately owned spaces which are publically accessible, such as arcades, building forecourts and station platforms. In addition the quality and presentation of a main street's shopfronts or facades (albeit privately owned) has a significant influence on the public domain. A high quality public domain contributes to a strong sense of place and is important for community wellbeing, pride and safety. It also contributes to a centre's economic wellbeing, and can influence investment within a centre.

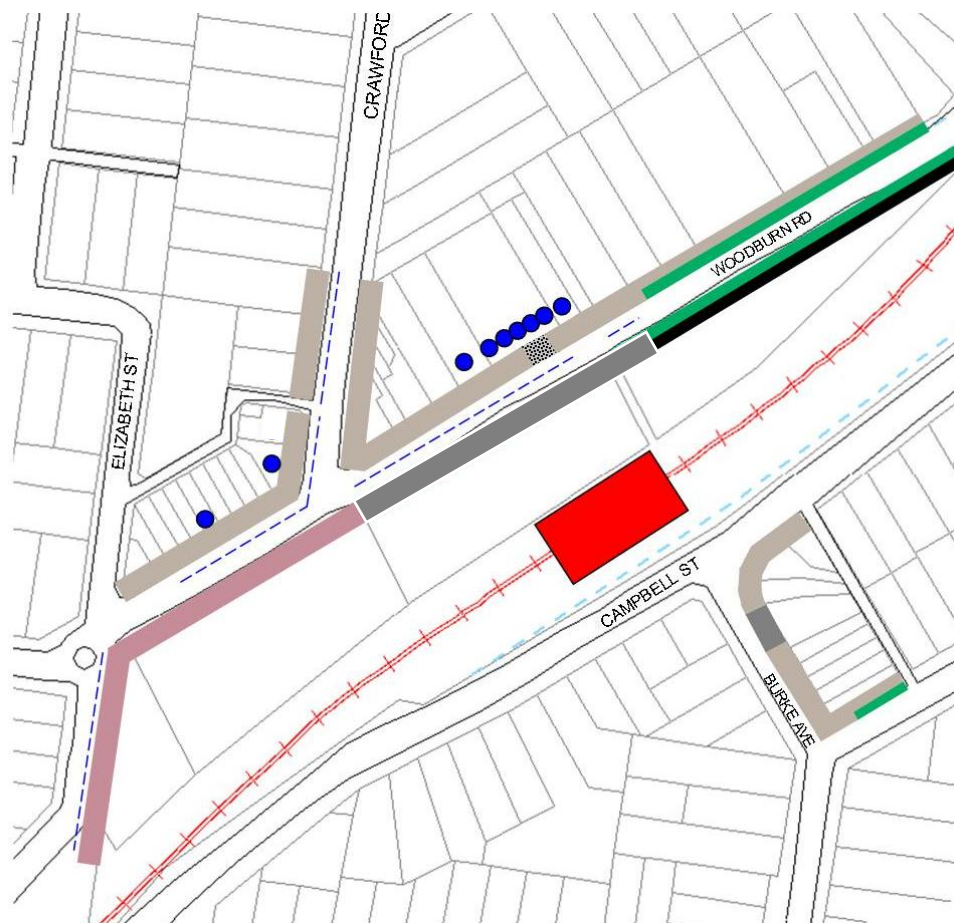
The public domain of Berala's main street area consists mainly of footpaths, with the railway underpass forming a key public pedestrian link between the northern and southern sides of the village. Berala's main street area is generally in need of revitalisation. In particular, footpath surfaces, landscaping, seating, and signage are showing signs of wear and tear. The existing street lighting is also in need of upgrading, and the village centre does not have a public toilet. Notwithstanding this, the main street area does have a positive attributes including a subdivision pattern which presents a streetscape of many small shopfronts. This type of streetscape is conducive to pedestrian activity, and together with public domain improvements, can contribute significantly to a revitalised centre with a village character.

Footpaths and Access

Footpath condition and ease of access to individual shops both have a significant impact on the safety and mobility of many groups within a community, and particularly older people, people with mobility issues, and people with prams and/or young children. These issues are discussed below.

Footpath condition and surface material varies throughout Berala's main street area, as shown in Figure 19 (over page). Footpath material throughout the remainder of the main street area includes a mix of concrete, red brick paving, and grey pavers (Figure 19 over page).

As illustrated in Figure 19, disabled access to shops also varies throughout Berala's main street area. Approximately 37 out of 49 shop fronts not having at-grade or ramped access (approximately 75% of shops).



Key

	Red brick paving (medium-good condition)		Concrete—full width (poor condition)
	Red brick paving (poor condition)		Concrete with grass verge
	Grey pavers (current town centre infrastructure manual specification)		Asphalt
	Concrete—full width (medium-good condition)		
	Shopfront awning		



Red Brick Paving - medium-good condition



Concrete - poor condition

Figure 19: Footpaths and Access

Facades

Building facades (shopfronts) are a critically important part of the street environment. They are the public face of privately owned buildings, and have a substantial influence on the character of the street. In a main street area, it is desirable to have 'active' building frontages at ground floor level. Active frontages are rich in detail, transparent, and interesting to look at and into⁹. Activities occurring on the street and those inside the buildings enrich the character of the street, and add to safety and surveillance. In the evening, well lit facades with a high level of transparency contribute to both a feeling of security as well as genuine safety¹⁰.

By contrast, blank walls or facades which are predominantly or completely obscured by posters, shutters, and blinds or similar on a permanent basis create an unfriendly and uninviting environment for pedestrians. In addition, by obscuring sightlines between the street and shop interiors, inactive or hostile facades create an environment conducive to anti social behaviour, and undermine the streetscape character of a centre.

To create a lively and people-friendly main street area, a substantial part of the building facades need to be open, transparent and welcoming. Active building facades together with the mix of activities in a centre can create a high quality streetscape and an attractive and thriving centre.

An analysis of the facades within Berala's main street area was undertaken as part of this study. The analysis assessed frontages as active, passive, or inactive, as outlined in Table 3 below.

Frontage type	Example
<i>Active Frontage</i> – predominantly glass, pedestrians can easily see into shop and people in shop can easily see footpath. Active frontages generally have a high ratio of doors to overall length of frontage. Shops with active frontages may also display goods out the front, but these will be displayed in a way so that there is still good visibility between the shop and the footpath. This photo is an example of an active façade in Auburn Town Centre. It has good sightlines to and from the street. The shopfront is pleasant to look at and into.	
<i>Passive frontage</i> – neither active nor inactive (eg sight lines between shop and footpath obscured by displayed goods – which could be improved by re-arranging the display). May also include longer shopfronts with one or few doors; shop fronts with some (minimal visibility from the footpath to inside).	
<i>Inactive frontage</i> – includes shops with small frontages and poor or no view from the footpath into the shop (eg mirrored glass, closed blinds, glass covered in advertising or bill posters,). Also includes long expanses of walls with no doors or windows. This photo is an example of a façade where sightlines to and from the street are almost completely obscured. The façade lacks detail and does not contribute to a pleasant pedestrian experience.	

Table 3: Active, Passive and Inactive Frontages

⁹ *Public Spaces and Public Life: City of Adelaide 2002*, Gehl Architects, July 2002

¹⁰ *ibid*

The site analysis of Berala's main street area identified approximately 33% of facades as active, 46% as passive, and the remaining 10% of facades were classified as inactive, or as having no facade (eg the petrol station)(Figure 20).

The passive facades are the shopfronts where relatively inexpensive and small-scale improvements (such as re-arranging window displays, removing and rationalising posters, opening blinds/changing window coverings or treatments (from solid to transparent or semi transparent) can bring about significant results. Initiatives such as education campaigns, preparation and distribution of "good shopfront presentation" guidelines, and even facade upgrade programs can assist in turning passive, and in some cases, inactive and hostile frontages into active facades.



Key

- Active Frontage
- Passive Frontage
- Inactive Frontage
- Hostile Frontage
- No Built facade (e.g. Petrol station)

Figure 20: Berala main street area facades

Community Safety Audit

A Community Safety Audit of Berala's main street area was undertaken by the Auburn Community Safety Committee (Auburn Council and Police from Flemington Local Area Command) (Figure 21) in October 2001. The audit identified a number of safety concerns and made recommendations to address these issues.

Visibility and sight lines was another safety concern. The audit team recommended that trees and shrubs obstructing lights or signs need to be trimmed regularly by Council and/or property owners. The audit also recommended that business owners be encouraged to keep their shop windows clear to allow unobstructed sight lines to/from their premises. Clearly visible house/business numbering was also noted as important by the audit team.

Graffiti was identified as a safety concern and the audit recommended that Council and/or building owners remove graffiti as soon as possible. The audit also identified a need for a collaborative response and ownership of these aspects (by Council, police, business owners and residents) is required to address these issues.



Figure 21: extent of Community Safety Audit 2001

- lighting is generally poor - needs to be substantially improved
- obscured shop windows – need to be kept clear to maintain good sightlines
- regular trimming of trees/shrubs – needed so lights and signs are not obscured
- prompt graffiti removal – by Council and/or building owners to discourage repeat graffiti
- lack of action - audit completed in 2001 - recommendations have not been addressed

2.12 Community Facilities

Community Centre

A development application has been approved for a community centre in Woodburn Road, with construction of this centre due to commence shortly.



Figure 22: Berala Community Centre

Parks: Jack and Jill Reserve, Tilba Street

Jack and Jill Reserve is within walking distance (approximately 400m) from the main street and station. The Park has a total area of 2917m². Council's Section 94 Plan has identified two lots, 37 and 39 Tilba Street (known as Lot Z DP 409484 and Lot Y DP 409484 respectively) for acquisition and for the purpose of expanding the park. The acquisition of these two properties would enable the park to be expanded by a further 1042m².



Figure 23: Jack and Jill Reserve

c. Economic Analysis

2.13 Economic Review of Planning Controls (Hill PDA)

In response to a resolution of Council in March 2013, specialist economic consultants, Hill PDA, were engaged by Council to undertake a further study of the Berala area. The purpose of this study was to provide economic advice about the suitability of the development controls applying to the Berala Village study area. Specifically, this study tested whether the existing planning controls that apply to Berala are sufficient, from a development feasibility perspective, to promote renewal and revitalisation within Berala.

In preparing this economic study, Hill PDA undertook market research on the scale and scope of demand for various uses within the study area. This research found:

- In recent years, demand for housing within Auburn City has been growing and spreading geographically from Lidcombe to Berala. This growth has led to a 12% increase in median house prices and a 6% increase in median apartment prices in Berala between June 2012 and June 2013.
- In terms of commercial uses, the food and other commercial uses in Berala have strengthened, as a result of the opening of a full line Woolworths supermarket and associated retail tenancies. The research also found that commercial uses in Berala are limited to local services such as real estate agencies, banks and medical centres (which typically seek to locate on the ground floor) and that there is limited to nil demand for commercial office space above ground floor level.

The Hill PDA economic analysis identified the following development opportunities and constraints within the Berala Study area:

Strengths and Opportunities	Weaknesses and Constraints
Some large sites with good redevelopment potential in the B2 Local Centre Zone i.e. hotel and car park sites	Flooding potential and associated cost implications to development
Growing market attraction to professionals and families	Current market economics
Good rail access to / from the Study Area	Limited development applications for redevelopment
Established village character and retail market	Tightly held retail properties limiting redevelopment opportunities
Limited acid sulphate soils (i.e. Class 5)	Strata titled units on edge of B2 Local Centre Zone i.e. within the R4 High Density Zone limiting redevelopment opportunities
Limited heritage constraints	Community concerns regarding poor quality development
Full line anchor supermarket acts as attractor	
Good level of public car parking in the Centre	

Table 4: Development opportunities and constraints within the Berala Study area

Source: Hill PDA 2013 Economic Review of Proposed Planning Controls for Berala Village (Appendix 4)

To test Council's existing development controls under ALEP 2010, two sites within Berala were selected: one currently zone B2 Local Centre, and one zoned R3 Medium Density Residential. The feasibility of redeveloping these sites under Council's controls was modelled using feasibility software (refer to Appendix 4 for details).

The testing found that both zones would need increased FSRs and heights to make redevelopment feasible in the current market, with an FSR of 3:1 and a height of approximately 17-18m required for the B2 zone, and the R3 zone translated to an R4 zone (with an FSR of 1.5:1 and a height of approximately 16m). However, the consultant study also noted that whilst the Berala community generally supported revitalisation, it did not necessarily support significant increases in built form density across the study area to achieve this outcome (refer to Part 3. Community Engagement).

In addition, the consultant study also commented on two key influencing factors:

- the significant cost of car parking, with the cost increasing with each level of underground parking required; and
- the small difference in land value between existing single storey houses and apartments in Berala in today's market. As a result of this, an increase in development density is often required to offset the additional cost of building apartments to provide sufficient incentives for development to occur (refer to Appendix 4).

The consultant study recommended 2 potential approaches and discussed the implications of each. In summary:

Option 1 Increase the existing controls – in line with the findings of the feasibility testing (details in Appendix 4). This would assist in encouraging development and would help to revitalise the centre.

Option 2 Retain the existing controls – this option would be a 'wait and see' approach and would have a less immediate effect than option 1. This option would be likely to see some redevelopment (ie on less constrained sites), however it would have less apparent revitalisation outcomes across the village centre.

Car parking – as a variation to Option 2, the study also indicated that Council could consider reviewing its requirements for on-site car parking within more accessible locations within the study area, recognising the benefits this could have in terms of development feasibility.