

Appendix C

Northwood Neighbourhood Centre Master Plan Design Principles and Block Study Options

Prepared by Jan McCredie, Urban Design

janmccredie urbandesign
email: urbanlady1@hotmail.com ph: 0439601400

NORTHWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE
Master Plan Design Principles and Block Study Options
Background Report

janmccredie urbandesign

email: urbanlady1@hotmail.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lane Cove Council's vision for Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is *"To create a high quality, vibrant and pleasant neighbourhood centre to serve local residents needs"*.

In order to achieve this Lane Cove Council are undertaking a master planning exercise of the Northwood Neighbourhood Centre and its environs.

This Master Plan Design Principles and Block Study Concept Options Report has been prepared for EG Property Group. A Planning Proposal for an amalgamated site at 4-16 Northwood Road, 274 and 274a Longueville Road, Northwood, located within the Northwood Neighbourhood Centre. The purpose of the work undertaken for this report is to examine the current Planning Proposal in the context of the Centre and test possible options for sites on the western side of Northwood Road that are also zoned for neighbourhood activities.

To provide a valid contextual setting for the Planning Proposal on the subject site, the work concentrates on the detailed exploration of appropriate urban forms on the two main developable precincts in the Centre. These are the sites on the east of Northwood Road (the Eastern Precinct) and the sites on the west of Northwood Road and east of Kenneth Street (the Western Precinct).

The report describes and analyses the Northwood Neighbourhood Centre in its local and regional context. This analysis provides a basis for stating a series of principles to guide future development within the Centre. The principles address street and block pattern, view corridors, view cones, siting and arrangement of buildings, density, height, access, safety, landscaping and architectural resolution.

Key principles

The key principles are:

- Buildings should define a clear public and private spatial system.
- The building envelopes/buildings should be derived through a design process related to the desired uses, the site conditions and ownership to create the spatial structure.
- The spatial structure should remediate the existing poor conditions and enhance and expose the topographical setting.
- Density and height should be derived from the building envelopes which define the spatial system.

- The existing street and block pattern should be retained.
- Additional streets and pedestrian connections should be introduced to link Northwood Road to Kenneth Street, the Conservation Zone and Lane Cove Country Club.
- These connections should act as new view corridors.
- Existing expansive views should be maintained and public access to expansive views over the Conservation Zone and Lane Cove Country Club from the Eastern Precinct should be introduced.
- All new development should be organised so that it:
 - follows the alignment of the streets, public spaces and the side boundaries;
 - face the streets and public spaces;
 - creates positive spaces with adjacent buildings; and
 - responds appropriately to the junction of the ground plane and the ground floor.
- The density should be maximised within the principles outlined so that the Centre becomes a local "destination".
- The height of the buildings should be:
 - related to the building footprints, terrain and other buildings so that the overall Centre is a cohesive whole;
 - organised so that the tallest building is at the junction of Northwood Road and Kenneth Street; and
 - create a clear roof profile to the sky.
- Pedestrian access should be clear, legible and safe to and around the Centre.
- Vehicle access should be clear, legible and safe.
- Points of entry and egress to new development should be agreed with the RMS and Lane Cove Council.
- Safety should be built through the basic organisation of the buildings and private and public spaces.
- Safety should be enhanced by appropriate lighting, planting and paving.
- Landscaping should structure the site and relate to the bushland setting.
- The building design should respect the overall spatial structure.
- The architecture should be resolved in a contemporary, environmentally, sustainable way.

Using these principles, block studies tested three design options for the built form and spatial structure in the Western Precinct of the Centre.

Key conclusions

The following conclusions are reached.

An overall Master Plan prepared by Lane Cove Council for Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is the appropriate initiative to ensure a co-ordinated approach and a cohesive built form outcome.

- The spatial system is the driver of urban form and the dominant element.
- The form of development In Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is:
 - to contrast with the surrounding suburban setting;
 - to deliver Council's vision; and
 - to address the existing fragmentation and lack of sense of place by providing a cohesive integrated local centre.
- There are uncertainties as to whether the Western Precinct will be developed. This is due to fragmentation of ownership, possible contamination in sites, the size and shape of the land parcels relative to residential uses.
- The Eastern Precinct is capable of carrying more capacity than the Western Precinct given similar uses.
- The Planning Proposal by EG Property Group is designed in accordance with the principles outlined in this report subject to modifications to height and ground floor uses.
- The Planning Proposal by EG Property Group is an excellent project in a similar model to Stockland Cammeray, designed by leading architects, is able to be delivered and will act as a catalyst to stimulate the Northwood Neighbourhood Centre to fulfil Lane Cove Council's vision.

Key recommendations

The report's key recommendations for the future built form and spatial structure within the Centre and for modifications to the Planning Proposal are:

- Maintain the existing street and block pattern and street alignments.
- Introduce a cross block connection from Northwood Road to Kenneth Street.
- Link the bushland corridors from Central Park and Warraroon Reserve on the west to the environmental Conservation zone and Lane Cove Country Club in the east, both sides of the Centre with pedestrian connection / view corridor.

- Open up view corridors from Northwood Road to the Lane Cove Country Club and bushland through the Eastern Precinct.
- Ensure that:
 - all buildings are to follow the street and open space alignments (as much as this is possible given the constraints related to a residential footprint in the Western Precinct); and
 - all buildings create a clear roof line to the sky.
- Adjust heights so that:
 - a six storey block edge building is located on the corner of Northwood Road and Kenneth Street in the Western Precinct;
 - four storey buildings are located to the southern end of the Western Precinct;
 - four storey buildings are located along Northwood Road in the Planning Proposal site in the Eastern Precinct; and
 - buildings at the rear of the Planning Proposal site are limited to one storey above the top level of the buildings along Northwood Road.
- Adjust density so that the Floor Space Ratio (**FSR**) is the result of the agreed building envelopes. These will be dependent on the final mix of uses. An FSR of 2.3:1 is suggested as a maximum for the Western Precinct and an FSR of 2.5:1 is suggested as a maximum for the Eastern Precinct.
- Adjust carparking requirements and Section 94 Contributions so the required urban form can be achieved. This may be necessary in the Western Precinct.
- Agree preferred vehicle access with the RMS and Lane Cove Council.
- Support the Planning Proposal as a catalyst for development of the Centre.

THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- prepare Master Plan principles for Northwood Neighbourhood Centre;
- test concept design options for the Western Precinct using block studies;
- make recommendations for the resolution of future development in the Western Precinct; and
- make recommendations for modification to the Planning Proposal by EG Property Group and for development in the Western Precinct.

A Master Plan for Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is being prepared by Lane Cove Council (Council). Council's work is to ensure that the Northwood Neighbourhood Centre (Centre) is not developed in an ad hoc manner and to this end the extent of its Master Plan for the Centre area is broader than the focus of this Design Principles Report.

EG Property Group has prepared a Planning Proposal for an amalgamation of sites located on the eastern side of Northwood Road at 4-16 Northwood Road, 274 and 274a Longueville Road, Northwood. This report can assist Council in its preparation of the overall Master Plan by examining the current Planning Proposal in the context of the Centre and testing possible options for sites on the western side of Northwood Road that are also zoned for neighbourhood activities.

This report provides design principles for the Centre, examines the current proposal for the Eastern Precinct in this context and proposes options for the built-form and spatial structure for the Western Precinct. Recommendations are made as to any modifications required to the current Planning Proposal for the Eastern Precinct, to ensure that the Centre is developed as a coherent whole.

THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE MASTER PLAN PRINCIPLES

One section of this report provides principles. These can be used to inform the Lane Cove Council Master Plan and to ensure that the proposed development on the subject site and future development in the Western Precinct will enable Northwood Neighbourhood Centre to develop in an appropriate way. It is essential to create a contiguous urban fabric which is legible, reflects the history, reveals the topography, responds to the introduction of new uses and meets Council's social objectives. The final Master Plan must address the area as a totality if the Centre is to develop to its potential and maximise the value of the natural and historical assets.

As well as the potential for a superior outcome, this approach provides clear guidelines for each site within the Master Plan area. This information will allow evaluation by Council and stakeholders early in the process. It also provides greater certainty of the potential for both the Western and Eastern Precincts for development because the capacities, being FSR, are derived from the Desired Future Character (DFC) in terms of the building envelopes and spatial structure. The examination will provide assurance that the Planning Proposal is appropriate for the site and does not inhibit any future initiatives.

The Master Plan Principles Report:

- Uses the existing the street pattern, landscape, heritage, the subdivision pattern and ownership pattern within the Centre as a basis for future urban interventions.
- Establishes principles for a new pattern for the built form, public and private open space.
- Clearly states principles for :
 - Street and block pattern.
 - Street hierarchy.
 - History.
 - View corridors.
 - View cones.
 - Siting and arrangement of buildings including:
 - Relationships of buildings to the street and public spaces existing and proposed.
 - Relationships of buildings to buildings existing and proposed.
 - Relationships of buildings to the ground plane.
 - Density.
 - Height.
 - Access.
 - Safety and Surveillance.
 - Landscaping.
 - Resolution of the Architecture.

DESCRIPTION: NORTHWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is situated in Lane Cove Local Government Area (LGA), located on the ridge line at the intersection of a confluence of streets. These are Northwood Road, Kenneth Street, Longueville Road and River Road West. Northwood Road accesses the Northwood peninsula; Kenneth Street accesses the Longueville peninsula; Longueville Road accesses South Lane Cove and connects to the Lane Cove Town Centre. River Road West becomes Penrose Street and connects to Burns Bay Road. Being on the ridge line the Centre receives cooling breezes from the north-east in summer.

The Centre encompasses development land as well as being part of a superb open space system. It comprises two albeit disconnected B1 mixed use precincts, an R4 high density residential precinct, two recreation precincts and an environmental zone.

The Centre as a whole (refer Figure 1) is defined physically by:

- **Northern Precinct** Longueville Road including the Masonic Hall and the Lane Cove Recreation Area on Longueville Road.
- **Eastern Precinct** Lane Cove Country Club and Lane Cove Bushland Park and a development precinct facing Northwood Road and the subject of the EG Property Group's Planning Proposal.
- **Western Precinct** Central Park, Longueville Sporting Club, Warraroon Reserve and a development precinct bounded by Kenneth Street, Northwood Road and a heritage precinct on its southern boundary.
- **Southern Precinct** A heritage zone bounded by Kenneth Street, Woodford Street, Arabella Street, Northwood Road and the development zone to the north.

The Western and Eastern development precincts are on opposite sides of Northwood Road.

The Centre has the potential to serve residents of the Longueville peninsula, the Northwood peninsula and areas of South Lane Cove.

This report focuses on the development future of the Western and Eastern Precincts.

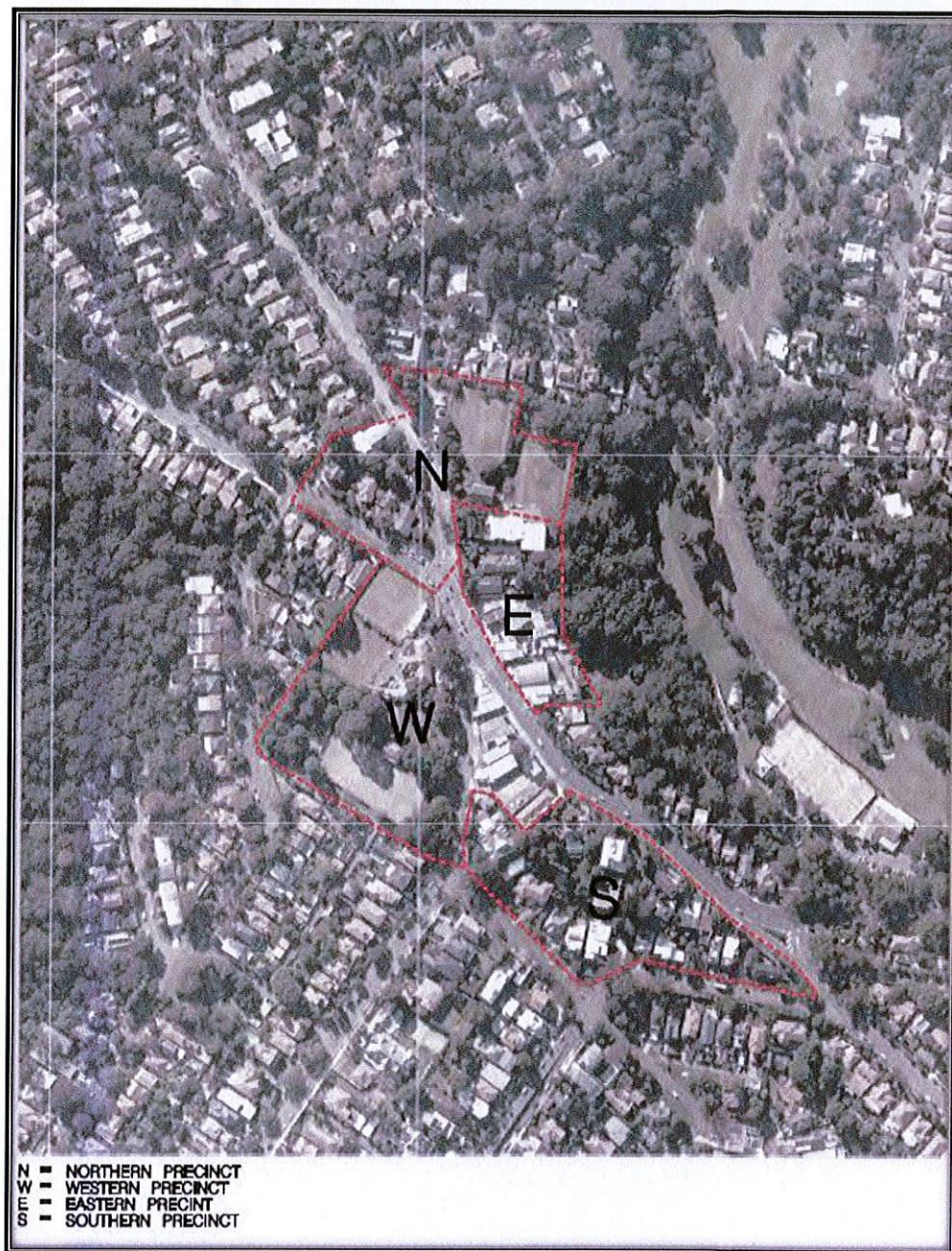


Figure 1: Northwood Neighbourhood Centre Precinct Boundaries

Western Precinct

The Western Precinct is effectively a triangular site located between Northwood Road to the east and Kenneth Street to the west. It comes to a distinctive sharp angled corner at the junction of these two streets. The Longueville Sporting Club, Tennis Courts and Central Park are on the opposite side of Kenneth Street. To the south the precinct borders residential properties in a heritage precinct.

Located at the high point of the junction of the ridge land formations the precinct is relatively flat. The overall block of which the Western Precinct is part is bounded by William Edward Street, Northwood Road, Woodford Street and Arabella Street. The irregularly shaped block containing the development precinct slopes to the south-west. There is one pedestrian access from Arabella Street to Northwood Road which connects to the cul de sac of McMahon Street.

Zoning

The Western Precinct is partly zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre and part RE 1 Public Recreation.

Uses

The current uses on the B1 part of the precinct are "retail" in the form of Porters Liquor known as Northwood Cellars, a travel agent and two service stations (Caltex and BP). Both service stations have convenience retail although the BP has a more substantial outlet. The Caltex service station also has a car repair workshop. There is a two storey residential flat building on a site adjacent to the southern boundary of the precinct with an entrance from Northwood Road.

On the opposite of side of Kenneth Street from these facilities is the Longueville Sporting Club co-located with Central Park and Lane Cove Tennis Courts. The Longueville Sporting Club has two outdoor bowling greens, a yoga school and a fitness club.

Ownership

The sites in the Western Precinct are individually owned. The recreation and park areas are owned by Council. The apartment building is company title.

Views into the Western Precinct

Every site in an urban environment will be more or less visible depending on its location within the terrain and the street pattern. Sites located at the end of vistas along a street or at a change in the direction of a street will be the most visible. This has implications as to the best way to introduce new development.

The sites in Western Precinct that are most visible are:

- Northwood Cellars: looking south from Longueville Road to the intersection of Northwood Road and Kenneth Street the site where Northwood Cellars is currently located is the most highly visible site in the Centre.
- Looking north from Northwood Road into the Western Precinct: this view is terminated at the junction of the BP and Caltex service stations where the road alignment deflects. It is currently not a very dominant view however if this site is developed it will be important to ensure that the building form that occurs at this juncture is sensitive to this view line.

Views from the Western Precinct

The views from the Western Precinct are:

- into Central Park and the Longueville Sporting Club from the B1 development precinct.
- from the corner of Woodford Street and Kenneth Street across Woodford Bay to the Sydney CBD.

There may be views from higher levels in the Western Precinct to Woodford Bay, the CBD in the south-east and to the Lane Cove Bushland Park in the east.

Planning Proposals

There is no planning proposal for the Western Precinct.

Eastern Precinct

Description

The Eastern Precinct has a frontage on its western boundary to Northwood Road and Longueville Road. The northern boundary abuts a Recreation Zone. The precinct slopes steeply to the east with views over Lane Cove Country Club and Lane Cove Bushland Park to Osborne Park, on the eastern boundary. The southern boundary is adjacent to low-density detached residential dwellings.

Zoning

The area is designated partly B1 Neighbourhood Centre, part R4 High Density Residential, part RE1 Public Recreation and part E2 Environmental Conservation.

Uses

The current uses in the precinct are residential and retail. Two apartment buildings are located on the northern boundary adjacent to the Lane Cove Recreation Area. They range in height from two storeys at the street frontage to Longueville Road, to five storeys at the rear. Adjacent to the apartment buildings are two detached dwellings, one behind the other. There is a Speedway service station with a car repair workshop at the rear on a lower level; a furniture outlet specialising in storage (Space Works); a catering organisation; and the Riverview Animal Hospital and Veterinary Clinic (Clinic).

Ownership

The precinct's two northerly sites, the strata apartment buildings, are in individual ownerships. The adjacent R4 site with the two detached dwellings, and all but the most southerly site in the B1 precinct (occupied by the Clinic), have been amalgamated under a single ownership. This amalgamated site is the subject of the Planning Proposal by EG Property Group.

Views into the Eastern Precinct

The view into the Eastern Precinct that is most visible is:

- Looking west from the junction of River Road West and Longueville Road into the Eastern Precinct. This string view line terminates on the Northern end of the subject site.

Views from the Eastern Precinct

The views from the Eastern Precinct are:

- The Environmental Conservation Zone, Lane Cove Country Club and Lane Cove Bushland Park to Osborne Park.
- From higher levels there will be views to the Sydney CBD and Crows Nest.

Planning Proposal

The Planning Proposal for the subject site in the Eastern Precinct extends over sites zoned R4, B1 and E2. There is one full level below the Northwood Road with a mix of retail outlets. A large pedestrian plaza is located at the Northwood Road level. This area is served by three retail outlets that face Northwood Road and the plaza area. Above this, three levels of residential apartments face Northwood Road.

At the rear there are six levels of residential apartments above the podium. These face the Conservation Zone and Lane Cove Country Club. The bushland gully is separated from the apartments by a protection zone of 10 metres. Views to the gully are opened up from Northwood Road across the plaza and along a series of steps located on the northern boundary. Vehicular access to the subject site including the loading dock is proposed toward the southern end.



Figure 2.1: Northwood Road looking north



Figure 2.2: Kenneth Street looking east



Figure 2.3: Northwood Cellars and Caltex service station

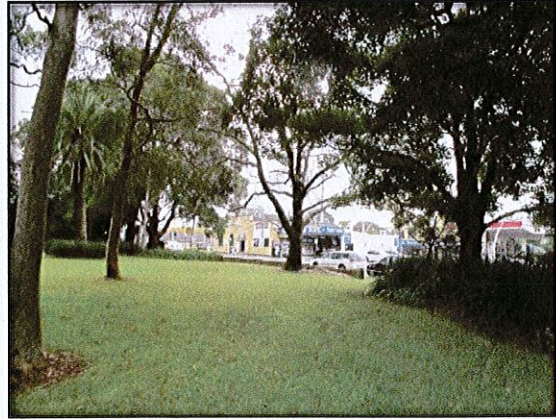


Figure 2.4: Northwood Cellars and Central Park



Figure 2.5: Expansive view from corner of Woodford and Kenneth Streets



Figure 2.6: Lane Cove Tennis Club

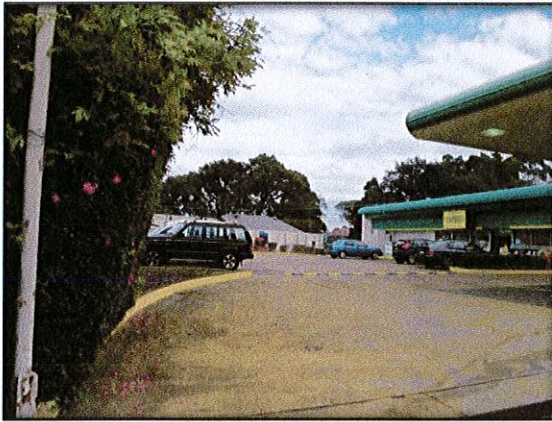


Figure 2.7: BP service station cross block connection



Figure 2.8: BP service station cross connection



Figure 2.9: Northwood Cellars and Longueville Sporting Club



Figure 2.10: View from Osborne childcare centre to site

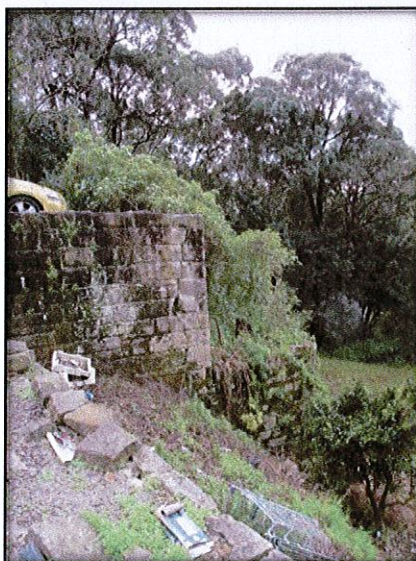


Figure 2.11: Sandstone wall at the site



Figure 2.12: View corridor from Northwood Road to conservation zone

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Location and Topography

Lane Cove LGA is located on the northern side of Lane Cove River, about 6 kilometres from Sydney CBD. The LGA extends to Mowbray Road in the north, Burns Bay Road in the west and the Pacific Highway in the east. Epping Road bisects the LGA from east to west and becomes the Gore Hill Freeway at Lane Cove. The freeway bisects the overall network of streets in the eastern part of the LGA. Longueville Road runs north / south from the Lane Cove Town Centre to the Northwood Neighbourhood Centre.

The Lane Cove River boundary on the south is defined by five predominately north / south peninsulas. Greenwich peninsula in the east is the longest and extends south so that it almost meets the Hunters Hill peninsula that runs east-west. Together they form the entrance to the Lane Cove River. Northwood sits between Greenwich and Longueville. The most westerly peninsula, Linley Point, is the access point to the bridge over Lane Cove River to Hunters Hill. Adjacent to this and on the western side of Longueville is Riverview, a peninsula dominated by Riverview College.

The peninsulas all have a different history and different topographical characteristics. The basic street and block patterns however are fairly consistent, subject to topographical nuances. Historical differences are reflected in the subdivision patterns, housing stock type, previous uses and location and type of neighbourhood centres.

Northwood is the smallest peninsula and the earliest settled. Longueville was developed later and this can be seen in a larger lot subdivision pattern.

Open Space

The peninsulas are separated by bays and linked by areas of bushland (refer Figure 3). Some of the low lying land between the peninsulas has been filled and formed into playing fields. Bushland fingers extend back into Lane Cove between the peninsula ridges. On the east is Lane Cove Bushland Park, with Lane Cove Country Club and Osborne Park flanking Northwood Centre. On the west, the Warraroon Reserve extends from Lane Cove River to the Northwood Centre.



Figure 3: Relationship of Northwood Neighbourhood Centre to bushland corridors

Street and Block Pattern

The street and block pattern throughout Lane Cove is a classic grid. A series of main ridge roads link Lane Cove to the greater Sydney street network. The most important of these are the Pacific Highway on the east, Burns Bay Road on the west and Epping Road. These main north-south east-west thoroughfares are complemented by a grid of streets which radiate at right angles from the ridge roads, only to deviate from a straight line where the topography dictates. Crossing these and running parallel to the main ridge roads are the roads with the high and low sides.

The grid pattern manifests itself to varying degrees in all parts of Lane Cove and in the peninsulas. Sites facing the long-ridge roads tend to be relatively level. The ridge spine is augmented by the "up and over" streets at right angles to the ridge roads and by streets parallel to the ridge roads which run along the slope. These parallel streets have a "high side" and a "low side". This excellent street pattern provides a marvellous reading of the topography and the context. Views are provided to the water, the ridge lines and the bush gullies from the streets, with glimpses of the same through the slim spaces between buildings.

The peninsula ridge roads all connect to River Road. River Road is a long sinuous road which effectively parallels the alignment of Lane Cove River. It is composed of a series of "part" roads which have been smoothed to facilitate traffic flow. Hence at Northwood Neighbourhood Centre "River Road" consists of part Northwood Road and part Longueville Road. It then becomes River Road West before turning into Penshurst Street just before the junction with Burns Bay Road. Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is located at the junction of Northwood Road, Longueville Road and Kenneth Street, where Northwood Road becomes part of River Road. Northwood Road feeds Northwood peninsula and Kenneth Street is the main spine road feeding Longueville. Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is at the junction of the two adjacent peninsulas.

Centres

The distribution of the centres reflects the history of Lane Cove and its changing transport options. With the exception of Greenwich all the centres are located on the intersections of / or along main roads. Originally accessed by boat through Northwood and later by tram to Lane Cove along the Pacific Highway through Crows Nest, Lane Cove is the town centre. It has the primary schools, Swimming and Leisure Centre, Council Chambers, library, medical facilities and a diverse collection of shops, restaurants and so forth with small associated businesses. Lane Cove serves as a centre for the LGA. Over the last 20 years the decline in residential population that affected all middle and inner ring suburbs has been addressed by the addition of apartment buildings and town-house developments located around Lane Cove Town Centre.

Chatswood is a nearby regional centre while North Sydney is a major centre for employment. Sydney CBD is easily accessed by express bus. There are many schools in the greater local area. The Australian Catholic University is in North Sydney and Macquarie University is nearby at Macquarie Park.

There are neighbourhood centres at Northwood, Burns Bay Road (Figtree), West Lane Cove and Greenwich (refer Figure 4). There are also a few specialised shops in Tambourine Bay Road located close to Lane Cove Town Centre. The Figtree Centre is located at the intersection of Burns Bay Road and Penshurst Street. West Lane Cove is located at the intersection of Burns Bay Road and Figtree Road. Both centres are located on high points in the topography and operate as successful smaller centres with a mix of local retail, e.g. food shops, hairdresser. Unlike Northwood, they have a variety of retail offerings and perform as true local centres.

Greenwich peninsula is the largest and longest of the peninsulas. It was developed later than Northwood but unlike Northwood it was originally developed when Sydney Harbour was undergoing industrialisation. In its early role pubs and shops were scattered down the peninsula along Greenwich Road from River Road to the waterfront. A legacy of this industrialisation is the Caltex Terminal which is still located at Gore Bay. The original retail and service facilities served the finger wharves and industrial activities around the deep water harbour frontage on the east side of Greenwich peninsula. This legacy is now partially preserved in the small grouping of shops still located at intervals along Greenwich Road. Many of the original shops have been converted to residential, reflecting the change of uses, different transport modes and the reduction in the working and living population. Diversity and interest within Greenwich has been diminished by the loss of more varied activities. Because the Greenwich Neighbourhood Centre is located away from the River Road intersection with Greenwich Road, it predominately serves residents in the peninsula rather than serving through traffic. There are two cafés, a chemist, IGA, Post Office and bottle shop forming a small centre opposite the Greenwich Primary School. Other more specialised shops are located further down Greenwich Road. Residents from Greenwich also have relatively easy access to the larger shopping centre at Crows Nest.



Figure 4: Lane Cove Village and surrounding Neighbourhood Centres

Relationship of Northwood Neighbourhood Centre to Other Centres

Development of a neighbourhood centre at Northwood is unlikely to diminish the role of the other centres in Lane Cove. Clearly the Lane Cove Town Centre, the closest other centre, fulfils the main and civic role for the LGA. The other centres are all disbursed geographically and separated topographically and provide only a reasonable level of car parking for the use of local residents. Lane Cove Town Centre is under pressure in terms of car parking.

An improved Northwood Neighbourhood Centre will undoubtedly be used by residents from Longueville, Northwood and South Lane Cove together with some passing traffic. Currently many local residents go to Lane Cove.

Public Transport

Northwood Neighbourhood Centre is served by buses from the Sydney CBD to Lane Cove and to Lane Cove West. The bus services 265 and 261 pass through the Northwood Centre either along River Road or from Lane Cove Town Centre. There is a very limited service to Chatswood. There is a private ferry service for Northwood and Longueville during the week peak hours. The Northwood ferry stop is the closest and about 10 minutes walk to the Centre. There is also a bus service that connects indirectly from the Centre to the ferry.

Many buses from the Sydney CBD pass through Lane Cove Town centre along Epping Road via the Gore Hill Freeway or the Pacific Highway. Greenwich is on the public ferry service with full weekly services. Parts of Greenwich are within walking distance of St Leonards and Wollstonecraft rail stations and there are numerous bus services to the area.

Dwelling Stock

The dwelling stock of Northwood and Longueville has changed substantially in the last 20 years. Northwood was developed earlier so it has a much more diverse subdivision pattern than Longueville and more modest dwellings. Like Greenwich it has a proportion of smaller and irregular lots. Generally however modest dwellings have undergone substantial redevelopment into upmarket detached housing which is now distributed through the peninsulas with a scattering of traditional heritage houses.