

NEUTRAL BAY VILLAGE

PLANNING STUDY

Final Report

North Sydney Council
May 2024



Acknowledgements

North Sydney Council acknowledges the Guringai Tribe and Cammeraygal Clan as the Traditional Owners of this land. The authors of this report pay our respects to the Elders, past and present and recognise the inherent connection of the Indigenous people of Australia to Country.

North Sydney Council appreciates the contribution made to the project by:

- Community survey/submissions and workshop participants
- Neutral Bay Alive community consultation group
- Spackman Mossop Michaels
- PlanCom Consulting
- HillPDA
- Stantec

Cover image: Chaos Cafe, Neutral Bay





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This planning study has been prepared by North Sydney Council with input from community and external consultants to guide future growth in Neutral Bay local centre, protect retail and commercial uses, and deliver much-needed public domain and community infrastructure.

Neutral Bay village is a vibrant local centre with a valued village atmosphere. The community enjoy a variety of restaurants, cafes, shops and services. The centre is well connected to Sydney CBD, North Sydney CBD, and the Northern Beaches. It has become a popular area for people to live, work and visit.

The local centre is, however, experiencing significant pressure with development proposals regularly challenging the current building height and density controls. The continuing decline in commercial floorspace, a shortage of public open space, limited community facilities, and impact of the B-Line are challenging the services, diversity and amenity of the area.

This planning study aims to:

- address the ongoing decline of the employment-generating floorspace under existing planning controls
- leverage a range of public benefits and public domain improvements from planned and targeted growth
- maintain and enhance the local character and amenity of the Neutral Bay village.

Community feedback has helped to shape the directions contained in this study. It will be used to guide any future development to ensure it meets the needs and expectations of the local residents and workers.

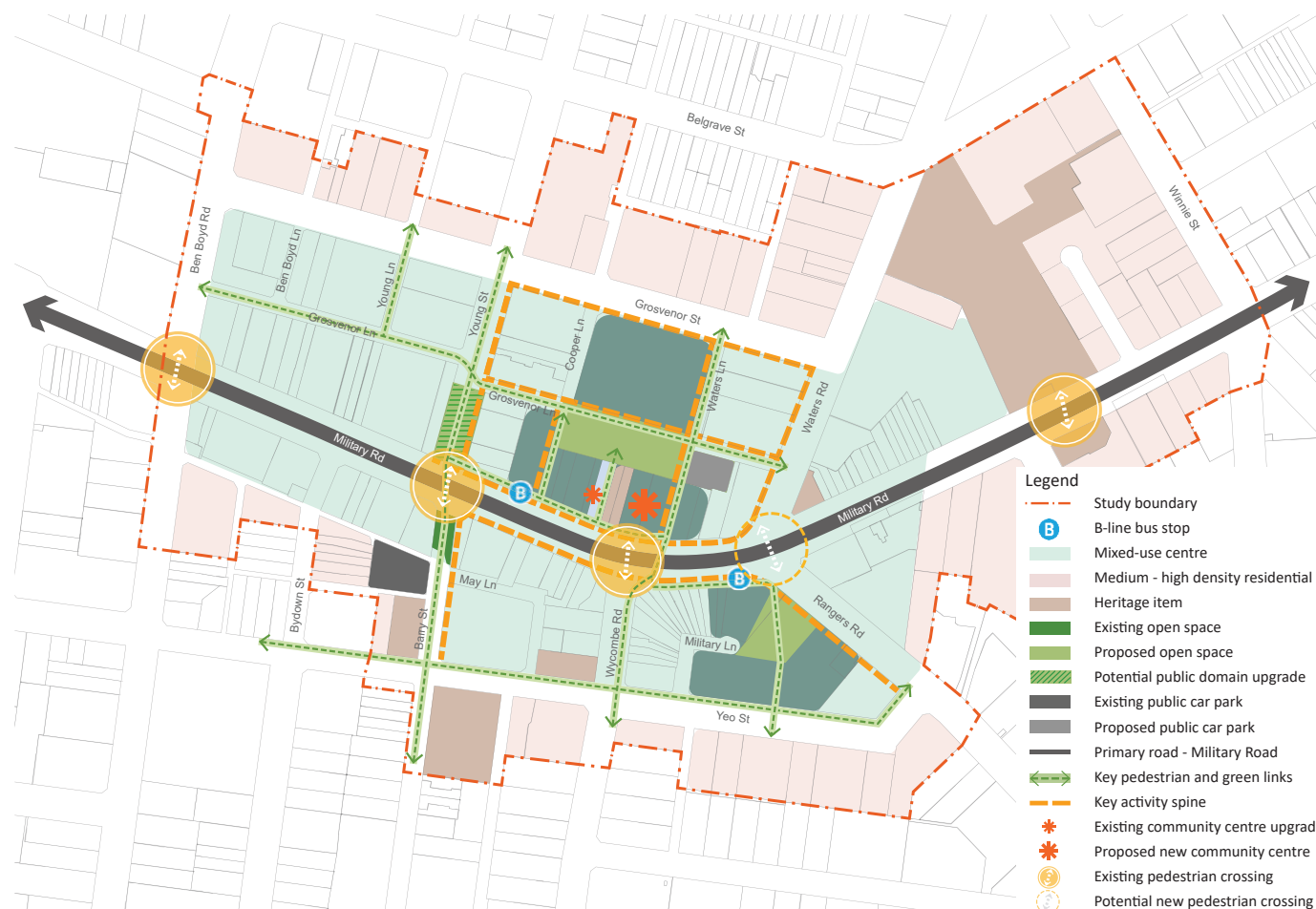
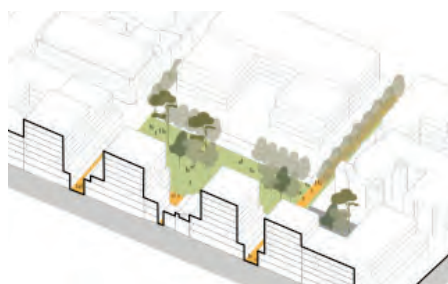


Figure 0-1. Proposed framework plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is proposed

Placemaking



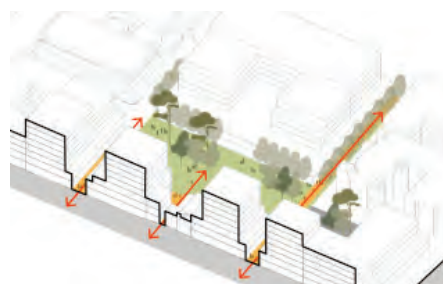
The suburb of Neutral Bay fronts Sydney Harbour and supports beautiful open spaces including Anderson Park and Forsyth Park. The only permanent open space in the local centre, however, is May Gibbs Place which has a limited area and activation, which is unusual for a centre of this size.

The community identifies improvements to the public domain as the most important issue for the centre. This includes the need for new open spaces, landscaping, upgraded community facilities and more community events.

This study envisages some major, new public domain and community facility upgrades, including:

- Grosvenor Plaza (3,000m²)
- Rangers Road Plaza (1,000m²)
- a new community centre (1,000m²)
- an upgrade of the existing community centre
- new laneways/through-site links activations

Access



Neutral Bay village is dominated by commuter traffic along Military Road which creates a major barrier between the northern and southern sides of the centre. Pedestrian paths along Military Road feel unsafe as pedestrians are exposed to fast-moving traffic and vehicle noise.

Recent upgrades to some of the laneway network behind Military Road have significantly improved the amenity and accessibility of the local centre, however there is scope for further improvement.

This study identifies opportunities to improve access and road safety within the local centre to encourage walking, cycling and public transport, including:

- Grosvenor Lane car park relocation
- through-site links upgrade
- footpath widening at Military Road bus stops
- pedestrian crossing improvements
- new cycleway and bicycle facilities

Employment



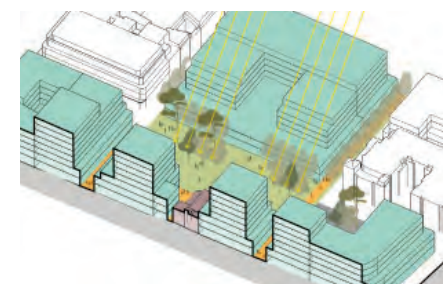
The centre provides day-to-day goods and services for the resident populations of Neutral Bay, Cremorne, Mosman, Kirribilli and Cammeray. It plays an important role in supporting local businesses and employment opportunities.

As the centre transitions from predominantly 2-3 storey commercial buildings to 4-5 storey mixed-use development with ground floor retail and residential uses above, under the existing planning controls, the long-term employment function of the centre is declining.

To protect the employment function of the centre, this study proposes changes to existing planning controls, including:

- increasing the non-residential FSR from 0.5:1 to 1.2:1 for most of the mixed-use zones and key Sites 1, 2 and 3A
- increasing the non-residential FSR from 0.5:1 to 1.5:1 for key Site 3B

Built form

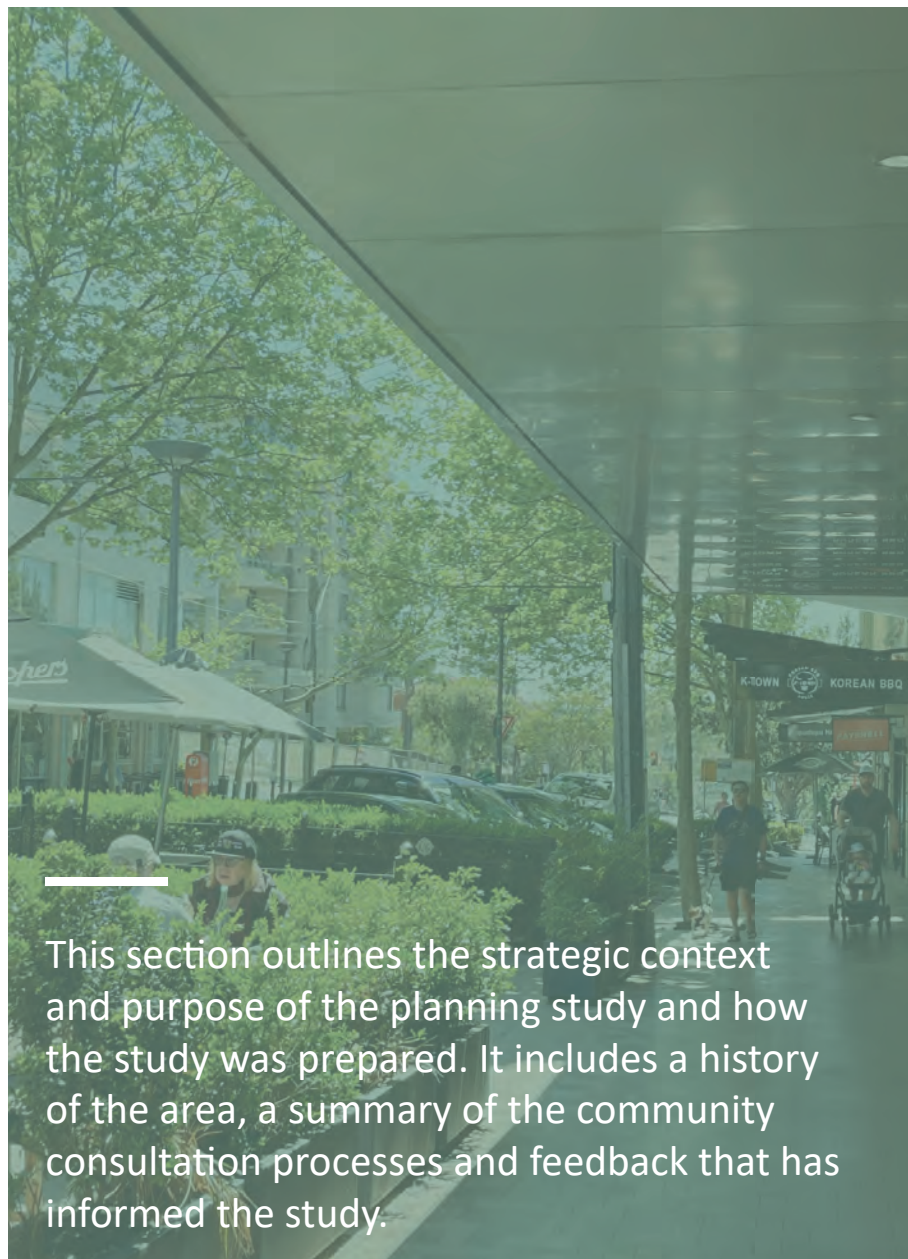


In recent years, there has been significant development pressure within the local centre. These interests vary in scale and intent, but they commonly seek to challenge North Sydney Council's current planning controls, particularly in terms of building height and density.

The community is seeking a better balance to building height that protects the character and amenity of the centre.

This study supports a modest and targeted increase in building height to protect existing retail/commercial spaces and create new public spaces and facilities for the community. Proposed built form recommendations are as follows:

- increasing the height limit from 5 storeys to 6 storeys for most of the mixed-use zone
- increasing the height limit from 5 storeys to up to 8 storeys for the identified key sites
- amending built form design guidelines





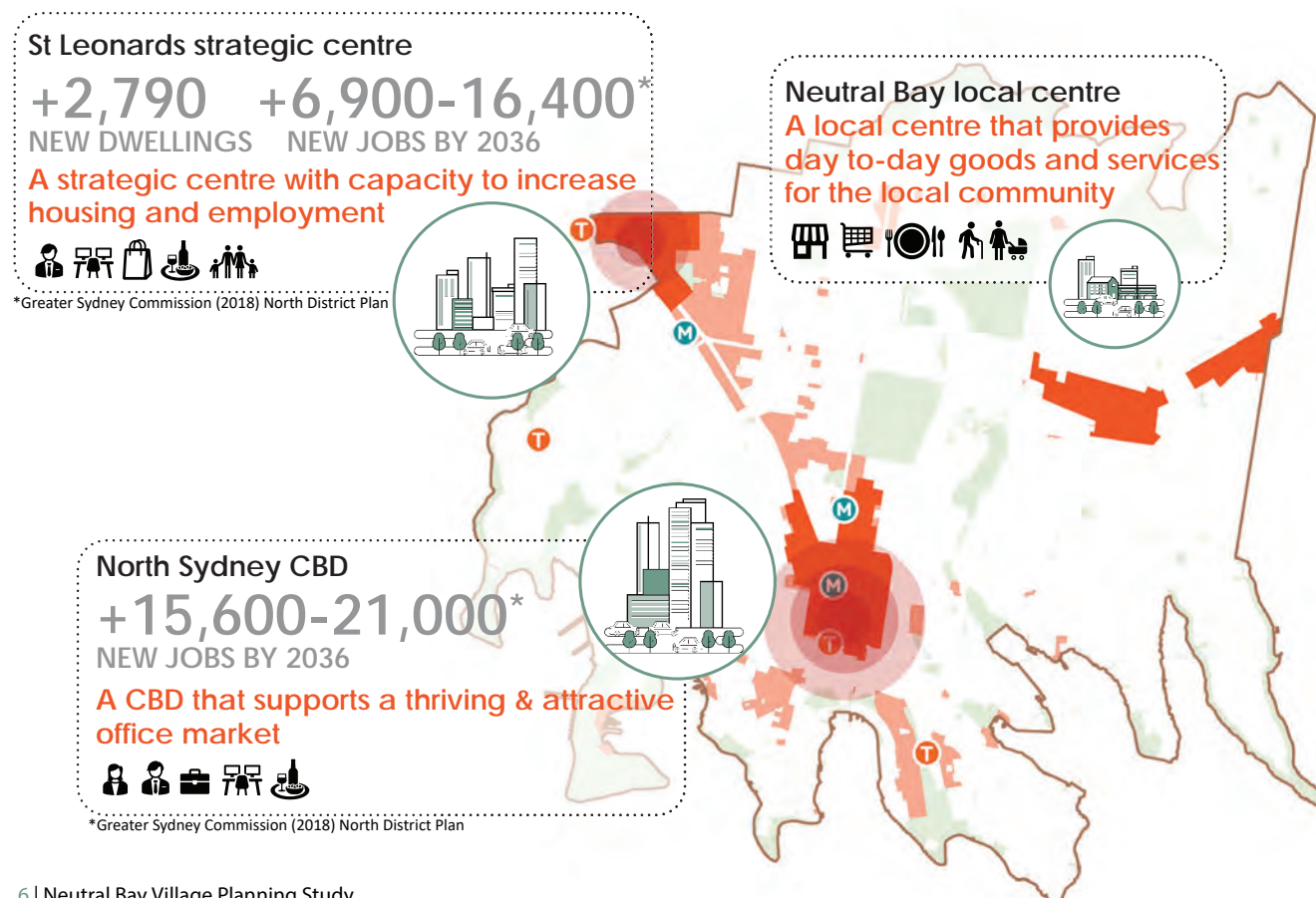
INTRODUCTION

01

1.1 STRATEGIC ROLE OF NEUTRAL BAY

Hierarchy of centres in the North Sydney local government area

Greater Sydney's population will grow to approximately 6.1 million by 2041 - over a million more than currently live in the region. To accommodate this growth, our centres are changing.



Role of Neutral Bay

The *North District Plan* was released by the then Greater Sydney Commission in 2018 to plan for population growth. It identifies Neutral Bay as **'local centre.'** Local centres play an important role in providing goods and services, local jobs, housing, access to public transport, recreational, cultural and community hubs. They contribute towards a vision of a "city of great places". The plan applies a wide range of place-based planning principles to local centres, signifying their importance to the health, economic prosperity and wellbeing of the community.

NORTH SYDNEY LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT (LSPS)
 MARCH 2020

The *North Sydney LSPS* (NSC 2020) is a 20-year vision for land use planning in the North Sydney local government area, that was prepared in response to the North District Plan. The LSPS identifies varying degrees of housing and jobs growth that will be delivered in the North Sydney CBD, St Leonards / Crows Nest and Neutral Bay and Cremorne Military Road Corridor. It identifies this planning study as the mechanism to manage that growth for Neutral Bay.

1.1 STRATEGIC ROLE OF NEUTRAL BAY

Key challenges for Neutral Bay

1 Development pressures



North Sydney Council has maintained a robust practice of guiding and managing growth through comprehensive planning studies, involving community consultation and specialist advice. This approach conveys a clear message to the development industry that growth will be responsibly managed in the LGA.

The Neutral Bay local centre is experiencing strong development interest. In the past two years, several planning proposals (PPs) and development applications (DAs) have proposed heights and a building density that exceed what was envisaged for the centre.

An endorsed planning study for Neutral Bay will reinforce the desired future outcomes for Neutral Bay local centre. It will be used to guide the preparation and review of planning proposals.

2 A decline in commercial floor space



Neutral Bay local centre has an under-supply of retail and commercial floor spaces of 6,460m² in 2023. By 2041, it is estimated that the under-supply will increase to 13,450m² of retail and commercial floor space as the population continues to grow in the region.

In addition, the current planning controls have the potential to lose an additional 30,000m² - or 1,200 jobs - as the local centre's older commercial buildings are replaced with mixed use buildings that support retail on the ground floor and residential in the upper floors.

Without intervention, the centre is at risk of losing local jobs, local businesses, and essential community services like medical, dental and fitness centres. Over time, this may also have an adverse impact on the retail function and vitality of Neutral Bay.

3 A shortage of public spaces



The community has identified improvements to the public domain and community facilities as the most important issues for the centre. According to the community survey results, 73% of people support enhancing pedestrian comfort by improving the Military Road environment, upgrading footpaths, increasing greenery, and creating better plazas in the area.

Additionally, the community has expressed concerns about insufficient community facilities within the centre due to the restricted space and the poor accessibility of through-site links.

The feedback from the community underscores the need for more community spaces that promote social engagement and activities, serving as a key driver for this study.

What is needed



4,000m²
new public plazas



1,000m²
new community centre



1 community creative hub



1 major north-south pedestrian link



2 footpath widening at B-Line bus stops



4 through-site links



2-3 storeys retail/commercial

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Background

In 2018, Council commenced the preparation of the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study* (MRCPS) to manage the significant development pressure in the Neutral Bay precinct and ongoing erosion of employment floor space facilitated by Council's existing planning controls.

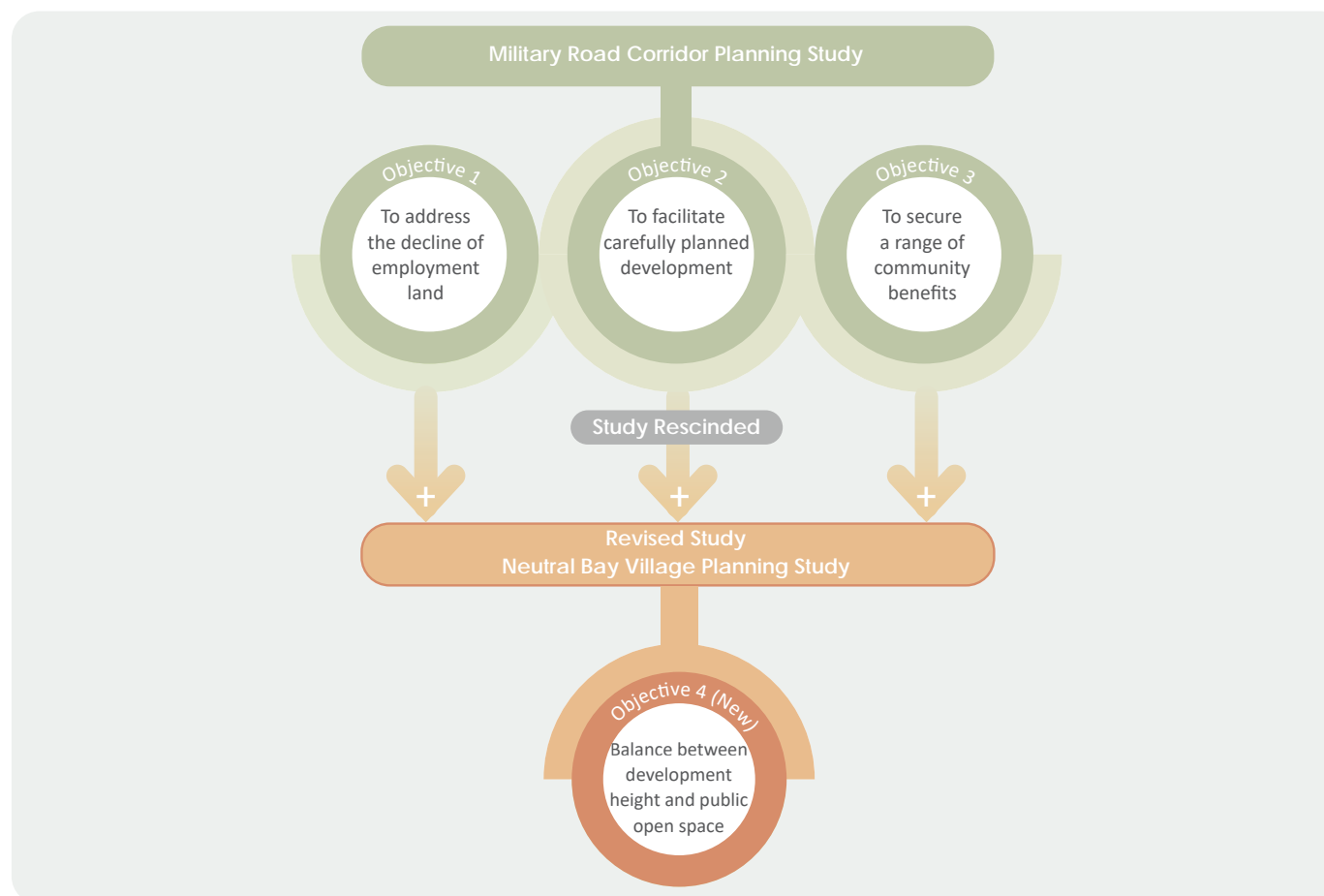
Following three consultation periods, the MRCPS identified a suite of public open space projects and community infrastructure, and proposed built form controls that would support maintaining the employment and allow some residential housing growth in the centre. Proposed maximum building heights ranged from 6 storeys on most of mixed-use zones to 8 - 12 storeys on three sites.

The MRCPS was adopted by Council in early 2021.

At its meeting on 24 January 2022, Council formally rescinded the MRCPS as a result of ongoing community concerns around building heights and the potential impact on the village atmosphere, heritage character, solar access and traffic impacts to the centre. Council resolved to engage further with the community and relevant stakeholders to prepare a revised study.

In August 2022, Council commenced a revised planning study for the Neutral Bay precinct, called the 'Neutral Bay Village Planning Study' (NBVPS). The same drivers and objectives from the MRCPS apply, however, a new objective was introduced to ensure the scale of growth achieved has a "better balance" between development height and the provision of additional public open space compared to the rescinded study.

Objectives



1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Project scope

The purpose of this study is to:

- outline a **future vision and design principles** for the Neutral Bay local centre as an integral part of the Military Road corridor
- set up a **development framework** that has been informed by the community to guide and manage future developments in the area
- identify a range of **community benefits** to be delivered through voluntary planning agreements on specific sites and local infrastructure contributions within the local centre.

The study has been informed by additional detailed community feedback and technical expertise provided by external consultants.

Work on the study began in August 2022, with draft design options ready for preliminary stakeholder engagement in March 2023.

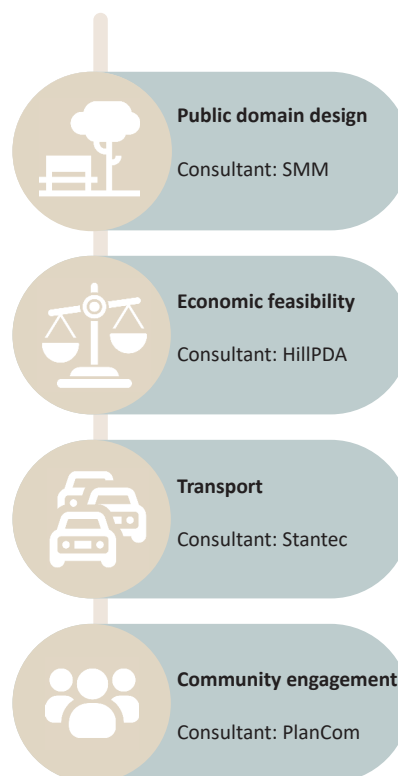
Stakeholder workshops and meetings with landowners was run between March and July 2023 (see section 1.4).

The consultant team comprised SMM (landscape architects), HillPDA (economics), Stantec (transport) and PlanCom (community engagement).

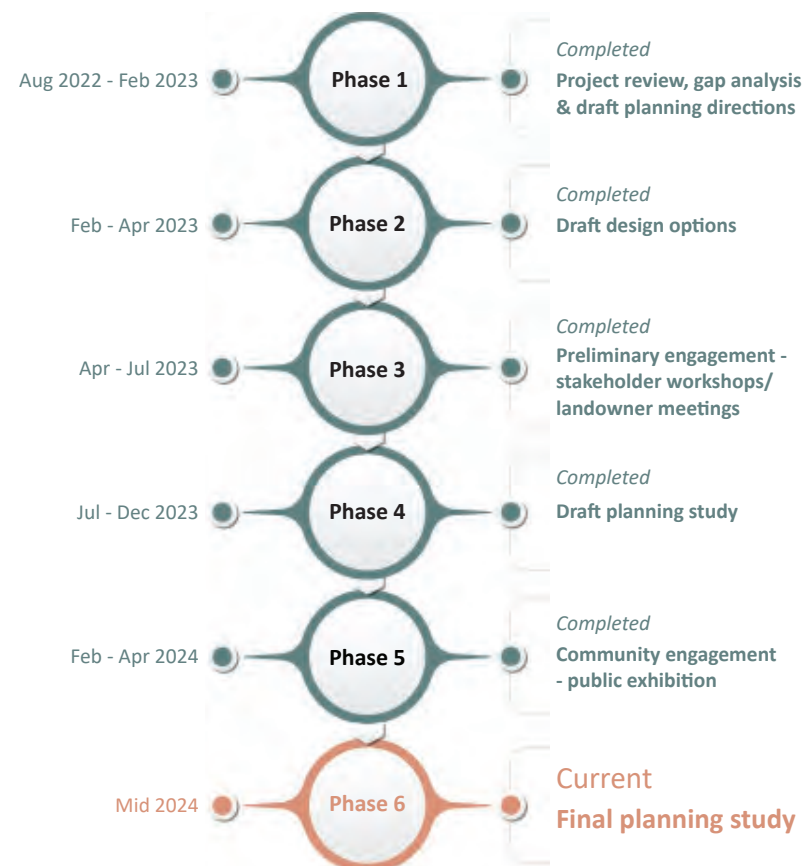
The draft study was placed on public exhibition from 27 February until 2 April 2024. Community feedback has informed the final planning study.

Consultant team

The Neutral Bay Village Planning Study was developed in-house with input from the following consultants:



Project staging



1.3 SETTING THE SCENE

Strategic setting

The *North District Plan* (GCC 2018) sets high-level housing and jobs targets for the District. It identifies Neutral Bay as a 'local centre' and establishes principles for the planning of local centres. Specifically, 'Planning Priority N6', requires place-based planning for local centres to address the following principles:

- provide public realm and open space focus
- deliver transit-oriented development and co-locate facilities and social infrastructure
- provide, increase or improve local infrastructure and open space
- improve walking, cycling and public transport connections including through the Greater Sydney Green Grid
- protect or expand retail and/or commercial floor space
- protect or expand employment opportunities
- integrate and support arts and creative enterprise and expression
- augment or provide community facilities, services, arts and cultural facilities
- conserve and interpret heritage values and
- increase residential development in, or within a walkable distance of, the centre
- provide parking that is adaptable to future uses, and takes account of access to public transport, walking and cycling connections.

The *North District Plan* emphasises that housing should not compromise a centre's primary role to provide goods and services, and the opportunity for the centre's employment function to grow and change over time (p.50).

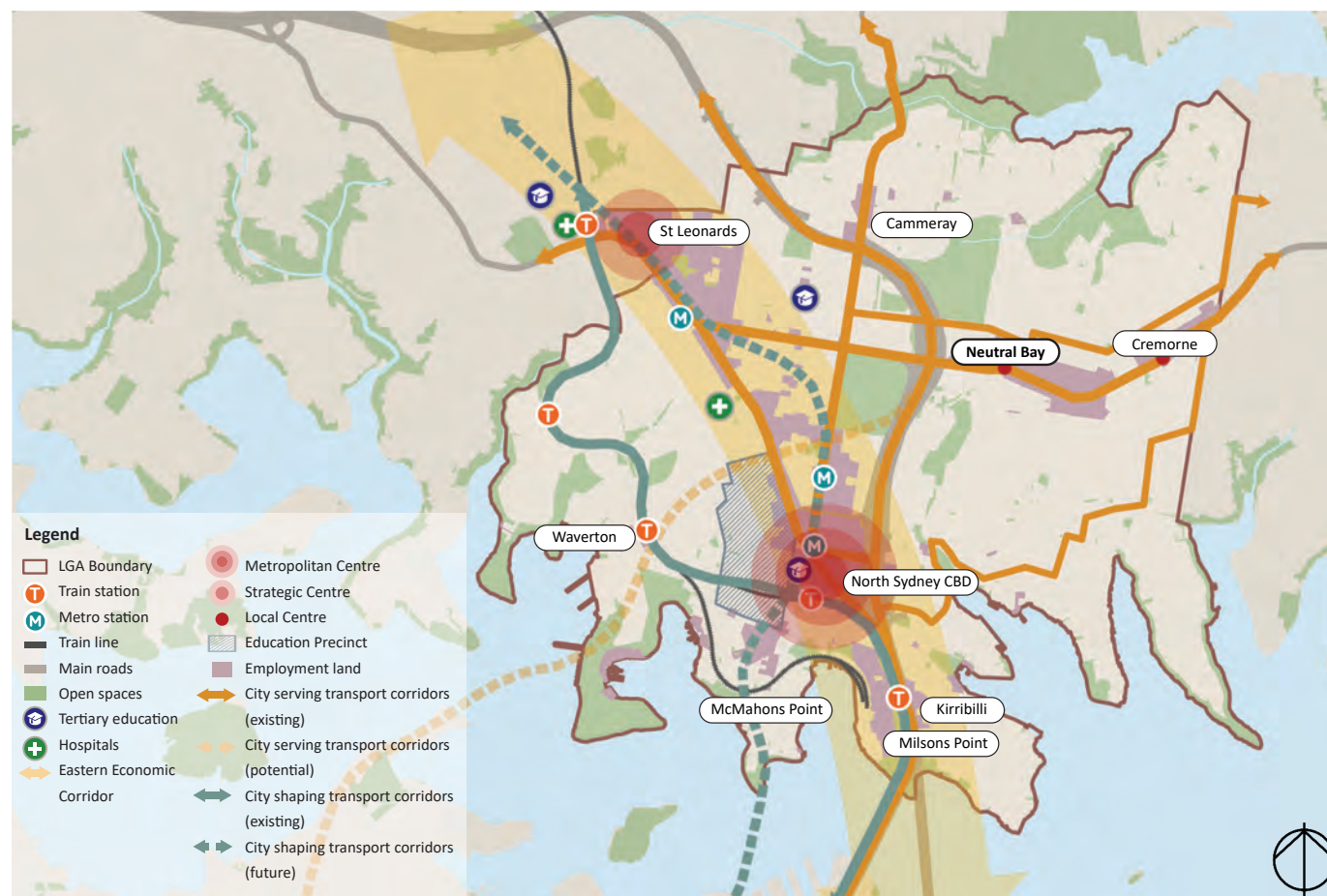


Figure 1-1. Strategic context map

1.3 SETTING THE SCENE

The study area

The study boundary for the Neutral Bay Village Planning Study is Ben Boyd Road to the west, Belgrave Street to the north, Winnie Street and Murdoch Street to the east, and a block south of Yeo Street. The bulk of the study area is located within the centre.

The Neutral Bay local centre is a mixed-use commercial and residential area. It generally comprises of large, consolidated sites intermixed with long, narrow sites with dual frontages.

The morphology of the area has been shaped by topography and Military Road, which is a major regional thoroughfare running through the study area. Military Road links the Lower North Shore and Sydney CBD with Mosman and the Northern Beaches.

There are currently three through-site pedestrian links along Military Road within the centre, all of which connect to the Grosvenor Lane car park. These connections are provided by The Grove shopping centre, Theo's Arcade, and the Neutral Bay Community Centre. However, these connections may not be readily apparent within the busy street environment of Military Road.

The study area is well-served by buses with services to and from the Northern Beaches, North Sydney and Sydney CBD passing on Military Road. North Sydney Railway Station is located approximately 2km from the centre.

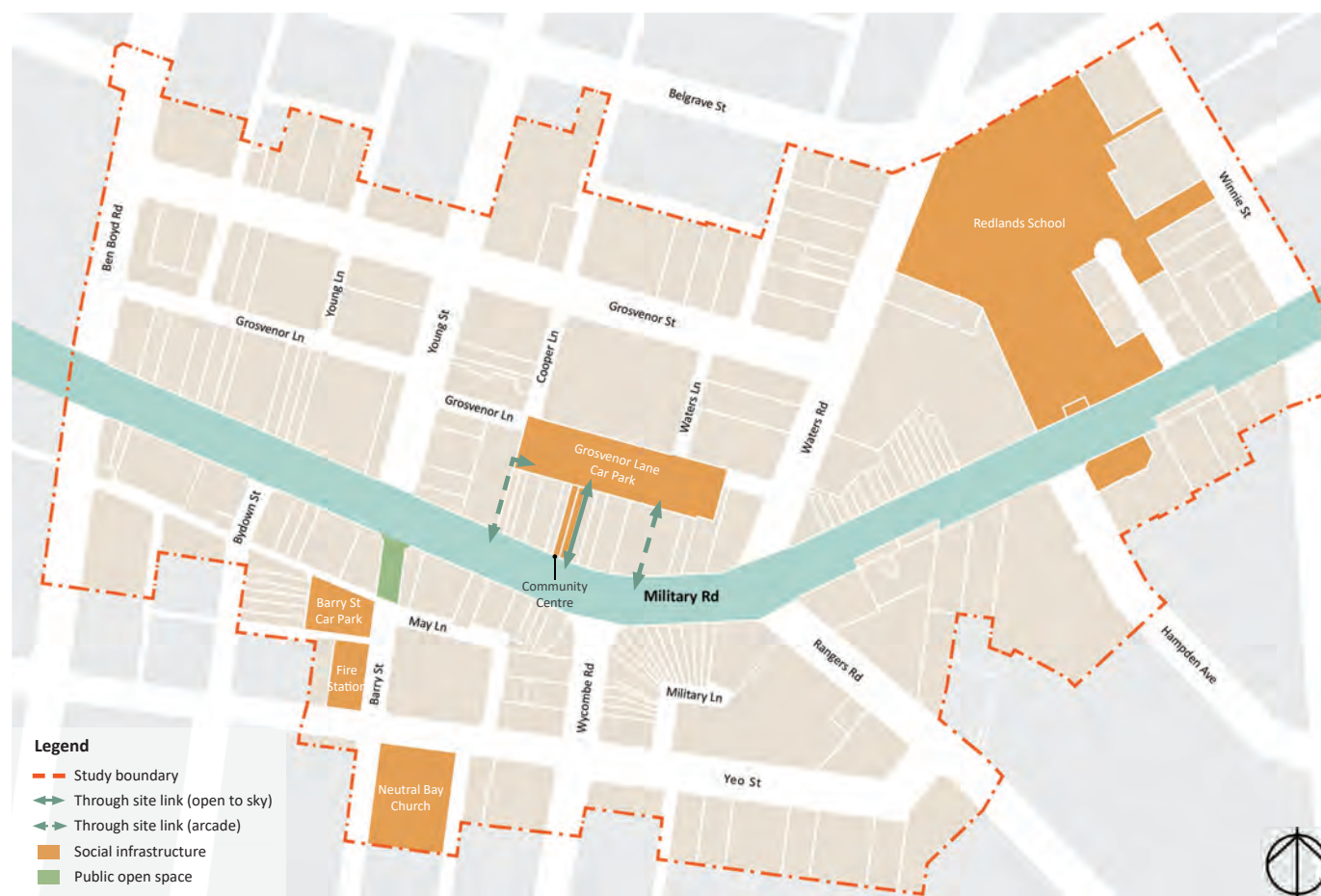


Figure 1-2. Existing site context

1.3 SETTING THE SCENE

History



Pre-Colonial era

Aboriginal heritage

The traditional owners of the North Sydney area are the Cammeraygal people. It is thought that Cammeraygal (Gameraigal) territory extended west to Woodford Bay and east to include Cremorne Point.

Like other harbour groups, the Cammeraygal relied upon shell and fin fish for sustenance. There is evidence of shell middens at Cremorne Point. It is likely the mud flats at the mouth of Neutral Bay creek provided oysters and other shellfish. The creek would have been a source of fresh water. Wallabies, reptiles and edible plants were hunted and harvested in the heath and forest areas.



1820's

1829

Settlement and establishment

By 1829, the Cammeraygal people likely ceased to exist as a coherent social group, although Aboriginal people still lived around the north shore waterfront. Cammeraygal territory, in present-day Neutral Bay, was purchased by John Piper from the Crown in 1814.

The name "Military Road" emerged after 1870, as it served as the conduit for transporting gun barrels from Blues Point to the under-construction Middle Head fortifications.

The availability of locally produced bricks spurred development along Military Road, leading to subdivisions on both sides in the 1890s.

An electric tram service along Military Road, from Falcon Street to Spit Junction, commenced in 1893. In 1909, a substantial tram depot, housing sheds and workshops, was opened at the western end of Military Road in Neutral Bay.

1880's



1940's

Post-war era

In the post-war era, the removal of trams and the rise of cars and buses altered Military Road's character, diminishing its role as a local shopping area. The construction of the Big Bear supermarket in 1959 marked the shift towards car-centric shopping and the need for parking. Subsequently, Military Road evolved into a prominent commuting corridor.

Mirvac's acquisition of the Big Bear site in 1983 led to significant commercial and retail redevelopment. Height restrictions were imposed, leading to buildings like Military Court with a stepped, defensive design. Neutral Bay Circle, constructed around 1980, integrated Brutalism and post-modernism.

In the 21st century, state government planning directives prompted mixed-use developments along Military Road, integrating residential and commercial spaces.

1990's



2023

Neutral Bay today

Neutral Bay is in a period of transformation with current planning controls becoming increasingly outdated as demand for commercial, residential and community facilities intensifies.

In recent years, Neutral Bay has faced significant development pressure, with developers proposing to exceed the area's existing height limit.

The precinct is experiencing a development trend from commercial single ownership into mixed-use strata ownership. Commercial spaces are being replaced by residential development, leading to a decline in employment opportunities that will potentially affect the local centre's vitality.

There are also added pressures on public spaces and community facilities, offering opportunities to improve the open space network and address the need for new community facilities.

1.3 SETTING THE SCENE

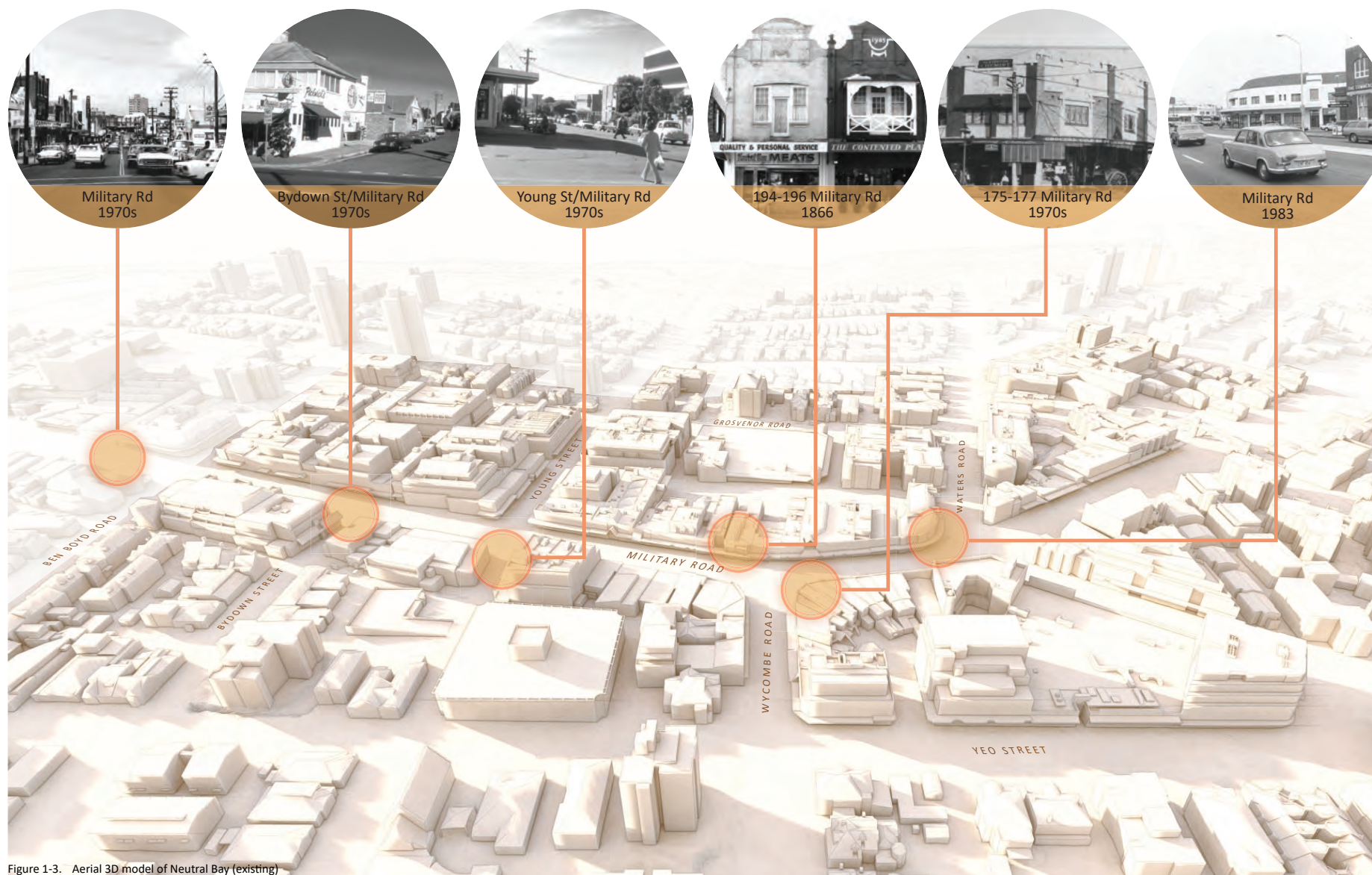


Figure 1-3. Aerial 3D model of Neutral Bay (existing)

1.3 SETTING THE SCENE

Existing character

The Neutral Bay local centre contains significant retail and hospitality uses, as well as office spaces servicing the business needs of the local population. The study area includes two major supermarkets, two small retail malls, a school, two Council-owned parking lots, and a community centre.

Over 40% of existing development in the study area is entirely commercial/employment generating. Military Road, in particular, boasts a significant commercial presence and serves as a prominent regional route, attracting substantial vehicular traffic and a high levels of pedestrian activity. This presents an opportunity for Military Road to better connect and activate both the northern and southern sections of the local centre.

Adjacent to the northern boundary of the local centre are medium to high-density residential buildings ranging from 5 to 16 storeys. South of the study area generally transitions to low-medium density housing, consisting of freestanding single-storey dwellings, many of which are original bungalows and workers cottages and identified as heritage items, with a few tall apartment buildings again dating back to the 1960's and 70's.

Significant to the distinct character of the area are several historically and culturally significant sites and iconic facades, such as houses, shops, churches, bus shelters, schools, and the Neutral Bay Fire Station.



Figure 1-4. Existing character map

1.3 SETTING THE SCENE

COMMERCIAL



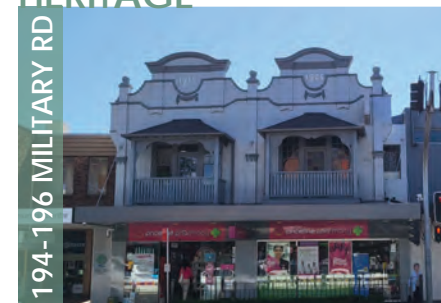
MIXED USE



RESIDENTIAL



HERITAGE



1.4 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

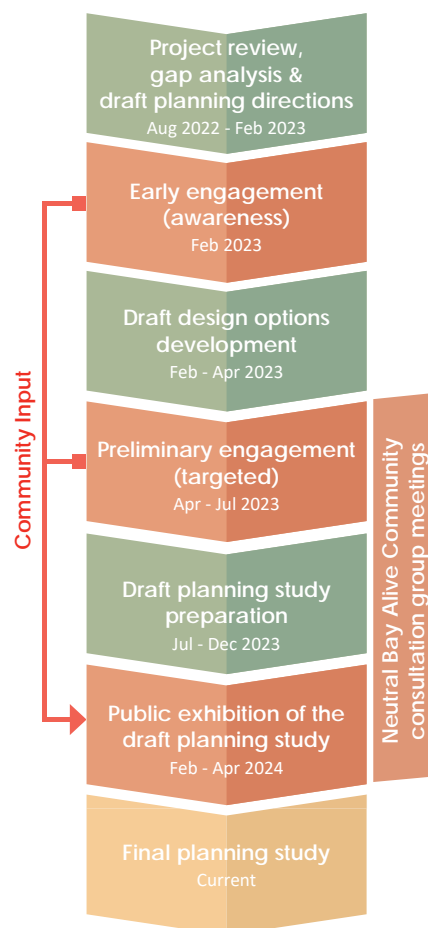
Community engagement and feedback are important in shaping this project and have contributed to the formation of this report.

Significant levels of engagement were undertaken in the preparation of the now rescinded MRCPS. The feedback from that engagement remains relevant and has provided valuable insights for the initial phases of this revised study.

Building upon the substantial feedback already received, a series of additional consultation sessions have been conducted to further explore Council's desire for *"a better balance between development height and the creation of additional public open space"* and other community improvements.

The additional consultation comprised:

- Early engagement drop-in sessions (February 2023)
- Preliminary engagement (April - July 2023)
 - Online and intercept surveys
 - Two community workshops
 - Landowner meetings
- Neutral Bay Alive community consultation group meetings (ongoing - from July 2023)
- Public exhibition (February - April 2024)



Early engagement Drop-in sessions

During late-February 2023, North Sydney Council conducted two early engagement drop-in sessions.

The drop-in sessions informed the community that preparation of a revised planning study was commencing and to outline the timeline and methodologies to be implemented.

Fact sheets and FAQs were distributed on site and made available on Council's website and at the Neutral Bay Community Centre and Council's Customer Service.

Promotion of the drop-in sessions included:

- Council website (Your Say)
- Social media
- E-newsletters
- Posters on noticeboards
- Notifications to precinct committees



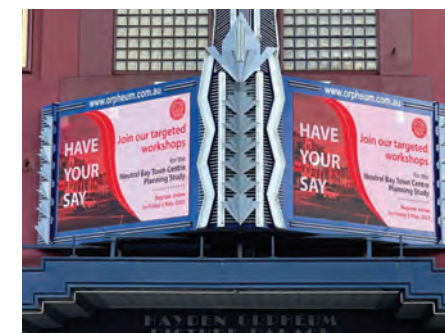
Preliminary engagement Online and intercept surveys

An external consultant, PlanCom Consulting, was engaged to assist Council conduct initial community and stakeholder engagement for the draft study.

A survey was conducted between April and May 2023, using a combination of randomised intercept respondents and self-elected online participants. The survey aimed to collect feedback on the use of Neutral Bay local centre and register interest in the community workshops.

Intercept surveys, held on 1 & 13 April and 2023, by PlanCom Consulting, as well as on 3 May 2023, by the Council, occurred at multiple locations within Neutral Bay local centre. An online survey was accessible on Council's Your Say webpage from 14 April to 11 May 2023.

In total, 212 responses were received, with 144 via Your Say and 68 from the intercept survey.



1.4 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community workshops

PlanCom Consulting facilitated two community workshops to gather feedback on draft built form options in the study area, building on prior consultations.

The first workshop on 24 May 2023, included 32 community members, focusing on capturing varied demographics and viewpoints. The second workshop, held on 30 May 2023, included 21 participants from local organisations, community leaders, precinct committees, and a local school. Representatives were selected by PlanCom Consulting through interest registrations.

Both sessions followed a standard interactive agenda, incorporating background information from Council, and participant engagement.

Workshop activities and presentations encompassed open space, new community centre location, building height options, built form scenarios, and key topics such as traffic, parking, pedestrian movement, village atmosphere, viability, and other issues raised by participants.



Landowner meetings

Between June to July 2023, Council staff conducted meetings with key landowners Coles (site 1) and Arkadia (site 2).

During these meetings, Council discussed the feedback, draft design options and public space upgrade opportunities from the community workshops.

Landowners were also provided an opportunity to present their design concepts and the progress they had made toward their development aspirations.

Council did not meet with Equitibuild (site 3A) or Woolworths (site 3B) due to active planning proposals that have been lodged on those landholdings.



Neutral Bay Alive

Community consultation meetings

Established in June 2023, the Neutral Bay Alive community consultation group has collaborated with Council throughout the preparatory phase of the study. Neutral Bay Alive has 10 community members, that have met regularly with Council staff to discuss the study's development. Consultation with the group will continue post-exhibition until endorsement of the final study.

Neutral Bay Alive's objective is to enhance Council's community engagement processes. It offers a platform for fostering in-depth and transparent discussions encompassing a diverse spectrum of study-related topics.

The group has provided feedback on matters of study preparation initiated by both Council staff and consultants. It has undertaken a pivotal role in rigorously testing and refining the proposed directions and recommendations embedded within this draft study.

Minutes of the meetings are available on Council's website.



Exhibition of the draft study

Notification and drop-in sessions

In February 2024, Council adopted the draft Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study (renamed '*Neutral Bay Village Planning Study*') for the purposes of public exhibition.

The draft study was placed on public exhibition from 27 February to 2 April 2024. Council received 342 submissions from the engagement process.

The community, businesses, and landowners showed significant support for the proposed enhancements to the public domain, pedestrian access, tree protection, preservation of local character, and protection of retail and commercial spaces in Neutral Bay.

Concerns related to building height and density, the long-term employment function of the area, problems with the Grosvenor Lane public car park and traffic implications from the potential growth.

This final planning study has been amended based on the feedback received.



1.4 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

What we heard from you

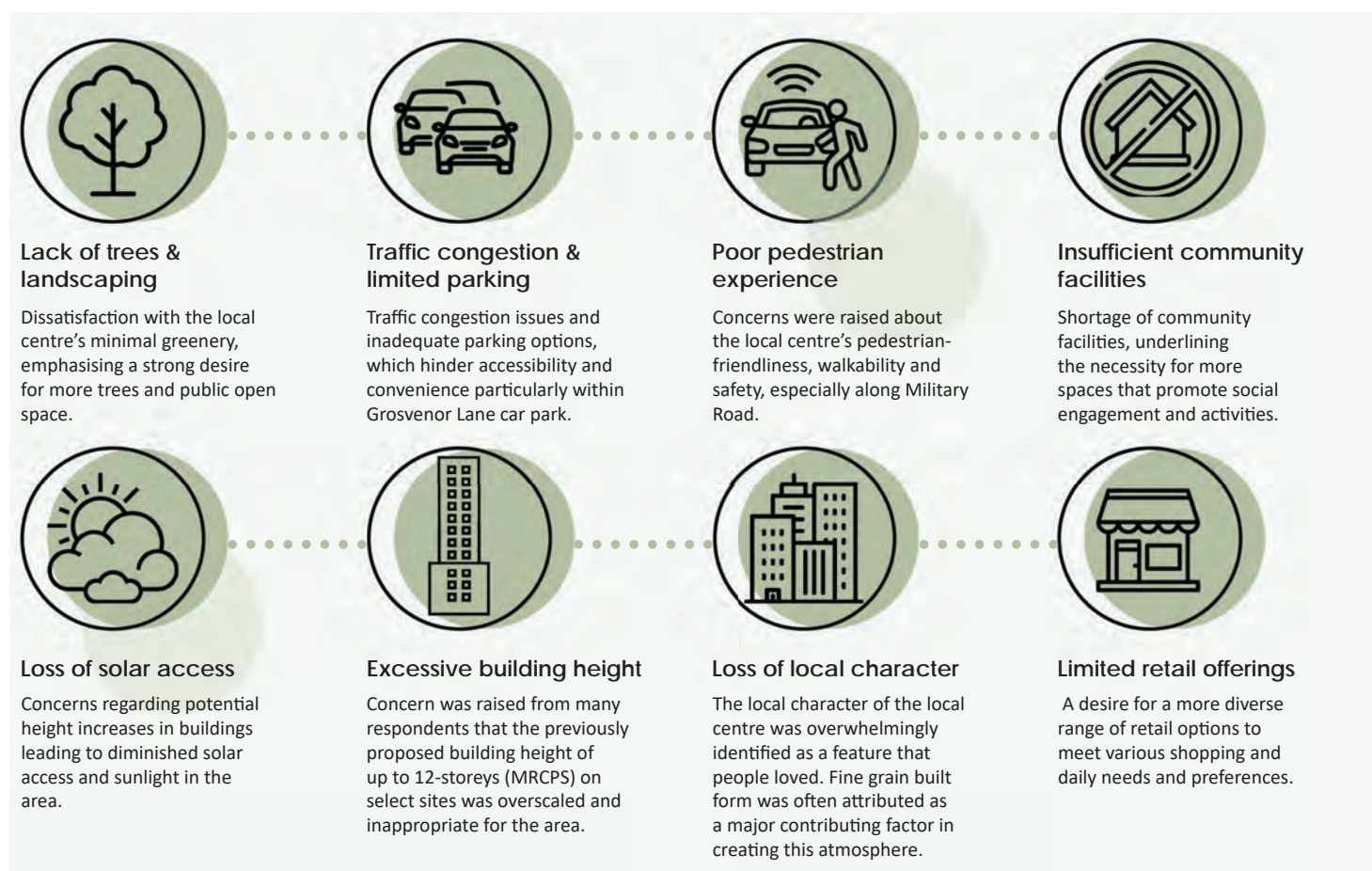
Feedback gathered from our community survey, workshops and exhibition provided insight into the viewpoints and preferences of individuals who frequent the local centre.

There is a strong demand for increased greenery, vegetation and open space. Approximately 80% of survey respondents considered more trees and landscaping to be highly important or important. Shopping is the primary reason for visiting the local centre. Dining emerged as an additional reason for half of survey participants. There is concern about the area's current variety of retail.

The majority of survey participants favour walking within the local centre. Consequently, significant concerns were raised about the poor pedestrian experience in the local centre.

Workshop attendees stressed the importance of a healthy, safe environment, better public spaces, and limiting building heights for Neutral Bay's future. While most workshop attendees found the proposed building heights in the MRCPS to be excessive, they were open to modest height increases, provided that they were supported by improvements to the public domain and included built form controls that consider the preservation of solar access and the local character.

Feedback from the exhibition indicates significant community support for proposed public domain and pedestrian access improvements, and various views on protecting commercial spaces and proposed building heights. The feedback has helped inform the final planning study.



1.4 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

What we will improve

The community consultation conducted has offered valuable input into the study.

Acknowledging the clear demand for additional public open areas, the study proposes two new plazas - Grosvenor Plaza and Rangers Road Plaza. In response to greenery concerns, the study supports preserving mature canopy trees at Waters Lane and in Grosvenor Plaza where possible, and proposes investigating new street tree and planting along Military Road.

The redevelopment of properties between Military Road and the planned Grosvenor Plaza offers an opportunity to establish stronger connections to the new plaza. The study proposes widened footpaths, and additional through-site links to improve connections. Flexibility has been provided at some locations to enable enclosed through-site links if the design can meet desired urban design outcomes.

In response to community concerns about previously proposed building heights in the MRCPS, the study reduces maximum building heights to up to 8-storeys on key sites, and includes detailed built form controls to protect solar access to public open spaces and residential properties along Yeo Street. Additionally, the study reconsiders the proposed control for the commercial floor space to address concerns raised during the exhibition of the draft study.

The study also examines new and upgraded community facilities, including a new Neutral Bay Community Centre with a prominent presence along Military Road and Grosvenor Plaza.







LOCAL CHARACTER STATEMENT

02

2.1 VISION



Figure 3-1. Artist Impression - looking south along Waters Lane

2.1 VISION

NEUTRAL BAY LOCAL CENTRE

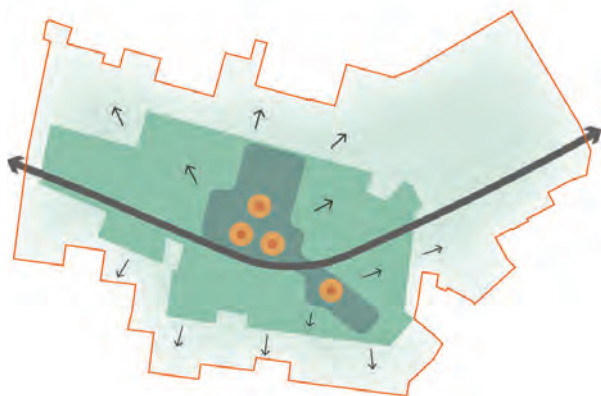
Neutral Bay will continue to develop as a vibrant local centre that meets the needs and aspirations of the community. New mixed-use development will offer a variety of retail, commercial and outdoor dining opportunities that create an economically strong centre with a lively atmosphere.

A network of high amenity public open spaces, pedestrian-friendly laneways and community facilities will support residents, workers, students and visitors of all ages and ability to gather, rest, and socialise.



2.2 PRINCIPLES

Principle 1 - Deliver infrastructure through VPAs



Mixed-use developments will be located in the centre, along the Military Road corridor. Additional heights are identified in prominent and highly accessible locations, in conjunction with the delivery of supporting public benefits. These benefits are new public open spaces and a community centre to cater to community needs.

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY I1 - North Sydney LSPS (2020)
Align growth and development with infrastructure that supports the needs of the North Sydney community

Principle 2 - Provide diverse community facilities



A range of community facilities will be provided in Neutral Bay local centre, such as multi-functional rooms, event spaces, art studios, and exhibition spaces. These amenities are designed to support the health and wellbeing of the community.

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY L2 - North Sydney LSPS (2020)
Provide a range of community facilities and services to support a healthy, creative, diverse and socially connected North Sydney community

Principle 3 - Protect heritage character and identity

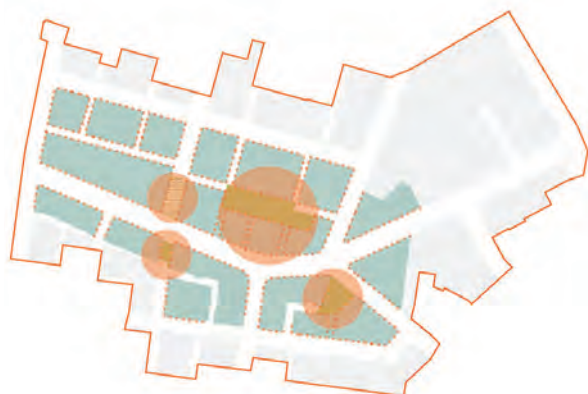


Heritage buildings and facades should be protected. Future developments adjacent to the heritage buildings are to ensure appropriate scale, facade treatment and separation to respect the existing town centre heritage character.

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY L3 - North Sydney LSPS (2020)
Create great places that recognise & preserve North Sydney's distinct local character & heritage

2.2 PRINCIPLES

Principle 4 - Support local businesses



The much-loved village atmosphere of the Neutral Bay local centre will be preserved through fine-grained shop frontages and an enhanced laneway network that supports local businesses, ensuring comfortable pedestrian access to shopping, dining, community services and workplaces. Activity clusters around open spaces and community facilities will support both daytime and night-time commercial activities.

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY P3 - North Sydney LSPS (2020)
Enhance the commercial amenity and viability of North Sydney's local centres

Principle 5 - Improve pedestrian amenity



Enhancing the walkability of the centre will improve convenience and enhance its overall appeal. Wide, open-to-sky through-block connections will be identified to enhance sight lines and create an activated and accessible centre. Design investigations along Military Road will focus on pedestrian safety, comfort, amenity and connectivity.

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY P6 - North Sydney LSPS (2020)
Support walkable centres and a connected, vibrant and sustainable North Sydney

Principle 6 - An integrated open space network



An inviting network of green public open spaces will enable people to gather, rest and socialise. New public open space opportunities will be identified to support active and passive recreation uses. Landscape planting and tree canopy will be increased, where possible.

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY S2 - North Sydney LSPS (2020)
Provide a high quality, well-connected and integrated urban green space system

Community Views

Creating a healthy and safe environment with additional public spaces and more landscaping was identified as important to the community in shaping the future of Neutral Bay. The community places considerable importance on the local centre's public domain, as indicated by the support of 73% of people surveyed for enhancing pedestrian comfort through the enhancement of the Military Road environment, improved footpaths, increased greenery, and better plazas in the area.





PLACEMAKING

03

3.1 PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

Key challenges

Placemaking encompasses the design and use of public spaces and the delivery of facilities and services that enhance the health, happiness, and wellbeing of the community.

Neutral Bay is a popular area for people to live, work, shop and visit. The centre's much loved village atmosphere stems from the suite of local shops, cafes, restaurants and businesses, and the tree-lined streets that frame the older commercial and more recent mixed use buildings. This chapter draws on these known strengths of the local centre to address some key placemaking challenges.

Parks, squares and plazas, whether owned by the government or private entities, are important community spaces. They play a major role in supporting social interaction and relaxation.

Currently there are two small public open spaces: May Gibbs Place and (temporary) Young Street Plaza. Respite options are generally limited to private cafes, dining spaces, and some informal seating. There is no permanent space in the centre for children's play but there are a few green spaces within 10-minute walk.

May Gibbs Place is a small public open space on Military Road in the heart of Neutral Bay local centre. Formed by the closure of Barry Street between Military Road and May Lane, the 380m² plaza celebrates the life of the renowned local artist May Gibbs, who lived and worked in Neutral Bay throughout her lifetime.

Young Street Plaza in its current form was implemented in November 2020 as an approximately 956m² temporary public open space for the community to trial. It was funded

by Transport for NSW as part of the Northern Beaches B-Line project. Opportunities for upgrading the public domain on Young Street are currently being reviewed.

The Northern Beaches B-Line project has resulted in a loss of tree canopy along Military Road, reducing shade and amenity for pedestrians navigating the six lanes of regional through traffic.

Overall, the community strongly feels there is a shortage of street trees and greenery. 80% of survey respondents consider adding more trees and landscaping 'important' or 'very important'.

Active shop frontages along Military Road and adjacent streets contribute to the area's vibrancy. Inactive frontages are located along some laneways and above ground supermarkets.

The Neutral Bay Community Centre at 190-192 Military Road plays a central role in supporting a wide range of community activities and services including computer lessons, hosting special interest groups and running health and fitness classes. It provides a strong range of services for older people in the area. The centre, however, is very limited in size which is restricting the number of activities that the community would like to see in Neutral Bay - particularly for future target groups of younger people, people with disabilities and those who are socially isolated. The aging building is seen as run down and difficult to access for people with lower mobility. 86% of survey respondents rated a new community centre in Neutral Bay as 'important' or 'very important'. The top priorities include additional space for arts, crafts, education and spaces for exhibitions and workshops.



Need for new public open spaces



More street trees and planting



Avoid inactive frontages



High demand for a broader range of community centre services

3.1 PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

Strategic context

A CITY SUPPORTED BY INFRASTRUCTURE

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY 11

Align growth and development with infrastructure that supports the needs of the North Sydney community

A CITY FOR PEOPLE

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY 12

Provide a range of community facilities and services to support a healthy, creative, diverse and socially connected North Sydney community

A CITY IN ITS LANDSCAPE

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY 12

Provide a high quality, well-connected and integrated urban green space system

- NORTH SYDNEY LSPS (2020)



- 1 Retain existing canopy trees where possible, and increase the amount of landscaping throughout the public domain



- 3 Improve pedestrian comfort, safety and amenity in the planning, layout, design and connection of places



- 2 Provide high quality green spaces that support active and passive recreation and children play areas



- 4 Enhance the social and cultural life of Neutral Bay

3.2 LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

1 Protect and enhance trees and landscaping

Maintaining and, where possible, increasing the urban tree canopy and landscaping contributes to the comfort, environmental performance and sense of safety and place of Neutral Bay.



Figure 3-1. Existing and proposed canopy trees

Retain existing tree canopy

Street trees and planting make a significant contribution to the visual character, environmental performance and comfort of the streetscape.

It is recommended that the existing mature trees located within Grosvenor Lane car park, and along Waters Lane and Military Road be retained. Some flexibility may be needed to accommodate basement parking under the future plaza. This flexibility, however, is subject to Council accepting a future plaza design having comparable tree canopy and achieving the required deep soil to accommodate this outcome.

Expand tree canopy and landscaping

To improve the street environment along Military Road, it is proposed to investigate the opportunity for additional street trees to be planted to infill gaps where trees were previously removed, where possible.

The new Grosvenor Plaza, Rangers Road Plaza and widening of Waters Lane should, on balance, support additional tree canopy and landscaping.



Figure 3-2. Artist's impression of Military Road proposed streetscape upgrades

Provide kerbside planting

Kerbside planting along both sides of Military Road should be investigated with the aim of providing a landscaped buffer between pedestrians and fast moving vehicles.

This would involve identifying opportunities for the placement, ideally, of hedge plantings that are set back from the kerb with periodic breaks to facilitate access to bus stops, pedestrian crossings, and parked cars. It would occupy the 1m kerbside zone of the footpaths, a space typically underutilised for pedestrian movement.

The cost of delivering and regularly maintaining hedges along Military Road, however, is likely to be high. Maintaining hedges would involve lane closures and significant traffic control most likely between 10pm and 4am, multiple times per year.

Alternatively, planter boxes or low lying grasses could serve as more achievable or affordable options for kerbside planting. Planter boxes are high maintenance, particularly in hot weather, and require repotting every 2-3 years. Grasses will not give the same level of landscaped buffer and may require fencing. Further work is needed to identify an optimal solution.

3.2 LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

2 Establish a network of public open spaces

A connected network of public open spaces enhances access to passive and active recreation opportunities for all ages and ability, promoting health, happiness and well-being.

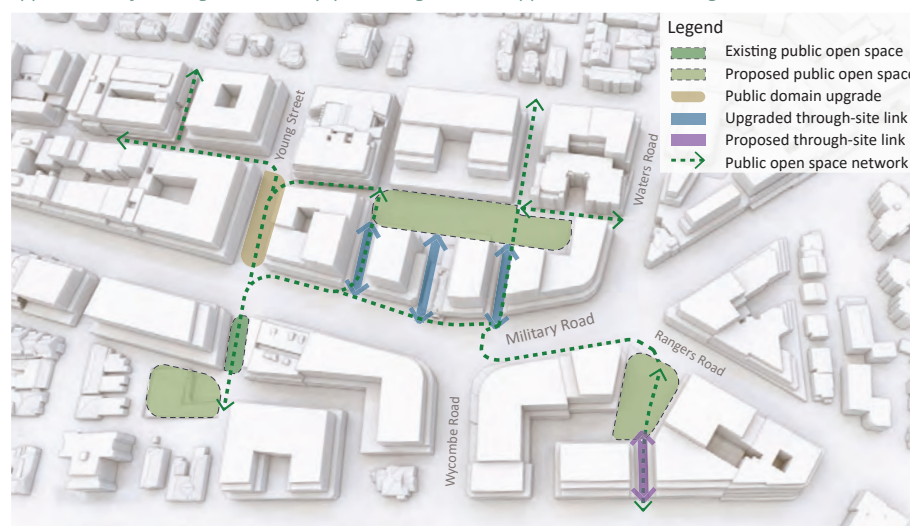


Figure 3-3. Proposed network of public open spaces

Provide new public open spaces

Two new public plazas are proposed:

- Grosvenor Plaza, a 3,000m² public space can be delivered by relocating the existing Grosvenor Lane car park underground
- Rangers Road Plaza, a new 1,000m² public space can be delivered by relocating the supermarket underground and built form setbacks.

Feedback from the community suggests both plazas should provide high quality green spaces that support active and passive recreation opportunities including children play areas. Further detail is provided on pages 32-35.

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Better-connected and accessible

A finer, coherent network of laneways, arcades and shared streets is proposed to connect the new plazas to Military Road and local streets.

The closure of Grosvenor Lane, between Cooper and Waters Lane, would form a strong east-west pedestrian connection away from Military Road. An open air laneway from Rangers Road Plaza to Yeo Street would improve visibility, accessibility and amenity. A covered link may be considered if it meets desired urban design outcomes.

Pedestrian links must be designed to provide access for all ages and abilities.



Figure 3-4. Artist Impression - looking south along Waters Lane

Widened Waters Lane footpath

Widening the footpath width of Waters Lane can be achieved via a 4m building setback along the western side of the laneway. This would create an opportunity for a highly landscaped, north-south connection to the new Grosvenor Plaza.

The mature plane trees along Waters Lane should be preserved.

3.2 LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

Grosvenor Plaza

Relocating the Grosvenor Lane car park underground would create an opportunity to deliver a new 3,000m² landscaped plaza in the heart of the centre.

The new Grosvenor Plaza should be a versatile, landscaped public open space capable of hosting markets and events. New elements such as a community lawn, play equipment, landscape planting, artworks, bicycle parking, quality paving and street furniture will support a range of day-to-day passive and active recreation.

Built form controls for surrounding redevelopment sites can ensure ample sunlight access to the plaza and active retail edges with new alfresco dining opportunities.

Access to the underground car park must support surrounding local retailers, local businesses and the supermarket, and achieve the placemaking objectives of this study. Pedestrian access to the car park should be situated at the plaza's perimeters. To keep vehicles away from the plaza and Waters Lane, vehicle access to the basement car park must be located on private land, ideally in the long term via Site 1.

The natural slope of the land is to be maintained to create seamless connections between existing and future developments, to minimise the use of stairs and maximise deep soil opportunities.

How this will be achieved is discussed in Chapter 6. Further design parameters and principles for the plaza are provided in Chapter 7.

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Figure 3-5. Artist's impression of proposed Grosvenor Plaza, looking west towards Grosvenor Lane



Figure 3-6. Long section-elevation through Grosvenor Plaza

Precedents



1 Existing canopy trees and new trees



2 Fully pedestrianised - Grosvenor Ln closed



3 'Village green' flexible space for passive recreation, events



4 Adventure playground with sculptural play equipment



5 Active retail frontage with outdoor dining



6 Potential for architecturally designed shelter for outdoor dining and events

3.2 LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

Key characteristics

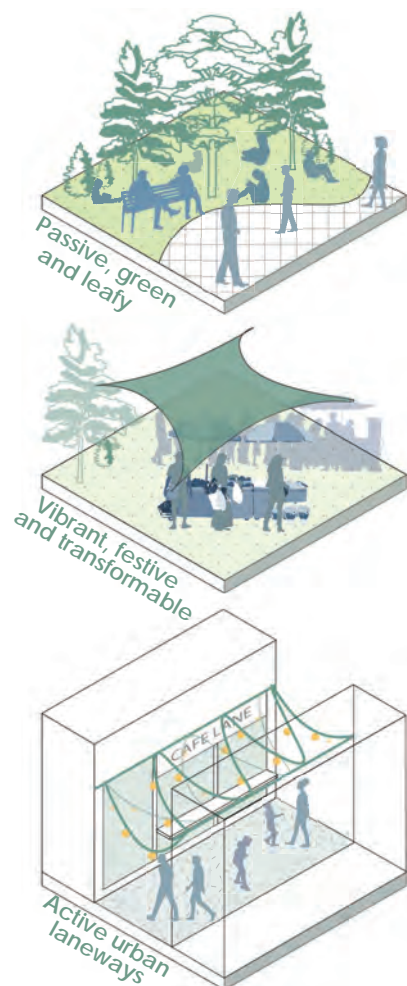


Figure 3-7. Grosvenor Plaza indicative plan subject to further design

3.2 LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

Rangers Road Plaza

A new 1,000m² public plaza on the southern side of Military Road can be delivered by relocating the current supermarket underground. This would provide much needed open space and expanded retail opportunities to support population growth.

The community strongly supports a playground for young children at this location. The playground should be set back from the street and be well serviced by surrounding cafes and retail. It should include a decorative shade canopy and interactive sculptural play elements, ideally including water play elements to combat summer heat.

Built form controls can support good solar access and active edges along either side of the plaza.

The design includes a 6m through-site link connecting the new plaza to Yeo Street. An open air link would improve visibility, accessibility and amenity. However, a covered through site link may be considered if it can be demonstrated that the through site link can meet desired urban design outcomes. Pedestrian entries into the supermarket and underground parking are envisaged to be integrated along the plaza's edges to ensure the space is not encumbered by built form structures.

A potential new pedestrian crossing over Military Road that connects the plaza to Waters Road would improve north-south connectivity. Further investigation is needed to resolve implications for traffic signaling on Military Road.

See Chapters 6 and 7 for further details.

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Figure 3-8. Artist's impression of Rangers Road Plaza, looking south towards Yeo Lane and Military Lane



Figure 3-9. Elevation of Rangers Road Plaza from Rangers Road

Precedents



1
Extensive and flexible lawn space for passive recreation



2
Seating wall to edge of lawn and playground



3
Interactive water play area with a series of fountains and sprinklers



4
Play space for young children with interactive equipment



5
Decorative shade element with integrated lighting



6
Active retail frontage with outdoor dining

3.2 LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

Key characteristics

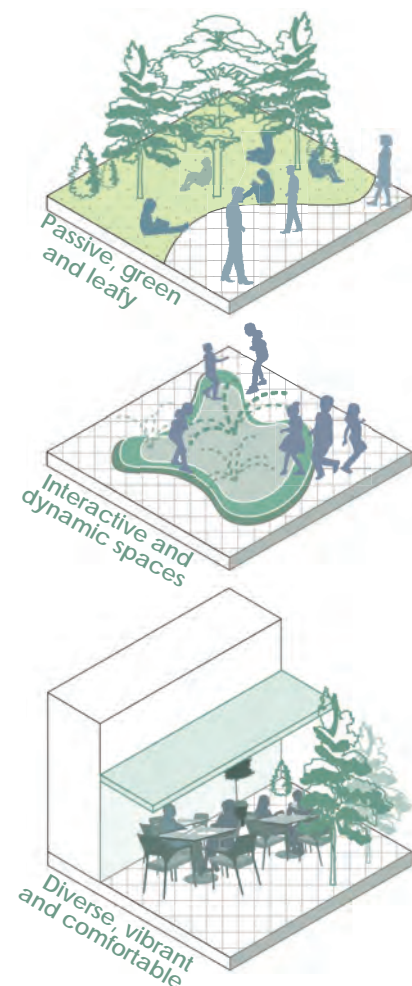


Figure 3-10. Rangers Road Plaza detailed plan

3.3 COMMUNITY LIFE

3 Improve pedestrian amenity, accessibility and safety

Actions to improve pedestrian comfort and connectivity will reduce reliance on private vehicles to access local shops and services, enhance the village atmosphere and support the local economy.

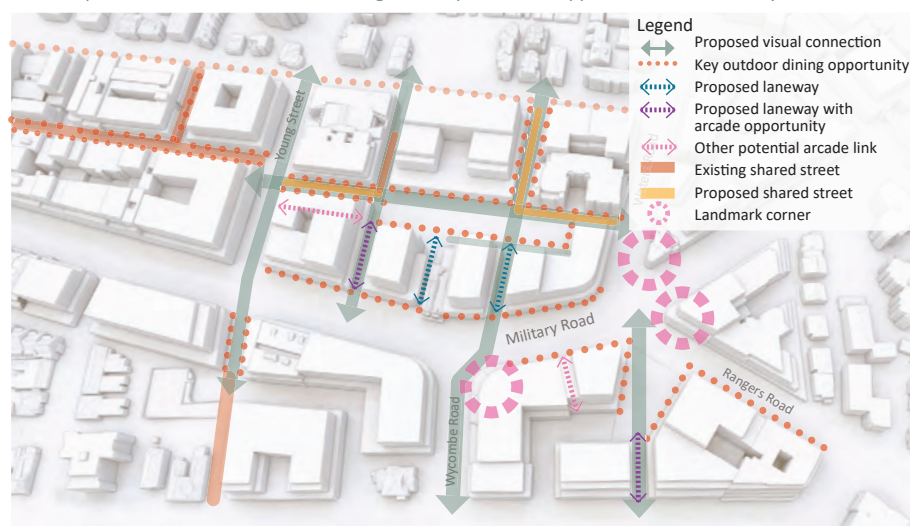


Figure 3-11. Through-site links and visual connections

Enhance street activity and outdoor dining

Additional ground-level setbacks are proposed along Military Road, Waters Lane and the edges of Grosvenor Plaza to widen pedestrian walkways and support more outdoor dining opportunities.

Active frontages are proposed along all main streets and public open spaces. Finer grain land uses such as small businesses, bars, cafes, shops and cultural activities will be encouraged in the ground floor of buildings fronting laneways and new pedestrian links.

Clearer visual connections

Through-site links have been carefully positioned to ensure clear visual connections between public spaces, bus stops and local landmarks within Neutral Bay local centre.

Community centres and new plazas will require clear entrances and exits and visible wayfinding. This will ensure that public spaces within the local centre are more accessible, inclusive and welcoming.



Upgraded paving, street furniture and lighting

To achieve a unified visual expression to the streetscape, improvements such as paving and street furniture to widened streets and shared zones is progressively being undertaken in accordance to Council's public domain style manual and design codes.

Atmospheric lighting of open spaces can create an inviting village atmosphere that supports the local night-time economy.

3.3 COMMUNITY LIFE

4 Upgrade community facilities

Community facilities bring people together to a build strong, connected and resilient community.

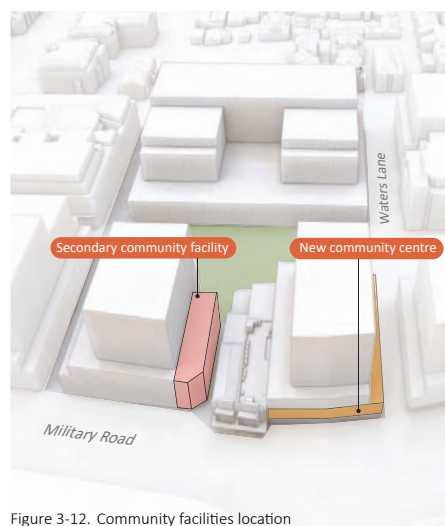


Figure 3-12. Community facilities location

A new Neutral Bay Community Centre

The need to upgrade the existing Neutral Bay community centre has been identified since 2016 (Community Uses on Council Land Study NSC 2016). This study proposes to relocate the community centre to a site nearby, adjacent to the new Waters Lane through-site link. The community centre would be a 1,000m² space located on the first floor of the new development at Site 2 (east), with a lobby on the ground floor facing Grosvenor Plaza.

Designed for a strong visual presence along Military Road and Grosvenor Plaza, the lobby,



situated prominently at the corner facing both the plaza and the new laneway, should be visually transparent and inviting, including accessible public toilets.

The community centre's activities can extend to the new Grosvenor Plaza, with a paved open space in front of the lobby providing flexibility for community events and gatherings.

Once relocated, the former community facility can be repurposed as a new 'Creative Hub'.

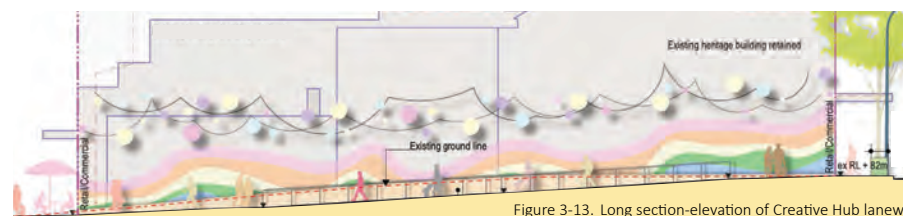


Figure 3-13. Long section-elevation of Creative Hub laneway



Creative Hub

A new secondary community facility developed as a 'Creative Hub' is proposed on the site of the existing community centre. It will promote a new, creative presence for the local centre through a mix of studio, exhibition and retail spaces for local artists.

In addition to arts and cultural activities, it is envisaged that the Creative Hub will also focus on learning and connectedness. Workshop/classroom spaces could be provided for short tech-related courses and activities for people of all ages.



At this stage, the 'Creative Hub' is unfunded. Further work is needed to identify an optimal solution.

Community Views

Survey respondents indicated that they usually walk to Neutral Bay to shop, dine, have coffee or meet friends. Approximately 60% of respondents identified 'better access' and 'increased comfort for pedestrians' as important issues for the centre.

Military Road is considered a significant barrier that divides the local centre, occasionally creating an unsafe and unpleasant walking experience. There are concerns about potential traffic increases resulting from proposed changes.





ACCESS

04

4.1 ACCESS STRATEGY

Existing transport networks

Walking network

The centre's walking network comprises footpaths, shared zones laneways and arcades. Access to key destinations is relatively easy and logical. Certain streets that are narrow or have disjointed footpaths are being progressively addressed via council's LATM (Local Area Traffic Management) action plan.

There are known concerns about inadequate footpath space near bus stops on Military Road during peak travel hours.

While signalised intersections generally provide safe crossings, limited crossing times on Military Road are a major issue for people with lower mobility. Crossing points along Military Road are limited, with the largest gap being 260m between Wycombe Road and Hampden Avenue, limiting north-south connections across the local centre.

Public transport and cycling network

Neutral Bay local centre is well-served by the bus network, featuring routes running east-west along Military Road. This encompasses B-Line services and other express bus routes connecting Wynyard and the Northern Beaches area, and other local services.

Presently, cycling is accommodated on local roads shared with motor vehicles, as there is no dedicated separated cycleways or off-road paths.

Council is investigating the opportunity of implementing a separated cycleway on Young Street, between Grosvenor Street and Sutherland Street on the north side.

There is a lack of safe crossing facilities connecting the cycleways north and south of Military Road and a lack of dedicated cycleway infrastructure along Military Road.

Car ownership

In 2021, an analysis of household car ownership levels in the Neutral Bay SA2¹ catchment revealed notably lower car ownership rates compared to the Greater Sydney average.

Specifically, 72% of households in Neutral Bay possess only one or no cars, whereas only 25% own two or more. In contrast, across Greater Sydney, 49% of households own one or no cars, and 46% own two or more.

This disparity in car ownership rates in Neutral Bay is likely attributed to enhanced accessibility to frequent public transport and services within the vicinity, thereby reducing the dependence on private vehicles.

1. The SA2 boundary extends much further than the Neutral Bay Local Centre, including the entire suburbs of Neutral Bay and Kurraba Point and Kirribilli, and parts of North Sydney.

Travel patterns and demand

Local workers in Neutral Bay exhibit a strong preference for active transport or public transit in their daily commutes, as highlighted by the 2016 ABS Census.

For the workers that live and work in the Neutral Bay SA2 catchment, 54% of journey to work trips was via walking, cycling or public transport, contrasting with 34% using private vehicles. In comparison, only 37% of Greater Sydney workers choose active transport or public transit, with 58% relying on private vehicles.

For those commuting from outside Neutral Bay, 37% prefer active transport, while 47% use private vehicles. The high level of self-containment, where individuals live and work in the same region, reduces private car use.



4.1 ACCESS STRATEGY

Parking occupancy

A parking occupancy survey was undertaken during both weekday and weekend time periods. The survey identified the following peak periods:

- Weekday (Wednesday): 12pm to 1pm
- Weekend (Saturday): 1pm to 2pm

The overall parking occupancy rate for the study area is at around 70% at weekdays peak periods and 80% at weekend peak periods (Table 4.1).

On the lunchtime Wednesday peak, the northern half of the study area had significantly higher occupancy (227 spaces) than the southern half (102 spaces). Grosvenor Lane car park averages about 73% occupancy, with peak periods of 83% between 11:00am to 2:00pm. Barry Street car park has an average occupancy of 84%, with peak periods between 9:00am to 2:00pm. At 6:00pm, the occupancy at this car park is at its lowest during the surveyed periods at 70%.

During the Saturday peak, the northern half of the study area again was observed to have a significantly higher occupancy than the southern half (226 occupied versus 126 occupied). Parking at Grosvenor Street picked up significantly to being 93% occupied.

On average, the study area presently provides sufficient public car parking. Although peak hours may witness high parking occupancy in certain locations, the results indicate that there will ultimately be adequate parking for visitors (Stantec 2024).

Parking occupancy survey results

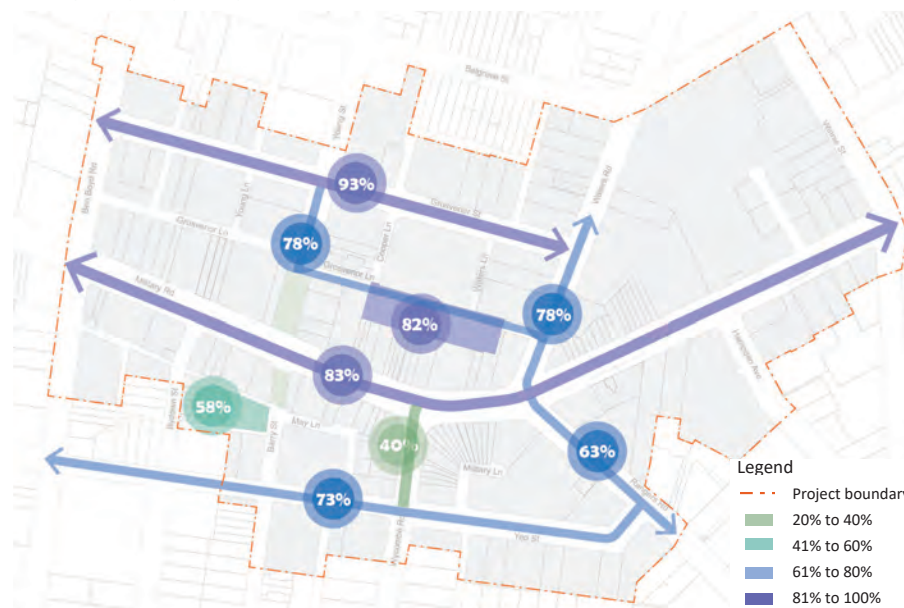
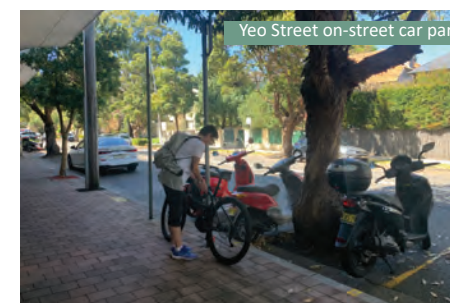


Figure 4-1. Existing public parking occupancy during the weekend peak period (Saturday 1pm to 2pm)

	Weekday Peak (12pm)	Weekday evening peak (6pm)	Weekend Peak (1pm)
Total	329/465 (71%)	288/465 (62%)	392/489 (80%)
North of Military Road	227/282 (81%)	168/282 (60%)	266/306 (87%)
South of Military Road	102/183 (56%)	120/183 (66%)	126/183 (69%)

Table 4-1. Summary of parking occupancy during peak periods

Data from Neutral Bay Traffic and Transport Study (Stantec 2024)



4.1 ACCESS STRATEGY

Neutral Bay Traffic and Transport Study (Stantec 2024) summary of recommendations

Pedestrian safety and amenity



Consider investigating:

- reducing speed limit to 30-40km/h (Grosvenor Street and Yeo street)
- 10km/h shared zone (Ben Boyd Lane)
- widening footpaths around B-Line bus stops
- various options for Cooper Lane and Yeo Street to improve pedestrian safety
- traffic calming treatments (various locations)

Cycling



Consider investigating:

- additional bike parking facilities

Public transport



Consider investigating:

- community concerns over lack of capacity on current bus services and liaise with TfNSW

Vehicular and parking



Consider undertaking:

- various treatments relating to Cooper Lane including potential shared zone status, sightlines, vehicle movements and Site 1 loading dock location
- network modelling for proposed pedestrian crossing upgrades along Military Road
- intersection modelling of intersection performance of growth scenario to year 2041 (various locations)
- pre-construction road safety audit of Site 1
- parking wayfinding strategy, on-street car share spaces and parking restrictions

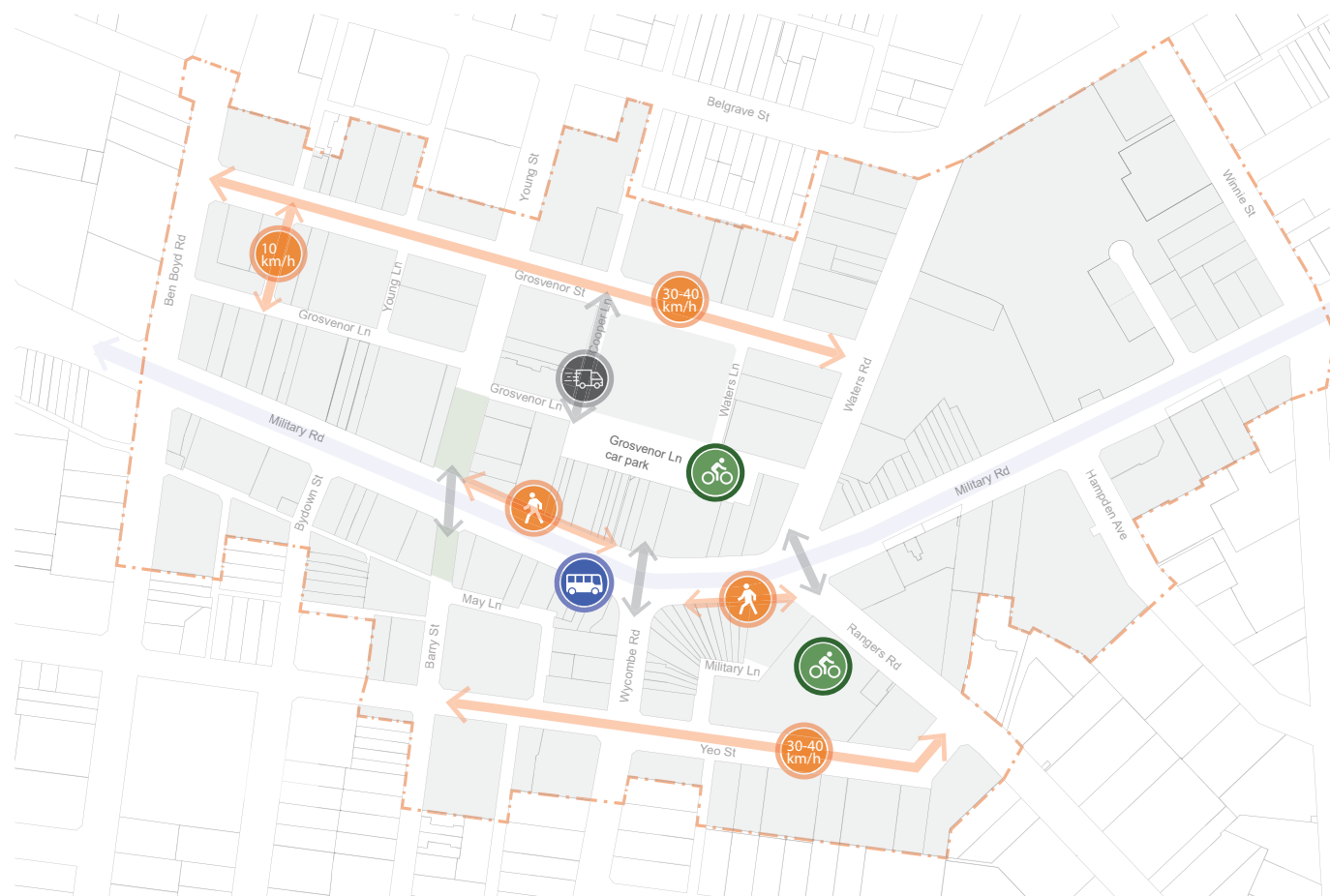


Figure 4-2. Traffic and transport issues and opportunities

4.1 ACCESS STRATEGY

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

30-MINUTE CITY

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY P6

Support walkable centres and a connected, vibrant and sustainable North Sydney

- NORTH SYDNEY LSPS (2020)



- 1 Improve footpaths, through-site links and crossings to provide safe, connected and walkable local centre



- 2 Improve cycling infrastructure and widen footpaths near B-Line bus stops



- 3 Relocate Grosvenor Lane car park underground, retain the number of public car parking spaces and investigate a parking management strategy



- 4 Minimise traffic impacts of future development and improve road safety

4.2 WALKING

1 Encourage walking within the local centre

Creating a safe, connected and pedestrian-friendly environment will encourage people to walk to and around the local centre.

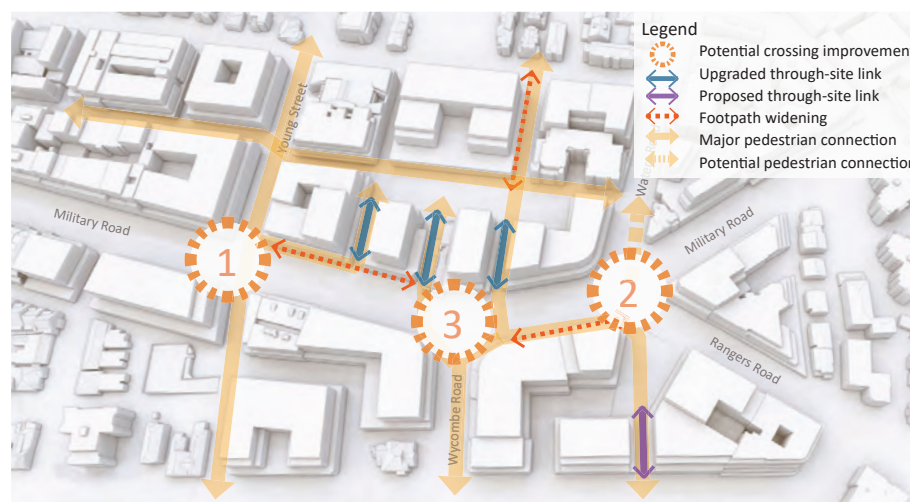


Figure 4-3. Local centre pedestrian connections

Potential crossing improvements on Military Rd

Military Road is a vehicle-dominated corridor that divides the local centre. The following projects have been identified for further investigation:

1. Military Road crossing realignment

Realigning the western pedestrian crossing would provide a more direct connection between Young St and May Gibbs Place for pedestrians and cyclists (SMM 2023)

2. Additional crossing near Rangers Road

A new pedestrian crossing connecting Rangers Road to Waters Road would provide easier access to the new plazas, shops and services on either side of the local centre (SMM 2023)

3. Extended pedestrian crossing signal times

Longer pedestrian crossing signal times would provide more time for pedestrians, particularly of lower mobility, to walk across Military Road (community consultation)

Military Road is a state road. Accordingly, any proposed changes to the road require the approval of TfNSW. TfNSW has identified Military Road as of strategic importance for vehicle thoroughfare, so proposals that potentially affect this function may be challenging. Council places a high priority on improving pedestrian safety and accessibility and will continue to advocate for improvements.



Improving through-site links

To create better connections between Military Road and the new public plazas, the following projects have been identified (SMM 2023):

- expand the centre laneway link in Site 2 (centre) near the community centre to 3m
- upgrade the western link in Site 2 (west) to a 6m wide link aligned with Cooper Lane
- improve the eastern link in Site 2 (east) to a 6m wide laneway aligned with the western side of Waters Lane footpath
- introduce a 6m wide new link in Site 3 connecting Rangers Road Plaza to Yeo Street

Widening footpaths

To further improve the amenity of the centre the following footpath widening projects have been identified (SMM 2023):

- a 2.5m whole of building setback along Military Road at the B-Line bus stops to provide extra space for commuters and landscape planting opportunities
- a 4m whole of building setback on the western side of Waters Lane to facilitate a landscaped north-south pedestrian connection to the plaza

4.3 CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

2 Encourage cycling and public transport use

Improving active transportation infrastructure can make it easier for people to access the local centre without relying on private vehicles and encourage cycling and walking in a safe context.



Figure 4-4. Cycling and public transportation infrastructure improvements

Cycling improvements

In promoting cycling as a sustainable urban mobility option, the following measures have been identified (Stantec 2024):

- a safe cycleway connection may be investigated along Young Street, that connects the local centre to the Sutherland cycleway to the north, and potentially to Barry Street in the south if the Military Road pedestrian crossing is realigned under strategy 1
- the installation of secure public bicycle parking on Grosvenor Plaza and Rangers Road Plaza

Widening B-Line bus stop areas

As discussed earlier, there are known concerns about inadequate footpath space near bus stops on Military Road during peak travel hours.

To improve the safety and amenity of waiting commuters and other pedestrians passing along Military Road, a 2.5m whole of building setback is proposed along sites fronting the B-Line bus stop, as shown in Figure 4.4.



4.4 ROAD NETWORK AND PARKING

3 Retain public parking spaces and develop a parking strategy

Replacing the current surface-level Grosvenor Lane car park with an underground facility will enhance the local centre. Parking management strategies aim to further reduce the impact of vehicles.

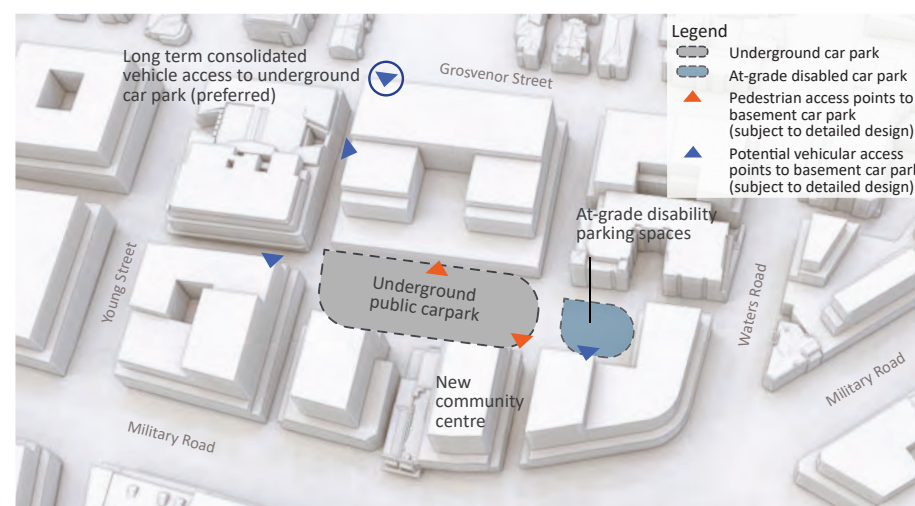


Figure 4-5. Grosvenor Lane underground car park and access points

Preserving public parking availability

The local centre has two council-owned car parks at Grosvenor Lane and Barry Street, offering easy access to local shops and public spaces. On-street parking is available on most local roads and specific segments of Military Road outside of clearway and bus lane hours, with a mix of time restrictions, metered spaces, and residential preferential parking. The study area also provides on-street accessible parking and car-sharing bays.

The Traffic and Transport Study (Stantec 2024) confirms there is a sufficient amount of parking spaces in the centre. The following projects will reduce the volume of vehicles circulating in and around the centre and create more space for people:

- 1. Grosvenor Lane Car Park**
Relocate the existing public car park underground, retaining the number of public car spaces in the new facility
- 2. Disability parking at grade**
Preserve at-grade parking spaces for designated disability parking spots



3. Enhancing pedestrian access

Establish clear physical connections around the plaza, facilitating easy pedestrian access between the basement car park and local shops and services

4. Consolidated car park access

Ideally, long term consolidated access to the basement car park will be via Grosvenor Street from Site 1 to minimise vehicle and pedestrian conflict and maximise the amenity of public spaces. Subject to detailed design, other potential locations for vehicle entries to the Sites 1 and 2 basement car park are identified (see figure 4.5)

Parking management strategy

A parking management strategy may include, but is not limited to (Stantec 2024):

- developing a parking wayfinding strategy to improve parking efficiency. Long term, this could include real time variable signage that identifies the number and location of available car parking spaces
- a comprehensive review of parking restrictions across the entire area to increase parking turnover in areas with short stay trip attractors
- identifying the demand and potential opportunities for additional car-share spaces

4.4 ROAD NETWORK AND PARKING

4 Minimise additional traffic impact & improve road safety

A major source of carbon emissions come from transport, and private cars are the biggest contributor. This study aims to minimise additional traffic impact by promoting sustainable transport modes and improving road safety.



Trip generation and traffic impact

A traffic analysis and impact assessment of the proposed growth and public domain upgrades under this study was conducted by Stantec.

Modelling of both residential and non-residential gross floor area (GFA) for the proposed growth scenario under this study indicates that:

- in general, traffic volumes generated from the proposed growth scenario are relatively minor for most intersections, and manageable within the local road network
- during the weekday AM and PM peak, the intersection of Grosvenor Street and Cooper Lane is expected to have the highest increase in vehicular trips due to the future redevelopment of Site 1
- during weekend peak hours within the study area, aside from the intersections along Military Road and the intersection at Ben Boyd Road with Ernest Street, the traffic volumes at the other key intersections are anticipated to experience a relatively minor increase



Improve road safety

To address community safety concerns about “rat-running” traffic on Grosvenor Street and Yeo Street, and the anticipated higher pedestrian activity in the centre, the following is recommended (Stantec 2024):

- a review of the speed environment and consideration of reducing speed from 50 km/h to 30-40km/h along Grosvenor St and Yeo St
- investigating opportunities for introducing additional formal crossings along Grosvenor St
- investigating introducing a mid-block formal crossing point along Yeo St near the proposed through-site link

Community Views

The community identified the restaurants, cafes and bars in and around Grosvenor Lane, Grosvenor Street and Young Street as their favourite and most valued spots. The community also highly valued ease of access to a wide variety of shops and services.

Local businesses are keen to see a broader range of specialty retail, restaurants, cafes and rooftop bars open both day and night and enhanced outdoor dining opportunities. Improved public domain, community facilities and shared zones, whilst maintaining customer parking, loading zones and servicing capabilities were also identified.





EMPLOYMENT

05

5.1 EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Strategic context



Figure 5-1. Structure plan for the North District, North District Plan 2018

The Neutral Bay village is identified as a 'local centre' in the North District Plan (GCC 2018). Local centres are the focal point of neighbourhoods and an important part of a 30-minute city, providing access to essential day-to-day goods and services, social and community infrastructure and public transport interchanges close to where people live. Local centres have an important role in providing local employment, and account for close to 18% of all Greater Sydney jobs.

Key principles for the planning of local centres as outlined in the North District Plan include:

- protect or expand retail and/or commercial floor space
- protect or expand employment opportunities
- support the night-time economy

Planning for a vibrant and safe local centre that enhances the social and recreational needs of communities includes supporting a range of small businesses such as retail, arts and cultural enterprises and events.

Military Road Corridor Economic Baseline Report

In 2018, Council engaged HillPDA to undertake an economic analysis of the Neutral Bay and Cremorne Military Road corridor. A comprehensive floor space audit and survey of 106 local businesses was undertaken in September 2018 to provide an understanding of current economic activity and future market trends and inform the development of an economic strategy for the Neutral Bay local centre.

Neutral Bay Local Centre Economic Analysis

In 2023, Council engaged HillPDA to undertake an updated floor space audit and commercial floor space demand analysis taking into consideration the short-to-long term impacts of Covid-19 on economic activity and future market trends.

The following pages outline the key findings of this study.

5.1 EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Commercial floor space supply

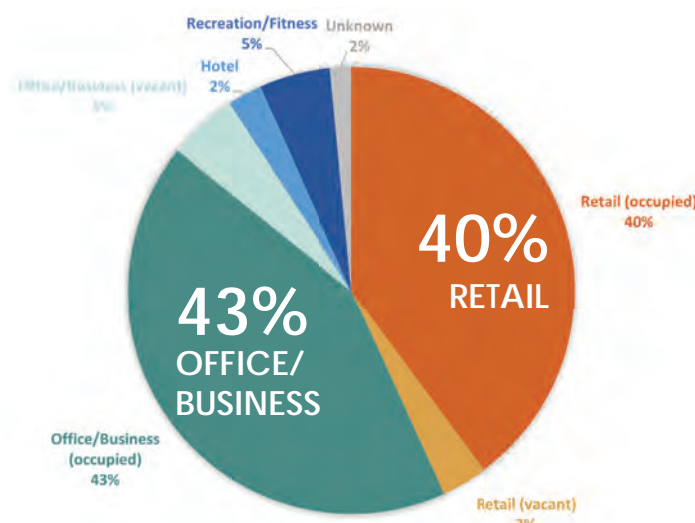


Figure 5-2. Non-residential excludes: residential, utilities, car parks, construction sites and community uses (schools)
Source: HillPDA, Neutral Bay Town Centre Economic Analysis & Feasibility Assessment Report

Retail and office/business premises

The floor space audit conducted by HillPDA in April 2023 identified a total 64,127m² of non-residential floor space within the Neutral Bay local centre. This included 27,704m² of retail floor space and 30,512m² of office/business floor space.

Over 60% of Neutral Bay's retail floor space is occupied by supermarkets, cafes/restaurants, and personal services. There is a high presence of medical and health-related services, real estate and property services, and financial institutions occupying Neutral Bay's office and businesses premises.

Vacancies

An estimated 5,300m² of vacant retail and commercial floor space was identified across the Neutral Bay local centre. The majority of vacant retail floor space was observed at the ground level, less than 80m² in size and located predominantly along Military Road.

Neutral Bay is a market of predominantly sole operators or small-medium size businesses, and floorplates between 120-300m² is considered optimum. However, the majority of observed vacancies were in floorplates around 110m², indicating lower quality product or high rents may be contributing factors to current vacancies.

Economic profile

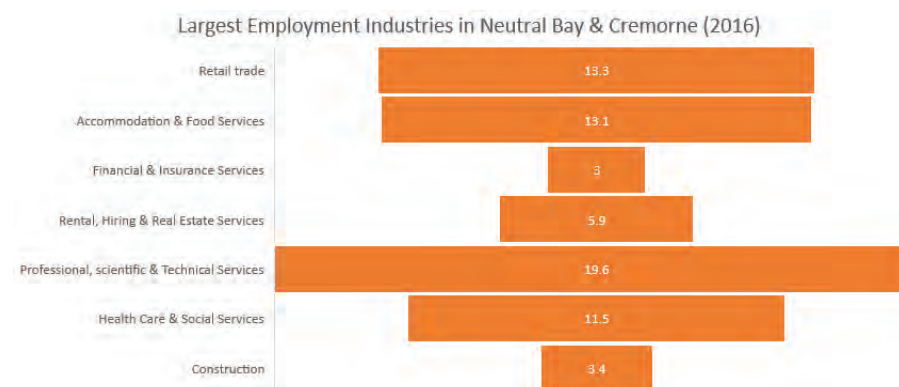


Figure 5-3. Largest employment industries in Neutral Bay & Cremorne 2016
Source: HillPDA, Neutral Bay Town Centre Economic Analysis & Feasibility Assessment Report

Business & employment characteristics

In 2017, Neutral Bay and Cremorne accounted for 9% (1,385) of total registered businesses and 8% (5,405) of total jobs in the North Sydney LGA. Many business owners have indicated their reasons for locating in the area is due to the Centre's established identity, amenity and close proximity to home. A high proportion of workers (38%) live locally, travelling less than 5km from their place of residence.

Whilst a high proportion (46%) of businesses in Neutral Bay are office/business premises related, they comprise only 6.6% of such businesses across the North Sydney LGA. This is largely attributed

to the high number of similar businesses located in the North Sydney CBD. Neutral Bay is an important location for retail businesses, with a total 141 retail businesses (or 13% of the North Sydney LGA's retail businesses) located in Neutral Bay and Cremorne alone.

Neutral Bay's largest employment industries are professional, scientific and technical services, followed by retail trade, accommodation and food services, and health care.

5.1 EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Commercial floor space demand & challenges

Retail and office/business premises

Neutral Bay local centre currently supports around **64,000m²** of non-residential floorspace (excluding school, car park, construction sites and utility uses).

Economic analysis indicates that there is current demand for an additional **6,460m²** of both retail (4,960m²) and office/business (1,500m²) floor space (HillPDA 2023). Whilst Neutral Bay contains an adequate supply of personal services retailing, there is sufficient demand for an additional supermarket, bulky goods, restaurants and cafes, and specialty food and non-food retailing, and demand for additional office/business floor space in the professional and technical services, finance, medical and property services sectors.

By 2041, it is estimated demand will increase to an additional **13,450m²** of retail (9,750m²) and of commercial office/business (3,700m²) floor space above existing levels.

Key challenges

A key objective of this study is to ensure the employment function of the Neutral Bay local centre continues to grow and remain competitive over time.

However, theoretical capacity modelling indicates that if all sites within the MU1-Mixed Use zone of the Neutral Bay local centre were developed to their maximum capacity under existing planning controls, it would result in the **loss of 30,000m²** (or 47%) of existing employment generating floor space in the centre. This broadly translates into a **reduction of 1,200 existing local jobs**.

Arresting the ongoing decline of employment generating floor space is critical to ensuring the long-term commercial viability and competitiveness of the Neutral Bay local centre.

If nothing is done, the centre will continue losing local jobs, local businesses and services for the community. This in turn will lead to increased car trips as people travel further for those same jobs and services. In addition, as local workers typically spend around an estimated 15-20% of their annual retail expenditure near their place of work on food, cafes, apparel, giftware and other leisure retailing, the retail function of Neutral Bay may also be impacted over time.

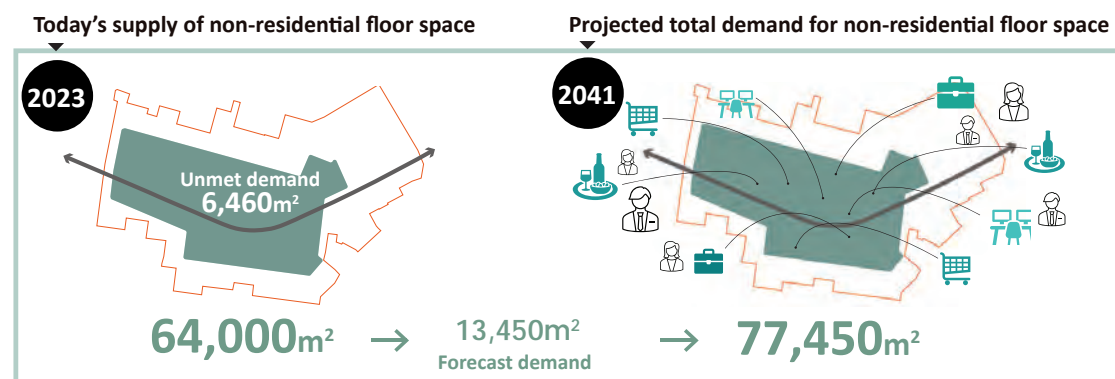
The economic analysis undertaken by HillPDA identifies several additional challenges impacting the overall attractiveness and competitiveness of Neutral Bay. These include:

- lack of public space
- traffic congestion
- access difficulties

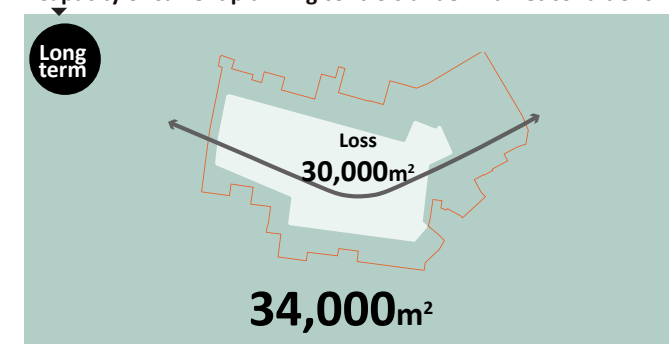
This study aims to stop the ongoing loss of existing non-residential floor space. It does not, however, address the forecast demand.

Impact of COVID-19

Neutral Bay has shown signs of post pandemic recovery. HillPDA suggest sectors like accommodation, food services, and retail have rebounded whereas the rise in work-from-home (WFH) practices has led to a slight increase in commercial office vacancies. Local services and in-person offerings are anticipated to thrive in the post-COVID landscape, and the rise in local co-working space, transport and proximity to the city will continue to make Neutral Bay a convenient place to do business in the long term.



Capacity of current planning controls under market conditions



5.1 EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Strategic context

LOCAL ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY P3

Enhance the commercial amenity and viability of North Sydney's local centres

- NORTH SYDNEY LSPS (2020)



- 1 Protect commercial floor space to meet current and future needs



- 2 Encourage a mix of tenancy sizes and flexible floor plates to support a range of non-residential uses



- 3 Enhance the amenity, identity and appeal of Neutral Bay



- 4 Concentrate fine grain specialty retailing and dining opportunities at the ground level



- 5 Continue to support mid-rise density near the centre



- 6 Provide for parking and servicing requirements whilst improving the public domain and pedestrian amenity

5.2 COMMERCIAL FLOOR SPACE SUPPLY

1 Protect commercial floor space

Ensuring sufficient commercial floor space is delivered to meet current and future projected demand will support the economic viability of the centre, jobs close to homes and services for the community.



Figure 5-4. Proposed non-residential FSR controls

Existing non-residential FSR controls

NSLEP 2013 contains a non-residential floor space ratio (FSR) control that applies to all land zoned MU1- Mixed Use. This control specifies the minimum amount of floor space that must be used for non-residential purposes. The intent of this control is to ensure sufficient employment generating floor space is provided to create a viable mixed-use centre.

NSLEP 2013 currently prescribes a non-residential FSR of 0.5:1 throughout the MU1 – Mixed Use zone of the Neutral Bay local centre, which enables the existing predominantly 2-3 storey commercial buildings in the centre to transition to

4-5 storey mixed use developments with a single level of ground floor retail and residential uses above.

As detailed earlier, if nothing is done to amend the planning controls, this will result in a progressive loss of 30,000m² (or 47%) of existing employment generating floor space.



Figure 5-5. Artist's impression looking south along Waters Lane towards Grosvenor Plaza and the proposed community centre

Proposed non-residential FSR controls

Increasing the non-residential FSR control throughout the MU1- Mixed Use zone of the Neutral Bay local centre will protect the existing employment function. This can be achieved by:

- increasing the non-residential FSR control from 0.5:1 (existing) to 1.2:1 (proposed) across the majority of the MU1 – Mixed Use zone and key sites 1, 2 and 3A; and
- increasing the non-residential FSR control from 0.5:1 (existing) to 1.5:1 (proposed) on key site 3B, which currently includes the fully commercial building at 50 Yeo Street.

Protecting commercial and retail spaces in a local centre is essential to achieving a sustainable and thriving community. The benefits include:

- maintaining economic vitality
- providing local employment opportunities
- maintaining community character and identity
- offering convenience for residents
- providing social and gathering spaces
- encouraging a walkable and sustainable centre

5.2 COMMERCIAL FLOOR SPACE SUPPLY

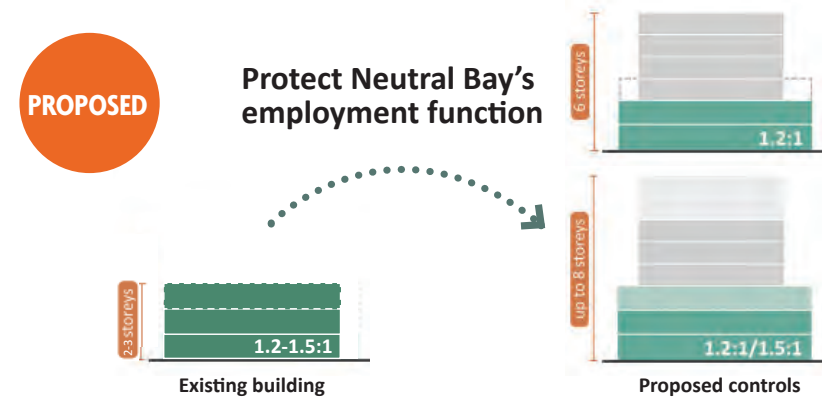
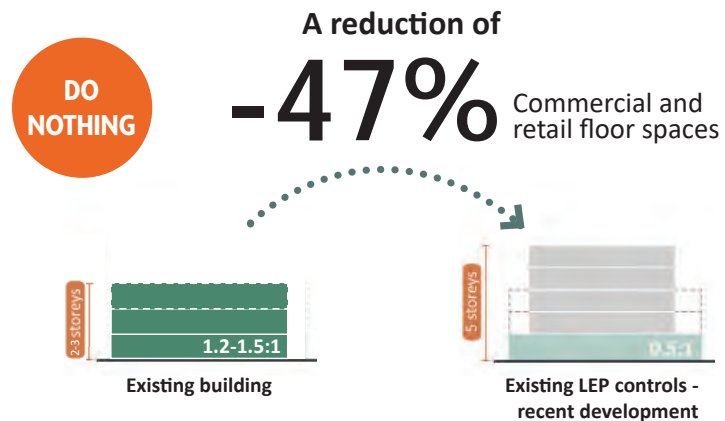
Existing local centre buildings



Recent mixed-use developments



Precedents of future developments



5.3 CENTRE AMENITY AND APPEAL

2 Encourage diversity in uses and tenancy sizes

Encouraging a mix of commercial tenancy sizes and flexible floor plates will encourage a diversity of uses that service different functions, enhance activation and the amenity of the centre.



Office & business

Neutral Bay is attractive to small-to-medium size enterprises of <20 employees. Business survey results indicated enterprises opted for floorplates between 100-250m² and that traditional purpose-built office spaces are increasingly giving way to more flexible options like co-working spaces. These spaces act as a shared workspace for a highly diversified workforce of small businesses, start-ups, freelancers and entrepreneurs, which are generally attracted to small office spaces (<200m²) at affordable rental prices.



Retail

To facilitate a diversity of retail uses and create an active dining and entertainment precinct both day and night, it is important to enable flexibility and diversity in floor space provision. Business survey results indicated that the optimal floorplate for retail in Neutral Bay is between 50-100m².

3 Improve centre amenity & appeal

Enhancing the amenity, identity and desirability of Neutral Bay through public domain upgrades and an improved pedestrian experience will increase centre visitation and attract further investment.

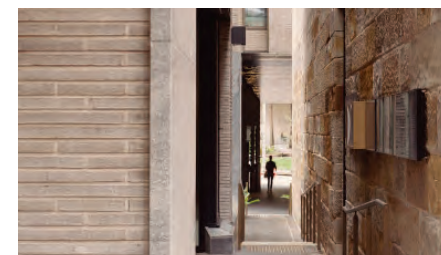


Public domain upgrades

Integrating additional street trees, a uniform public domain palette and delivering attractive, green public open space for markets, events, passive relaxation and socialising will enhance the amenity and appeal of the centre. Where public spaces are delivered, ground floor active uses should be encouraged.

Local character

Encouraging development to maintain heritage or older facades where they are an identifiable feature of the centre will enhance the identity of the centre.



Through-site links

Enhancing the legibility and pedestrian movement capacity within the centre will improve convenience and enhance the appeal of the centre. Business survey results indicated pedestrian accessibility in the centre was average with limited lines of sight from Military Road to the retail and commercial uses behind. Encouraging wide, open-to-sky through-site connections to enhance sight lines will create an activated and accessible centre.

5.3 CENTRE AMENITY AND APPEAL

4 Encourage centre activity

Encouraging active uses at the ground level will increase the vibrancy of the centre and optimise the feeling of safety, particularly at night. This can attract further local businesses to locate in the area.



Active street frontages

Land uses that have higher levels of customer interaction, such as fine grain retail and dining, at the ground level will be encouraged along main pedestrian thoroughfares with strong amenity and along secondary streets and laneways. More passive uses that do not generate active trade should be encouraged to locate above ground level or along main road corridors, such as along Military Road.



Community facilities

The provision of community facilities such as meeting rooms, events spaces and childcare facilities can contribute significantly to strengthening the appeal of the centre as an office location, with more convenient family services for workers and families available. Community facilities should be delivered in a central location that can be easily accessed.

5 Density near the centre

There are economic benefits to enabling residential and commercial densities within a walkable catchment of the centre.



Centre performance is intrinsically linked to the density of the trade catchment. Residential and commercial density of the walkable catchment can enhance the patronage of retail and thereby extend centre activation. Diverse, mid-rise and affordable housing options that cater to a broad demographic will continue to be provided within the walking catchment under existing planning controls.

6 Parking and servicing

Parking, servicing and delivery needs will be accommodated whilst enhancing the pedestrian amenity and activation of the centre.



Designated servicing and delivery areas will be provided for the daily operation of businesses and provided in locations that reduce impacts to the public realm.

New development will continue to incorporate designated spaces for off-street parking, servicing and delivery.

Community Views

Within the context of Neutral Bay local centre, the community values a balanced development height and the provision of additional public spaces and facilities to cultivate a lively local atmosphere while preserving the existing character and identity.

The proposed built form controls in this chapter are designed to achieve an appropriate scale for new development, foster a harmonious relationship between built structures and the public realm, maintain a high standard of urban design and amenity, and unlock opportunities for enhancing public spaces and community facilities within the local centre.





BUILT FORM

06

6.1 BUILT FORM STRATEGY

Existing built form context

In the early 1870s, a track was established along the ridge from North Sydney to supply the newly-installed fortifications at Middle Head, gradually leading to the emergence of shops and businesses around Military Road.

Today, Neutral Bay is a vibrant hub with a mix of businesses, retail, offices and residential developments. The majority of the study area along the Military Road corridor is zoned MU1 - Mixed Use (NSLEP2013) which enables residential development above ground floor retail. The edge of the study area transitions to high and medium-density residential zones on the periphery, with pockets of land zoned SP2 - Special Uses.

Neutral Bay contains heritage-listed items along Military Road and Yeo Street, together with iconic facades on Military Road and Wycombe Road, which contribute to the local character of the centre.

The current maximum height of buildings in the mixed-use zone is 16m, which equates to 4-5 storeys. Outside the local centre study boundary, there are some taller residential buildings of up to 16 storeys. These buildings were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and significantly exceed the current residential height limit, which is generally 12m or 3-4 storeys.

Current planning controls require 1.5m setbacks at ground level along laneways and sections of Military Road, Grosvenor Street, and Rangers Road to enhance pedestrian amenity and infrastructure. However, these setbacks are often interrupted or constrained due to site limitations.

Key challenges

Planning and built form controls, encompassing land use zoning, height regulations, and setbacks, serve a crucial role in defining a local centre's character, managing development intensity, and establishing an appealing built form.

Critically, for Neutral Bay, any uplift in building capacity via increased building heights can be supported by public benefits identified in the placemaking strategy outlined in Chapter 3.

A key objective of this study is to strike a balance between maximum building heights and the provision of public benefits that gains a better level of community support compared to the rescinded 2021 Planning Study.

The Neutral Bay local centre is currently experiencing strong development interest. Without an endorsed planning study, landowners and proponents will continue to submit

ad-hoc planning proposals that seek amendments for additional height and density via the NSW Government. This approach carries an inherent risk of undermining the desired future outcomes for the centre including:

- limited commercial uses at podium levels
- height exceeding agreed height limits
- insufficient and inconsistent setbacks
- built form challenging heritage values
- inadequate transition to the residential area
- built forms causing substantial shadow impacts on public open spaces and residential areas
- lack of site permeability
- missed opportunities to deliver public benefits

To mitigate these risks, this study establishes a framework to guide development built form and ensure that future developments better align with the needs and expectations of the community.



6.1 BUILT FORM STRATEGY

BUILT FORM STRATEGY

A CITY OF GREAT PLACES

LOCAL PLANNING PRIORITY L3

Create great places that recognise & preserve North Sydney's distinct local character & heritage

- NORTH SYDNEY LSPS (2020)



- 1 Preserve the mid-rise built form and protect the existing retail/commercial capacity



- 2 Strategically identify additional height and density to deliver public benefits



- 3 Encourage high-quality building design to enrich the experience of the Neutral Bay local centre



- 4 Require sensitive height transitions to protect solar access to public open spaces and residential areas



- 5 Ensure a human-scaled streetscape to enhance the village atmosphere

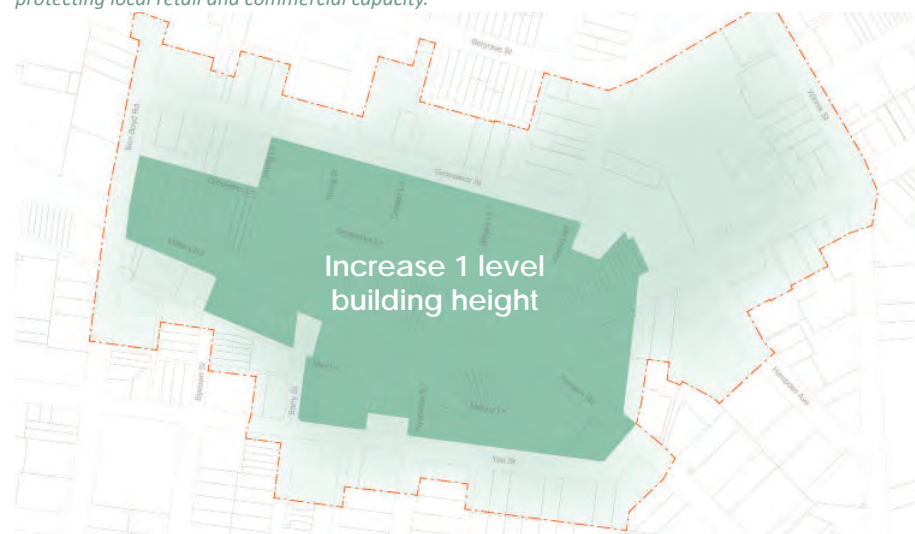


- 6 Enhance the much-loved heritage character with built form controls

6.2 BUILDING HEIGHT AND DESIGN

1 Preserve local centre mid-rise built form

Achieving a dominant typology of mid-rise 6-storey mixed-use buildings throughout the local centre will ensure new infill development supports the existing fine-grained character of Neutral Bay whilst protecting local retail and commercial capacity.



6 storeys in the majority of the centre

The maximum building height in the majority of the mixed use zone is proposed to be increased from the existing 5 storeys to 6 storeys.

The proposed 6 storey building height is a mid-rise built form. Thoughtful built form controls can ensure that mid-rise buildings offer human-scaled designs, promoting urban density with increased economic activity, and maximising solar access to new public open spaces.

Protect existing retail/commercial offers

To preserve the existing commercial capacity of Neutral Bay that supports local jobs and businesses, the additional level is to accommodate new commercial space in the podium. This will be secured via a proposed increase to the non-residential floor space ratio (FSR).



Figure 6-1. The 5-6 storeys development at 9 Rangers Road, Neutral Bay

6.2 BUILDING HEIGHT AND DESIGN

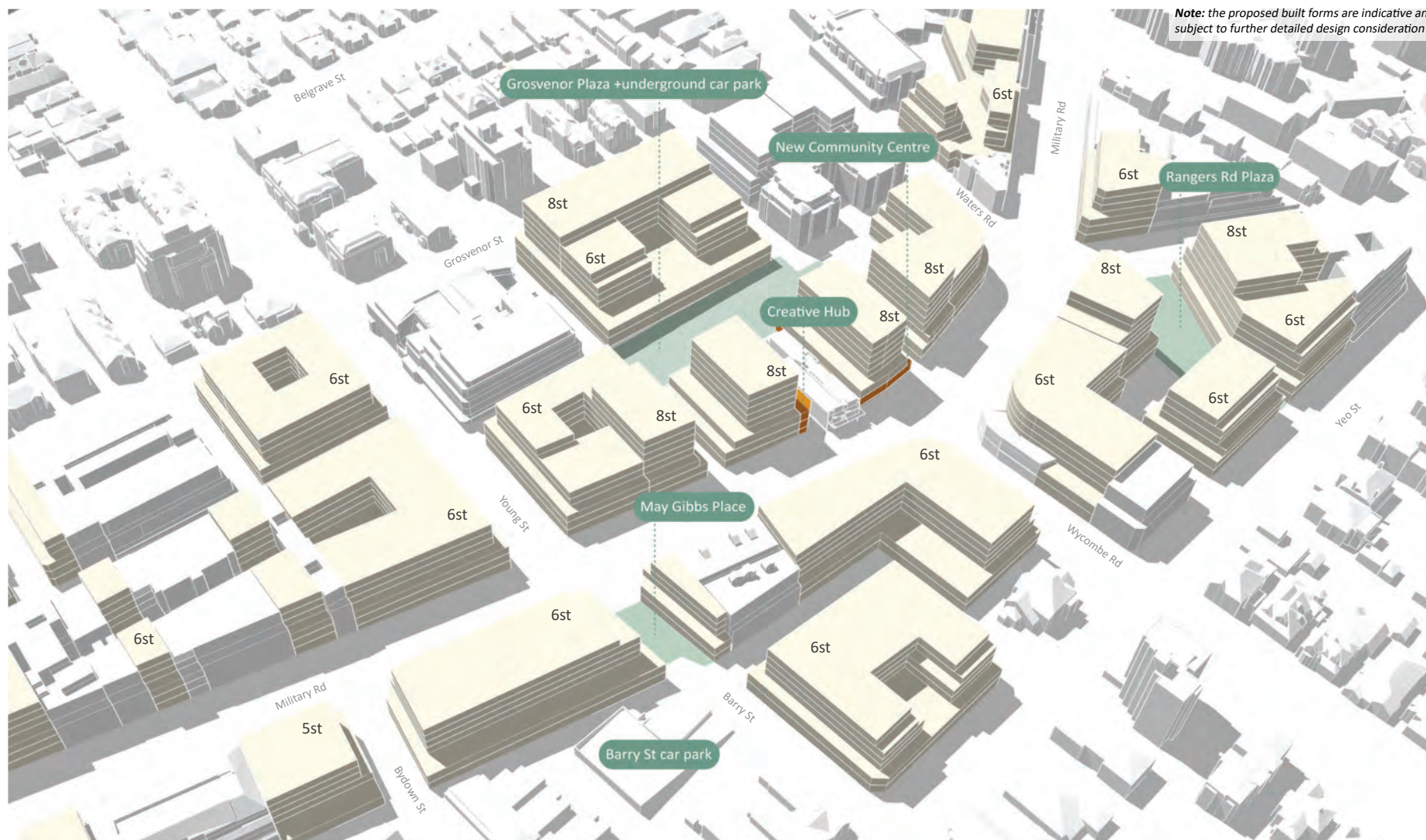


Figure 6-2. Aerial of indicative proposed local centre built form

6.2 BUILDING HEIGHT AND DESIGN

2 Strategically allocate additional height and density

Permitting additional height on well-sized and highly accessible locations, can deliver some public benefits that support the placemaking objectives for Neutral Bay.



Key sites to deliver public benefits

Key sites have been identified for a proposed height increase of up to 8 storeys (Figure 6.3). A higher building typology at these locations will create a distinctive and varied urban form within the centre. Good separation between the 8-storey buildings will avoid any "street wall" or feeling of overbearing.

The additional height over the existing LEP height limit will only be considered in conjunction with the delivery of identified public benefits, including but not limited to larger setbacks, through-site links, public open spaces and community facilities,

along with demonstrated design excellence.

The key sites were chosen, based on:

- their location at the core of the local centre
- proximity to main bus stops (B-Line)
- a direct interface with future plaza spaces
- avoidance of potential site isolation issues
- limited shadow impact on residential areas
- size that supports an appropriate urban form

Detailed urban design objectives, proposed planning controls and supporting public benefits are outlined in Chapter 7 and should be referenced when preparing a planning proposal.

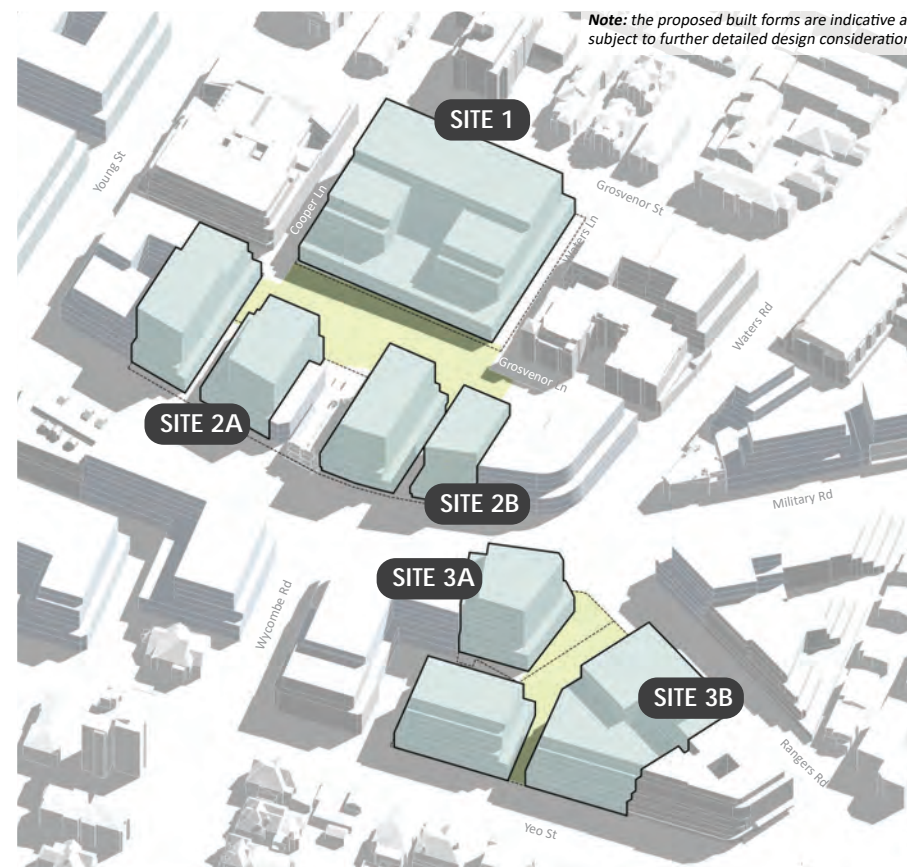
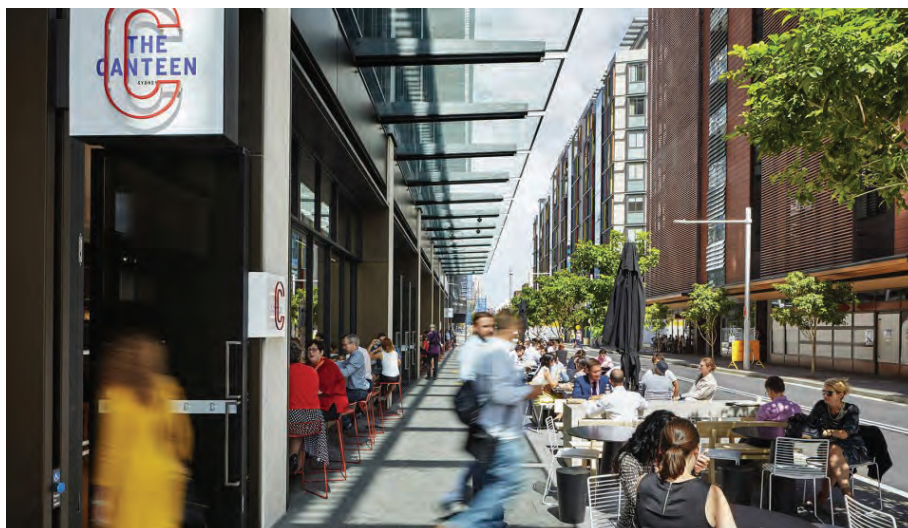


Figure 6-3. Aerial of indicative proposed development envelope at key sites

6.2 BUILDING HEIGHT AND DESIGN

3 Encourage high quality design

Encouraging award-winning architectural designs will deliver high-quality mixed-use developments that gain greater community support for higher density urban renewal.



Design excellence

All new developments are expected to meet a high standard of architectural design to enhance the experience of the Neutral Bay local centre. 'Design excellence' is established as a central urban design principle for future developments in the centre.

North Sydney Council actively promotes high quality urban design and sustainability in the North Sydney local government area. Independent advice is sought from the North Sydney Design Excellence Panel and will be required for all redevelopments resulting in this study.

In the pursuit of design excellence, proponents are encouraged to engage architectural firms with a proven track record in designing high-quality buildings. The objective is to prepare design solutions that:

- demonstrate a high level of design excellence in accordance with criteria established in the NSLEP 2013, NSDCP 2013, Apartment Design Guide and Neutral Bay Village Planning Study
- deliver public benefits consistent with the goals outlined in the Planning Study
- provide high quality materials and finishes

6.3 SOLAR ACCESS

4 Provide height transition and protect solar access

Developing detailed built-form controls that address the relationship and response to surrounding residential areas and public open spaces, including considerations for solar access.

Public open spaces

A key outcome of this study is the creation of new plazas and an overall net increase in the public domain. These public spaces are expected to be intensively used by the community and visitors. Protecting the quality and amenity of the spaces is essential to the vibrancy of the local centre.

Proposed built form controls will ensure these open spaces receive adequate solar access and maintain a comfortably-scaled interface with surrounding buildings.

Residential areas

Neutral Bay local centre is adjacent to residential neighbourhoods, necessitating a built form transition that minimises the impact on nearby residential properties, such as adverse overshadowing or excessive building bulk. This transition will also help establish a defined edge to the local centre.

In addition to the proposed height transition, upper-level setbacks are proposed at the interface of zoning changes.

Legend

- Shadow within the plaza area
- Grosvenor Plaza

Grosvenor Plaza - with proposed built form



Note: the solar access levels to the plaza with the existing LEP/DCP built form is 24% at 10am, 46% at 12pm and 43% at 2pm at mid-winter.

Legend

- Shadow within the plaza area
- Rangers Road Plaza

Rangers Road Plaza - with proposed built form



6.3 SOLAR ACCESS



Grosvenor Plaza

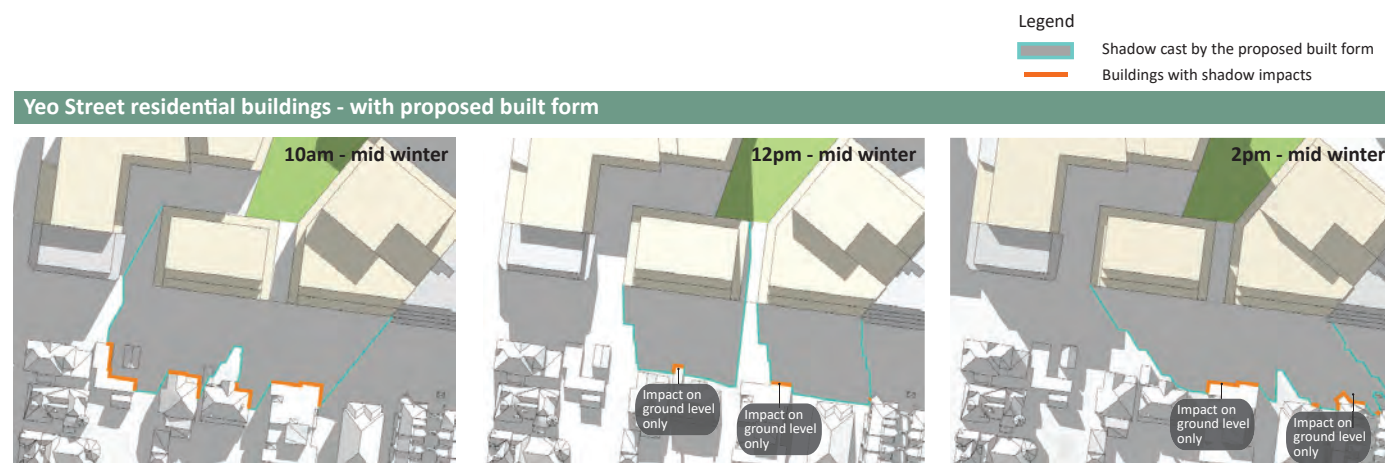
Grosvenor Plaza can receive a significant amount of solar access with the proposed built form, particularly between 11am and 2pm in mid-winter. Built form transitions can enhance solar access at Grosvenor Plaza by approximately 10% during each hour between 10am and 2pm in mid-winter in comparison to 5-storey buildings permissible under the current planning controls.

Rangers Road Plaza

Rangers Road Plaza can receive excellent solar access with the proposed plaza shape and location, especially between 9.30am to 1.30pm at mid-winter.

May Gibbs Place

May Gibbs Place can receive excellent solar access with the proposed adjacent built form, especially between 9.30am to 1.30pm at mid-winter.



Yeo Street residential buildings

With upper-level setbacks, the proposed height increase will not create a net increase in shadow impact on the residential buildings along Yeo Street compared to the existing planning controls. The shadow analysis illustrates that the extent and duration of the shadows cast on the residential buildings along Yeo Street is limited, and can still achieve ADG and DCP residential solar amenity requirements.

6.4 LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

5 Ensure human-scaled streetscape

Creating a positive street level environment that reinforces the village atmosphere can be achieved through a built form that maintains a human scale and supports street activity.

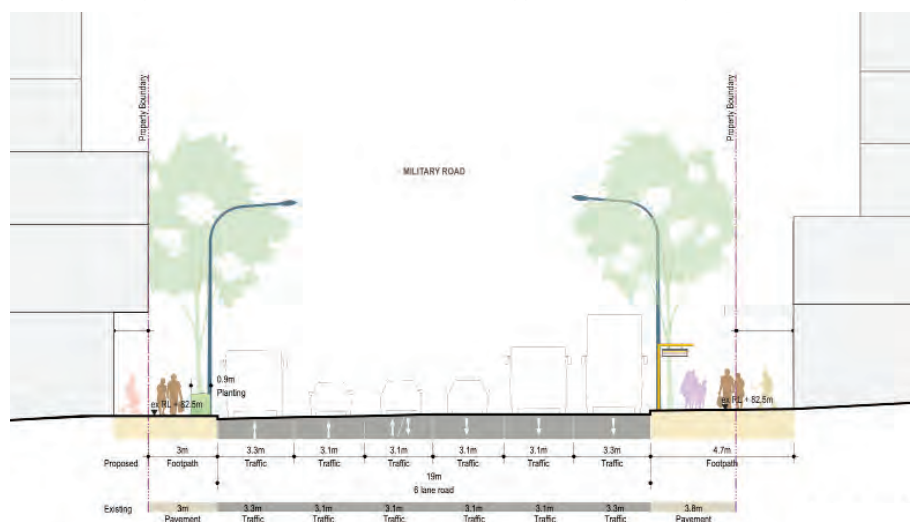


Figure 6-4. Proposed footpath widening- typical Military Road section

Podium height

3 storey podiums will continue to be encouraged along Military Road and most blocks on the northern side of the local centre. Additional requirements will be in place to preserve heritage-valued frontages.

In the mixed-use area, 2 storey podiums will remain mandatory in laneways, enabled around key public open spaces, and may also be required near heritage buildings.

Building setbacks

New whole of building and ground level setback requirements are proposed to accommodate street trees, kerbside plantings, and outdoor dining areas while improving pedestrian amenity.

Proposed setback requirements have regard to:

- enhanced walkability
- outdoor dining and public spaces
- street trees and greenery
- pedestrian safety
- local centre visual appeal
- business opportunities



Above podium setbacks

Above podium setbacks achieve several positive outcomes. They enhance views between buildings and reduce the appearance of taller buildings from the street to foster a more human-scaled streetscape. They also minimise any wind or solar impacts to public open spaces and residential areas, enhance heritage buildings and promote better internal ventilation.

A 3m above podium setback to the street and laneways is proposed for the majority of centre. Larger setbacks are proposed to protect solar access to Grosvenor Plaza and to heritage facades.



Street activity

Neutral Bay local centre is known for its vibrant street activity. The proposed active frontage requirements will expand opportunities for street activation and further enrich the local retail atmosphere. Key planning recommendations are:

- create active frontages along main pedestrian thoroughfares and around public open spaces
- design active frontages with engaging and permeable facades
- ensure a mix of retail offers at ground level to infuse life into the streets

6.4 LOCAL CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

6 Enhance heritage character

Enhancing the heritage character of the local centre can be achieved through built form controls.

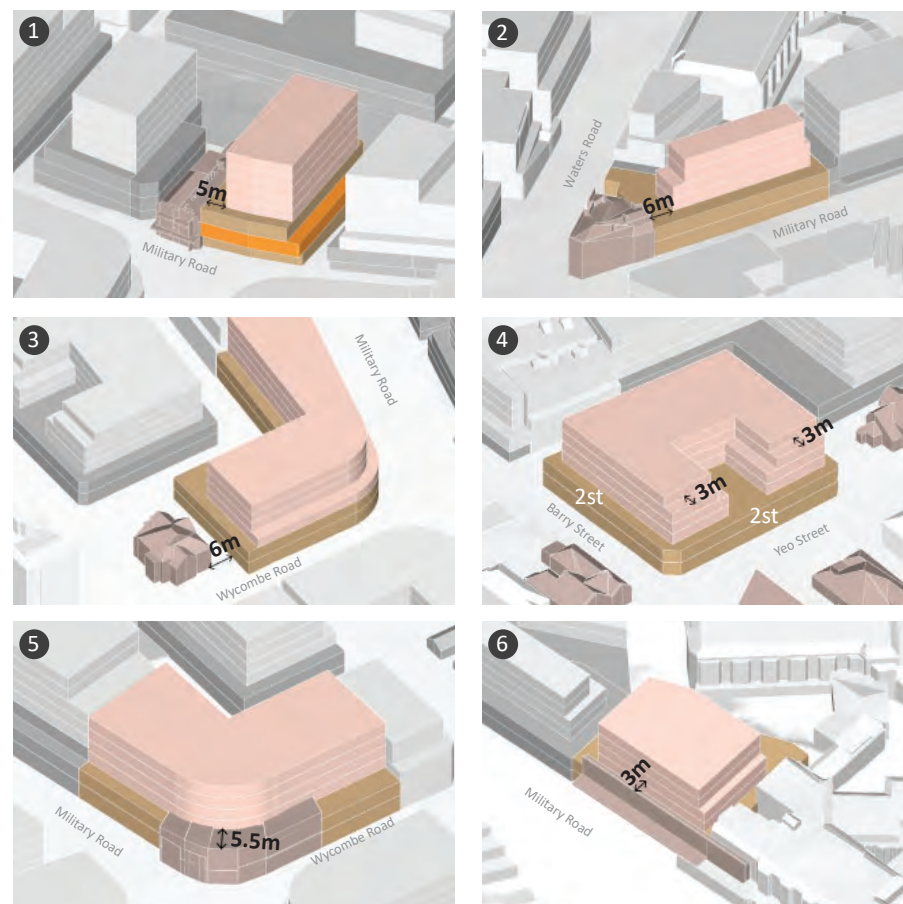


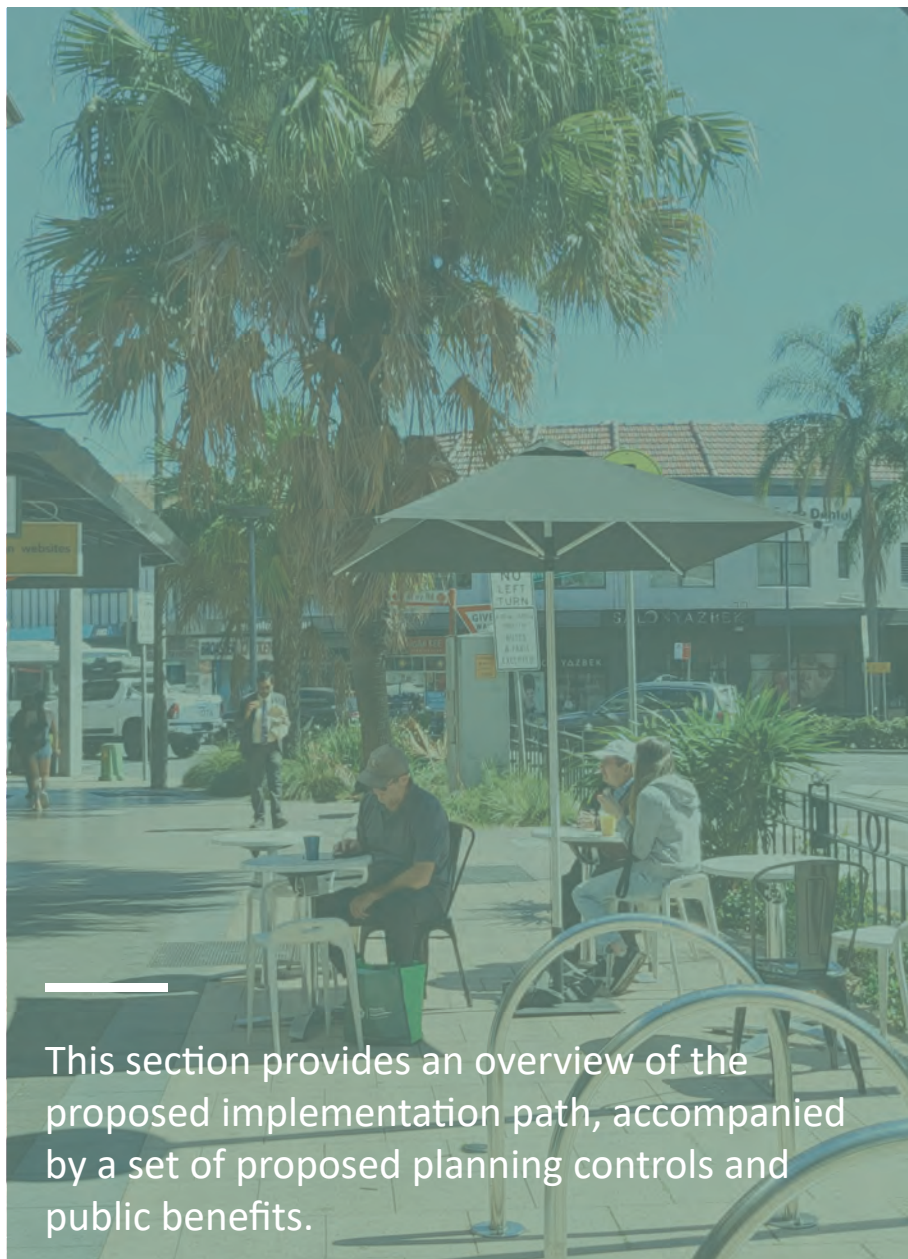
Figure 6-5. Proposed heritage protection controls

Built form controls are proposed to provide a respectful response to the heritage listed items and other iconic facades along Military Road that contribute to the local character of the centre.

The proposed built form controls include:

1. a 5m above podium setback along the western side of 198 Military Road
2. a 6m above podium setback along the western side of 230 Military Road
3. a 6m whole of building setback along the southern side of 146 Wycombe Road
4. a 2 storey podium height for all the street/laneway frontages at 40 Yeo Street, and an additional 3m top level setback along the southern side of 40 Yeo Street
5. retaining the heritage-valued facade at 165-169 Wycombe Road and 175-177 Military Road, with a 5.5m above podium setback for any building additions to have an aligned upper-level frontage along Military Road
6. retaining the heritage-valued facade at 246-258 Military Road, with a 3m above podium setback for any building additions to have a consistent street frontage with the adjacent building at 260-270 Military Road







WAY FORWARD

07

7.1 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Overview

The Neutral Bay Village Planning Study is the long-term strategic plan for the local centre. It presents a vision, design principles and a framework for future built form and much needed community facilities and public domain outcomes.

To implement the recommendations contained in the study requires amendments to the planning controls that apply to the centre:

- North Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2013
- North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013

Council will consider an amendment to NSLEP 2013 aimed at protecting the capacity of Neutral Bay to support local jobs and businesses; and an amendment to NSDCP 2013 that provides greater design guidance to the built form.

Proposed changes to the planning controls that apply to Sites 1, 2, 3 may be initiated by the landowners via a planning proposal that is supported by a planning agreement to deliver the public benefits outlined in the study.

Amending the planning controls

Planning proposals

Following the finalisation of this planning study, an amendment to the NSLEP 2013 (often referred to as a planning proposal or PP) aimed at protecting local jobs and businesses will be put to Council for consideration.

The amendment would apply to the majority of mixed-use land in the Neutral Bay local centre.

The amendment would include:

- increasing the minimum non-residential FSR from 0.5:1 to 1.2:1
- increasing the maximum building height from 5 storeys to 6 storeys
- solar protection controls (if not included in design guidance)

It will not include Sites 1, 2 and 3 as these will be progressed separately.

Design guidance

An amendment to the design guidance contained in the NSDCP 2013 aimed at protecting the vibrancy and village atmosphere of Neutral Bay local centre will also be put to Council for consideration.

This amendment would apply to majority of mixed-use land in the Neutral Bay local centre.

The design guidance would include:

- solar access (if not included in a planning proposal)
- ground level and whole of building setbacks
- active frontages
- podium heights
- above podium setbacks
- through site links

Sites 1, 2 and 3

Separate amendments to the NSLEP 2013 for Sites 1, 2 and 3 aimed at delivering the public benefits, employment, access and built form objectives of this study are expected to be progressed by the landowners.

The amendments would include:

- increasing the minimum non-residential FSR from 0.5:1 to 1.5:1 at Site 3B
- amending the maximum building height that applies to the land from 5 storeys to a combination of between 2-8 storeys

Amendments to these sites may be supported by proposals to also amend the NSDCP 2013 as further design work is undertaken for each site; and a planning agreement to deliver new public space and/or community infrastructure identified in this study.

7.1 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Supporting infrastructure

Planning agreements (VPAs)

A driving principle of the study is that targeted development opportunities should only be pursued if much needed public benefits are provided to meet the community's needs. These benefits are in addition to what would normally be required by a new development, such as design excellence and local infrastructure contributions.

Accordingly, for Sites 1, 2 and 3, a proposed amendment to NSLEP 2013 should be accompanied by a draft voluntary planning agreement (VPA) which sets out any public benefits proposed to be delivered in accordance with Council's [Voluntary Planning Agreements \(VPAs\) Policy](#).

Under the *Environmental, Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, a public benefit can be a monetary contribution, dedication of land or an in-kind contribution (a material public benefit as negotiated with Council).

Local infrastructure contributions

Local infrastructure contributions (also referred to as developer contributions), are charged when new development occurs. It applies to all development that increases the resident or worker population and exceeds \$100,000 in construction costs.

Council's [Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2020](#) outlines how the levy will be spent.

For Neutral Bay, the plan identifies public domain facilities including:

- landscaping
- amenities buildings
- playgrounds
- seating
- footpath paving
- street tree planting
- street lighting
- through-site link upgrade
- shared pedestrian paths
- cycleways

Housing and productivity contribution

The Housing and Productivity Contribution is a state levy that applies to development applications for new residential, commercial, retail and industrial development.

Contributions are to fund state infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, major roads, public transport infrastructure and regional open space.

B-Line funding

Transport for NSW completed the B-Line program in Neutral Bay in 2019. This included upgrades to the road corridor and implementation of bus priority measures to improve the reliability of bus services in the area.

Additional state government funding was provided to help mitigate the impact of the B-Line on pedestrian amenity. Works included Young St closure (under review), local traffic improvements, paving, landscaping and street furnishings.

Future community involvement

Community feedback is critical at all stages of the planning process.

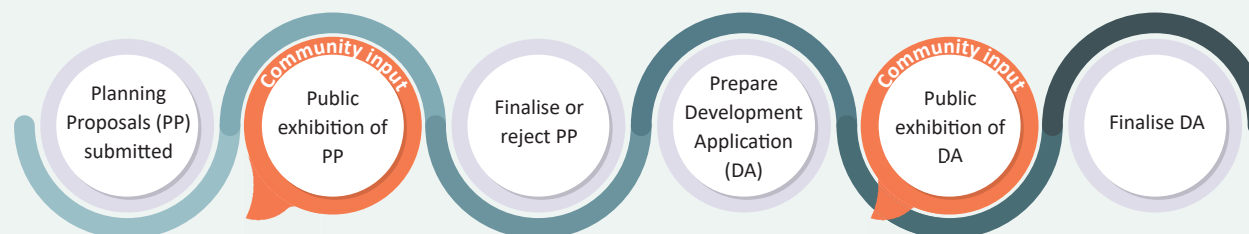
Further opportunities to comment on proposals for Neutral Bay are available via the public exhibition of amendments to the NSLEP 2013 and NSDCP 2013, draft voluntary planning agreements and development applications.

All feedback received from the community is carefully considered by Council staff and reported to Council meetings with any recommended changes to the proposals.

Visit [Your Say North Sydney](#) to find out more.

Planning Proposal & Development Application

Opportunities for community input



7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Non-residential floor space ratio

Increasing the minimum non-residential floor space ratio (FSR) control throughout the MU1-Mixed Use zone of the Neutral Bay local centre will protect the existing employment function of the centre.

Actions

- A1. Council-led PP to increase the non-residential FSR control from 0.5:1 (existing) to 1.2:1 (proposed) across the majority of the MU1 – Mixed Use zone, with a corresponding increase in height from 5 storeys (existing) to 6 storeys (proposed) to facilitate an additional level of commercial uses whilst not resulting in an overall negative impact on development feasibility.
- A2. Landowner-led PP to increase the non-residential FSR control from 0.5:1 (existing) to 1.2:1 (proposed) on key Sites 1, 2 and 3A and 1.5:1 (proposed) on key Site 3B, where height increases from 5 storeys (existing) to 8 storeys (proposed) have been identified as suitable to deliver additional commercial floorspace as well as identified public benefits.
- A3. Non-residential floorspace provided below the ground level to be excluded from the above non-residential FSR control calculations unless for a specified purpose such as a supermarket.



Figure 7-1. Proposed non-residential FSR

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Building heights

Increasing the maximum building height throughout the MU1-Mixed Use zone of the Neutral Bay local centre will preserve existing retail and commercial offerings, encourage renewal of older sites and fund public domain and social infrastructure improvements.

The proposed heights aim to achieve an appropriate scale to Military Road, transition to surrounding residential neighbourhoods, protect solar access to key areas and maintain the character of surrounding heritage buildings.

Actions

- A4. Council-led PP to increase the maximum building height from 16 metres (5 storeys existing) to 21 metres (6 storeys proposed) across the majority of the MU1-Mixed Use zone.
- A5. Landowner-led PP to increase the maximum building height from 16 metres (5 storeys existing) to up to 21-28 metres (6-8 storeys proposed) across select sites. Southern portion of Site 1 to be a maximum of 9 metres (2 storeys proposed) to protect sunlight to the future Grosvenor Plaza.

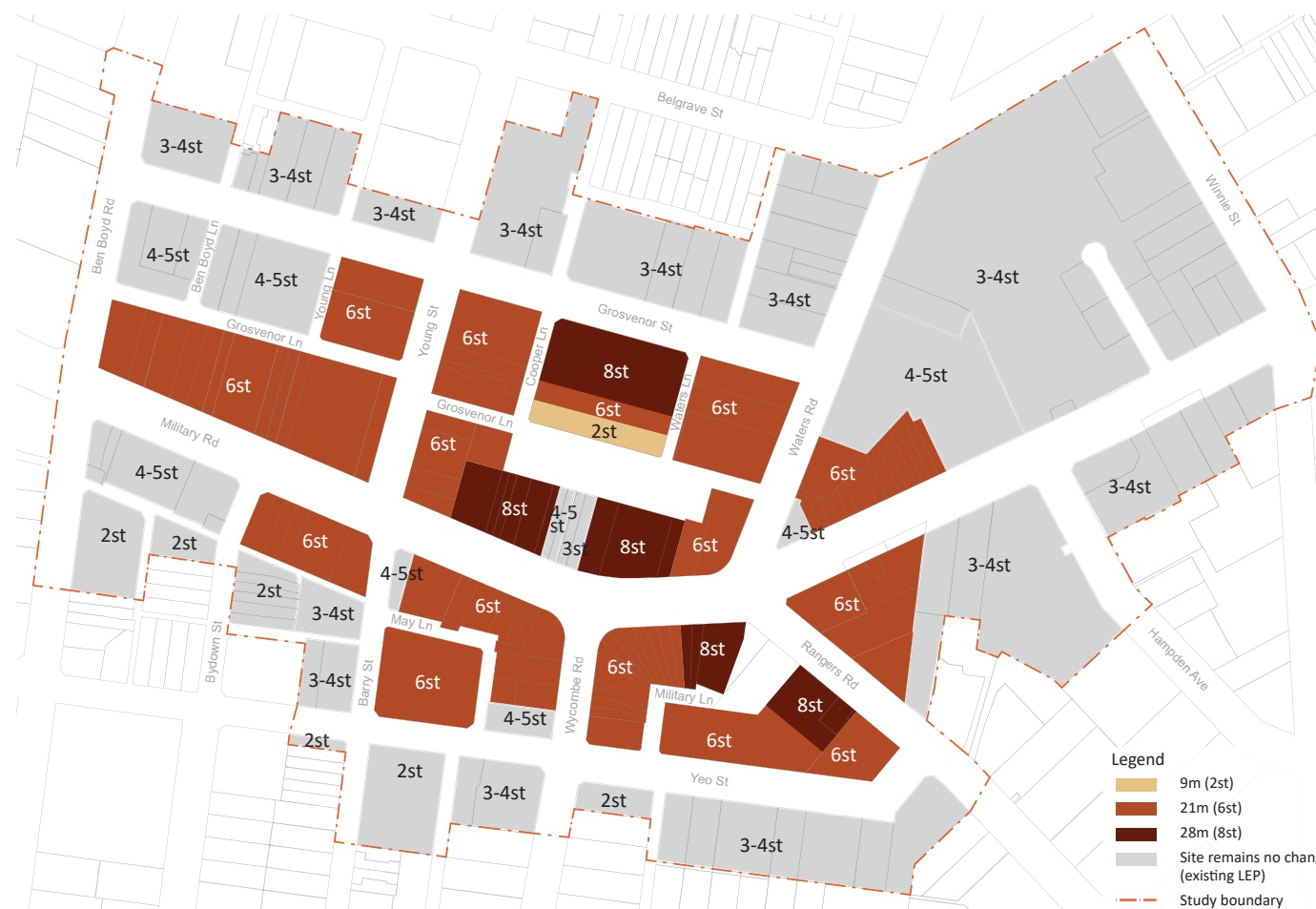


Figure 7-2. Proposed building heights

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Solar access

Solar access is an important consideration in determining an appropriate level of density in the local centre. New buildings should be sited, orientated and configured to receive adequate solar access and natural light, while minimising overshadowing impacts to neighboring properties and public open spaces.

Solar access controls will ensure that new buildings do not cause a significant net loss in solar access to these spaces compared to the existing 5 storey height limit.

Areas requiring solar protection are:

- Grosvenor Plaza
- Rangers Road Plaza
- May Gibbs Place
- residential properties along Yeo Street

Action

A6. Amend the planning controls to ensure all future developments achieve the solar access requirements (see following page).

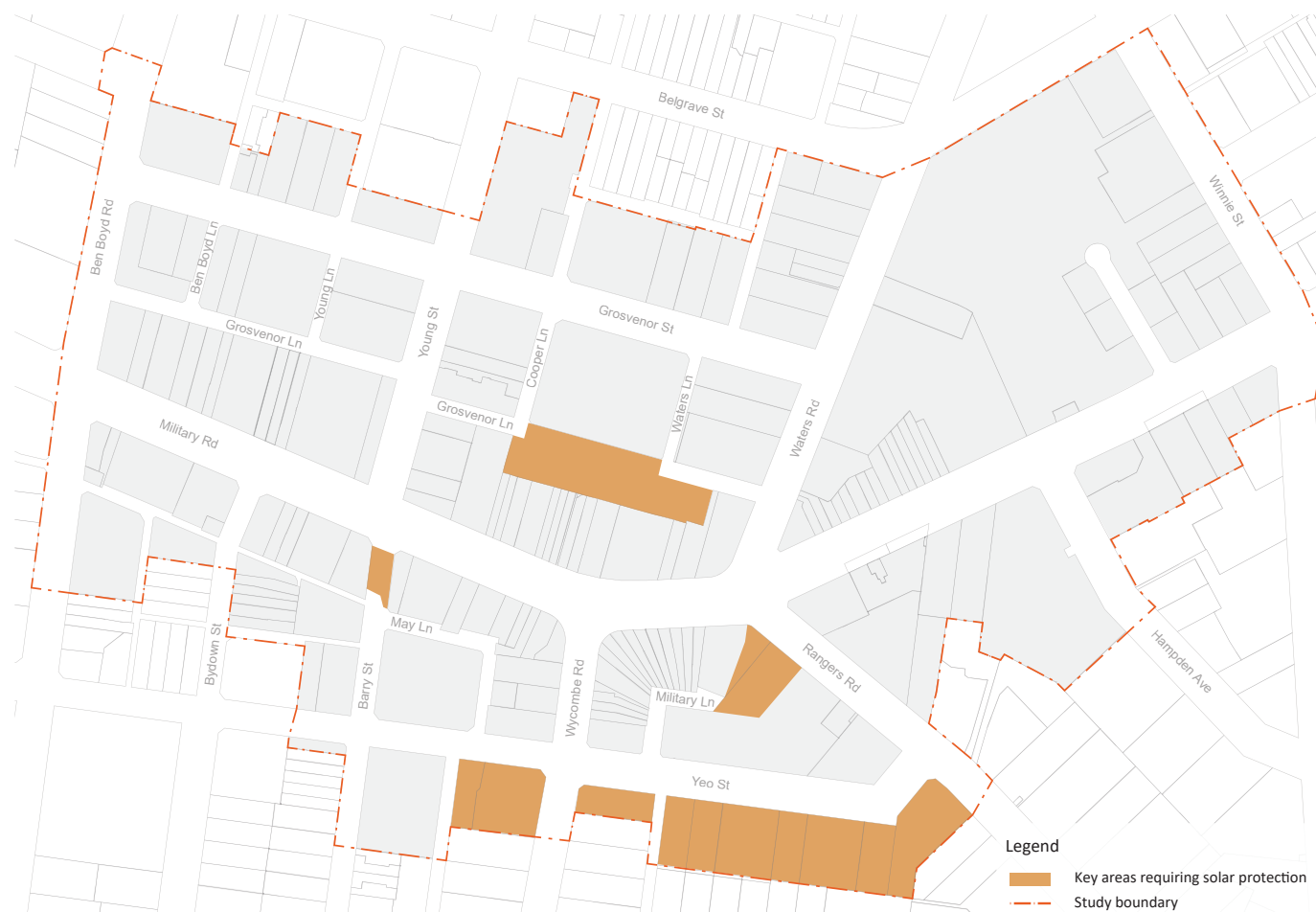


Figure 7-3. Proposed solar protection sites

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Solar access requirements

Grosvenor Plaza

- retain solar access to a minimum 50% of the site area of Grosvenor Plaza from 11am to 2pm mid-winter June 21
- must not create any overshadowing in the areas of Grosvenor Plaza marked 'no overshadowing' between 12pm and 2pm mid-winter June 21

Rangers Road Plaza

- provide solar access to a minimum 50% of the site area of Rangers Rd Plaza from 10am to 1pm mid-winter June 21

May Gibbs Place

- retain solar access to a minimum 50% of the site area of May Gibbs Place from 10am to 1pm mid-winter June 21

Yeo Street Residential

- ensure solar access for a minimum of 2 hours sunlight to 70% of residential dwellings along Yeo Street to be consistent with NSDCP2013 and SEPP65 (ADG)
- provide a 3m top floor setback for the building along the northern side of Yeo Street (Site 3) to minimise overshadowing the residential area and mitigate the visual impact of a 6-storey built form from the street

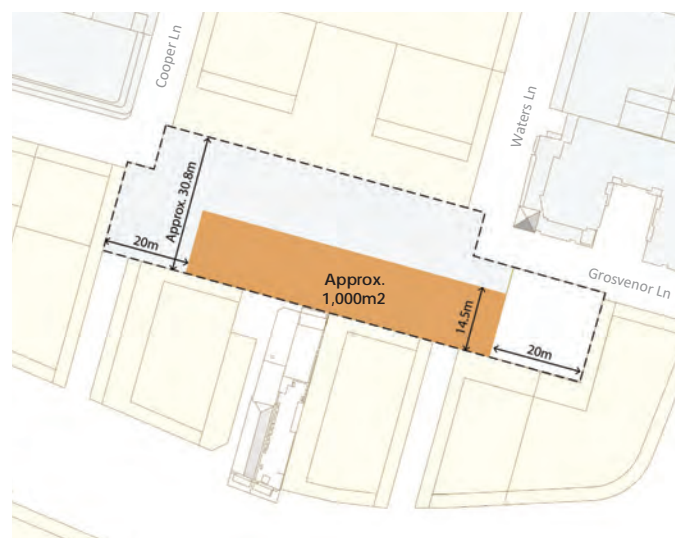


Figure 7-4. Proposed solar protection control - Grosvenor Plaza

Legend

- No overshadowing between 12pm-2pm mid-winter
- Grosvenor Plaza

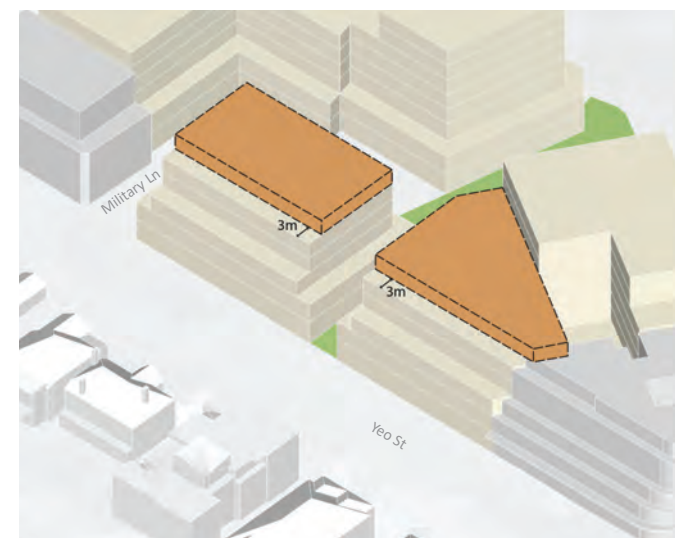


Figure 7-5. Proposed solar protection control - Yeo Street built form with upper-level setback

Legend

- Top level of the Yeo Street mixed-use built form with a 3m upper-level setback

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Building setbacks

Building setbacks enhance pedestrian safety and amenity by widening the footpath to enable greater separation between people and traffic, promote the growth of street trees, and accommodate outdoor dining where suitable.

Action

A7. Amend the planning controls to support:

- a. 2.5m whole of building setback along B-Line bus stops to improve pedestrian safety and amenity
- b. 4m whole of building setback at Waters Lane to widen the footpath and align with the identified through-site link connecting to Military Road
- c. 1.5m whole of building setback to the western side of May Gibbs Place to enlarge the open space and to better align with Young Street
- d. 1.5m whole of building setback to laneways (except Military Lane) to allow for sufficient building separation and improve the pedestrian experience
- e. 1.5m setback at ground level along the northern side of Military Road to improve pedestrian circulation
- f. 1.5m setback at ground level to the southern side of Grosvenor Plaza to provide sufficient gathering and movement spaces
- g. 1.5m setback at ground level along the western side of Rangers Road to provide a consistent street frontage with the mixed-use development to the south



Figure 7-6. Proposed building setbacks

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Active street frontages

Active street frontages support local retailers and infuse streets and plazas with activity that enhance the vibrancy of the local centre. Greater passive surveillance improves perceived and actual safety of local streets.

Active frontages along mid-block links and laneways are also encouraged wherever feasible, noting the essential service functions of laneways such as vehicle entries and waste handling need to be accommodated.

Action

- A8. Amend the planning controls to maximise active frontages in the local centre



Figure 7-7. Proposed active frontages

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Podium heights

Podium height, or the 'street wall', refers to the front façade of a building constructed at or near the street boundary. It plays a vital role in urban design, serving as an interface with the street, contributing to a sense of enclosure, and defining the public realm.

As per the NSDCP 2013, a 2-3 storey podium is currently required along street frontages, with setback requirements above the podium to promote a human-scaled street frontage. Most of the existing buildings in Neutral Bay local centre have a 3 storey podium height.

The proposed podium heights in this study take into account the existing built form and the condition of each street and laneway.

Action

- A9. Amend the planning controls to support:
- 3 storey podium along Military Road with exceptions of the heritage-valued frontages and adjacent buildings to maintain consistent street frontage
 - 3 storey podium for the blocks on the northern side of the local centre, where most recently constructed buildings have a 3-storey podium height
 - 2 storey podium across the laneways and through-site links of the mixed-use areas, around public open spaces and adjacent to heritage buildings.



Figure 7-8. Proposed podium heights

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Above podium setbacks

Above podium setbacks reinforce podium heights by requiring taller levels of a building to locate further away from the property boundary and provide greater building separation. It reinforces a human scale to the street and 'village feel' of the centre.

Actions

A10. Amend planning controls to support:

- 3m above podium setback for the majority of building frontages
- 10m above podium setback is required along the southern side of the 43-53 Grosvenor Street site to ensure sufficient solar access to Grosvenor Plaza, and locate the residential levels to the north of the site to reinforce a village scale to the plaza and avoid a ziggurat-shaped tower
- 5.5m above podium setback is required along Military Road and Wycombe Road at 175-177 Military Road and 157-169 Wycombe Road sites to provide adequate setback from the heritage-valued facade and align with adjacent future developments along Military Road

A11. Increased setbacks above the podium may be required to achieve adequate building separation in accordance with SEPP 65.



Figure 7-9. Proposed above podium setbacks

7.2 AMENDING THE PLANNING CONTROLS

Placemaking framework

The placemaking framework aims to draw together open space, social infrastructure, access improvements and public art to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, characterised by a vibrant village atmosphere with landscaped public spaces and easy access to shopping, dining, and services. It looks at the local centre as a whole.

Through-site links on private property can enhance the permeability and activity of the centre, and support local retailers.

Actions

A12. Amend the planning controls to support through-site links:

- between Military Road and the future Grosvenor Plaza (Lot11/DP600315, Lot10/DP229/37, and Lot1/DP802102)
- between Rangers Road and Yeo Street (Lot2/DP1091371)

A13. All such links should be provided with public rights of access and designed with passive surveillance

A14. These links are recommended to be open-to-sky, with potential for enclosed links at Site 2A and Site 3B (refer to the design guidelines in Section 7.3)

A15. A major new public artwork for Grosvenor Plaza will be investigated, subject to funding



Figure 7-10. Placemaking framework map

7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Sites 1, 2 and 3

Sites 1, 2 and 3 are of a size and location to support additional density and deliver public benefits for the local centre. Whilst this planning study identifies the overarching design parameters and infrastructure requirements for each site, further design work is required.

Accordingly, separate amendments to the NSLEP 2013 for Sites 1, 2 and 3 aimed at delivering the employment, access and built form objectives of this study are expected to be progressed by the landowners. Planning agreements will be negotiated to fund public domain improvements and social infrastructure.

Following the rescission of the Military Road Corridor Planning Study, the following have been lodged:

- Site 1 development application ([DA 258/23](#)) (lodged: 1 September 2023)
- Site 3A planning proposal ([PP 4/23](#)) (lodged: 6 April 2023)
- Site 3B planning proposal ([PP 1/23](#)) (lodged: 11 January 2023)

Council will use this planning study to advance proposals that are in line with this document, and negotiate with proponents and advocate for amendments where needed.

The following guidelines summarise the desired outcomes for Sites 1, 2 and 3. These guidelines have been informed by the detailed feedback received by the community and aim to achieve a 'better balance' between height and public benefits.

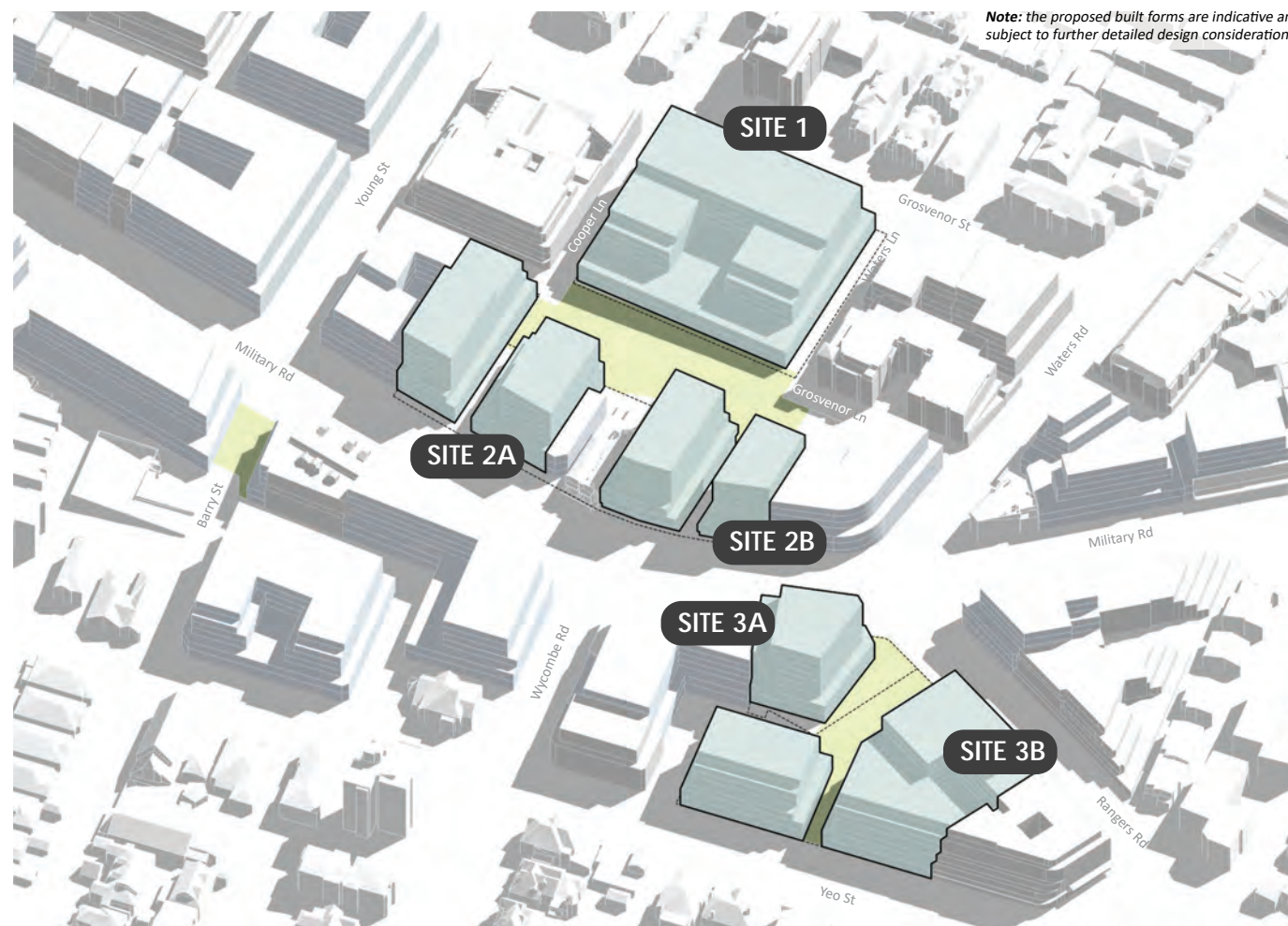


Figure 7-11. Aerial of indicative proposed development envelope

7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Site 1 - Grosvenor Lane North

Site 1 is located at 43-51 Grosvenor Street and currently supports a large supermarket. The site fronts the Council owned Grosvenor Lane car park and is enclosed by Cooper Lane, Waters Lane and Grosvenor Street.

This study recommends the relocation of the Grosvenor Lane car park underground and the creation of a fully pedestrianised public plaza.

Site 1 objectives

Enable the redevelopment of Site 1 to:

- support local jobs, local shops and housing opportunities
- relocate the public car park underground and transform the Grosvenor Lane car park into a new, sunny public plaza
- enhance pedestrian amenity and access between Grosvenor Street and the new plaza
- support the village atmosphere of the centre

Site 1 design guidelines

- 1 provide additional employment floor space with a minimum 1.2:1 non-residential FSR
- 2 implement a 4m whole of building setback along Waters Lane, and 1.5m along Grosvenor Lane and Cooper Lane
- 3 protect solar access to the future plaza by staggering building heights
- 4 provide multiple fine-grain retail shops along Grosvenor Lane, Waters Lane and Grosvenor Street to support a variety of on-street shops
- 5 minimise the impact of loading and parking access by providing vehicular access through Cooper Lane and Grosvenor Street
- 6 preserve and add more trees in Waters Lane and Grosvenor Street where feasible
- 7 maintain existing trees at Grosvenor Plaza with deep soil where possible (see section 3.2) and add new plantings to enhance tree coverage
- 8 create flexible green space for passive recreation, markets and events
- 9 relocate the existing public car park underground with breakthrough access to the southern portion of the plaza. Provide surface-level parking spaces for loading services and disability parking

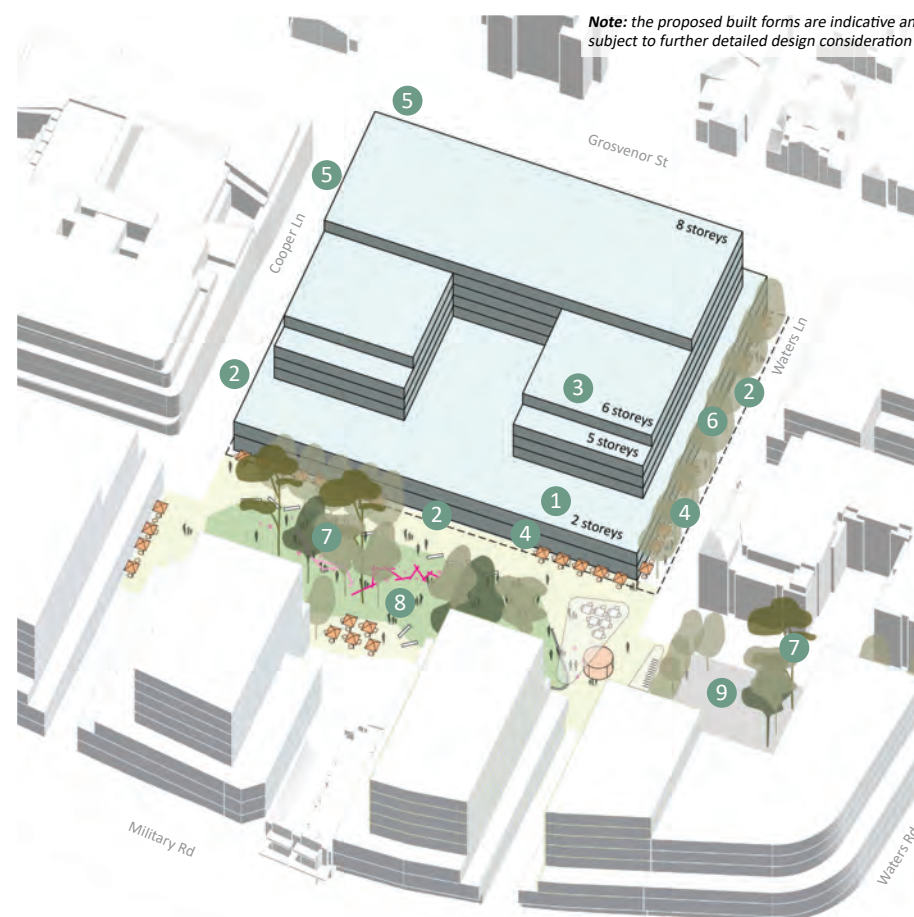
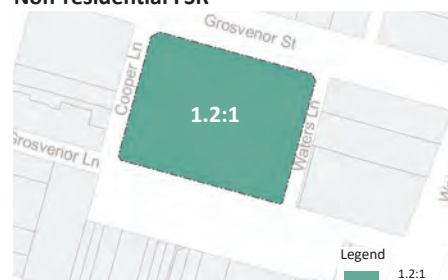


Figure 7-12. Illustrative Site 1 building envelope looking north-west

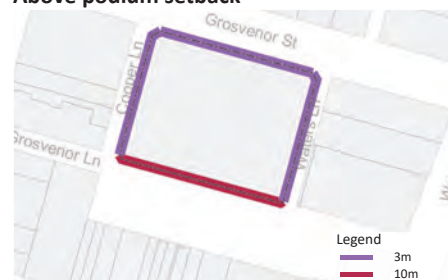
7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Non-residential FSR



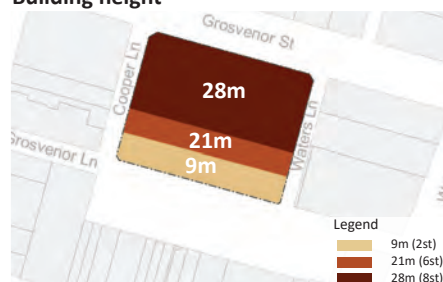
A minimum 1.2:1 non-residential FSR is proposed at Site 1 to provide more retail and commercial opportunities at this core location of the local centre.

Above podium setback



A 10m above podium setback is proposed at the plaza frontage. This is to ensure adequate solar access can be achieved at Grosvenor Plaza and village scale to the plaza. A 3m above podium setback is required at the other street frontages.

Building height



The proposed maximum building heights for Site 1 vary, with height controls of 2, 6, and 8 storeys, designed to achieve a height transition toward the plaza. This is accomplished by articulating the building through separate built form volumes that are stepped to align with the topography and urban fabric.

Active frontages



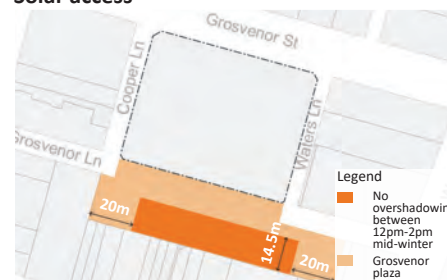
Maximise active retail frontage and potential outdoor dining spaces on the plaza and Waters Lane pedestrian link. Active uses are also recommended at the corners of the block where possible.

Setback



Provide a 1.5m setback along Cooper Lane as per the NSDCP 2013 for laneway services and movement. Additionally, implement a 1.5m southern setback to improve solar access to the plaza. Along Waters Lane, a 4m setback is required to strengthen this landscaped north-south pedestrian connection.

Solar access



Retain solar access to a minimum 50% of the site area of Grosvenor Plaza from 11am to 2pm mid-winter June 21. In addition, new development must not create any overshadowing to the areas of Grosvenor Plaza marked 'no overshadowing' between 12pm and 2pm mid-winter June 21.

Podium height



A 2 storey podium is recommended along the plaza and Waters Lane to create a human-scaled interface and enhance solar access to the plaza. A 3 storey podium height is proposed for other street frontages. Due to the site's topography change, the podium height may vary at Cooper Lane.

7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Site 1 public benefits

Recommended public benefits to support a planning proposal for Site 1 are:

- a 3,000m² Grosvenor Plaza across council-owned land, subject to agreement, that:
 - delivers a flexible community open space with multiple design elements, such as a community lawn, playground, outdoor dining area, public seating, public artwork, landscaping, bicycle parking, disability parking and loading service car park
 - maintains the majority of existing mature trees in the public domain where possible (see section 3.2)

Refer to the Neutral Bay Town Centre Public Domain Plan (SMM 2023) for further design guidance.

- an underground public car park that enables a future basement connection between Site 1 and Site 2 across a below-ground stratum of council-owned land, subject to agreement, supporting:
 - 64 public car spaces
 - at least 5 disability parking spaces
 - 11 public motorcycle spaces

Refer to pages 88-89 of this study for further design guidance.

- footpath widening at Waters Lane
 - establish a major north-south pedestrian connection with a 4m building setback
 - preserve existing mature trees
 - provide active frontage and outdoor dining

Precedents



7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

GROSVENOR PLAZA

1. Grosvenor Lane closed to traffic (emergency vehicles excepted)
2. Proposed development envelope
3. Proposed ground floor supermarket
4. Public traveller access to Grosvenor Plaza from underground carpark
5. Existing trees retained
6. Adventure playground
7. 'Village green' flexible space for passive recreation and community events
8. Architecturally designed shelter provides flexible space for outdoor dining and community events
9. Active retail frontage
10. Creative Hub laneway



Figure 7-13. Artist's impression of proposed Grosvenor Plaza, looking west along Grosvenor Lane urban terrace towards Young Street

7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Grosvenor Plaza car park

The Council has a longstanding policy objective to relocate the Grosvenor Lane Car Park underground and create a public plaza at ground level. The draft study aligns with this objective.

Consultation advice

The transformation of the public car park into an underground facility was discussed with community, Council's internal project control group (PCG) and external consultants. Key feedback is:



Design to maximise pedestrian safety and local centre amenity



Community workshops

- under grounding the car park is safer for all of the community
- the proposed plaza and traffic circulation changes can improve access and less traffic congestion and cars
- will attract better/quality businesses and range including more cafes
- underground car park and staged works will be important

Neutral Bay Alive group

- relocate existing Grosvenor Lane public parking to an integrated underground car park for public and retail use
- the public car park's operation should benefit all Grosvenor Plaza businesses, not just the supermarket
- to maintain pedestrian safety, car park and loading dock accesses to adjoining properties to the plaza need careful consideration

Council's project control group

- the proposed plaza and underground car park will provide a safer environment for motorists and pedestrians in Grosvenor Lane
- consider providing loading zones at Grosvenor Lane if needed
- provide loading dock at basement car parks
- include goods lift for delivery of goods for any shop located around the plaza

Transport consultant (Stantec)

- the current number of public car parking spaces within the study area is sufficient
- relatively high increase in trips is expected at the intersection of Grosvenor Street with Cooper Lane
- investigate opportunities to reduce traffic speed and introduce new crossing at Grosvenor Street
- area-wide review of parking restrictions is recommended



Retain mature trees at the plaza where possible



Community workshops

- more open green outdoor space, public space, greenery and meeting places is important
- leafy green mature trees are crucial to the community and are the reasons they appreciate Neutral Bay Local centre the most

Neutral Bay Alive group

- shade trees (including canopy) and landscaping is one of the key elements to preserving the village atmosphere and projecting a village streetscape
- ensure mature trees are planted or retained to create a leafy outlook, which is already present

Council's project control group

- retain existing trees for their historical presence, offering valuable shade from their canopies
- the trees are currently healthy and in excellent condition
- to establish the precise Tree Protection Zone (TPZ), Council should engage an arborist for a comprehensive inspection

Landscape consultant (SMM)

- preserve existing trees for landscape character and shade
- keep ground levels within the root/canopy zone untouched
- a minimum 2.5m depth of deep soil zone to support quality tree planting
- urban heat island effect is evident at the plaza, leading to a higher temperature compared to the surrounding local streets

7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Car park design guidelines

Recommended design guidelines for the Grosvenor Plaza car park site include:

- 1 relocate public parking underground to create a green public plaza
- 2 provide the current number of public car, disability and motorcycle spaces in the Site 1 basement level (Figure 7.15)
- 3 enable a potential connection between Site 1 and Site 2 basement car parks across council land (subject to negotiation)
- 4 retain the existing mature trees with adequate tree protection zone where possible (subject to detailed design)
- 5 provide 10 additional parking spaces, that include 4 disability parking spaces and space for small-scale loading services, at ground level
- 6 include at grade temporary loading facilities servicing Site 2 along the southern side of the plaza. These temporary loading facilities should not impact the plaza's amenity, and be relocated underground as part of Site 2 redevelopment
- 7 incorporate car park entries into Site 1 and Site 2 development, away from the plaza, consolidate those entries where possible and provide 24 hour / 7 day a week public access
- 8 provide pedestrian access points to the basement car parks at both northern and southern side of the plaza, ensuring pedestrian access to the underground car park is visible from the plaza and not internalised into the building



Figure 7-14. Proposed Grosvenor Plaza car park site - ground level

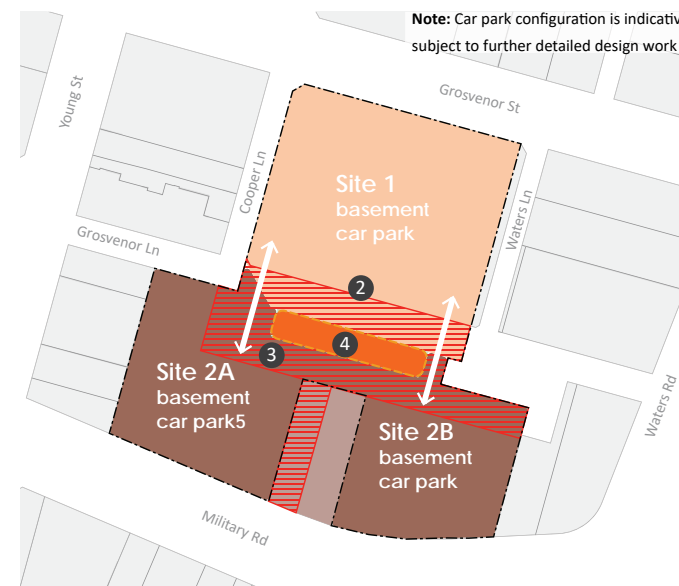
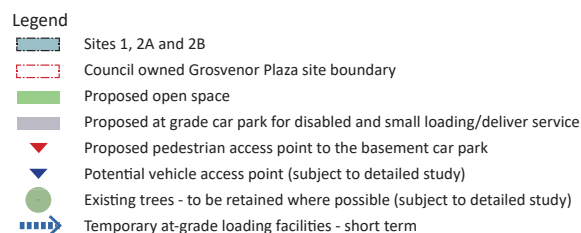
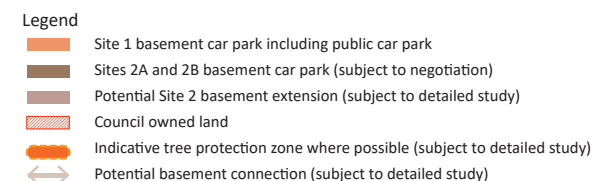


Figure 7-15. Proposed Grosvenor Plaza car park site - basement levels



7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Site 2 - Grosvenor Lane South

Site 2 is located at 166-188 and 198-214 Military Road and supports multiple local shops and businesses. The site also fronts the Council-owned Grosvenor Lane car park and is bounded by Military Road and Grosvenor Lane.

This study recommends replacing the two existing arcades with open air through-site links aligned with Cooper Lane and Waters Lane. Additionally, there is potential to establish a new community centre at Site 2, with an entrance from the plaza and convenient access to the surface-level disability parking spaces.

Site 2 is under multiple ownership. It is likely the site will be developed in stages. Accordingly, the site has been broken into Sites 2A and 2B, with four recommended development parcels.

Site 2 objectives

Enable the redevelopment of Site 2 to:

- support local jobs, local shops and housing opportunities
- enhance pedestrian amenity and access between Military Road and the new plaza
- deliver a 1000m² community centre with the potential to extend the community activities outdoor at the plaza
- support the village atmosphere

Site 2 design guidelines

- 1 provide additional employment floor space with a minimum 1.2:1 non-residential FSR
- 2 enhance streetscape amenity by providing a 2.5m whole of building setback along Military Road at Site 2A and a 1.5m ground level setback at Site 2B with additional street trees and landscaping
- 3 ensure that the built form presents unobtrusively by maximising above podium habitable facades on all sides and providing generous building separations to avoid a continuous 'wall effect' along Military Road
- 4 protect solar amenity to Grosvenor Plaza
- 5 deliver two new through-site links with a 6m width and open to the sky. A covered arcade link may however be considered at Site 2A provided the maximum length of any building over 6 storeys in height avoids the 'wall effect' along Military Road. This is subject to further investigation
- 6 provide multiple fine-grain retail shops along Military Road, plaza and through-site links to support a variety of new on-street shops
- 7 deliver a new 1000m² community facility with a separated lobby accessible from the plaza on Site 2B as shown in figure 7.16
- 8 ensure that the built form sensitively responds to existing heritage items

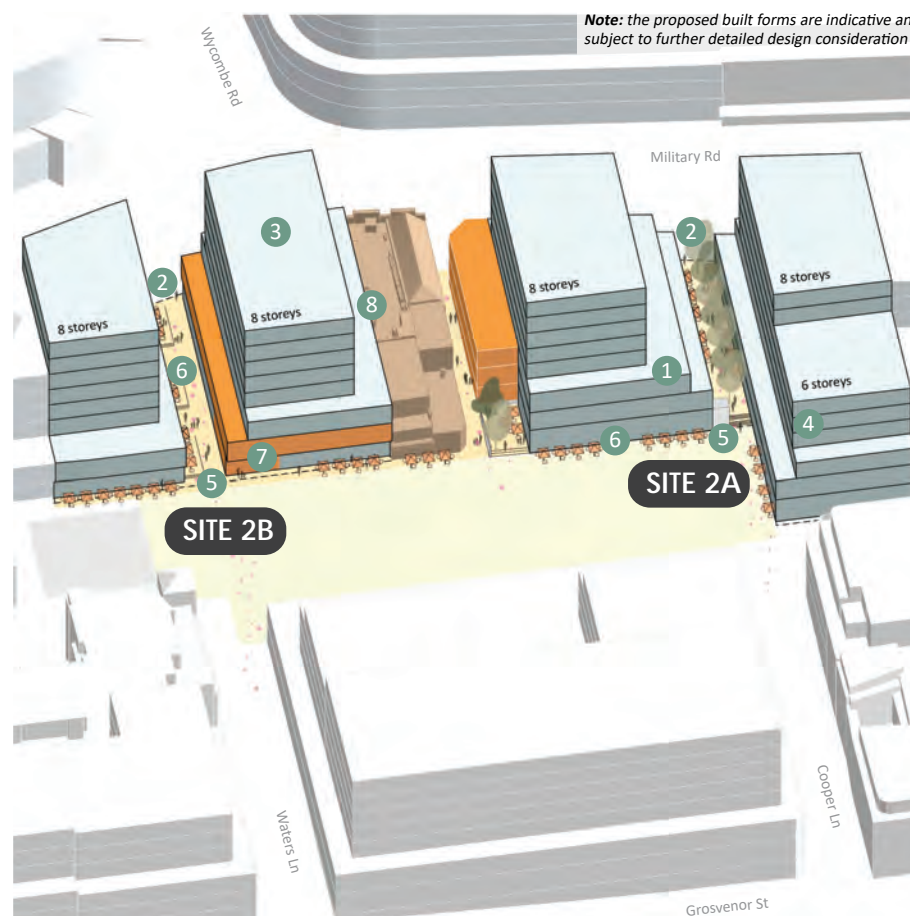
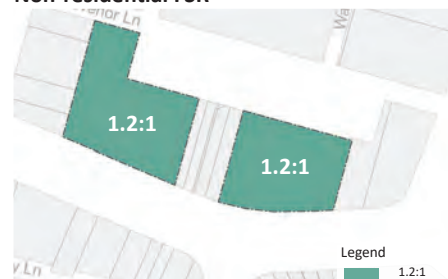


Figure 7-16. Illustrative Site 2 building envelope looking south

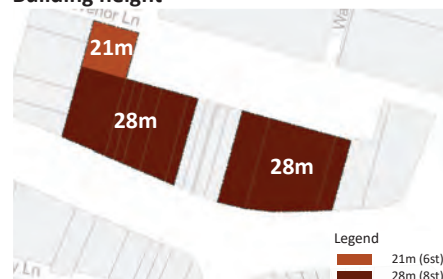
7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Non-residential FSR



A 1.2:1 non-residential FSR is proposed at Site 2A and 2B to provide more retail and commercial opportunities at this core location of the local centre.

Building height



The proposed maximum building heights for Site 2 vary, with 8 storey buildings along Military Road, and a 6 storey height limit on the western side of the plaza to minimise the shadow impact on the plaza.

Setback



A 2.5m whole of building setback and a 1.5m ground level setback along Military Road are proposed to widen the footpath. A 1.5m ground level setback is recommended to provide flexible space in front of the future community centre lobby and access path to the surface-level car park.

Podium height



A 2 storey podium is recommended around the plaza and along the through-site link to create a human-scaled interface, while a 3 storey podium height is proposed for the other street frontages.

Above podium setback



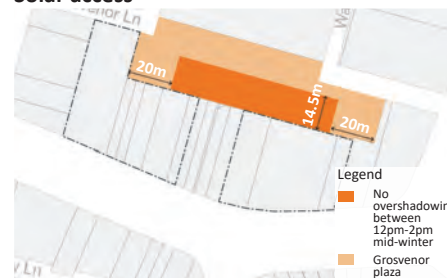
A 3m above podium setback is proposed at all the street and plaza frontages to provide a consistent street frontage.

Active frontages



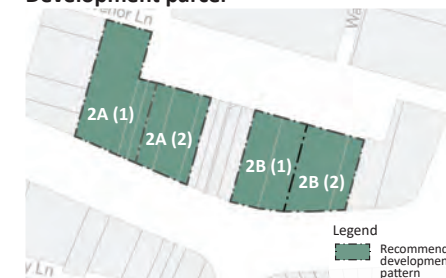
Maximise active retail frontage and potential outdoor dining spaces on the plaza and along Military Road. Encourage active uses at through-site links to promote fine-grain retail patterns and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Solar access



Retain solar access to a minimum 50% of the site area of Grosvenor Plaza from 11am to 2pm mid-winter June 21. In addition, new development must not create any overshadowing to the areas of Grosvenor Plaza marked 'no overshadowing' between 12pm and 2pm mid-winter June 21.

Development parcel



Lot amalgamation should reflect the above diagram with the following associated public benefits: Through-site links delivered by Site 2A(1) and Site 2B(2). A new community centre is required at Site 2B(1).

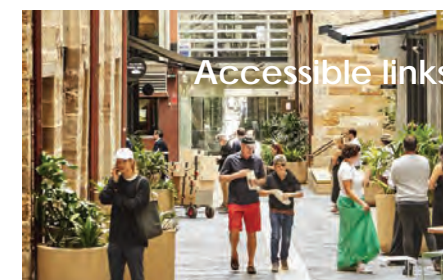
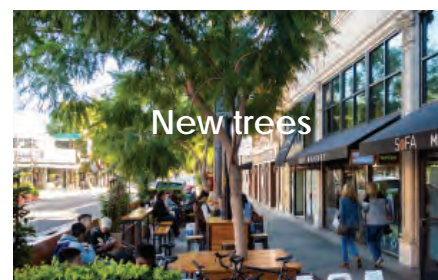
7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Site 2 public benefits

Public benefits to support a planning proposal for Site 2 are:

- a 1000m² community centre
 - located on the first floor of the new development at Site 2B, with a ground floor lobby facing Grosvenor Plaza designed to be visually transparent and inviting
 - ensure a strong visual presence along Military Road and Grosvenor Plaza
- two new through-site-links
 - both links with a width of 6m and open to the sky
 - provide accessibility for people with limited mobility
 - provide 2 storey podium height with active retail frontages on the ground level along the through-site links
 - a covered arcade link may be considered at Site 2A provided the maximum length for buildings over 6 storeys avoids the 'wall effect' along Military Road
- footpath widening at Military Road
 - provide footpath widening at Military Road with a 2.5m whole building setback, allowing opportunities for new street trees and kerbside plantings to enhance pedestrian amenity and improve pedestrian safety
 - include a 1.5m ground level setback to improve pedestrian amenity and widen the footpath

Precedents



7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES



Figure 7-17. Artist's impression of proposed Grosvenor Plaza, looking south towards new community centre and through-site link aligned with Waters Lane

7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Site 3 - Rangers Road

Site 3 is located at 183-185 Military Road, 1-7 Rangers Road and 50 Yeo Street, with frontages along Military Road, Rangers Road, and Yeo Street.

By relocating the supermarket underground, a new public plaza can be delivered fronting Rangers Road and Military Road. Access to the plaza can also be achieved from Yeo Street.

New developments are limited to a maximum of 8 storeys along Military Road and Rangers Road, while a height limit of 6 storeys applies to Yeo Street. Upper level setbacks are required to facilitate a transition and safeguard solar access to the Yeo Street residential buildings.

Site 3 is in multiple ownership and will likely be developed in stages. The site has been broken up into Site 3A and 3B.

Site 3 objectives

Enable the redevelopment of Site 3 to:

- support local jobs, local shops and housing opportunities
- create a new public plaza fronting Rangers Road and Military Road
- enhance pedestrian amenities and accessibility between Rangers Road and Yeo Street
- support the village atmosphere

Site 3 design guidelines

- 1 provide additional employment floor space with a minimum 1.2:1 and 1.5:1 non-residential FSR as per the opposite page
- 2 improve streetscape amenity by implementing a 2.5m whole building setback along Military Road to allow for an expanded tree canopy.
- 3 ensure that built form presents unobtrusively, with a focus on maximising above-podium habitable facades on all sides
- 4 deliver a 1,000m² new public plaza and an open to the sky, 6m wide through-site link to Yeo Street. A covered arcade link may however be considered if it can be demonstrated that the link can meet desired urban design outcomes, such as clear sightlines, maximising legibility and wayfinding, and adequate design for building articulation along Yeo Street
- 5 protect solar amenity to Rangers Road plaza and residential zones along Yeo Street
- 6 provide multiple fine-grain retail shops along Military Road, Rangers Road, the plaza and through-site link to support a variety of new ground level shops
- 7 activate street edges along Yeo Street and Military Lane where possible
- 8 deliver loading and basement access through Military Lane or potentially along Yeo Street, subject to a transport study
- 9 mitigate wind impacts to the public plaza
- 10 ensure built form sensitively respond to the existing residential buildings across Yeo Street

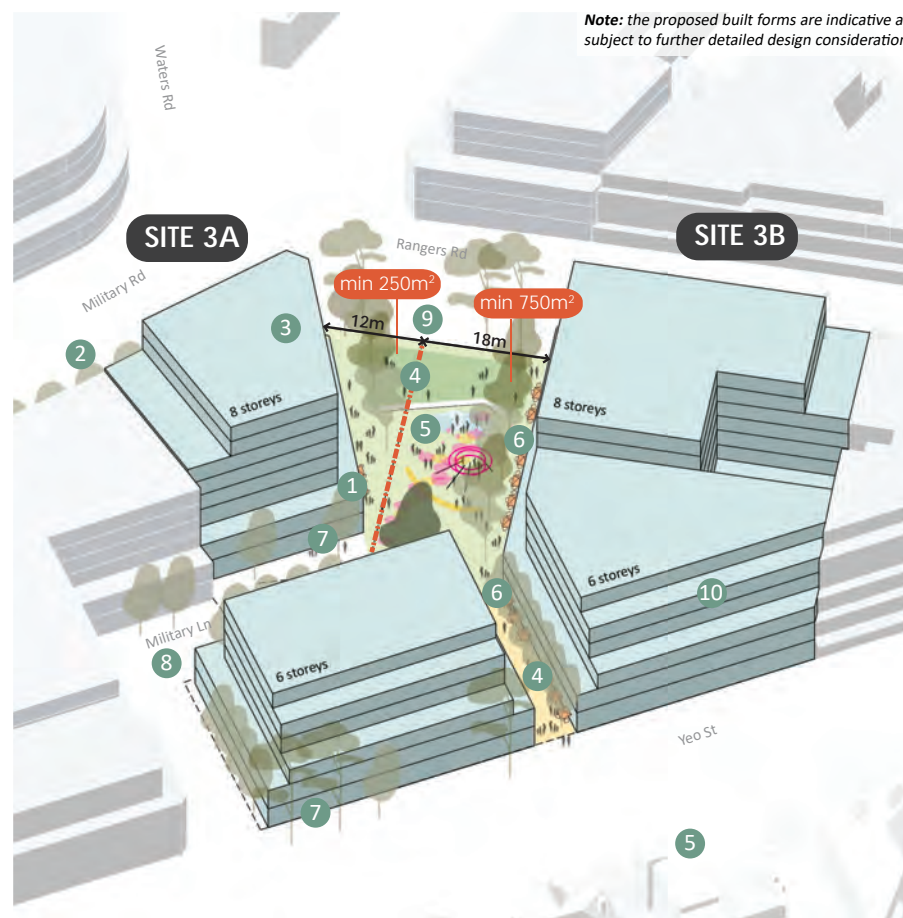
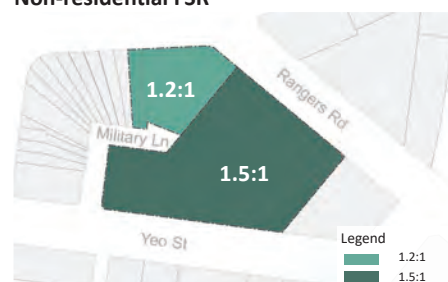


Figure 7-18. Illustrative Site 3 building envelope looking north-east

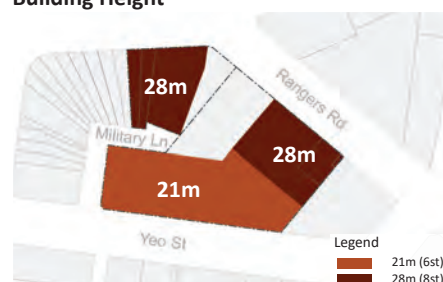
7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Non-residential FSR



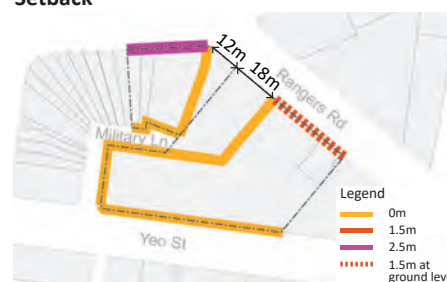
A 1.2:1 non-residential FSR is proposed at Site 3A and a proposed 1.5:1 non-residential FSR at Site 3B to provide more opportunities for retail and commercial spaces at this central location within the local centre.

Building Height



The proposed maximum building heights for Site 3 vary, with 6 and 8 storey height controls. The 8 storey buildings are recommended along Military Road and Rangers Road, while a 6 storey height is proposed along Yeo Street to minimise the impact on the residential zones.

Setback



A 2.5m whole of building setback along Military Road to widen the footpath. A 1.5m ground level setback along Rangers Road is recommended to ensure a consistent street frontage alignment with the adjacent development.

Podium Height



A 2 storey podium along Military Road is recommended to provide a respectful response to the adjoining heritage-valued building facade. A 2 storey podium is also proposed around the plaza, laneway, and the link to create a human-scaled interface. 3 and 4 storey podium heights are suggested at Yeo Street and Rangers Road.

Above Podium Setback



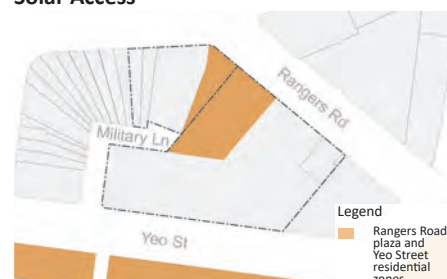
A 3m above podium setback is recommended at all the street and plaza frontages to provide a consistent street frontage, and minimise the shadow impact to the plaza.

Active Frontages



Maximise active retail frontage and potential outdoor dining spaces on the plaza, Military Road and Rangers Road. Active uses are also recommended at through-site links to encourage fine-grain retail patterns and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Solar Access



Retain solar access to a minimum 50% of the plaza area from 10am to 1pm mid-winter June 21.

Ensure a minimum of 2 hours of sunlight for 70% of residential dwellings along Yeo Street to align with NSDCP 2013 and SEPP 65 (ADG).



A 3m top floor setback is required to the building along the northern side of Yeo Street to minimise overshadowing the residential area.

7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES

Site 3 public benefits

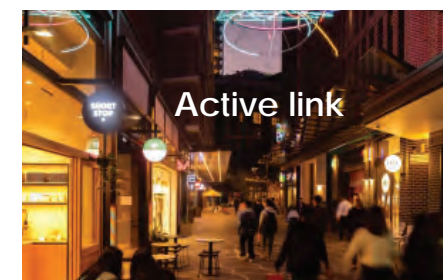
Public benefits to support a planning proposal for Site 3 are:

- a 1000m² public plaza
 - shared plaza area contributions: a minimum of 250m² from Site 3A, and a minimum of 750m² from Site 3B (refer to figure 7-18)
 - deliver a sunny open space with active edges around the plaza for retail, cafes and outdoor dining
 - provide multiple design elements to activate the space, such as an outdoor dining area, public seating, community lawn, playground, water features, public artwork, landscaping and bicycle parking

Refer to the Neutral Bay Town Centre Public Domain Plan (SMM 2023) for further design guidance.

- new through-site link
 - create a 6m wide, open to the sky, north-south pedestrian link between Military Road and Rangers Road intersection, and Yeo Street with a clear visual connection
 - provide 2 storey podium height with active retail frontages at ground level on each side of through-site link
 - a covered arcade link may be considered if it can meet desired urban design outcomes, such as clear sightlines, maximising legibility and wayfinding, and adequate design for building articulation along Yeo Street
- footpath widening at Military Road
 - implement a 2.5m whole of building setback to widen the footpath

Precedents



7.3 KEY SITE GUIDELINES



Figure 7-19. Artist's impression of Rangers Road Plaza, looking towards Yeo Lane and Military Lane

7.4 FUTURE INVESTIGATIONS

Military Road streetscape upgrades

Street trees

Street trees and planting make a significant contribution to the visual character and sense of comfort within a streetscape. While there are substantial mature street trees and planting to be found in the local streets throughout Neutral Bay local centre, urban redevelopments and the Northern Beaches B-Line project have resulted in accelerating canopy loss in recent years.

The scarcity of planting along Military Road has exacerbated the heat island effect – as temperatures experienced along the main street are higher than those experienced in the surrounding local streets (SMM 2023).

80% of survey respondents considered more trees and landscaping to be important or very important (NSC 2023).

To enhance the environmental performance, streetscape amenity and distinctive character of Neutral Bay's local centre, opportunities for additional street tree and kerbside planting along both sides of Military Road should be investigated.

The new street trees would need to meet the clearance requirements of the double-decker B-Line buses and accommodated via footpath widening and awning cut outs in new developments fronting Military Road.



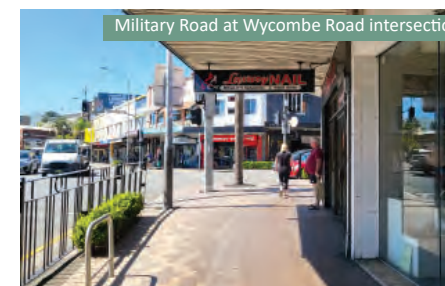
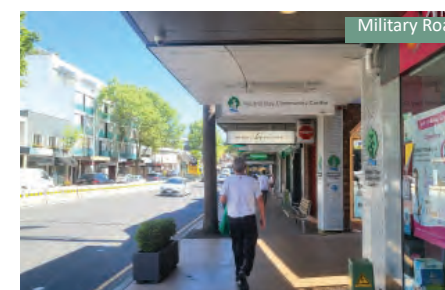
Kerbside planting

The majority of the footpaths along Military Road are situated directly adjacent to the constant flow of traffic in the kerbside lanes, lacking measures to alleviate the impact of traffic on pedestrians. This has resulted in a hostile environment. At intersections, fences are installed which physically reinforce the prioritisation of regional through traffic over local pedestrian amenity.

Continuous kerbside planting along both sides of Military Road, would physically and experientially separate the footpaths from the fast-moving roadway, creating a sense of safety and respite within the pedestrian environment.

Military Road designs could draw inspiration from the successful Cleveland Street hedging project undertaken by the City of Sydney, completed in 2015. The Cleveland Street project introduced kerbside hedges along a 2.3-kilometre stretch, creating a continuous green corridor linking Victoria Park to Moore Park. The thick hedges successfully transformed the pedestrian experience, offering a sense of separation and respite from the busy roadway without compromising street functionality.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the cost of delivering and regularly maintaining hedges or planter boxes along Military Road, however, is likely to be high. Further work is needed to identify an optimal solution.



7.4 FUTURE INVESTIGATIONS

Pedestrian crossings

Military Road

Military Road is a barrier to walking in the study area, particularly with extended wait times and restricted crossing times at intersections. A number of crossing points are located across the extent of Military Road. The largest gap between pedestrian crossings is 260m, located between the signalised crossing at Wycombe Road and the footbridge at Hampden Avenue. Large distances between crossings limit the north-south permeability through the local centre.

All the crashes identified within the study area, that involved pedestrians and cyclists occurred along Military Road. There is a clear need to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity across Military Road.

Chapter 4 identifies potential at grade crossing improvements along Military Road that should be subject to further investigation including:

- ① longer crossing times
- ② realigning the Young Street crossing
- ③ new crossing at Rangers Road

Another option put forward by the community is a grade-separated overpass. This can also be included in the investigation, however, it presents additional challenges, including landing points, cost, and retail and pedestrian activation.

The outcome of the investigation may be used as a point of advocacy with TfNSW as the authority responsible for approval, funding and delivery.



Local Roads

Higher pedestrian activity is expected around Grosvenor Street, and particularly within the area between Young Street and Waters Road where the major redevelopment sites and the proposed Grosvenor plaza are located. Currently, there is a lack of dedicated north-south crossing facilities along Grosvenor Street.

At Site 3, the new through-site link is introduced as part of the implementation of the Rangers Road Plaza. A midblock formal pedestrian crossing point at Yeo Street near the through-site link may be required to align with the pedestrian desire line.

Accordingly, potential pedestrian crossing improvements for future investigation are:

- ④ introducing additional formal crossing facilities for north-south crossing movements along **Grosvenor Street**
- ⑤ providing a new formal pedestrian crossing point near the through-site link at **Yeo Street**



7.4 FUTURE INVESTIGATIONS

Cycling

Currently, there are no dedicated separated cycleways or off-road shared paths within Neutral Bay local centre. Surrounding the local centre, apart from the separated bicycle path along Sutherland Street (to the north), there are no dedicated cycleways connecting the surrounding suburbs to the local centre. Cyclists are required to share the road with motorists on the approved “General Roads”.

Recently, Council proposed a separated cycle path on Young Street between Grosvenor Street and Sutherland Street. This initiative aims to provide a safe cycleway connection between the local centre and the Sutherland Street cycleway to the north.

However, there is a clear lack of safe crossing facilities connecting the cycleways north and south of the Military Road corridor, with no bike phase provided at designated crossing point(s) at Military Road.

To encourage cycling in and around the local centre, the following interventions have been identified for future investigation:

- establishment of a dedicated cycleway along Young Street, connecting Grosvenor Street cycleway to Belgrave Street, with a potential extension to May Gibbs Place and Barry Street
- provide bike parking facilities close to key destinations and easily accessible locations, such as open plazas



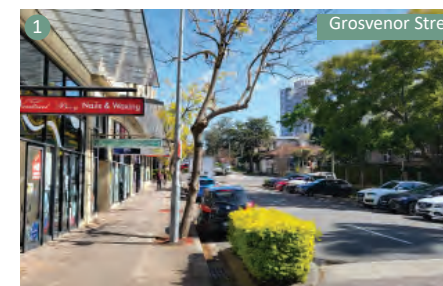
Traffic speed

There are safety concerns raised by the community regarding rat-running traffic observed along Grosvenor Street, which currently has a speed limit of 50km/h.

Furthermore, the Traffic and Transport Study (Stantec 2024) has identified safety concerns over rat-running traffic along Yeo Street. The introduction of the proposed Rangers Road plaza and a through-site link off Yeo Street is expected to increase pedestrian activity in the area.

To address these concerns, potential traffic calming measures for future investigation include:

- 1 implementing speed reduction (30km/h or 40km/h HPAA) along **Grosvenor Street**
- 2 implementing speed reduction along **Yeo Street**



7.4 FUTURE INVESTIGATIONS

Parking management

Wayfinding

Areas within the local centre face varying levels of parking demand, contributing to congestion. A parking wayfinding strategy may optimise parking assets and alleviate vehicle congestion caused by drivers searching for parking spaces. This strategy aims to provide drivers with information about available parking spaces during their journey.

For future consideration, the following interventions have been recommended (Stantec 2024):

- **signage at key decision points**
identify important decision points and install relevant signage. This will enhance the user experience, distribute demand, and reduce through-traffic on streets where a higher level of pedestrian amenity is desired.
- **smart parking technology**
explore the integration of smart parking technology as a real-time digital interface, offering improved user information. This technology allows for continuous data collection on car park utilisation, serving as a valuable tool for future parking policy management. Furthermore, advancing this technology enables users to access real-time parking availability through a smartphone application, contributing to the reduction of vehicle congestion.

Parking restriction

Conducting an area-wide review of parking restrictions aims to enhance parking turnover in zones with short-stay land uses. Anticipating an increase in longer-stay off-street parking spaces due to future developments like Site 1 at 43-51 Grosvenor Street, there's an opportunity to reduce timed parking restrictions on certain on-street parking areas within the local centre.

For instance, potential areas for reducing timed parking restrictions include the 2-hour parking zones along (Stantec 2024):

- Grosvenor Street
- Military Road between Wycombe Road and Waters Road
- Barry Street north of Yeo Street

Car sharing

The Neutral Bay local centre currently has up to four on-street car-sharing bays at Grosvenor Lane and Yeo Street. To promote sustainable transport modes and potentially alleviate parking demand, Stantec (2024) recommends investigating the demand for car-sharing and identifying opportunities for additional on-street car-share spaces.

It is important to ensure that these locations are evenly distributed throughout the local centre, strategically placed near higher-density residential developments where they are most needed.

APPENDIX

Abbreviations

LEP - Local Environment Plan

LGA - Local Government Area

MRCPS - Military Road Corridor Planning Study (rescinded)

NSDCP 2013 - North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013

NSLEP 2013 - North Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2013

SEPP65 - State Environmental Planning Policy No.65 sets design quality principles for residential flat buildings

VPA - Voluntary Planning Agreement

FSR - Floor Space Ratio

Glossary

Voluntary Planning Agreement - financial or in-kind development contribution to support the increased demand for public amenities and public services in an area.

Masterplan - provides a planning and design framework to guide the incremental development of large or complex areas with multiple buildings, new laneways or parks.

Floor space ratio - the ratio of the gross floor area of all building levels within a site to the site area.

Setback - the space between the lot boundary and the building, or the edge of the podium and the tower element of a building.

Podium - the base of a building upon which taller (tower) elements are positioned.

Fine-grain built form - Small scale architectural detailing and promoting multiple entries in ground floor facades to provide variety, interest & activity.

Affordable housing - community housing for key workers that could otherwise not afford to live in the area.

APPENDIX

References

Council documents - all available at <https://northsydney.nsw.gov.au>

- NSC Community Strategic Plan
- NSC Delivery Plan
- NSC Operational Plan
- NSC Community Engagement Policy 2013
- NSC Local Environmental Plan 2013
- NSC Development Control Plan (as amended March 2018) (NSDCP 2013)
- NSC Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
- NSC Draft Local Housing Strategy 2019
- NSC Neutral Bay Shopping Centre Urban Design Study and Masterplan
- NSC Grosvenor Lane Planning Study 2015
- NSC Recreational Needs Study & Implementation Plan 2015/2016
- NSC Open Space Provision Strategy 2009
- NSC Street Tree Strategy 2016
- NSC Urban Forest Strategy 2011
- NSC Economic Development Strategy 2016
- NSC Infrastructure Manual
- NSC Transport Strategy
- NSC Neutral Bay Traffic Study 2015
- NSC Integrated Cycling Strategy
- NSC Local Area Traffic Management Action Plans 2017
- NSC Public Domain Upgrade Neutral Bay Cremorne (draft)
- NSC Neutral Bay Streetscape Upgrade and NSC Cremorne Streetscape Upgrade
- NSC Public Domain Style Manual & Design codes
- NSC Playgrounds Plan of Management and Playground Methodology
- NSC Public Amenities Strategy & Action Plan 2016
- NSC Community Uses on Council Land 2016
- NSC Outdoor Dining and Goods display policy
- NSC Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016-2019
- NSC Floodplain Risk Management Study and Flood Management Plan

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Census data - available at:
<http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au>

.id The Population Experts

Profile.id.com.au. - available at:
<http://profile.id.com.au/north-sydney>

State Government documents -

Available at:

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/a-metropolis-of-three-cities>

- DPHI – Greater Sydney Regional Plan
- DPHI – North District Plan

Available at:

<https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/>

- TfNSW – Future Transport Strategy 2056

Expert Consultant Advice

- Economic & Financial Feasibility Assessment - HillPDA Pty Ltd
- Community Engagement & Consultations Outcomes Report - PlanCom Consulting Pty Ltd
- Neutral Bay Town Centre Public Domain Plan - Spackman Mossop Michaels (SMM)
- Neutral Bay Town Centre Traffic and Transport Study - Stantec Australia Pty Ltd

