

The General Manager, Mayor and Councillors
Ku-ring-gai Council
Locked Bag 1051
PYMBLE NSW 2073

20 February 2015

Dear Mr McKee, Mayor and Councillors,

Hillview Heritage Conservation Area and FOKE Heritage Walk

We draw attention to the 2013 Sue Jackson-Stepowski Peer Review where the statement of significance states, *“the Hillview Conservation Area displays a layering of the history of the North Shore”*.ⁱ We also draw attention to our concerns relating to zoning for planning (development) and heritage (protection).

FOKE’s confirmation of the Peer Review

The proposed Hillview Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) is truly worthy of the State and Local significance accorded to it by the Peer Review. It is remarkable that the entire complex of Hillview buildings, their siting and vista has lasted intact till today. That the integrity of their history has been preserved despite the current frenzy of demolition and development, is nothing short of amazing.

The rarity of Hillview’s curtilage, combined with the variety of layers of the North Shore’s history represented by the precinct’s location, its buildings and their recorded past,ⁱⁱ clearly establish that protecting the precinct as a **surviving whole** is more significant than securing any single part on its own. As the Review states, *“Hillview forms an historical complex with aesthetic and architectural significance”*.

The importance of this precinct is summarized as an, *“historical record of the growth of the North Shore”*. The Jackson-Stepowski Peer Review describes each of the buildings by detailing their individual owners and history. Most importantly the statement of significance records that the *“curtilage of Hillview has conserved its significant setting and siting with views towards Sydney contributing to its representative qualities as a place of retreat.”*

FOKE’s vision for the Hillview Heritage Conservation Area (HCA)

FOKE re-iterates its vision for this important historical precinct and Heritage Conservation Area, to raise awareness of Ku-ring-gai’s history and its significance to Sydney and New South Wales.

- Our presentation to Council demonstrated the opportunity for an award-winning plan to adaptively reuse The Garage and adjacent garden settings as an indoor/outdoor café and public open space.
- In keeping with the history and current use of buildings, the future precinct allows for evolution into a health, medical and recreational precinct in Ku-ring-gai.
- The original Chemist Shop and adjacent flats could in future convert to health practitioner consultation rooms in a peaceful and relaxing setting, where buildings are already used by

the health industry for dentistry, as a health spa, yoga classes and health services by Hornsby Hospital.

- We understand The Turrumurra Community Garden currently attend to parts of the garden and would like to sympathetically garden this environment.
- The HCA would enhance Turrumurra's other areas of interest (Churches, Gilroy Road, Rohini Street, Village Park,) by simple awareness signage, small highlights at selected Heritage points, and minor organization to bring the Heritage Walk into public and tourist view in Sydney.

FOKE therefore confirms its 2015 intention to promote The Heritage Walk in Turrumurra presented to Council's ESDAC on 26 June 2014.

FOKE's intention in 2015

To this extent

- FOKE presents to Council hundreds of signatures collected from individuals supporting the Heritage Walk from stalls held last year raising awareness of the Heritage Walk proposal.
- FOKE states its intention to raise more community awareness of local and state history and to collect more supporting signatures.
- FOKE confirms its intent to present the Heritage Walk to Rotary and other community assistance organizations in 2015, and give talks and walks on specific histories and buildings, including forest remnants which feature in the local history of the area.

Concerns relating to adjacent and cumulative impacts on the Hillview Heritage Conservation Area

In consideration of existing and incrementing development in Turrumurra, including loss of high biodiversity in the village centre, several concerns are raised with you. In light of the importance of the Hillview Heritage Conservation Area as described, and its State and Local significance, these concerns will be pursued.

An informal sketch of Hillview (attached) by CARSTE studio Pty. Ltd. has been included in the Peer Review with demarcations suggesting "potential development sites". This conflicts with recommendations for protection as a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) of State and Local value.

- It is concerning that on the night of the Council meeting of 31st July 2013: that Council Officers' recommendation (after LEP exhibition) assisted up-zoning Hillview to 5 storeys with R4 Zoning. This despite the precinct being exhibited to the public in bulk as 2 storeys.
- It is strange that notwithstanding the State Heritage significance accorded to them in the Peer Review, a road and /or other infrastructure has been gazetted through the most heritage sensitive buildings on the corner of Pacific Highway and Kissing Point Road (see Town Centre zoning map)
- It's interesting that the Uniting Church's Northaven nursing home was exhibited as 2 storeys (R3 zoning) and on the night of 31 July went to 5 storeys (R4 zoning) and stayed there.
- It seems from the above that council and other vested interests are determined to push for development of community land and public open space (Hillview, Ray St., Turrumurra Ave car parks,) in Turrumurra with no attention to obvious, ultimate, zoned over-development.ⁱⁱⁱ

- Questions put to the Minister for Planning in Parliament in 2012 in relation to public land were answered with imprecision and questions may need to be put again in relation to Turramurra.

Finally, we refer to the 2014 exhibition of the Peer Review documents and Council statement as follows: ***“Please note: This is a non-statutory public exhibition. The views contained within the reports are those of the consultants only. At this stage, we are seeking community views only. Any decision by Council to extend or add HCAs based on the recommendations of these reports has not been made at this stage and will be subject to a separate planning process and further public exhibition.”***

http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/I_want_to/Ask_discuss_or_comment/Have_my_say_public_exhibitions/2014_Heritage_Conservation_Areas_Review_-_North FOKE believes Council website potentially devalues the Peer Review by suggesting that the views in the reports are views “of the consultants only”. The statement also suggests that (as happened in July 2013) publicly exhibited documents may be changed after exhibition, and indeed, (as in 2013) the situation may also be changed by the Minister, for reasons which the public will not be made aware of.

Recommendations: Based on the above concerns we recommend that:

- The proposed Heritage Conservation Area be made watertight by councillors and staff.
- The Heritage Walk in principle be supported in writing by Council.
- An appropriate planning proposal be forwarded to the Department of Planning.
- The anomaly of CARSTE studio’s sketch allowing “potential development sites” in an important Heritage Conservation Area be immediately removed.
- Concerns highlighted be addressed before the Peer Review is placed on exhibition.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Kathy Cowley
PRESIDENT

cc. Rachael Cumming, Director, Sydney West Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

ⁱ See C2 [Heritage inventory forms C1 to C6 \(pdf. 3MB\)](#)

ⁱⁱ See Article on Turramurra Architecture by Design 5 Architects in Ku-ring-gai Historical Society, Vol 35. See detail in State Heritage Inventory forms completed by the Peer Review for Hillview Heritage Conservation Area

ⁱⁱⁱ Attention is drawn to the Land-use zoning map of Turramurra where Hillview has been zoned B2, SP2 and R4 with no regard to its heritage significance. Across Turramurra there has also been no consideration of cumulative impact on environment and heritage e.g. Deferred Matter Area (Duff to Finlay St), Granny Springs Reserve, Hillview, Gilroy Rd etc. Indeed, in terms of future Metropolitan planning, no strategic consideration is given to incrementing development effects of planned and existing major commercial centres, on the un-recognized environmentally significant area of Sydney, which is Ku-ring-gai.