



# OUR MONA VALE COMMUNITY PLAN

*PROTECTING & CREATING PLACES  
FOR PEOPLE*

## PART 1

**A Community Vision and Concept Plan for the  
Mona Vale Centre, NSW (For Discussion Purposes)**

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# OUR MONA VALE COMMUNITY PLAN

## PROTECTING & CREATING PLACES FOR PEOPLE

### PART 1

#### A Community Vision and Concept Plan for the Mona Vale Centre, NSW

### CONTENTS

#### Introduction

1. Strategic, Planning and Urban Design Context
2. Our Mona Vale Community Vision
3. Our Mona Vale Urban Design Goals
4. What People Want: The Criteria for a Successful Public Place
5. Village Park, Civic Centre, Library, Hall and Civic Link: Protect
6. Place-making: Ideas for Mona Vale's Public Places, Pedestrian Links and Lanes
7. Urban Design, Built Form, Scale and Style: Beachside Village Ambience and Lifestyle
8. Our Mona Vale Community Plan's Land Use Planning Priorities
9. Accessibility, Circulation, Parking Provision and Parking Management
10. Mona Vale Concept Plan: Towards a Strategic Centre Structure Plan and Urban Design and Landscape Masterplan i.e.precinct based.

#### **Disclaimer**

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## **Introduction**

### **OUR MONA VALE COMMUNITY PLAN: Protecting & Creating Places for People**

**Pittwater is a vibrant sustainable community of connected villages inspired by bush, beach and water.**

The Mona Vale Residents Association resolved to prepare a brief community plan to assist Council as a community initiative. It is called OUR MONA VALE COMMUNITY PLAN: Protecting & Creating Places for People. Our plan is a community response to the Draft Mona Vale Place Plan (Sept 2016) as exhibited and recent developments, including Council's analysis of submissions received during the exhibition period (cut short by the former Administrator) and the adoption of the North District Plan 2018.

The Association and the Mona Vale Plan Group are drawing on the local expertise and knowledge of community members. We have researched current Australian Place-Based Planning and Urban Design protocols. We have also been inspired by Adelaide City Council's Placemaking Strategy, especially its lane activation program. The community groups have been conducting their own place appraisals of Mona Vale Centre to inform Our Mona Vale Community Plan: Protecting and Creating Places for People (2019).

#### **The Existing Mona Vale Centre:**

Mona Vale is already a vibrant, well functioning and "Successful Place for People". Therefore a community based understanding of existing village "Context", place and functionality must guide all "place-based" planning, urban design, placemaking and gradual change. Mona Vale is a thriving centre, providing amenity, convenience and a sense of community for local residents. It has an early morning and early evening economy. Mona Vale Centre works as a sociable and successful place for people with many place attributes that are valued by the community. Mona Vale's intricate urban ecosystem of people, activity, sociability, design, art, places, landscape, schools, jobs, culture, commerce, transport and history provides the CONTEXT that is crucial to appreciate as the basis for all "place based" urban planning, urban design and place creation.

#### **Context:**

Context includes the Strategic, Planning and Design Framework (e.g. North District Plan 2018) and the existing natural, social, economic, cultural and built environments and key pedestrian links and public places. Mona Vale currently functions socio-economically, culturally and physically as a thriving and valued community place.

## Place Plan ignores wishes of residents

I STRONGLY encourage all residents to read the Mona Vale Place Plan and respond during the exhibition period.

They will find very little evidence of the input the community willingly gave to council during last year's public workshops. Rather, the main thrust of the Place Plan is to raise the height limit in Mona Vale from three to six storeys in order to 'incentivise' highrise residential development. We read of and experience the overcrowded schools, lack of sports fields and increasing traffic delays in our area.

The Mona Vale Place plan as it stands will only add to these woes.

It is the council's document of deception. Leave building height limits as they are and give us the bike tracks, safe pedestrian access and the village atmosphere we asked for.

**David Murray, Mona Vale**



Part of the crowd at the rally at Mona Vale on Sunday. Photo Volunteer Photography

Rally against the Mona Vale Place Plan, Sunday 27 November 2016  
Letter to the editor and photo: Manly Daily

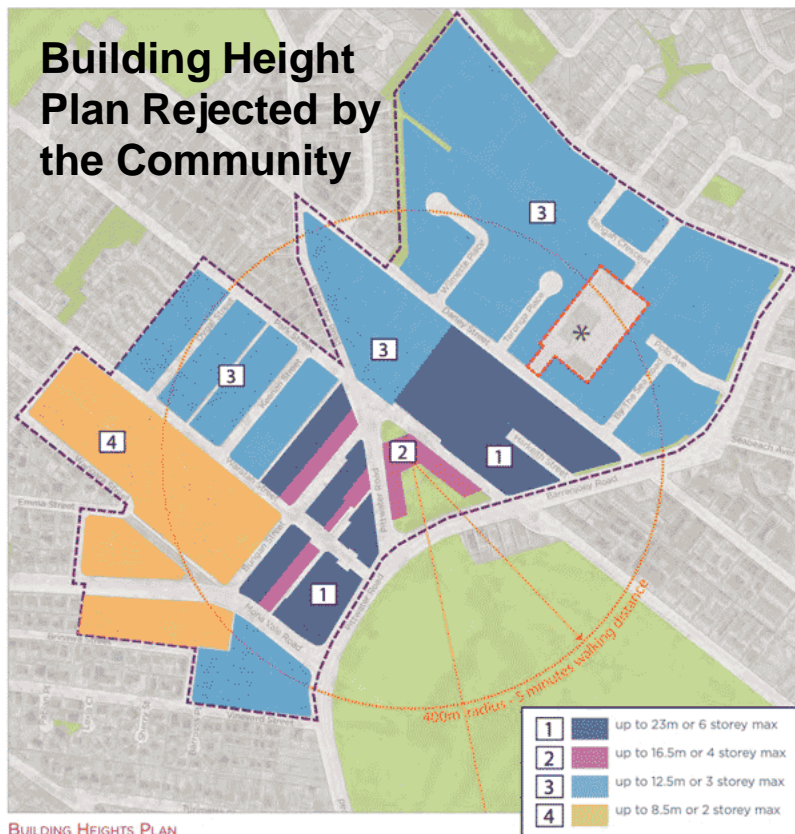
### Community Opposition to the Draft Mona Vale Place Plan (Sept 2016):

The community did not support the Draft Place Plan in its previous form. Council's published draft feedback summary is indicative of community opposition to the Draft Mona Vale Place Plan and many of the valid issues raised. Community opinion was not supportive of the proposed urban design and form, building height increases, land uses and character of the Mona Vale Centre (and the adjoining industrial area) foreshadowed in the Draft Mona Vale Place Plan (Sept 2016).

The community felt let down by the former Pittwater Council's consultation process and exhibited place plan. This was confirmed when a GIPA freedom of information request revealed that just one of the 1300 comments made by community members on the future of the Mona Vale Centre mentioned anything about an increase in building height or greater density. Source: Manly Daily

“The Draft Mona Vale Place Plan had been hijacked by two agendas which were never discussed in any of the place making workshops. Firstly a 6 storey agenda and secondly an agenda to re-build and add onto the Council community buildings,” said David Owen, President of CABPRA (Clareville and Bilgola Plateau Residents Association). “This hijacking, understandably, has made our community angry and distrustful of the whole process.” Source: Pittwater Online News

“Village park is sacrosanct to the community as made very clear on the post-it notes in the workshops. We do not want four storey development on our park,” said Marcia Rackham of the Mona Vale Residents Association. The community is still completely opposed to the “Building Height Plan” shown below. Issues and concerns are:



- Opposition to the “Building Height Plan” that is at the core of the Draft Mona Vale Place Plan.
- Opposition to the proposed increase in building height to 6 (six) storeys or more.
- Opposition to the proposed development of the park precinct, the park itself and public lands.
- Any loss of car parking and accessibility to the centre and resulting business stress is of concern.
- Opposition to the proposed housing in the Industrial Zone. As existing employment lands are scarce they need special protection from rezoning and the incursion of residential development.
- The “Vision” that Mona Vale should be like Manly with at least 6 (six) storey building heights and night time economy is not supported.
- Very concerned about potential residential over-development of the commercial-retail core of Mona Vale, loss of commercial office function, adverse impacts on existing businesses and loss of village character and sense of place.

# 1. Strategic, Planning and Urban Design Context

## Priorities for Mona Vale Strategic Centre in North District Plan 2018

Greater Sydney Commission

“**Mona Vale strategic centre** is a mixed-use area including retail, commercial, community, light industrial and residential uses. It is a thriving centre during business hours, providing amenity, convenience and a sense of community for residents”.

### Action:

“Strengthen Mona Vale through approaches that:

- a. protect and enhance the commercial and retail function of the centre to provide employment growth and maintain high job containment
- b. ensure sufficient retail and commercial floor space is provided to meet future demand
- c. leverage Mona Vale’s role as a north-south and east-west bus interchange to facilitate a greater diversity of employment and mixed-uses in the centre
- d. improve access and linkages to local destinations, such as Mona Vale Hospital, through priority pedestrian networks
- e. promote walking and cycling to and within the centre
- f. retain and manage the industrial precinct to the north of the centre to serve the growing population
- g. prioritise place-making and urban activation, including enlivening the centre.

Responsibility: Northern Beaches Council, other relevant planning authorities and State agencies.”

Source: *North District Plan 2018, GSC*

<https://www.greater.sydney/north-district-plan>

**Comment:** *As there is no Mona Vale Hospital anymore, it is suggested that objective (d.) should be amended to refer to either a “Mona Vale Medical Campus” or “Mona Vale Health Campus”.*



Data sources: Public open space - Sydney Open Space Audit (DPE 2016), Aerial Photo – Nearmap 2018

- Green Shading: Public open space
- Orange Shading: Indicative location of existing jobs and services in centre

Mona Vale - Jobs

2016 Estimate - 4,300

2036 Baseline Target- 5,000

2036 Higher Target - 6,000 **Source:** *North District Plan 2018, Greater Sydney Commission*

Mona Vale Centre is not identified as a residential “growth centre” in the North District Plan 2018, according to the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC), or in the current “Towards 2040 Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement” published by Northern Beaches Council. The centre is not strategically earmarked for rapid or high density growth. This represents good, common sense strategic planning given the significant constraints.

Under the North District Plan 2018, the essential functions of Mona Vale as a “Strategic Centre” are employment retention and generation, in both the Centre’s commercial-retail-village core and adjoining industrial zone. The core’s commercial, retail and services roles should be protected from higher density residential over development. This will be necessary to help achieve the employment targets for Mona Vale as a Strategic Centre, specified in the North District Plan 2018. Employment generating floor space (both existing and new) and additional parking are essential for the continued viability of the centre. The industrial precinct must be retained to protect employment lands and jobs.

The NSW Government’s pro-development policies would, over time, tend to trigger even more medium (and possibly higher) density residential development near the Mona Vale Centre. These would include the State Policies (SEPPs) on Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability, Affordable Housing and other initiatives.

The community did not support the draft Mona Vale Place Plan, including the foreshadowed changes to Pittwater LEP 2014 and DCP. The Centre is already zoned for mixed-uses, with four storey buildings permitted. The community does not support the proposed increase in building height from 13 to 23 metres (six storeys or more). Significantly, under Clause 4.6 of Pittwater LEP 2014, developers may be able to seek building height increases above both the current and the proposed 23 metre height controls, via the DA process. This is made possible by recent interpretations of Clause 4.6 via case law. The proposed height increase to 23 metres, it is suggested, is not needed and may cause poorly designed residential over-development and unnecessary disruption to the centre. Preferably any redevelopment of the Mona Vale Centre as a whole, should be gradual and staged, using precinct-based urban design along the lines of the new NSW Government design guidelines.

The Draft Mona Vale Place Plan appears inconsistent with the North District Plan, in that it may lead to:

- ***ad hoc residential over-development of the Mona Vale Village Centre (including the commercial/retail core and Bungan St “Village”),***
- ***loss of commercial, services and industrial functions and jobs,***
- ***poor urban design, significant loss of village character and sense of place, and***
- ***loss of public open space and inadequate infrastructure and services.***

Mona Vale Centre is already a successful, socially cohesive “place for people” with many positive and quality place attributes; environmentally, socially, economically, culturally, aesthetically and functionally. This reality needs to be acknowledged, understood and used as the basis for place-based planning and urban design that ultimately contributes to both the creation and protection of successful places for people.



## 2. Our Mona Vale Community Vision

Mona Vale Centre will continue to gradually evolve as a vibrant people-oriented centre integrating sustainably designed mixed-use, commercial, retail, residential and light industrial developments, Village Park, Civic Centre, library, hall, community centre, visual arts space/gallery, schools, parks and human scale places with a friendly beachside village ambience and lifestyle.

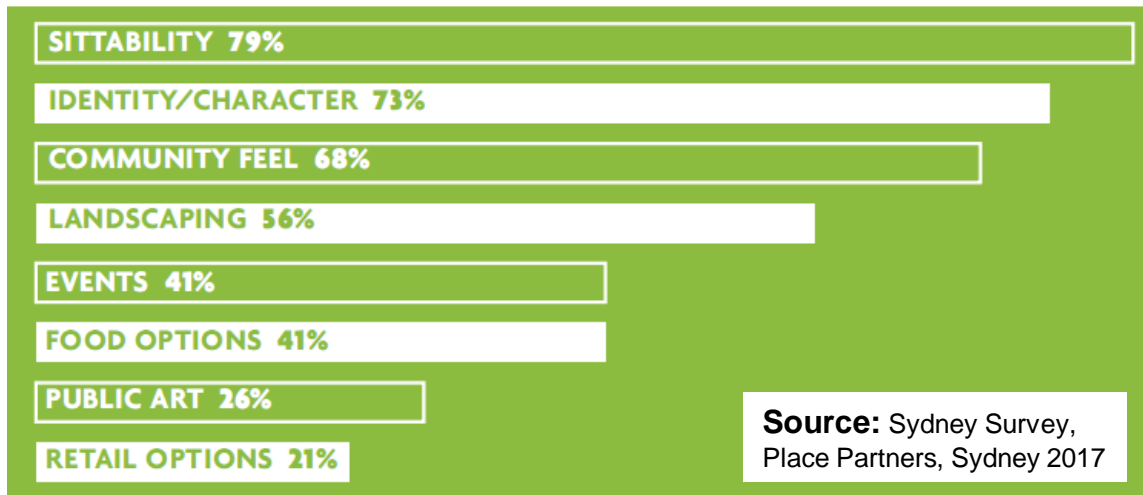
- Mona Vale Centre, as both our local Village and district centre, will continue to frame and sustain our lifestyle, work, leisure, culture, transport and daily needs.
- A place for living, shopping, working, learning, socializing and connecting with community.
- A place that protects culturally valued buildings and places e.g. Village Park and the Civic Centre/Library/Hall complex including associated public spaces, trees and landscaping.
- A meeting place that is sociable, service oriented, productive and creative and also relaxed and welcoming.
- A place that both protects existing businesses and jobs and provides for new employment generating development, activities and land uses.
- A place that promotes self-containment in terms of balancing population growth with jobs.
- A place where you know you're Beachside. A place to visit, explore and enjoy.
- A place with everything: home, work, shopping, services, schools, art, culture and leisure.
- A place that's active during the day, and safe, secure, quite and comfortable at night.
- A place for walking and talking, sitting and chatting.
- A place reflecting our healthy, sunny, early morning Beachside culture; relaxed and informal with a wide choice of activities, retail outlets, services, cafes and restaurants including fine dining.
- A vibrant space, a sociable place. Our Beachside community way, the Mona Vale way.
- A safe, inclusive and accessible place for all members of our community, with easy mobility, including wheelchair accessibility, within and around the centre.
- A visionary and practical approach that both protects existing places that are valued and well used by the community and also creates new places where people will want to spend their time.
- A place with a high standard of urban infrastructure and human services.
- A place that is not a developer's "growth centre" given over to ad hoc, developer driven planning, over-development and loss of valued places. Concerns were expressed about the misapplication of a US "economic place-making" model to the Mona Vale Centre in the Draft Mona Vale Place Plan (2016).

### 3. Our Mona Vale Urban Design Goals

1. Pittwater is a vibrant sustainable community of connected villages inspired by bush, beach and water. This is a core community aspiration, vision and urban design goal.
2. Continue to create a sustainable, village style commercial, retail, service and cultural centre serving the people of the Mona Vale area, adjoining suburbs and further afield.
3. Draw on Mona Vale's unique "**Character**" and "**Sense of Place**" identified by Village Park, the Library and Civic Centre to celebrate and enhance its village feel, sociability and spatial integrity; the language of landscape, bush, water, beach, sunlight, ocean breeze, space, form, texture and colour.
4. Provide for people to move and sit safely and freely within quality public places taking into account the needs of older residents, people in wheelchairs, parents with children, students, workers, socialisers, shoppers, visitors and other stakeholders.
5. Balance traffic flow, accessibility and parking requirements of customers, drivers and businesses with the creation of friendly pedestrian, wheelchair accessible and "sittable" places and similar convivial environments.
6. Protect and create a lively and active network of streets, lanes, pedestrian links, share-ways and mini-piazza involving "walkable", wheelchair accessible and "sittable" open places (in both public and private ownership). Ensure high amenity, safety and security. Avoid a central plaza, "Corso" (like Manly), formal town square and "avenues" when conceived as either generic solutions or grandiose over-statements.
7. Scale, bulk and height needs moderation. It can't be excessive because of the existing context that is typically 2 storey development going up to 4 storey mixed uses (four storeys permitted).
8. Enhance vistas and street views that reveal the topography and relationship between Mona Vale Centre and the beach, and important natural elements.
9. Our plan's goals are to provide safe and inclusive access for all our community, including people in wheelchairs, promote walking and cycling to and within the centre and to both protect and create places where people want to spend their time. Significantly, all places for people must be accessible to everyone and especially wheelchair accessible.
10. A "Structure Plan" and "Urban Design and Landscape Master Plan (precinct based)" to be prepared using current Australian and NSW urban design protocols, guidelines and practices. Ref: **Better Placed** Design Guidelines 2017, Government Architect NSW. An infrastructure financing package or "infrastructure compact", prepared by Council, will be necessary to implement the strategy and plans via the timely provision of infrastructure.

## 4. What People Want: The Criteria for a Successful Place

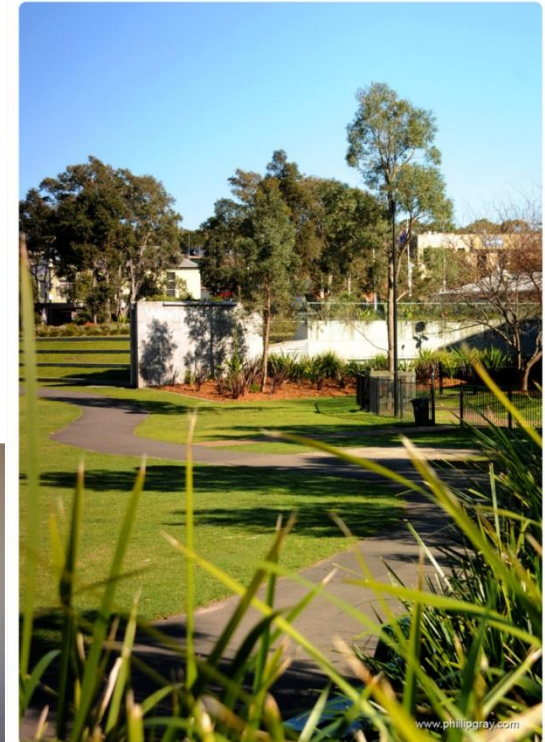
*"Places are complex systems with many elements that contribute to their success. A recent survey, conducted by Place Partners Director Kylie Legge, took up the challenge of identifying what criteria are most valued by the people who use public places in Sydney. As part of the survey, respondents were asked to rate eight criteria in terms of their importance in making this place attractive to them. The surveys were conducted at two locations; West Circular Quay and Martin Place, on a weekday and on a Saturday. The table below shows the percentage of all respondents who rated how 'important' or 'very important' each criterion was in terms of contributing to the attractiveness of the place as a whole. It is fascinating that the simple welcome of somewhere to sit is seen as the most important criteria of an attractive place". Source: <http://placepartners.com.au/about-placemaking/criteria-2/>*



### Existing Mona Vale Centre

*These "successful place" criteria are also valued by the local community from "sittability" to "retail options". Existing identity, character and community feel are rated highly by our local community.*

**Local Place Appraisals** conducted by community groups using a survey approach adapted from Placecheck, a UK method.



## 5. Village Park, Civic Centre, Library, Hall and Civic Link: Protect

These places are very well used and highly valued by the Community as very significant public places; culturally. These significant “Places for People” are to be **protected from development**.



Market Day (top 2 photos), Christmas carols (left) and morning exercise classes (above)



An innovative 10 km/hr lane share-way in Adelaide, South Australia.

Photo: Kelvin Auld 2018



## 6. Place-making: Ideas for Mona Vale's Public Places, Pedestrian Links and Laneways

- 6.1 Colorful tables & chairs (free use) and lighting in public domain.
- 6.2 Protection & activation of existing lane ways and pedestrian links.
- 6.3 Activities such as Market Days.
- 6.4 Lighting of pedestrian crossings and Civic/Library Link (urgent).
- 6.5 Parking supply and management are issues (urgent).
- 6.6 Street Trees and Landscaping to be increased & better managed.
- 6.7 Pedestrian crossings to be raised, paved and widened.
- 6.8 Explore new links between Park St and Darley St.
- 6.9 Create share-ways with improved paving and landscaping.

Ref: **Better Placed** Design Policy, Government Architect NSW, 2017



Bungun St. showing a key pedestrian link. Context is 2 storey retail-commercial up to recent 4 storey mixed-uses. Pedestrian crossing to be raised and paved. Lighting is needed at night.

## 7. Urban Design, Form, Scale and Style: Beachside Village Ambience and Lifestyle

**Pittwater is a vibrant sustainable community of connected villages inspired by bush, beach and water.**

Urban Design Concept Drawing (cropped image) **Source:** HBO+EMTB Architects and Urban Designers (Newport Village Commercial Centre Masterplan, Pittwater DCP21 Appendix 12) A Pittwater place-based beachside typology.

The Urban Design approach is consistent with **Better Placed** Design Policy, Government Architect NSW, 2017



## 8. Our Mona Vale Community Plan's Land Use Planning Priorities:

Commercial Core, Main Street Village, Village Park/Civic Centre, Harkeith St. Area, New Link Area and Industrial Zone.

**Commercial Core** (*Precinct 1*) Encourage new commercial, retail and services floor space. Job retention and generation is key role of Core consistent with North District Plan 2018. Precinct based Urban Design.

**Protect:** Civic Centre, Library, Hall, Civic Link and Village Park (*Precinct 3*). An excellent, valued community place for people. Maintain as is.

**Main Street Village** Bungan St-Warratah St Area (*Precinct 2*). Mixed Use & Job retention and generation are key roles. Special Urban Design treatment to retain Village Character & Sense of Place.

**Industrial Zone:** (*Precinct 6*) Protect employment and services land from rezoning and incursion of residential development. Consistent with North District Plan 2018.

**Protect:** Green Spaces, Links and Trees

**Harkeith Street Area** (*Precinct 4*) Explore Mixed-Uses with innovative work places and accommodation.

**Protect:** Green Spaces, Links & Trees

**New Links Investigation Area** (*Precinct 5*)

- Consider **New Links** between Park St. & Darley St. and new public parking with access from Darley St.
- Explore Mixed-Uses with innovative work places & accommodation adjoining the proposed links.



### **8.1 Library, Civic Centre, Hall and Central Plaza (Civic Link):** Protect from Development

“The position of the Central Plaza provides a visual, physical and pedestrian link between the local businesses and has a direct relationship to the Community Hall and provides breakout space for events” Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects. This very significant pedestrian link, in the form of a “mini-piazza” set against the attractive library glass and steel façade, is a valued community place. As a very well used and successful place for people it needs to be protected. Photo: Kelvin Auld 2017



## 8.2 Village Park, Civic Centre, Library, Hall and Civic Link: Protect

Village Park is a symbolic entrance to the Pittwater Peninsular. The park links to the broader urban fabric and open space areas surrounding the site and acts as a significant cultural and environmental heritage place of the area.

- Design elements include a central plaza and grass terrace
- An amphitheatre, library courtyard and streetscape works
- An urban rooftop plaza created above the library
- A sunken rainforest courtyard naturally lights the library
- A dramatic grass terraced embankment links seamlessly to the existing and valued Village Park



Source: Taylor Brammer Landscape Architects  
( an early post construction photograph )





### **8.3 Village Park : To be Protected from Development**

Village Park incorporates the War Memorial. The park is a valued place that provides a green community focus and sense of identity. Landscaped mounding is used to separate the park from Barrenjoey Road and the new bus stop.

## 9. Accessibility, Circulation, Parking Provision and Parking Management.

- Our plan's objective is to provide safe and inclusive access for all our community, including pedestrians, promote walking and cycling to and within the centre and to both protect and create places where people want to spend their time. All such places will be wheelchair accessible.
- Our plan suggests a New Links Investigation Area (*Precinct 5*). Council, in consultation with stakeholders, to consider New Links between Park St. and Darley St. and new public parking with access from Darley St. Explore mixed-uses, innovative work places and accommodation.
- Our plan raises the issue of the impact of loss of car parking and accessibility on the viability of the centre. Any reduction in centre accessibility and total parking availability, including on-street parking, will significantly impact on businesses. In the short term, more public parking provision is needed, not less. However the location of any new public parking is critical.
- Businesses in the centre have been impacted by the significant upgrade of the Warriewood Square shopping centre, especially the substantial increase in accessible customer parking and of course increase in retail floor space and customer amenities. This seems to be the main challenge facing the Mona Vale Centre, not demography or lack of local talent. Increased parking supply and parking management are urgent issues to be addressed.
- Business sustainability is currently hyper-sensitive to any changes to overall accessibility to the centre, loss of overall car parking and in particular loss of on-street car parking. Any rationalization or reduction of on-street parking requires the prior increase of new public parking supply elsewhere preferably on the accessible edge of the centre (i.e. within the built up area of the centre, not in open space areas).
- Our plan does not support the diverting of traffic from Pittwater Rd to Darley St. The proposal appears impractical because of increased traffic and congestion made worse by frequent truck, regular bus, and especially B-line bus movements in Darley St. Increase in traffic and congestion will result in delays, inconvenience, reduced driver and pedestrian safety and impact adversely on the industrial area in general and businesses in particular. Reduced vehicle access to the centre via Pittwater Rd, coupled with reduced on-street parking spaces, would impact on businesses and perhaps the centre's viability.
- It is noted that the B-Line Bus service is only an enhanced bus service, not a full Bus Rapid Transit system (BRT). The B-line needs more public parking within the urban centre, not in open space areas. In addition sufficient onsite employee parking (for all employees) should be provided, if possible, at the Darley St. bus depot (a top priority issue).

**Industrial Zone (Precinct 6)** : Protect employment & services land from rezoning & incursion of residential development. Consistent with North District Plan 2018.

**Protect:** Civic Centre, Library, Hall, Civic Link & Village Park (Precinct 3). An excellent, valued community place for people. Maintain as is.

**New Links Investigation Area (Precinct 5)**

- Consider **New Links** between Park St. & Darley St. and additional public parking with access from Darley St.
- Explore Mixed-Uses with innovative work places & accommodation adjoining the proposed links.

**Main Street Village** Bungan St-Warratah St Area (Precinct 2). Key Roles: Mixed-Use and Job retention/generation. Special Urban Design treatment to retain Village Character & Sense of Place.

**Protect:** Green Spaces, Links and Trees

**Harkeith Street Area (Precinct 4)** Explore Mixed-Uses with innovative work places and accommodation.

**Commercial Core (Precinct 1)** Encourage new commercial, retail & services floor-space. Job retention & generation is key role consistent with North District Plan 2018. Precinct based Urban Design.

**Protect:** Green Spaces, Links & Trees

1		Regional Road (RMS)
2		Town Centre 'Character' Streets
3		Local Streets
4		Existing Links (mostly private)
5		Alternative Route <b>(Opposed)</b>
6		Possible New Links*

**10. Mona Vale Concept Plan:** Towards a strategic centre Structure Plan for the Mona Vale Centre with supporting Urban Design & Landscape Masterplan (i.e. precinct based).  
**NOTE:** Base Plan Source is the Draft Mona Vale Place Plan, NBC 2016.  
 FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES 20

