



Urban renewal and affordable housing in Sydney: recent experience and future prospects

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Never Stand Still

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City Futures Research Centre

**Presentation to Warringah Council Affordable Housing Community
Committee, 28 May 2015**

Urban Renewal in Sydney – major projects 1970s-2015

Project	Era	Renewal type	Financing source(s)	Objective
Woolloomooloo, Waterloo	1970s/ 1980s	Public housing redevelopment	Public	Better public housing, removing slums
Darling Harbour	1980s	Railyard/port renewal	Public/ private	Entertainment precinct
Ultimo/Pyrmont	1990s	Inner city brownfield redevelopment	Public/ private	Mixed use development, private housing with affordable component
Olympic Park	1990s- ongoing	Brownfield redevelopment	Public/ private	Utilise stimulus of major event to catalyse large-scale renewal
Minto	From 2002	Public housing estate renewal	Public/ private	Replacement of defective estate by mixed tenure/mixed use development
Bonnyrigg	From 2007	Consortium-led public housing estate renewal	Public/ private	Replacement of 'defective estate' with major densification potential by mixed tenure development
Green Square; Rhodes	2000s	Brownfield private housing development	Private	Mixed use development, primarily high density housing for sale (small affordable component)

Presentation overview

1. Urban renewal – what, why and how?
2. Public housing regeneration/renewal projects in NSW
3. Planning-led renewal initiatives in Sydney – past, present and future

1. Urban Renewal – what, why and how?

‘Urban renewal’ – what, why and how (1)

- What is ‘urban renewal’?
 - *‘the cumulative physical redevelopment of existing urban areas’*
(Roberts, 2005)
 - *‘the process of transforming under-utilised and sometimes degraded or neglected parts of the city into spaces and built environments that meet contemporary living, working or cultural needs’*
(SGS, 2014)

‘Urban renewal’ – what, why and how (2)

- Why does urban renewal happen?
 - urban economics dictates that conditions for renewal met when given site ‘under-performing’ or ‘underutilised’ under current use – economic potential unfulfilled
 - Could reflect economic change making a landuse outmoded (e.g. pre-containerisation dockyards)
 - Landowner incentivised to invest in ‘renewal’ to liberate underutilised potential
- Urban renewal pressures in all Australian cities reflect:
 - Ongoing strong population growth – migration + natural increase
 - Urban containment policies
 - Ongoing de-industrialisation combined with the geography of the emerging knowledge economy
 - Embedded speculative dynamics pushing up land values
- All of the above strongly reflected in Sydney

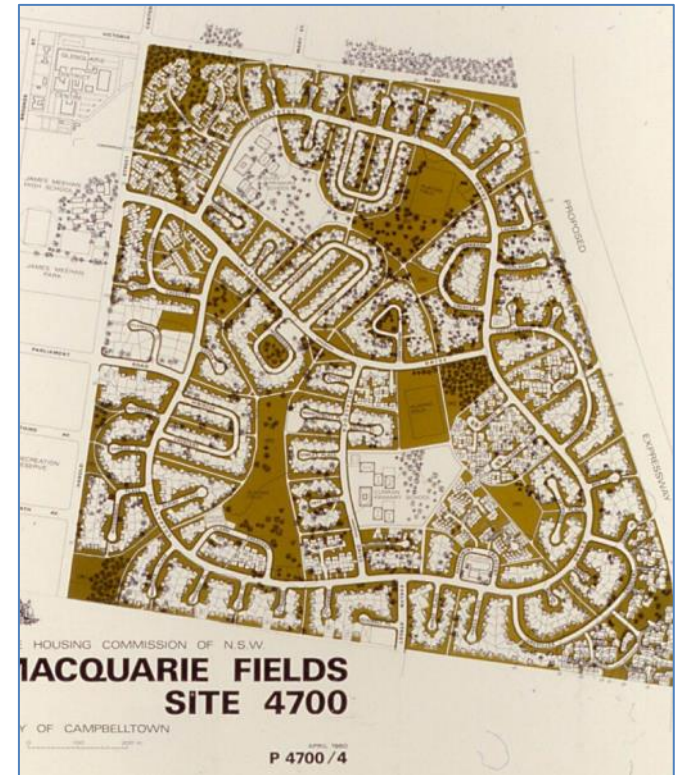
'Urban renewal' – what, why and how (3)

- How does urban renewal happen?
 - Primarily through market processes – e.g. individually-commissioned knock-down and rebuild
- Also Govt-initiated
 - Housing-led public housing estate renewal
 - Planning-led renewal/intensification of brownfield sites (or otherwise already developed land)
- This presentation mainly about state-initiated projects involving public housing and/or affordable housing

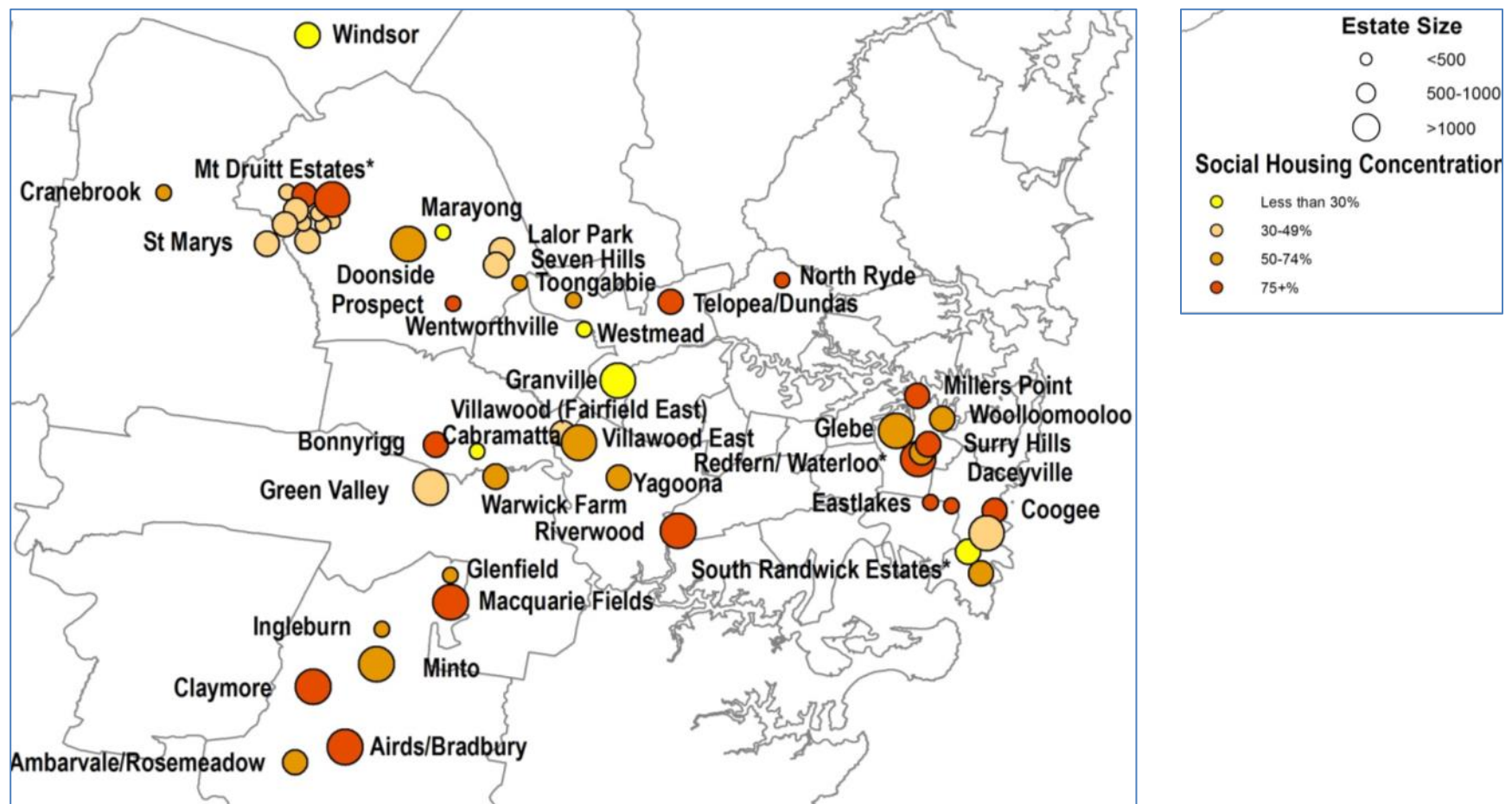
2. Public housing estate renewal/regeneration

Context for NSW public housing regeneration projects

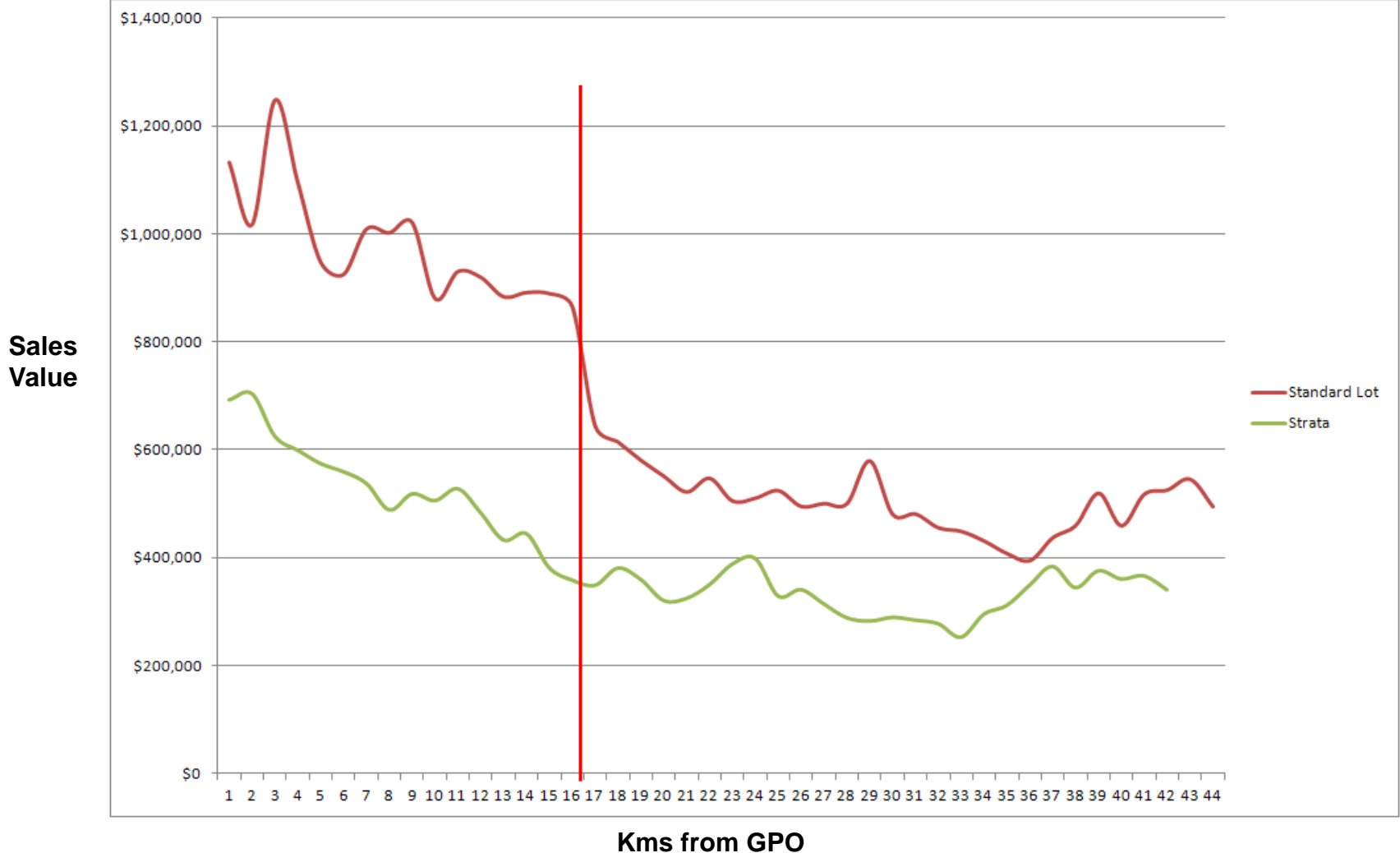
- Numerous large estates, many built in outer suburban locations [see next slide]
- Made socially and managerially problematic by:
 - Increasingly residualised population (mainly due to narrowed ‘targeting’ in allocations policies)
 - Accumulating impacts of insufficient expenditure on maintenance and modernisation
 - Radburn layouts wasteful and socially problematic – enhanced vulnerability to crime



Public housing estates in Sydney – size and social housing concentration



The Sydney Property Price Precipice in 2011



Radburn estate layouts



Features of NSW large estate renewal projects

- Typical large-scale renewal project/plan involves:
 - Existing estate largely or wholly demolished
 - Moderate to high ‘densification’ (up to threefold)
 - Tenure restructuring on a 70/30 private/social basis
 - CHPs increasingly involved in housing and place management
 - Little control over use of sold dwellings means many occupied as private rental
 - Re-provided social housing sharply reduced – typically by about half

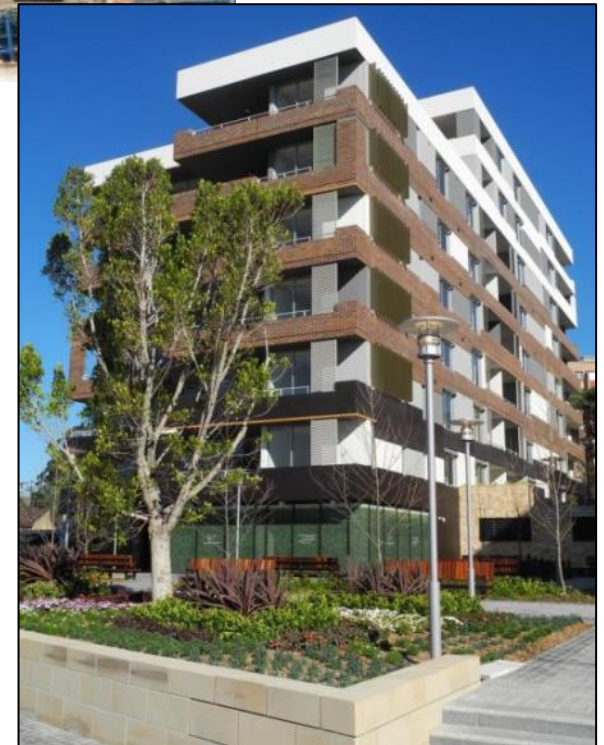




*Newly built mixed tenure housing, **Bonnyrigg**, Western Sydney*



*New community centre, **Minto**, SW Sydney*



*Newly built social housing, **Riverwood Estate renewal**, SW Sydney, 2014*

3. Planning-led urban renewal initiatives in Sydney – past, present and future

Planning-led renewal – inclusionary zoning in major brownfield redevelopment projects

- Affordable housing target adopted in 1990s Pyrmont-Ultimo renewal (Bldg Better Cities funding catalyst)
- More recently also applied in Green Square redevelopment
- On the plus side, because target relates to rental housing, affordable in perpetuity
- On the minus side, target set at only 3% - output still only in the hundreds
- Developer compliance via on-site provision or commuted sum payment
- In practice all have paid the sum
- Delivery via CityWest Housing – govt-sponsored ‘CHP’



CityWest, Pyrmont (1995)



CityWest, North Eveleigh (2015)

Planning-led urban renewal – UAPs

- Urban Activation Precincts – renamed ‘Priority Precincts’ in 2013 – designed to encourage urban densification in identified locations close to transport nodes
- State Govt government proposes ‘enabling’ adjustments to planning controls (e.g. re-zonings, height controls) – these override existing local environmental plan
- But new controls determined through consultative process involving community and local govt
- 8 UAPs designated 2013 – incl North Ryde, Epping Town Centre, Macquarie Park
- Potential for inclusion of AH targets in UAPs but Govt ignored call for this as ‘standard practice’ requirement

Planning-led renewal – future possibilities for associated affordable housing

Major renewal projects currently under development by UrbanGrowth NSW

Project	Summary	Potential housing target*
Central to Eveleigh corridor	30-year project to intensify landuse of 80 ha of 'largely underused govt land' along rail corridor west of Central station	
Parramatta Road corridor	Integrated with WestConnex road tunnel, major densification proposed between Sydney Univ and Parramatta	50-60,000
Bays Precinct project	Redevelopment of 80 ha of govt-owned harbour foreshore and disused rail yards 2 km from CBD	16,000
Parramatta North project	Redevelopment of 146 ha of govt-owned land adjoining Parramatta town centre	4,100

**according to media reports*

- Not clear how (or whether) State Govt commitments to 'housing diversity' will translate into affordable housing
- But Pyrmont-Ultimo and Green Square precedent for some level of AH quota
- Ministers have suggested a tradeoff between higher density and AH component

Conclusions

- Extensive scope for urban renewal in Sydney in coming decades
- Some potential involving ‘under-utilised’ public housing estates, but recent experience illustrates associated practical and financial challenges
- Modest land values limit scope for renewal of outer Sydney estates via DDC (densification, diversification, cross-subsidy) model
- Substantial momentum underpinning UrbanGrowth agenda on major brownfield renewal projects running forward over decades
- But realising scope for significant AH component will call for effective lobbying to build on existing precedents

Sources/references

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