Urban consolidation – Its impact on sense of place.

Prepared for
Planning and Urban Development Program
The Faculty of the Built Environment
University of New South Wales

By: Christina Heather - 3132447
The photo on the front describes some urban consolidation occurring within the Ku-ring-gai Council Local Government Area. The aerial photo is not up-to-date. Since the aerial photograph was taken, two other large sites, of similar size, have been excavated surrounding this house.
Source of Aerial photograph: Department of Lands 2008.
ABSTRACT

Australia is one of the most urbanised societies in the world and the urban processes that have led to Sydney’s formation and growth have been dynamic. Population growth has placed pressure upon transport, health and education services, land availability and housing costs. Urban consolidation has been imposed by the State Government to limit urban sprawl, to ensure that all councils contribute to the supply of medium density housing, and to develop more space-efficient residential land use practices. This thesis examines the impact of urban consolidation on selected communities within middle-ring suburbs in metropolitan Sydney. It is argued that whilst urban consolidation is a positive force for change, a key element – the socio-cultural – is not being given due consideration. This thesis considers whether urban consolidation as expressed in the Transit Oriented Development approach has compromised the sense of place in some communities. The research findings indicate there is a risk that the lack of effective planning measures for better managing urban consolidation at the local level may lead to dramatic changes in the social-cultural character of suburbs. This thesis makes recommendations for future local planning activity within state urban consolidation policy.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks goes to Susan Thompson for her invaluable advice, support and motivation. Your role has been extremely influential in the ‘quality’ of this project.

Thank you to those I have shared the past five years of planning education with at UNSW including the class of 2008 and the many lecturers of the Built Environment. This time has been a challenging, memorable and significant chapter of my life.

To the residents of Lindfield and Oatley West – thank you for inviting me into your communities. This research would not have been possible without your help.

Warmest thanks go to my loving parents and other family members for their continuos encouragement, support and patience every step of the way.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 - THE URBAN PROCESS</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Sydney’s Population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Initial Urban Pattern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Growth and Expansion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Post War Dynamic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Emergence of a Planning Dynamic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Contemporary Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2 – URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND ITS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Urban Consolidation in Sydney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of Sydney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Urban Consolidation through Transit Oriented Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Impact of Transit Oriented Development on Existing Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>The need to find a balance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3 – THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Attraction to the Suburbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Place Identifiers and Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Emotional Connections to Suburban Environments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Preserving Sense of Place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Summary

CHAPTER 4 – A CASE STUDY

4.1 Case Study Approach

4.1.1 Introducing Lindfield East
4.1.2 Changes to the built environment in Lindfield East
4.1.3 Introducing Oatley West
4.1.4 Changes to the built environment in Oatley West
4.1.5 Similarities between Lindfield East and Oatley West

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Representative views
4.2.2 Survey of residents
4.2.3 Audit of increased density developments

4.3 Summary

CHAPTER 5 – EXPLORING SENSE OF PLACE

5.1 Suburban Living

5.2 How do residents feel about change?

5.3 An Analysis: Some Key Outcomes

5.3.1 Community consultation
5.3.2 Introduction of iconic commercial activity
5.3.3 Metropolitan wide vision versus local vision

5.4 Summary

CHAPTER 6 – MANAGING URBAN CONSOLIDATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

6.1 Perceptions of Current Practice

6.2 Local Government and Social Issues

6.2.1 Local government and social needs
6.2.2 Place management
6.2.3 Community consultation

6.3 Government Initiatives

6.3.1 Local Government level
6.3.2 State Government level

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Community policy
6.4.2 Community based planning process
6.4.3 Other recommendations

6.5 Summary

CHAPTER 7 – URBAN CONSOLIDATION AND SENSE OF PLACE – A WAY FORWARD

7.1 General Overview

7.2 Research Outcomes

7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

7.4 Final Comment

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Further in-depth interview questions

Appendix 2. Aerial view of dwelling surveys in Lindfield East and Oatley West

Appendix 3. Survey prepared for existing residents in the case study area

Appendix 4. UNSW FBE ethics approval documentation

BIBLIOGRAPHY
| Figure 1.1 | Sydney’s population growth. |
| Figure 1.2 | Sydney’s urban growth history. |
| Figure 2.1 | Household types in Sydney. |
| Figure 2.2 | Density in different areas of Sydney. |
| Figure 2.3 | Centrifugal and centripetal forces which impact on the stability of a social suburb. |
| Figure 3.1 | Home and work location in Sydney – 2001. |
| Figure 3.2 | Quality of life ranking in Sydney. |
| Figure 3.3 | Community activity involvement as population increases. |
| Figure 4.1 | Location of study area in Lindfield East. |
| Figure 4.2 | Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area – population growth. |
| Figure 4.3 | Location of study area in Oatley West. |
| Figure 4.4 | Hurstville Local Government Area – population growth. |
| Figure 4.5 | Local media coverage and residents’ responses to urban consolidation. |
| Figure 5.1 | Length of residency. |
| Figure 5.2 | Do you feel there is a sense of community in your area? |
| Figure 5.3 | Do you think your sense of community is: |
| Figure 5.4 | Are you an active member of any local community groups or organisations? |
| Figure 5.5 | Land audit of urban consolidated developments in Lindfield East and Oatley West. |
| Figure 5.6 | Predominant styles of development in each suburb. |
| Figure 5.7 | Do you feel the change in built form is changing the sense of community in your area? |
| Figure 5.8 | Success of maintaining and preserving the sense of community in their suburb whilst introducing urban consolidation. |
| Figure 5.9 | Have relationships been built with the people who live in higher density developments? |
| Figure 5.10 | How do you rate your community as a result of these new urban consolidation developments? (Lindfield East and Oatley West). |
| Figure 5.11 | Should the local community have more involvement in the urban consolidation occurs in their suburbs? |
| Figure 5.12 | Degree of community consultation based on complexity of issue. |
| Figure 5.13 | Do you think the vision for a more sustainable Sydney reflects the vision of community at the local level? |
| Figure 6.1 | Alternative community based planning process. |

**LIST OF TABLES**

<p>| Table 2.1 | Perceived advantages and disadvantages of urban consolidation. |
| Table 2.2 | Proportion of new dwellings close to transport and services to 2013. |
| Table 6.1 | Stakeholders’ aligned interests. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLG</td>
<td>Department of Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGAs</td>
<td>Local Government Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS 2005</td>
<td>Sydney Metropolitan Strategy 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD</td>
<td>Transit Oriented Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TODs</td>
<td>Transit Oriented Developments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Focus

Sydney’s urban spaces have evolved over a 200 year period (Spearritt 2000). Compared to many global cities, this evolution has occurred within a relatively short time period. It is still possible to distinguish the initial urban morphology and functional patterns within Sydney’s landscape. For example some of the major arterial roads in Sydney are the result of the original roads formed during the city’s colonisation. These initial patterns were driven by political and strategic goals linked to colonial status and were planned accordingly (Fraser 1989). Over time, urban expansion in Sydney has increased in response to factors such as economic cycles, migration, natural population increase, wealth and lifestyle (Spearritt 2000). This complexity has been shaped too by cultural imperatives, supported by legislative and economic incentives for “ownership of land and occupancy on quarter-acre residential blocks” (Lewis 1999, p.61).

A myriad of influences have led to the evolution of urban spaces such as Sydney (Ashton 1993). A fundamental driver of this urbanisation process is population growth (Spearritt 2000). This growth, which has spatial and temporal dimensions, has initiated a complex pattern of change as the urban system responds to population pressure (Burnley 1980; Spearritt 2000). The morphology of urban growth has followed patterns related to meeting peoples’ needs and wants for home, work, recreation, transport, security and identity (Gibson & Watson 1994). This growth is identified within this thesis as the urban dynamic and Sydney’s urban form and functionality is the sum of its past.

Sydney’s rapid growth and people’s desire for single dwellings and large lots has created what is generally termed urban sprawl. The urban dynamic has moulded urban sprawl that has made today’s provision of utilities, infrastructure including transport either inefficient or inequitable (Weller 2007). Various planning responses to manage the growth of urban form and the built environment have been employed over the last 50 years with different success (Stillwell, F. 1993; Sydney Metropolitan Strategy 2005). However the contemporary combination of land shortage, rising housing costs as well as expected population growth has put significant pressure on government to deliver an appropriate planning response.

The response which has been adopted for the past 30 years is called urban consolidation, meaning a more inclusive use of available land for residential purposes. It has underpinned all housing planning policy and affected a range of stakeholders - planners, local government
Introduction

agencies, developers and state instrumentalities responsible for infrastructure, as well as residents. Residents of established suburbs subject to urban consolidation have, and will see, substantial alterations to their local environments (Johnson 2006).

It has been recognised that people identify with the place in which they reside (Manzo 2003). While not all can decide exactly where they live, there are numerous reasons for selection of place, all of which reflect broad cultural principles (Giuliani & Feldman 1993). These principles can be generally associated with values, lifestyle, necessities and economic activity. The built form of Sydney has been embedded with elements of these socio-cultural principles over time (Giuliani & Feldman 1993). However urban consolidation has invoked a range of responses from residents, some of which are predictable, but others have not been. Planners need to anticipate what these responses might be and respond appropriately, balancing the needs of local communities with broader environmental and social imperatives.

This thesis examines the impact of urban consolidation on selected communities in Sydney’s middle-ring suburbs, focussing on residents’ sense of place. It investigates how urban consolidation policies are being managed and perceived at the local level. The problem statement is as follows:

The social consequences of urban consolidation have largely been overlooked by planners and politicians. Residents perceive that urban consolidation is diminishing their sense of place. A planning framework needs to be established which can address this situation in order to foster and preserve the sense of community that exists in these areas, while continuing to meet the broader environmental and economic objectives of urban consolidation.

Specifically, the key questions are as follows:

- Does Sydney’s urban consolidation policy include a social dimension that values residents’ identification with their existing sense of place?
- What is the value or significance to urban planning of existing residents identification with their sense of place?
- Is this sense of place identification a meaningful construct for urban consolidation planning?
- What evidence is there that a ‘sense of place’ has influenced urban consolidation planning within middle-ring suburbs?
• How can planners utilise the outcomes of this study in future planning activity within the urban consolidation policy?

**Background**

The theoretical context is drawn from a wider concept expressed by Raymond Bunker, Darren Holloway, Bill Randolph, et al, who focus on the outcomes of current metropolitan city policies and the implications of higher density housing for social stability (Bunker et al 2005; Randolph 2006). These theoretical concepts imply that extensive programs of urban renewal and redevelopment envisaged for existing built-up areas cannot rely on current planning measures to reach their highest and best use. Also the issue of exactly how much consolidation can be contained in existing areas whilst enhancing social sustainability remains largely unanswered.

**Structure**

The structure of this thesis is relatively straightforward. Its unity and focus is progressively developed by reference to:

• The urban process – this sets the theoretical context and direction.

• Urban consolidation and its social implications – an appraisal of relevant scholarly literature, which presents an overview of the framework of urban consolidation in Sydney. It debates whether the social needs of the community are being overlooked to meet the requirements of increasing the housing demands.

• The importance of place – a review of the significance of place in a developmental context and its role within local communities. Through an examination of peoples’ emotional relationships to place, the preservation of sense of place in local communities is explored.

• A case study – a rationale for selecting Lindfield East and Oatley West as case study areas is provided. The methodology employed is also presented in this chapter.

• Exploring sense of place – the outcomes from all the in-depth interviews and surveys are discussed. A synthesis is provided of the views that people have about sense of place and urban consolidation. At this point, an establishment of the validity and contribution of knowledge is correlated with the problem statement.
Introduction

- Managing urban consolidation at a local level – current local government practice, as perceived by the relevant stakeholders and residents, is explored. Several planning and community development practices and policies are examined. The research findings are used to develop recommendations to assist local planning practitioners in the holistic management of urban consolidation.

- Urban consolidation and sense of place – a way forward – The aims of the thesis are reviewed to see how they have been addressed, with particular reference to the problem statement and key questions. Finally, based on the research findings, ideas for future study are suggested.

Research Limitations

This paper has the following limitations:

- The economic and environmental impacts of urban consolidation are not considered in-depth. Rather, the focus is on the social dimension of urban consolidation – in particular, a sense of place – acknowledging its interdependence with broader economic and environmental perspectives.

- Time did not permit a comprehensive investigation of all middle-ring suburbs in Sydney. The research focuses on the Northern and Southern sectors of the Sydney Metropolitan Area using two representative suburbs.

- The concept sense of place is a very complex issue to measure. It encompasses social, economic, environmental, cultural and political forces of the urban dynamic. This thesis focuses on the socio-cultural factors that influence sense of place as a result of urban consolidation.

- The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data is from 2006. There have been changes in the population since this time. Other sources have been used but the ABS is the only comprehensive data set.

- Results of the qualitative interview may have been impacted by the methodology as the interview was digitally recorded. Individuals are generally more reluctant to speak freely when a digital recording device is being utilised.
Introduction

Research Significance

This thesis is significant because:

- it attempts to link theoretical principles of planning with the practices or urban consolidation in Metropolitan Sydney as expressed in the urban landscape of two middle-ring suburbs;

- it examines the urban consolidation planning agenda through the lens of key stakeholders, including long term residents of established suburbs – a stakeholder group largely ignored;

- it contributes to broader urban consolidation debates by formulating recommendations which endeavour to balance environmental, economic and social considerations;

- its fundamental value or significance is its expressed agenda to have planning empower the community. This can be accomplished by creating opportunity for individuals to shape their own community and to be fully involved in the planning process.

Summary

This introduction poses the thesis problem statement, which is to investigate the impact of urban consolidation upon the sense of place of existing residents, within selected sites currently experiencing significant urban consolidation. The introduction points to the focus on people’s perceptions of the planning process, particularly where it impinges on what they value about their residential location. Chapter 1 explores the evolution of Sydney’s urbanisation and how the urban consolidation policy has come into fruition.
This chapter examines the urban dynamic of Sydney. Population growth has been a key factor in the development of the city’s morphology, functional character and identity. Population growth continues at a pace that has created a variety of pressures requiring a systematic planning approach and implementations of various urban consolidation strategies. This chapter presents the context of this thesis wherein are to be found the underlying forces and influences which generated urban consolidation as a planning response.

It is well documented that Australia is one of the most urbanised societies in the world. The bulk of Australia’s population live on the Sydney-Canberra-Melbourne axis. This concentration is a paradox given the size of the continent relevant to its population size. It also points to a complex mix of forces that inform the context of this thesis.

The urban process that led to Sydney’s formation, growth and consolidation has spatial and temporal elements that have waxed and waned in significance (Ashton 1984). A unifying feature has been the inexorable growth in population due to a combination of fertility rates, migration and the mix of “push” and “pull” factors. In an article called ‘1400 a week move to Sydney’ written by Simon Benson and Bruce MCDougall (2008), it states that Sydney’s rate of population growth has increased and is twice that of 2004. Figures 1 and 2 are a representation of how Sydney’s population has evolved over time compared to the city’s urban growth history and future prediction.
An article published in September 2008 in the Sydney Morning Herald states that in “the past year immigration added a record 199,064 people to Australia…the biggest annual rise in history, figures released yesterday by the Bureau of Statistics show. This surpasses the boom after World War Two, which peaked at about 149,000 people in 1950” (Irvine 2008).

In order to understand why the human population in Sydney is such a contentious issue in the town planning profession, it is important to explore the dynamic formation and function of this city as an urban society. This thesis refers to this complex process as the urban dynamic.
The Sydney region was first inhabited by Aboriginal Australians for almost 50,000 years before European settlement. Roughly 750,000 people resided in Australia prior to European settlement (Mulvaney & White 1987). In the Sydney region Aboriginals particularly settled along the foreshores of the harbour. They were autonomous people who fished and hunted in the waters and hinterlands of the region, and gathered food from the surrounding bush. (Aboriginal Heritage Office 2008). The Aboriginals also developed a rich and complex ritual life which comprised of language, customs, spirituality and the law – the heart of which was connection to the land (Mulvaney & White 1987). This connectedness formed their sense of place and their culture was such that apart from rock carvings and middens, they left little tangible evidence of their occupancy.

When European settlers arrived, the Aboriginal Australians were progressively displaced and replaced by a colonial settlement and under Governor Macquarie, key morphological and functional factors were established that have persisted, albeit blurred by what was to evolve. The demographic make-up of Sydney swiftly altered to convicts who were seen as a source of labour to advance and develop the British Colony (Australian Government 2008). Convict labour was used to develop the public facilities of the colony such as roads, bridges, courthouses and hospitals (Birch & Macmillan 1962). Development gradually extended along what is now called Sydney Harbour, Parramatta River and along the Hawkesbury as water was the main means of transportation (Birch & Macmillan 1962). In effect, the canvas for the urban sprawl that was to follow over the next 200 years was established by 1825.

When Lachlan Macquarie was Governor (1810-1821), Sydney was constructing the foundations for the urban city it was to become. A more complex urban place evolved as the economy grew. The wool industry emerged, which was highly productive like the whale and sealing trade (Spearritt 2000). Building functions were also changing; for example, jails were transformed into schools, churches, markets, stores, theatres and libraries (Fraser 1989). These were specialist places to meet growing and sophisticated needs. The imprint of Britain on the new colony went beyond government, education, the legal system and buildings. The colonists introduced to an alien landscape as many features as they could by transporting their sense of place from the United Kingdom. Place names were of particular significance. Other than Aboriginal place names which were accepted, some British adopted place names include Waterloo, Paddington, Auburn, Liverpool, Brighton and Ramsgate (Kennedy 1982). Other features of British heritage also included transferring their European architecture and
town morphology to a land considered by them to be a strange new world. This development process became increasingly common and was dispersed throughout Sydney’s basin.

### 1.2 Growth and Expansion

Sydney’s growth and expansion of the built form has been due to the growth in population (Spearritt 2000). The rate at which Sydney grew depended upon the economic, social and environmental circumstances that arose. For example when gold was discovered in the 1850s there was a sudden influx of people not only from Europe and California, but from China as well. This gold brought migrants, new technologies, new communities, new cultures and attitudes (Australian Stamp and Coin Coy Pty Ltd 2007). This laid the foundations for some urban expansion in Sydney, some infilling and the emergence of new and more sophisticated ideas connected with a sense of place (Fraser 1989). For example 1901 was Federation year in which independence was celebrated and people “had to stop thinking of themselves as residents of the colony, as the land they called Australia was their nation” (Spearritt 2000, p.1).

At the turn of the 20th century, fuelled by rapid population growth and expansion, the subdivision and building boom saw Sydney spread out along the rail, tram and road routes (Fraser 1989). The rail and road configuration formed the growth corridors for urban expansion (Spearritt 2000). It encouraged and supported the formation of suburban Sydney. For example, the rail line was significant as it provided services for people to get to and from work if they did not own a private vehicle. However, dependence on railways diminished as the population grew and the ownership of private vehicles increased (Spearritt 2000). It encouraged scaterring of development away from public transport lines, establishing the basis for the urban sprawl of the 1960s – 1990s.

Economic growth and development is cyclical and Sydney experienced a slowing of population growth throughout the 1930s from both world wars and the depression (Gill 1993 & Webber P 1988). This in turn affected the progression of development. The First World War spurned economic growth for Sydney, though with the artificial spending stimulant of the war over, the economy declined quickly. Consequently, over a third of Sydney-siders were unemployed during the Great Depression of the early 1930s (Spearritt 2000). The Depression further exacerbated the ‘slum’ conditions in the inner suburbs of Sydney (Spearritt 1974). The centre of Sydney was the place for professional employment but people
started to locate themselves on large blocks of land used mostly for farming purposes and to get away from the at times plagued city.

During the post-world war two period of the 1950s and 60s the expectations of residents began to change to an improved standard of living and the demand for better housing (Kelly 1987). This was also a turning point for Sydney demographically. The baby-boom period accelerated the increase in population of Sydney. Additionally the “White Australia Policy” was abolished in the 1970s, and non-European immigrants were encouraged to assimilate into the then established culture of Australia (Spearritt 2000).

Sydney has now been diversified by the receipt of migrants and their cultures such as Lebanese, Chinese, Greek, Spanish and Italians. In turn, patterns of lifestyle preferences have altered. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has revealed that in terms of housing preferences, a lot of the Asian population live in apartments instead of the traditional detached house (ABS 2006). Also, each culture tends to have its niche whereby they have segregated themselves into groups across the city basin. For example most people born overseas have shown a preference for city living (81% in 2001) (ABS 2004), which makes them more urbanised than the Australian-born population. Cultural diversity and its expression within an urban setting point to these cultures’ sense of place. Migrants have been a part of the process of urban filling and the intensification of densities within the existing urban structure (Collins & Castillo 1998). For many and varied reasons, this has led to increased aggregations of a distinctive cultural presence in various suburban centres.

The division of local government areas (LGAs) in conjunction with the migrants who have chosen to settle in distinct patterns across Sydney has ultimately impacted on the population’s sense of place. For example, when people refer to where they live, they often have associated themselves with colloquial terms such as ‘The Shire’, ‘St George’, ‘The North Shore’, ‘The Eastern Suburbs’, ‘The Northern Beaches’ and ‘The Westies’. These personal connections with the built environment are a reflection of identity and the basic human need to belong. It also communicates these areas have distinct characteristics which planning practitioners have to take into consideration.
Chapter 1 – The Urban Process

Sydney’s urban form and function is the sum of its past. Urban planning and policy development confronts this inheritance. As the population of Sydney accelerated throughout the first 160 years of settlement, there were never any long term planning policies implemented in New South Wales (NSW) to mitigate growth effects, however by the 1940s this was to change.

It wasn’t until the late 1940’s that planners released the first strategy for Sydney called the County of Cumberland Plan. It was a decentralisation policy encouraging people to move out of the city into ‘district centres’ (Spearritt 2000). Lifestyle themes were promoted, encouraging people to live in attractive ‘green’ suburbs, in houses that were on large blocks of land. An example of its implementation was the garden city concept by Ebenezer Howard. This was a way of giving new life and direction to suburban growth (Garnaut 2000).

Despite its appeal, “the policy did not take into account the evolving factors of the populace” (Interview Hamilton 2008). It failed to consider the accelerating increase of population and in response the Sydney Region Outline Plan was released in 1968. It set out to form growth corridors incorporating a series of towns. Parramatta, Campbelltown, Blacktown, Mount Druitt, Penrith and Chatswood were namely the town centres that would provide the main services and facilities (Department of Planning 2005). This was initiated by the rapid expansion of planned housing communities into the ‘green belt’ created under the Cumberland Plan, to Sydney’s West. It encouraged inner city slum clearance and provided an opportunity for the gentrification of these areas.

In order to monitor urban sprawl, more power was also delegated to local governments after the 1950s (Interview Hamilton 2008). This involved the regulation of facilities and services to the general public such as libraries, local swimming pools and schools. The increased responsibility for decision-making from councils has influenced how the built form of LGAs has evolved (Interview Hamilton 2008). That is, development that has occurred in Hurstville consisting of high-rise buildings is characteristically different to the lower dense urban form in Sutherland. The development which has occurred in each of these areas has been influenced by the following metropolitan plan.

The 1988 Metropolitan Plan was the first comprehensive attempt to develop a plan and implementation strategy to curb, contain and constrain growth, to follow key urban principles to meet economic, environmental and social needs. It was able to strategise how
development would occur, based on a projected population growth of 4.5 million people by 2011 (Department of Planning 2005). Parramatta was nominated as Sydney’s second Central Business District, along with the identification of twenty-one regional and sub-regional centres, specifically served by rail. They were to accommodate more jobs and house more people. Each key step in the emergence of the city can be explained by reference to population growth and its dispersal across the Sydney Basin. Also the pressures on land availability as a function of demand generated by population growth and aspiration have influenced how the city has evolved (Ashton 1993). The latter is a keen determinant of place and residents’ sense of identity.

There have been many patterns that have been established in Sydney’s dynamic urban process. Planners need to recognise the trends Sydney is currently experiencing, in order to plan appropriately for the future. The dynamic process that led to the city’s evolution has created problems now exacerbated by pressures on land prices, housing affordability, infrastructure, employment and the continuous growth of population. One planning response has been urban consolidation.

### 1.6 Contemporary Setting

The issues that arise from a dynamic city such as Sydney are complex to resolve. Their resolution requires governance informed by planning to ensure proper outcomes are implemented. Planning should include the social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of the urban society if it is to function properly. The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy 2005 (SMS 2005) is the most recent policy aiming to promote and manage growth to ensure it can meet the aspirations of its various and varied communities. The strategy is also promoting a sustainable form of living that will be embedded in the urban structure and built fabric of the city.

The urban dynamic has influenced what issues have been prioritised within the SMS 2005. Housing is a key subject matter discussed in the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy. The principal strategy this plan has adopted is a centralisation approach known as urban consolidation as an attempt to reconcile tension between population growth and land availability (Randolph 2006). A substantial amount of research has been completed focusing on the outcomes of current metropolitan strategies and the various implications of higher density housing. Local newspaper reports and enquires have also added to the vast amount of information which is available.
Urban consolidation has grown to become a major political issue in which the economic and environmental issues of the city are constantly highlighted. Increases in population have impacted on the amenity of the environment as more houses, services, and facilities need to be provided to cater for existing and future residents. This is often done at the expense of the cultural appearance of suburbs and flora and fauna in the area (Bunker et al. 2002). In the September 2008 local government elections, support for the Green Party increased because of their stance on environmental issues (Robins 2008). This is indicative of a growing concern about urban development in general and its impact on people’s perceptions of change.

Furthermore, there is concern that equilibrium has not been established between the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural implications that increased density developments bring (Johnson 2006). Particularly, there is not a lot known about the social ramifications of urban consolidation (Bunker et al. 2005). This thesis is concerned that the social implications of urban consolidation have been undermined by the economic and environmental pressures of Sydney as an urban dynamic society. The urban dynamic as expressed above has constantly demonstrated how sense of place has been established, maintained, and evolved according to the needs of the population. It has played an important role in forming a context within which people can feel comfortable in their environment. Planners need to consider the social connections that people have with the suburbs they live as part of the urban dynamic.

This chapter has identified that Sydney’s landscape reflects the historical, economic, political, environmental, and socio-cultural development of this dynamic city. For the purposes of this thesis, consideration of the urban dynamic process of Sydney and how planning now plays a fundamental role in the regulation of policies such as urban consolidation is explored. In particular, focus has been placed upon the social implications of urban consolidation in terms of affecting residents’ sense of place. Chapter 2 investigates the concept of urban consolidation and its implementation, with specific emphasis on the social outcomes which may arise.
This chapter examines the concept of urban consolidation in Sydney. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of social sustainability and stability in local communities. Chapter two also discusses whether urban consolidation as communicated in the TOD approach has compromised the sense of place in communities. Socio-political forces that influence the effects of urban consolidation are also highlighted.

2.1 Urban Consolidation in Sydney

Urban consolidation is a policy response to help combat the issue of accelerating population increase in Sydney. Australia’s urban development has been dominated by suburban development with approximately 50% of the nation’s population residing in the combined middle and outer suburbs of the metropolitan areas (K, O’Connor et al, 2004). Graeme Davison (1999) stated according to the medical science of the day “there was a direct relation between death rates and density of the urban environment”. Despite this, a higher density compact metropolitan area is about to become the new Sydney norm.

Urban consolidation is defined by the NSW State Government as:

“increasing density of dwellings or population, or both. It does not refer to one single policy, but rather a number of related land use measures and housing initiatives that can increase residential densities.”(NSW Department of Environment and Planning 1984).

The latest policy prepared by the State Government is called the SMS 2005, which aims to increase the population by 1.1 million in the next 25 years. As a result, an additional 640,000 new homes will be required to accommodate Sydney’s growth and by 2013 190,000 new dwellings will have to be found in established suburbs (Bunker et al 2005). Peter Hamilton from the Department of Planning states:
“It’s the restrictive response that we have to the long term housing needs in Sydney and balancing that with all the other objectives we have for managing a city… It’s about maintaining Sydney as an attractive and workable city – it’s a growing city and attracts a lot of people here because it’s the main entry port into Australia… There is a lot that comes from population pressures so we’ve tried to find the most effective way of meeting a whole lot of different dynamics whilst also dealing with infrastructure…we want to have a balance of this in established areas.” (Interview Hamilton 2008).

Whilst the population is increasing, this is having a cumulative impact on household formation which is slowly transforming (refer to Figure 2.1 Household Types in Sydney). In order to combat this change a greater diversity of housing choice is to be pursued within the existing urban fabric. It has been strategically implemented into the SMS 2005 and it is now up to each council as to how this housing choice will be distributed within its LGA.

The practicality of the targets are questionable as they have given little consideration to how the Sydney population would like to live in the future, and what is considered important to them in their living environment. In North America local governments have created secondary plans by which the residents play the predominant role in the formulation of the plan. Emphasis is placed on the preservation of the character of their neighbourhood and every time redevelopment occurs, it is largely confined to sites and integrated well with the established neighbourhood (Filion et al 2007). In the existing suburbs of Sydney how is urban consolidation properly implemented with regards to each community’s needs when strategies such as these have not been put into practice?
Increasing densities has been enforced for the past 30 years resulting from the change in demographics such as the ageing population, family formation, migration and proportion of women in the workforce (Randolph 2006). It has been established there are five predominant styles of urban consolidation (Bunker et al 2002):

- **Dual occupancy** – consisting of two independent dwellings on a single allotment that can be subdivided if it is considered large enough. They may be two separate dwellings, or two dwellings attached side by side or above one another.
- **Multiple small lot housing** – are separate houses that each have their own title, are built on small lots and arranged in groups.
- **Townhouses and villa homes** – are separate houses with their own open space that are attached to each other in groups. Townhouses are usually two storeys (sometimes three) whereas villas tend to be single storied. Their form will usually be semi-detached or terraced like houses.
- **Housing for the aged and disabled** - more importance is placed on its purpose rather than form. They can be arranged as attached dwellings in clusters or separately and usually single storied.
- **Flats and units** – incorporate attached dwellings within a single building and is ordered in a range of arrangement. Usually common access points, facilities and open space are shared.

These typologies of development have affected the way that density has been distributed around Sydney (figure 2.2 below).
Chapter 2 – Urban Consolidation and its Social Implications

It is now evident that medium-high density is affecting the majority of Sydney. Therefore it has become an increased topic of discussion as more people are affected (Lewis 1999). This has lead to debates about urban consolidation and what it will achieve.

There are many perceived advantages and disadvantages that may result from urban consolidation. The author of this thesis has succinctly compiled the issues into Table 2.1 below:

### Table 2.1 – Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages of Urban Consolidation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages:</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased use of public transport</td>
<td>The more efficient use of public transport as the developments are mostly centred surrounding transport nodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased travelling</td>
<td>This will result in energy savings and reduced space or land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 2 – Urban Consolidation and its Social Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times Consumption</th>
<th>Reduction in Air Pollution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better Air quality</td>
<td>Reduces the amount of air pollution are more people will be using public transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce pressure on land</td>
<td>By increasing densities within the existing urban fabric, this reduces the developmental pressure to build on the fringes whilst still accommodating the increases in population. Increasing densities also will manage urban sprawl by making the city increasingly compact to enhance sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower infrastructure costs</td>
<td>It can help reduce capital expenditure costs on urban infrastructure by making the use of land and existing infrastructure more efficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower housing costs</td>
<td>Will be able to meet the needs of the housing affordability crisis in Sydney in order to maintain social diversity and essential services in its communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater housing choice</td>
<td>Suburban growth has been dominated by detached housing which is designed and marketed mainly for family households. This will provide many more options in terms of housing choice and even be more available for rental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial for climate change</td>
<td>The claim that compact cities use less fossil fuels, emit less greenhouse gases and conserve agricultural and water catchments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Disadvantages Justification

| Increased traffic congestion | As densities increase, so do the total vehicle hours per square kilometre of the city. Developers know they cannot profit from constructing units if they do not provide for car spaces. |
| Increased pollution | As a result of traffic congestion, pollution levels will increase. This will negatively affect peoples’ health and well-being. |
| Adversely affects health | A study of 4 million people in Sweden found the rates of psychosis were 70% greater for denser areas and within that there was 16% more chance that you would develop depression (Tony 2005 pers. comm., 13 August). |
| Pollutes storm water systems | There is a greater degree of hard surfaces with increased density developments which would otherwise be absorbed by natural ground surface |
| Decimates urban bushland | Value of our natural flora and fauna diminishes. It also does not allow people to have their own vegetable garden. |
| Increased pressure on Sydney | Sydney was designed for the density then built. Increasing density |

18
Chapter 2 –Urban Consolidation and its Social Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>existing infrastructure</th>
<th>strains the existing infrastructure and only postpones expenditure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased housing cost</td>
<td>The very reason the government is restricting development on the urban fringes of Sydney makes land scarce. This means that existing land is more valuable and as a result its worth has soared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not increase housing choice</td>
<td>A free standing dwelling has much more flexibility in terms of accommodating various households. A study called <em>Australian Social Trends</em> found that 80% of Australians prefer to live in a freestanding home. Encouraging urban consolidation in communities that do not want it does not increase housing choice (ABS 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induces climate change</td>
<td>There is more energy produced when constructing multi-unit buildings. Also operational and embodied energy are much more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close quarter living in a physical sense</td>
<td>People have to become accustomed to living in closer proximity to each other compared to others living in single houses have to contend with. Consequently it requires a high degree of tolerance as there will be a decrease in the amount of privacy, increased noise, sharing facilities, smaller and adjoining residences which may vary amid distinctive cultural backgrounds (Randolph 2006).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This change in built form encourages and attracts a more diverse range people and consequently impacts on and alters the identity of the existing neighbourhood. Whether or not this is a positive move forward for the community and their sense of pride for the suburb in which they live is something which has not been investigated thoroughly. These types of developments also dictate that a higher proportion of people in the future will own strata titled development. Is this what we want our existing local suburbs to turn into and is it what the community views as the best outcome for their area? What happens to the strata market as it ages, when no planning policies have been put in place to address this? These questions illustrate the lack of acknowledgment or understanding by planners of both the social context and its outcomes in which this form of housing is created as part of urban consolidation.

There is the general perception that social consequences will be addressed and function properly by meeting the economic and environmental issues. However there is no information regarding how far the incentives will satisfy the communities’ needs and the change in social structure, therefore affecting the level of social cohesiveness. This, together with the spatial attempt to concentrate future development around train lines and town centres, as promoted by current planning beliefs as a way of increasing densities, may imply
that a degree of social segregation by household types and lifestyle will become a principal characteristic of future local suburban areas (Bunker et al 2005).

2.3 Urban Consolidation through Transit Oriented Development

The SMS 2005 had identified over 500 towns, villages and neighbourhood centres which are located in close proximity to transport nodes. Apart from the larger strategic centres in which plans have also been created, planning visions have been prepared for these smaller centres as they are considered to be important to the people who live in the vicinity. Smaller local centres encompass unique features that all contribute towards the overall economic, environmental and social aspects of Sydney. The State Government has projected the proportion of dwellings that should be built close to transit nodes (refer to Table 2.2). Local councils have been delegated the responsibility of enforcing and implementing the policy as they have the best understanding of how these developments should be integrated within the established environment.

![Table 2.2 - Proportion of new dwellings close to transport and services to 2013](source)

The population has been calculated according to the Residential Development Strategies prepared by every local government. Housing is being distributed near transit nodes either within 800m of a rail station or 400m of high frequency bus services in peak hour. By 2013, it is expected 66 per cent of new housing in existing areas will be developed in close proximity to transit nodes, thereby transforming the suburbs affected into Transit Oriented Developments (TODs).
TODs are recognised as medium to high density residential developments that also include employment and shopping services and are situated within easy walking distance of a significant transit stop (Lund 2006). It is hoped this development will promote transit use, enhance housing opportunities, support walking and bicycling and assist neighbourhood rejuvenation. In America, these places reveal that development and transit really can work collectively and that neighbourhoods that supply transport choices and convenient services can lead to changed travel exercises and tangible benefits for both individuals and communities (Belzer & Autler 2002). The effectiveness of these TODs to become implemented in Sydney’s existing suburbs along rail lines is debatable as the government has trouble in maintaining consistent service to current commuters. Would our train lines be capable of functioning with the increase in population? How would this affect existing residents who presently use public transport? Would they then be subject to over-crowding whilst travelling, especially during peak hour? It may produce frustrations between residents which in turn may affect their health and well-being (Frumkin et al 2004).

In Sydney, density has failed to be distributed evenly throughout the region despite the more recent concerted effort to promote TODs around transport nodes. Also, there has been little to no research completed as to how TODs will affect the existing communities who are forced to tolerate the brunt of this change within their neighbourhood. Australia’s planning legislation currently contains no structure for community consultation as it has not been uniformly and consistently incorporated into any of the state’s statutory system (Urban Futures 1996). This questions the amount of public service provided by all levels of government to inform and take into account the views and concerns of each community, particularly when long term impact changes are occurring on such a large scale.

Each suburb’s capacity to absorb increased densities around transport nodes should be assessed individually. This increases the chances that the existing community’s sense of belonging and pride is not negatively altered. Forcing more development around transit nodes will also not work unless there is a demand for it in the housing market. Statistical data from places such as Atlanta illustrates that people who prefer walkable and transit-oriented environments would be similarly expected to end up in neighbourhoods corresponding to their desires as those who favour low density neighbourhoods planned around the car (Frank & Levine 2006). This illustrates that understanding market demand
prior to constructing more developments is imperative in the prevention of ‘lifeless’ buildings in these existing suburbs.

Furthermore, what scale of development is necessary to make TODs work in different contexts? Are there any maximum limits set as to how much each suburb can acquire without becoming socially inept? In the UK, the government is now providing direction on how local authorities can measure urban housing capacity. In this case the underlying principle is to recognise new capacity in areas which local consent authorities claim are full (Searle 2004). Even if limits are placed as to how much more the population can grow in a particular area, it may restrict the effectiveness and efficiency of the TOD theory. This could result in the suburb not functioning to its full potential because of the importance of maintaining community strength.

The transformation that is occurring in these existing areas can also be criticised as happening too quickly and not allowing the communities to adjust to the social change. It is undeniable that suburbs in their physical form change in due course; however place attachments are profoundly disrupted when environments change rapidly (Obst & Smith 2002). Perhaps if urban consolidation was introduced gradually, more developments could be built over time as the community is able to adapt to the changing social conditions and community’s sense of belonging has time to evolve so that everyone is able to have a sense of place.

The social environment of middle-ring suburbs has been influenced by the evolution of the cultural features that have been created, bringing both a sense of place and hopefully a sense of community equilibrium. This sense of balance or stability can be explained by reference to socio-political factors.

Urban consolidation is a strategy that potentially impacts on the existing socio-cultural aspects of a community if not implemented correctly. It has the potential to destabilise a community, hence the frequent reference to the need for consultation later within this thesis. Socio-political factors are influential in determining how ‘balanced’ is an outcome. Political science provides a conceptual tool to analyse the balance of forces at work within a community influencing perceptions and offering insights into community behaviour. This tool describes the competition between centripetal forces intended to unite a community and centrifugal forces which have the potential to divide a community (Parkinson 1999).
The mix of centripetal and centrifugal forces identified in each case study community is summarised in figure 2.3.

The planning process must accept responsibility for maintaining the “balance” between these conflictive forces. If they do not, the existing sense of place is compromised. Understanding the social qualities of each place, communicating it in the design of communities, incorporating it within our suburbs and regarding its balance are fundamental components of creating and preserving a human place that is sustainable and spiritually beneficial (Parkinson 1999). If this analysis is valid, it clearly points to the need for planners and relevant policies to acknowledge the visible expression of centripetal and centrifugal forces, as expressed publicly in a community.
Chapter 2 – Urban Consolidation and its Social Implications

2.6 Summary

If urban consolidation is to be comprehensive and inclusive, it must have as an important feature a concern about the social dimension of place. Chapter 3 highlights the centripetal forces mentioned by investigating the significance of suburbs in fostering a sense of community and how it impacts on the individual.
3 – The Importance of Place

Chapter three focuses on the importance of place by highlighting socio-political centripetal forces. By this it is meant the means of forming one’s identity, attachment or connectedness with a suburb and its community. This connection is expressed by people through their social, cultural, political and recreational behaviour.

3.1 Attraction to the suburbs

A major outcome of the urban dynamic linked to Sydney’s population growth is the formulation of a sense of place. The suburbs have been significant in the evolution of Sydney from colony to city (Kelly 1987, p.9). Kelly states that “Sydney, like all modern, western cities, is characterised as much by its suburbs as by its central core” (P192). This is reinforced by the large proportion of Sydney’s residents who live and work in the suburbs (figure 3.1). Sydney has evolved as a dispersed set of suburban communities because in the main, people desire the independent home on a large block of land.

Figure 3.1 – Home and Work Location in Sydney – 2001

Source: ABS 2006.
Sydney’s suburbs rate distinctly in terms of quality of life. Based on a study of information received from the census, the Bureau of Statistics, the Tax Office and health agencies, The Bankwest quality of life index, in August 2008, states that the best quality of life occurs when people live in the suburbs. The study contrasted issues such as “health, home ownerships, employment, earnings, education, crime rates, internet access and volunteering” (SMH 2008). The bank’s chief executive of retail, Ian Corfield, said that “people are better off in the suburbs. In Sydney’s suburbs residents often have the best of all worlds, with access to good schools, modern hospitals and reliable jobs, but also large houses, fast internet connections and low crime rates” (SMH 2008). Figure 3.2 below demonstrates that nationally, suburbs on the north shore, south of Sydney and outer west regions such as Camden contain the best living standards, compared to Liverpool which rates as one of the lowest.

In Sydney a suburb hierarchy has been established relating to the era in which each suburb was formed. One such classification this thesis is specifically investigating is called the middle-ring suburb. This term refers to the area between the north coast and eastern suburbs of Sydney and the newer urban fringe areas out to the west. In the middle exists an area built over 35 years ago but which is now subject to social and physical restructuring through urban consolidation (Randolph 2002). These suburbs signify the result of urban expansion in the post-war period in which the urban form is distinguished by broad acre, low rise, detached dwellings on separate plots and characterised by broad streetscapes.

A key reason people were, and still are, attracted to living in middle-ring suburbs after the war was the desire of a ‘green and secluded neighbourhood’, one where families could...
benefit from ‘fresh air, a pleasant view and a shady garden’ (Troy, Summer 2003-2004). This consequently has a direct relationship on community development as historically communities have been rooted in nature (Calthorpe 1993). Nature has been pivotal in setting both the identity and physical limits of the suburb.

Middle-ring suburbs in Sydney are not just a combination of the city and country, but they are known for encompassing features of both lifestyles. They have evolved to essentially become integrated as part of the Australian way of life. Robin Boyd (1987) described the suburbs as:

“…a curtain of leaves, monumental gateway, a sweep of gravel drive, bay windows, lawns and flowering shrubs…a street with narrow grass strips dividing sidewalks from the roadway, cropped trees and telegraph poles set in lines in the grass…it was children playing against a lamppost on the street or asphalt schoolyard…it was the purr of lawn-mowers, the car being washed in the street; neighbours discussing the merits of their favourite manures whiles applying them to their front flower beds; a short burst of glassy laughter from the house where they entertained on Sunday mornings and countless other kindred elements of a half-world between city and country in which most Australians lived” (p.137).

This passage is expressive and indicative of the emotional relationship that Boyd was able to form between her living environment and herself as an observer. Generally, this vivid description is still relevant to many middle ring suburbs today, suggesting that there are residents who have formed a connection with the suburb in which they live. It is important to note that suburban Sydney is far from homogenous and each suburb contains a unique history and character of its own, which may or may not enhance residents’ comfort and happiness.

### 3.2 Place Identifiers and Connection

There are many factors contributing to the development and sustenance of residents’ connection with their suburb. Many of these include place identifiers by which suburbs contain urban design elements within the landscape that residents can associate with. These place identifiers have emerged in middle-ring suburbs due to “the successive adaptations to the terrestrial world made by individuals and groups of people striving to meet their needs as they perceive them” (Lang 1995, p.1). For the purposes of this thesis, place identifiers have been recognised as landmarks and heritage attributes influencing the social make-up of an
area and their relationships. This section of this chapter deliberates on these influential factors.

Place identifiers deal with a range of social, economic, transport, infrastructure and cultural aspects that have a progressive impact on the functioning and form of the urban environment (Kozlowski 2006). This can be expressed through the various landmarks that a suburb encompasses. For example the Sutherland Shire Local Government Area (LGA) is associated with the long beaches from Cronulla to Wanda, The Royal National Park and the Woronora Cemetery located at Sutherland.

Heritage also plays a great deal in being able to identify with place. The middle-ring suburbs in the North Shore contain historic homes which add to the cultural value of the area. With this heritage comes the notion of place as residents own large gardens, and there are wide streetscapes lined with trees and many corner parks. Other such suburbs, which contain strong heritage presence, are located within the Strathfield LGA. This is a predominantly residential area with large old homes and well-manicured gardens. Homes and streets in Strathfield, which are considered significant and valuable to current and future generations, have been heritage listed to assist their long-term preservation (Strathfield 2007). This will contribute to maintenance of sense of place for existing residents.

Landmarks and heritage are just some aspects of the physical environment that form the foundation in which the social dimension of place identification commences (Casey 1993). Suburban community groups may form from the facilities and services that are provided to them in the built environment. The Ku-ring-gai LGA is known to be very “family-oriented” (Interview Shelley 2008). Over time it has established many community groups, organisations, sporting clubs and educational facilities to meet the needs of its residents. This Council has also established a ‘community information directory’ which gives access to contact details, information and maps for these civil services (Ku-ring-gai Council 2008).

These elements of heritage and landmarks contribute to the socio-cultural aspect of middle-ring suburbs. In turn it will influence the way that residents respond to the built environment they live in.

3.3 Emotional Connections to Suburban Environments

The middle-ring suburbs across Sydney have evolved to contain a strong suburban culture to support the various community groups that have been created. When people buy a house in
suburbia, a sense of belonging and comfort are likely to make it their home for a long period of time (Keane 1991). There are many factors as to why people select a certain place to live. These include housing prices, amenity of the area, proximity to transport nodes and other suitable relevant services and facilities. However there are also personal preferences that people have and make on a subconscious level and are discussed further in this section.

It has been recognised that people desire environments that are “congruent with their self-concept, modifying settings to better represent themselves, or moving to find places which are more congruent with their sense of self” (Manzo 2003, p.3). Often, these subconscious preferences can be strongly associated with the emotional relationships that residents then develop as Manzo (2003) affirms that both conscious and unconscious processes play a large role in developing relationships to places.

There has been an extensive body of literature written exploring residents’ emotional relationships to place. To understand the meanings of place, Gustafen (2001) recognised three broad themes of self, others and the environment to conceptualise the function of space and place for people in the various environments they live. There are a variety of connections people may develop whilst living in a particular area, some of which include place attachment, place identity and sense of place that all may determine how successful a community is within the suburb.

When people first form a connection with places, this is called place attachment (Altman & Low 1992). These connections hold particular emotional significance through a range of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. As a result, the concept is considered to be complex and multifaceted, involving both understanding the past and the level of interaction the suburb encourages as well as its potential for interacting within the space in the future. Place attachment maintains a sense of continuity which, if displaced, can entail widespread grief and mourning and a sense of loss. As a result, a feeling of nostalgia becomes evident whereby there is a longing for a better time where there was a sense of unity with the natural world (Fried 2000).

The feelings associated with place attachment can evolve to be positive or negative, ultimately influencing residents’ sense of identity as there are dimensions of the self that develop in relation to the physical environment. For example, people-place relationships reflect residents’ identities as they share familiar, communal and ethnic or cultural bonds with their neighbours. These bonds can form intimate links between people and places and
may extend beyond the home and the street into a wider area where a sense of belonging is established, where the places as well as the people are cherished (Fried 2000). This demonstrates that people are active shapers of their environments, and their interactions with the world around them are part of a conscious process. Bonds also encourages the establishment of a sense of place.

A sense of place is defined as “an experiential process created by the setting, combined with what a person brings to it” (Steele 1981, p.9). In any suburb it can be recognised by the character and typologies of the buildings together with how residents enhance and maintain the environment. Consequently people are able to attribute meanings to the suburb and engage in diverse activities in a particular environment (Devine-Wright & Lyons 1997). In theory there are many suburbs around Sydney which currently contain a strong sense of place, from Centennial Park which is a pleasant space for people to enjoy outdoor recreational activities, to Bondi Beach, which is not only a national icon for Australia, but also hosts numerous festival events and provides a vibrant beach culture and related lifestyle. Places such as these are seen as having acquired social significance with symbolising values, experiences and emotions considered important to each individual. The availability of the general social support that has been presented in suburbs such as these will then naturally encourage the formation of a sense of community.

3.4 Sense of Community

When place attachment, identity and sense of place are instilled within the residents of a particular suburb, this forms a foundation upon which a sense of community can be established. The concept of community has been a continuing focus of academic studies (Taska 1994, O’Farell 1994), however it is not easily defined. The identification of 94 community definitions were either expressed as “social formation, on the one hand, or a social experience, on the other” (Taska 1994, p.23). Social formation suggests that communities are distinguished as populations enclosed by their geographic or administrative locations (Taska 1994). For example, town or local government boundaries can be utilised to differentiate one community from another.

Communities as a social experience are more complicated to identify as there are diverse types of social relations and interactive behaviour involved (Taska 1994). Community in this sense community translates to more than just a place but as the idea of “a group of people bound together by a particular set of common interests or by a common identity” (Taska
In general most people belong to more than just one community. For example, there is scope for a person to belong to both a sporting community and spiritual community (Taska 1994). This sense of community within a suburb also produces a strong sense of belonging.

Community development is dependent upon the degree of social support arising from relationships. Relationships between residents succeed by increasing homogeneity which would increase the likelihood of individuals residing in households congruent with their lifestyles. That is, like attracts like. In turn, this conceivably also improve interaction, support and the overall level of social cohesiveness in the area. However, as the population of middle-ring suburbs is increasing, will this decrease the level of community development and interaction? Tony Recsei included a figure within his article ‘Pipe Dreams: The shortcomings of ideologically based planning’, which illustrates (figure 3.3):

This reinforces the importance of creating and maintaining built environments to provide the opportunity for residents to connect with place at a personal level.

In terms of experiences, community fosters the feeling of being at home and encourages interaction, for example by the use of shops and services in the local area, in order to maintain the neighbourly feeling. Community ties are important for the “benefits they yield to individuals, including greater safety on the streets, reduced crime, better access to
education and improved health” (Johnson and Kay 2007, p.18). All these aspects promote social capital, or “the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interaction” (World Bank 1999 cited in Marshall 2006). This speaks of the importance of social networks, of communication, and of an exchange of resources that strengthens community (Johnson & Kay 2007, p.1).

### 3.5 Preserving a Sense of Place

The amount of social interaction among neighbours is a key indicator of the strength of localised communities and their sense of place in urban societies (Guest et al 1999). For example community organisations and committees often band together when they feel like their suburb is in the ‘line of fire’ from proposed developments. Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) reactions are constantly being contended with throughout Sydney to the point where at times they have halted redevelopments. These community groups have undeniably contributed towards the scaling back of larger developments on nearby low density developments.

While accomplishing an ideal sense of place in a suburb may be unachievable, being aware of the sense of place that people hold becomes crucial in planning for new suburbs (Porteous & Smith 2001). It is understood that communities within middle-ring suburbs are not static as “people change, communities change and social discontinuities are inevitable” (Fried 2000, p.193). However, urban consolidation is changing this sense of continuity at a more rapid rate (Randolph 2006). Domicide is the name given when there is deliberate destruction of home against the will of the home dweller (Porteous & Smith 2001). Home for the purposes of this thesis refers to sense of place in which residents may have formed strong emotional connections with the built environment they live in. If their environment is ruined, it can result in the decline of a sense of place attachment, loss of personal security and ownership, loss in sense of identity, and becoming increasingly disconnected from their sense of place and community” (Porteous & Smith 2001).

To have a solid foundation to a place is “perhaps the most important and less recognised need of the human soul” (Weil 1952, p.43). Urban consolidation may also be compromising the sense of rootedness. In North America there is particular concern about the status of community development and maintenance. The young culture is realising that mobility in relationships comes at the cost of stable connections to people and place. Without connections that are lasting, as in a sense of place, we may find it difficult to integrate
memories and feelings in later life for the mosaic places and love partners we have known, that there is little continuity in our life stories. With individual continuity, community and societal cohesion are themselves at risk (Hay 1998).

The SMS 2005 states that urban consolidation will create more housing diversity for the household form as can be seen in Chapter 2. Johnson and Kay (2007) affirm that the “majority of people and groups are believed to be negatively affected by housing diversity because the presence of ‘difference’ threatens individual or collective identities and leads to a reduced sense of trust and lower levels of cooperative activity (p.172). If residents feel threatened, it may reduce their participation in the community, impacting negatively on the sense of place.

Each suburb in Sydney has its own unique social ties and measure of sense of belonging and community, contributing to the formation of sense of place. The transformation in the built form in an existing area as a result of urban consolidation will affect the community socially. Sociologists remind us that interaction by meaningful human contact at a personal and daily level is the key to ensuring tolerance, harmony and contentment in dynamic multicultural societies (Gleeson 2002). So how do we increase densities without having a negative effect on a community which has a strong sense of place? How do we improve the community’s values and sense of belonging as a result of increasing densities? Further questions arise concerning what kind of neighbourliness and sense of place would be a feature of medium-high density developments? Will these create or maintain positively vibrant communities or simply dormitories for people that are highly socially mobile?

3.6 Summary

This chapter has investigated the notions of place and community and how they interrelate to establish belonging in place for communities. From this theoretical perspective Chapter four introduces the case studies and the methodology employed to explore urban consolidation and its impact on place.
Chapter 4 – A Case Study

The importance of a sense of place as a result of urban consolidation is assessed using case studies of two established middle-ring suburbs called Lindfield East and Oatley West. The data employed in this study is drawn from a range of qualitative, and to a smaller extent, quantitative sources. This thesis compares and contrasts key indicators identified from the analysis of literature and data, surveys of existing residents, input by way of in-depth interviews and land audits. The data obtained from the investigation has been used to inform and provide a range of best practice techniques for the management of increasing densities.

4.1 Case Study Approach

The following two suburban areas were selected because they have strong communities and are experiencing urban consolidation.

4.1.1 Introducing Lindfield East

Lindfield is located 10 kilometres north-west of Sydney’s Central Business District, within the Ku-ring-gai Council LGA. The suburb is divided into East and West Lindfield by the Pacific Highway. This case study is specifically concentrated within a 600 meter radius of the train station in Lindfield East (refer to shaded area in figure 4.1). It is in the LGA of Ku-ring-gai Council and forms part of the Roseville Ward.

The name Lindfield is known to have originated from the village of Lindfield in Sussex, England. This highlights the original connection the area has with an English heritage (Kennedy 1982). The name was specifically given to a cottage in the suburb that was built in 1884 and was then transferred to the train station name when the North Shore railway line was constructed (Ku-ring-gai Historical Society 2008).
The area of Lindfield was historically a timber-getting and farming community. The well where the farmers used to take their cattle is still visible outside the local library and offers a sense of connection to its past for residents. Lindfield East today has evolved to encompass many characteristics. It contains a mix of period and contemporary homes, ranging from majestic Victorian and Federation homes, Californian bungalows, modern executive homes, classic older style apartments and contemporary townhouses and apartments. The older housing typologies provide a direct visual link with the history of the area and help illustrate its foundation and formation.

Lindfield East has various open space areas such as the Swain Gardens in care of the National Trust and Seven Little Australians Park, which was named after the famous Australian book written by Ethel Turner. The parks also cater for the diversity of sporting clubs including soccer, cricket, tennis and rugby and further endorse a sense of place. In addition to its resident function, the commercial area contains shops, restaurants and cafes appropriate to this suburb. Lindfield East is very family-oriented and there are a large number of schools and churches that encourage social interaction contributing to the sense of community. The following photos were taken by the author of this paper, unless otherwise stated. They illustrate the case study area in its context.
Chapter 4 – A Case Study

Example of bungalow style dwellings of the 1940-1960s.

Representative of the abundance of soft landscaping that help form the wide streetscape.

Example of the many places which residents can congregate to socialise and build rapport.

Demonstrative of the strong relationship the area has with the natural environment as a result of the many parks and gardens it possesses.

The relationship and scale between the commercial site on the left and Lindfield station on the right.

Source: Ku-ring-gai Council, 2008
4.1.2 Changes to the built environment in Lindfield East

Urban consolidation is currently being implemented in Lindfield East as part of the broader planning and policy imperatives of the NSW State Government. The built environment is transforming into high rise residential units. Land has been re-zoned to allow further urban consolidation to occur, particularly around the train station.

The photos below demonstrate the types of apartment buildings that are being constructed within 600 metres of Lindfield train station and how they are integrated within the existing streetscape.

The population growth of the Ku-ring-gai LGA (figure 4.2) has been relatively stable for the past 30 years. The nature of this growth has facilitated the case for urban consolidation to occur in this location. Figure 4.2 can also be representative of the population growth trends
within Lindfield East. Considering the population has not changed substantially from the late 1970s, the addition of multi-unit buildings will impact on the existing low-density suburb. Urban consolidation, in this case, almost marks a new era in Lindfield East’s built form which is part of the dynamic process of an urban society.

4.1.3 Introducing Oatley West

Oatley is a located on a small peninsula along the Georges River approximately 15 kilometres south-west of Sydney’s Central Business District. Its surrounding suburbs are Hurstville Grove, Mortdale and Peakhurst Heights. This suburb is divided by the railway which also forms the local government boundary line. Hence, Oatley East is located within Kogarah Council and Oatley West is situated within Hurstville Council. As a result of its geographic location and the alignment of the highway, river and railway, Oatley West has remained relatively untouched by the urban development between the two municipalities. This thesis specifically focuses on the shaded area in figure 4.3 within Oatley West in Hurstville Council’s Penshurst and Peakhurst Wards.

Oatley’s history as a community is expressed in its built form as well as its name. The suburb’s name originated from a convict called James Oatley who was transported to Australia in 1815. A clock tower is located in the town centre of Oatley symbolising the contributions Mr Oatley made towards the clock industry. This tower was funded and built...
by Oatley’s residents and continues to stand in its original location, reminding Oatley residents of the suburb’s origins.

The placement of the railway line is also significant. The Georges River was used as the main form of transporting trade in colonial times, but it was also a physical obstacle, which restricted the spread of the population. A bridge was constructed from Oatley to Como because the distance between land was shortest at this point. This bridge provided train access from Oatley to the Sutherland Shire. When the train station at Oatley opened in 1886 and public transport was provided, this attracted more people to live in the area and as a consequence, Oatley developed.

Oatley West hosts original and renovated Californian Bungalows together with more contemporary styled dwellings and small commercial centre. These buildings are located along wide streetscapes which are lined with trees. These features have developed the cultural aspects of the area, further reinforcing sense of place which is characteristic of the area.

Other socio-cultural elements of Oatley West are also reinforced by the various corner parks Oatley West contains. A main attraction is Oatley Park which is listed on the National Trust and attracts people from around Sydney. The park itself encompasses a variety of recreational features including Oatley Baths, Lime Kiln Bay Bushland Sanctuary, a sporting
ground, picnic/playground area and bushwalk tracks. Its ridges of sandstone plus woody slopes of eucalypts are a distinctive and attractive feature of the area.

The following photos were taken by the author of this thesis. They illustrate the case study area in its context.

4.1.4 Changes to the built environment in Oatley West

Oatley West over the past decade has experienced a change in the built form within 600 metres of the train station. In recent times, architectural townhouses and villas have been developed in addition to contemporary apartments. In turn, this is influencing the nature of the area as it has begun to change as more businesses have been established. There is apprehension from the Oatley community towards the change in nature of the built form (refer to figure 4.5). This apprehension has been conveyed through community rallies and
meetings, formation of resident action groups and residents who are directly impacted by these developments. An example is the Coles development, which is mentioned in Chapter 5. The photos below were taken by the author of this thesis and indicate the types of developments that are being constructed.

The Hurstville LGA has historically grown quite rapidly (figure 4.4). Most of this density has been concentrated in Hurstville as high rise apartment blocks built throughout the late 1990s. Its growth can be associated with the increase of population that Oatley West has been experiencing. The population was relatively stable from the 1960s through to the late 1990s. Taking this into account, the increases in density via urban consolidation will affect the suburb of Oatley West as they have grown accustomed to their built environment. It may consequently impact on residents’ sense of place as the socio-cultural setting of the area is transformed.
4.1.5 Similarities between Lindfield East and Oatley West.

These case studies were chosen because they are both middle-ring suburbs that have many similarities despite being located in the northern and southern suburbs of Sydney. This thesis acknowledges that all suburbs have a sense of place. However, the suburbs chosen have a particular sense of place that is undergoing change. A prominent factor of both suburbs is the sense of place they possess as a result of their low density built form and streetscapes. Specific cultural functions have evolved from the history of the areas, which have adapted to the modern day lifestyle. Lindfield East’s and Oatley West’s morphology have happened differently, although they both have been able to create and foster a sense of place evident in their generously spaced landscape and other socio-cultural elements.

Urban consolidation has been introduced and is currently being implemented into both these middle-ring suburbs by means of infilling. This is impacting on sense of place of each area as the built form is being altered dramatically. The communities of Lindfield East and Oatley West have responded to the developments which are being constructed and, as a result, development has become an issue that is highly discussed in local newspapers. Figure 4.5 illustrates the concern that has been expressed through various community meetings, resident action group meetings and rallies and local newspaper articles. It is important to understand the perceptions of key stakeholders involved in order gain a proper insight as to how to mitigate the effects of the SMS 2005.

Source: Information adapted from Spearritt 2000.
Chapter 4 – A Case Study

Figure 4.5 – Local Media Coverage and Residents’ Responses to Urban Consolidation

Source: Newspaper headlines are sourced in bibliography. Photographs are provided by Friends of Oatley and Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Resident Action Groups.
This section discusses the research techniques which were employed to investigate urban consolidation’s impact on sense of place.

4.2.1 Representative Views

A number of in-depth interviews were undertaken with key informants and residents to acquire a deep understanding of their perceptions of the impact that urban consolidation is having on local communities. The findings of this qualitative research have been used in the development of best practice guidelines for the local management of urban consolidation.

Phoning and emailing were the main means of contacting the 12 interviewees. Interviews ranged in duration from 30 minutes to two hours. Each interview was transcribed and coded, enabling the interview to be analysed and compared to the themes in the relevant literature. Initial and final coding trees were devised in which the data was reframed, and new concepts became apparent. The coding process was guided by the interview questions. Due to scope limitations, this thesis presents the key questions which were asked to all interviewees (further questions can be viewed at Appendix 1), listed below:

- When I say Lindfield East/Oatley West, what do you think of?
- What is happening to the built environment in this area?
- What is your opinion of the relationships between the residents of Lindfield East/Oatley West and these new urban consolidated developments? Please Explain
- Do you have any recognition or understanding of the social context in which this form of housing is delivered? How about its likely social outcomes? Please Explain.
- What is community?
- What constitutes a socially functioning community?
- Has urban consolidation had an impact on the existing sense of community in Lindfield East/Oatley West? If so, How?

The rigorous thematic analysis in the qualitative research approach ensured that due to scope limitations, only the most prominent issues were highlighted and used throughout this thesis.

Listed below are the people who undertook the interview. Consent was granted from all interviewees to be quoted and identified.

- **Peter Hamilton, Department of Planning.** The Department of Planning is the State government agency responsible for the urban consolidation policy in Sydney through
the SMS 2005. Peter has been involved in the strategic planning division of the
department for roughly 30 years. He has contributed towards the Government’s long
term plan to maintain Sydney’s role in the global economy and to plan for growth
and change.

- **Councillors from Local Government Areas (LGAs).** Two in-depth interviews
  were undertaken. The first was conducted with Maureen Shelley, who is a Roseville
  Ward Councillor from Ku-ring-gai Council. The second involved Philip Sansom who
  is a Peakhurst Ward Councillor for Hurstville Council. They have the role of taking a
  comprehensive view of the needs and priorities of local areas and lead in the work
  that is needed to meet those requirements.

- **Andrew Sweeney, Property Developer/Architect for Greengate Property Group.**
  Andrew has had extensive experience in all core property sectors, being residential,
  commercial and industrial. He has the ability to see and predict trends, challenge
  practices and create new ways of managing projects. Andrew has a particular interest
  in urban consolidation and its implementation. His vision includes producing
  innovative property outcomes and generating more sustainable community and
  environmental solutions.

- **Local Property Developers.** Two in-depth interviews were carried out with
  developers who have constructed increased density developments. Alek Novavick is
  a development director who specialises in the residential property market in Sydney
  and is in the process of building in Lindfield East. Within Oatley, a developer with
  architectural qualifications called Renaldo Gaietti managed a development within
  Oatley West. These developers help provide development management involving site
  assessment and acquisition, design and planning approvals, construction and
  marketing management. Both have a stake in the urban consolidation policy setting
  for they impact on business opportunities.

- **Patrick Troy, Social Researcher and Visiting Professor at the University of
  NSW.** Currently one of Australia’s leading academics, concerned with the built
  environment and other urban issues. He is an emeritus professor at the Australian
  National University. Patrick also has past experience in the administration and
development of Australian residential strategies. He works actively to ensure issues
  such as housing and the urban environment are provided efficiently and effectively.
Chapter 4 – A Case Study

- **Tony Recsei, President of Save Our Suburbs (NSW).** Tony Recsei is an Environmental Consultant who has spoken at many conferences and written many published articles on the subject of urban consolidation. As President of Save Our Suburbs he contests local councils about local rezoning and developments, and state government about the lack of planning and regulation.

- **Active members of local organisations and groups.** Four local residents from four different local resident action groups were interviewed about urban consolidation in their suburb. Participants were recruited using a cumulative technique as the majority of resident groups in each area have associations with other groups in which additional participants were selected. The names of these participants shall be introduced later within this thesis.

### 4.2.2 Survey of Residents

Fifty surveys were completed by existing residents in both suburbs in relation to their level of community satisfaction and sense of community as a result of urban consolidation. According to the SMS 2005, Lindfield East and Oatley West are categorised as villages. Villages, by definition, are a “strip of shops for daily shopping and typically includes a small supermarket, butcher, hairdresser, restaurants and take away food shops…needs to develop an enjoyable public environment with a mix of uses and good physical links with the surrounding neighbourhood” (Department of Planning 2005, p.130). These factors, which shape a village, form the foundation upon which a sense of place is established and can be maintained. A village centre generally encompasses a 400-600 metre radius. Therefore houses were chosen and approached which were located within this domain (Refer to Appendix 2 for an aerial view of the houses surveyed).

The surveys were created after several in-depth interviews had been completed. This method provided the opportunity to consider what would be the most effective questions asked to residents in the short survey that was prepared. A copy can be found in Appendix 3. The surveys were completed by contacting residents in person fairly informally which produced a high response rate. The random sample of 50 households within each village were made with the selection intended to ensure a cross-section of gender, age and work/retiree occupants of detached dwellings were represented.

Upon completion, the results were tallied and converted into percentages. However, the representation of the results in percentage form convey appropriate perceptions of how
residents feel about the urban consolidation issue and their sense of place. The long responses were categorised into the themes arising from the in-depth interviews. It should be noted that due to word limitations, only selected responses from the in-depth interviews and surveys have been incorporated into this thesis. The responses chosen are considered to be the most relevant in the context of this thesis.

4.2.3 Audit of urban consolidated developments

An audit of the urban consolidated developments that currently exist which are located within 600 metres of the station at both Lindfield East and Oatley West was completed. A combination of data sources were drawn on to accomplish the audit, including ABS catalogues, public records from the council libraries, street directories, and Google Earth.

Using this information, it was possible to gain a perspective as to what development typologies exist within each suburb that residents have to encounter on a daily basis.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for the UNSW FBE ethics approval documentation (Approval Number 85037) for these interviews and surveys.

4.3 Summary

This chapter has been succinct in describing the case study areas representative of the middle-ring suburbs of Sydney. A variety of resources have been employed to ensure an unbiased outcome is presented in this thesis. Chapter five presents the findings of this research.
This chapter applies the broader theoretical concepts discussed in earlier chapters to a detailed examination of the case study areas, Lindfield East and Oatley West. Chapter five explores perceptions of urban consolidation and how it is impacting the sense of place for residents, through the use of qualitative research. The analysis is based on the results of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and surveys of existing local residents. This chapter also identifies three distinct perspectives expressed by local residents regarding the impact of urban consolidation on their sense of place.

The intention of the interviews and surveys was to illuminate residents’ perceptions of their existing built environment. An understanding of residents’ perspectives on the impact of urban consolidation is required to assist planners in managing its effects on sense of place. It is argued that the existing residents within the case studies have had their sense of place compromised by the urban consolidation to date.

The majority of residents surveyed have lived in their home for a substantial amount of time (Figure 5.1). Tony Recsei, appraises that “people choose to live in suburbs such as Lindfield East because they like the particular atmosphere and community; they like low density and want trees; they want reasonably sized blocks of land and they don’t want overlooking units next to them.” (Interview Recsei 2008). Ted Cooper, a founding member of the Oatley Residents Association action group, and has been a resident of Oatley West for over 25 years, speaks fondly of the suburb in which he lives:

“Many residents live in Oatley West because of its wide tree-lined streets, its quiet ambience, its large building blocks that have space for trees, gardens, play areas, sunlight and space to see the sky. They also live in Oatley West because of the close proximity to public transport and primary schools and its own neighbourhood shopping centre. They
also greatly appreciate the many public gardens and natural bushland areas beside the Georges River and appreciate the many activities and organisations that exist in the community.” (Interview Cooper 2008).

One of the main reasons drawing people to stay and live in their area is because of the community spirit in each suburb location. As Maureen Shelley explains:

“We have a very strong sense of community and it comes about because people in the street know each other and our children go to school together; we run into each other in the shops, we have street parties; we’re involved in community groups like neighbourhood watch, book club or for older people there is Meals on Wheels…so people in Lindfield East are very community minded and we have literally thousands of volunteers and this strengthens the sense of community that we have. It’s at all levels – young to old. It makes it such a nice place to live.” (Interview Shelley 2008).

The residents of both Lindfield East and Oatley West also concur that a sense of community exists which is relatively strong (figure 5.2 and 5.3):
One interviewee claimed a sense of place has developed in Oatley West in the following manner.

“I think the community is the history and the people and the environment and built form. It’s the combination of a whole range of things. It’s something that builds up over time and it’s where people identify with a number of things in that area including the culture. People need somewhere where they can identify and link themselves to that.” (Interview Sansom 2008).

The residents of Lindfield East and Oatley West have grown fond of the place in which they live. Anne Wagstaff, an active member of the Friends of Oatley resident action group, described her sense of place for in Oatley West:

“There are heaps of things that have made our “place” strong such as the trees, parks, open spaces, local independent shops; this all brings a sense of calmness and safety to the streets…Oatley West is also a place where there is not a lot of noise and there is hardly any through traffic. There is a high sense of neighbourliness…It is a place where there is common respect between people.” (Interview Wagstaff 2008).

The importance of the built environment in contributing to a person’s sense of belonging is evident in Anne Wagstaff’s explanation. Being a resident for over 15 years she has been able to identify herself with the place, which is made up of the physical environment, the streetscape, the character of the area and the placement of commercial premises. It has also encouraged her to join community groups in the area which is not unusual for both suburbs as is illustrated in figure 5.4 below:

The survey results illustrated that active community involvement of both middle-ring suburbs is considered to be substantial and an integral part of residents’ lifestyle. This high level of social interaction is extremely important, as Councillor Maureen Shelley stated,
“that is one of the fundamental parts of what a community is. Without that you don’t have a shared history or goals …the environment has been changed or altered depending on the values of the community. So the whole physical environment is both predicated and modelled by the shared values of the people in that community.” (Interview Shelley 2008). Urban consolidation changes the appearance of the built form and it is vital that planners understand how residents are responding to this change.

Lindfield East and Oatley West have been experiencing the effects of urban consolidation, particularly within the last decade. There are now a variety of increased density developments within 600 metres of the train station that have been constructed or are underway (see figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 - Land Audit of urban consolidated developments in Lindfield East and Oatley West.

**LEGEND:**
- Train Station
- Neighbourhood shops
- Dual occupancies
- /villas/townhouses
- Units

**Note:** Uncoloured areas are single dwellings/open space or roads

Source: Adapted from the NSW Department of Lands SIX Viewer.
Outlined in figure 5.6, the residents surveyed have an understanding about what type of development is most predominant in their suburb and if they like it. It illustrates that residents are aware of the physical built form, which makes up the socio-cultural elements of the suburb. In terms of the social impact that these developments are having on suburbs generally, Patrick Troy stated that “these issues are location and culture specific…so you cannot assume the same effects in different suburbs with different cultures.” (Interview Troy 2008).

Both suburbs have predominantly low density development reflecting their evolution and historical urban character and attraction. Significantly, urban consolidated developments focus on medium – high density developments. Considering figure 5.6 demonstrates the majority of residents within both suburbs prefer lower density developments, it is fair to say residents have strong negative views or real reservations about high density development and these need to be considered by planners. This is reinforced in figures 5.7 and 5.8 below.
Residents feel that there has been failure to maintain and preserve the sense of place within their area (figure 5.8). There is concern about changes to both the physical nature of the suburb and the influx of new residents.

“Many residents consider that a large increase in housing and commercial densities with associated increases in vehicular traffic and parking will destroy the physical part of their environment….many residents also feel that this will bring a different cross section of people who may change the friendly neighbourhood atmosphere of the community. They are therefore concerned that an increase in property densities in a few smaller areas may lead to large increases and overdevelopment which will destroy their environment that we all greatly appreciate.” (Interview Cooper 2008).

Kathy Cowley, a member of the Friends of Lindfield resident action group, further elaborates on how increased density developments are impacting on sense of place:

“Residents are being forced to think prematurely about what they want to do. They are angry, puzzled, some are turning into mini-developers because they see the opportunity and in a way it’s dividing the community because there are some that want to exploit this, and so you’re getting neighbourhoods where it’s divisive…The areas being rezoned are bluntly chosen, and the imposition of and empowering of non-local bureaucrats to make
decisions has been inappropriate…Our brief was to revitalise our centres to get new life and new vigour into our centres – not wholesale development! Sensitivity to the style is important – but we’re not getting it and it’s affecting our sense of place. We’re losing our community, we’re losing our sense of identity.” (Interview Cowley 2008).

Property developer Alek Novavick currently has a development application in with Ku-ring-gai Council for a 58 unit building, which will be constructed within 600 metres of Lindfield East’s train station. He affirms:

“…development will draw people together and make people interact with each other…especially in higher density, people are obliged to look after each other a bit more and are concerned about common issues about the buildings they’re living in.” (Interview Novavick 2008).

However, residents’ surveys highlighted that not many had formed a relationship with the residents in the new increased density developments (figure 5.9). Residents indicated that if the sense of community diminishes then residents will be less satisfied. As Tony Recsei stated above, it is one of the fundamental reasons which originally attracted people to live in the suburb and prevents them from leaving.

Tony Recsei also believes the biggest impact for home-owners is “they are going to sell out because somebody is going to build a block of units next door. So that community will fragment and break apart. New people will come in and those new people will over time form their tentacles into the community much the same way as anybody else…The community is also going to become less local and more geographically dispersed because we don’t have town centres that work and function properly…people are doing a whole lot of things in different places outside…what traditionally you would do locally.” (Interview Recsei 2008).

Figure 5.9 - Have relationships been built with the people who live in higher density developments?
Consolidated developments are being designed and constructed by developers such as Ren Gaitti. He constructed a controversial development in a prime residential area with 12 units and Coles supermarket in Oatley West. He is heavily involved with each of his developments after completion as “part of the work that we do, we have a responsibility to maintain these complexes for seven years, so we’re always going back and we understand the dynamics of how these people are living within the community – so we get a fair bit of feedback from that, so that’s some of the positives that come out of it for future projects.” (Interview Gaitti 2008). These dynamics, some of which are illustrated below in figure 5.10, are not necessarily positive outcomes. The chart below suggests that further consideration is needed on the design of the building and in providing opportunity for social interaction for residents.

The residents revealed that, on the whole, they supported progress and consolidation. Yet not to the detriment of their established local community and by demolishing significant local cultural icons, such as heritage buildings and open space. Phillip Sansom states that “I personally think that there are other ways in which this could be done which could create better outcomes for the community. I think the fact that you’ve got this very abrupt change is problematic, but I am encouraged to try and find a suitable alternative.” (Interview Sansom 2008).

![Figure 5.10 - How do you rate your community as a result of these new urban consolidation developments? (Lindfield East and Oatley West).](chart)
Chapter 5 – Exploring Sense of Place

To find a suitable alternative, Councillor Sansom may consider the three key outcomes which have been raised by the residents and resident action groups of Lindfield East and Oatley West.

Three key outcomes arose from interviewing the various stakeholders and surveying residents of Lindfield East and Oatley West, which will be discussed in this section of this chapter.

5.3.1 Community Consultation

Stakeholders and residents involved believe that consultation is at the heart of why there are negative perceptions about the implementation of urban consolidation. Peter Hamilton elaborates when he stated that community consultation is an “inherent part of the planning process” (Interview Hamilton 2008). Anne Wagstaff thinks that if residents are contributing to what happens in their suburb, they will live more enjoyable lifestyles.

Yet there are concerns that the community is being ignored by the government. Kathy Cowley, from Friends of Lindfield resident action group, explains

“I really don’t think that government is listening to what we would like. When people feel like they’re not being consulted by the authorities, it increases apathy within the community and that divides us…nobody’s being listened to and everyone wants to be heard…but not everybody has got strong personalities but people don’t like to be ignored, they like to have a say, even if it’s just something small.”

Figure 5.11 illustrates how residents of both suburbs have convincingly decided that there still needs to be more involvement in how urban consolidation is being instigated in their suburbs. This desire reflects their community identity and sense of place.

![Figure 5.11 - Should the local community have more involvement in the urban consolidation that occurs in their suburbs?](image-url)
Developer Alek Novavick is also critical of the consultation process. He does not “particularly like it because people aren’t very objective and it ends up being a waste of time…the Council and the State Government spend a lot of time on the controls and if my development meets their guidelines then council is obliged to approve it and the town planners are obliged to recommend it to be approved.” (Interview Novavick 2008).

This view is not shared by all developers. Andrew Sweeney asserted that more needs to be done to ensure developers and planners are meeting the requirements of the community:

“The more complex the issue is for the community, the more engagement and the longer that needs to be. So what we’re getting at the moment is a very dumbed down communication on a very complex issue…people are not being given options on what they want and what they can have in their suburb…it’s more like well this is what we’re doing. That’s not engagement; that’s just communication. So we’ve got to get more engagement into these major undertakings. I think when you do that you’re going to get better buy in from the community as well.” (Andrew 2008 pers. comm., 21 August).

The Department of Planning has formulated a guiding principle to determine how much community consultation is required. This is dependant on the project’s intensity (figure 5.12).
Anne Wagstaff comments on her feelings towards the level of consultation and how it is affecting her sense of place in Oatley West:

“…where you live is really important for feeling part of that community. If you have put all your life savings into your home and then a development is constructed next door that overshadows your back yard – then that creates antagonism between neighbours. This is already happening! People are frustrated with these new buildings and feel like a sense of their identity is being forced to change. Proper consultation can help alleviate this and help residents comprehend what is happening to their community. In the process I think it will also enhance the sense of belonging and community as residents become more involved.” (Interview Wagstaff 2008).

Several key and recurrent themes residents raised to help improve the consultation process included the requirement of an increase sense of involvement, awareness and feedback before developments are approved, from all the constituents involved, including developers.

5.3.2 Introduction of Iconic Commercial Activity

Another issue identified is more subtle in nature, although stakeholders consider it to be significant outcome. Whilst not directly part of the policy of urban consolidation, a collateral issue, which influences a sense of place, is the introduction of commercial activity. This is attracted by the growth in market that comes from population increase. Larger retailers are seeing the marketability of operating within these suburbs. Residents suggested that these newer consolidated developments with larger commercial businesses were undermining the viability of smaller independent shops. This issue is important to signal as small businesses are important contributors to sense of place but are disappearing partly because of that process. Patrick Troy elaborates on this issue:

“The power is in the city with government, the legal system and commerce and over time we have been breaking down the relationships of these things with their community. You used to know the grocer, the butcher and baker and candle stick maker. You don’t anymore because it’s now a chain store and whoever is there is only employed. These large urban consolidated developments attract with it the market power, for example, of the two great chains Woolworths and Coles. They account for such a high proportion of the retail trade that it’s very hard for independence and small businesses to be in competition with them, so they get forced out of the market.” (Interview Troy 2008).
The new Coles supermarket in Oatley West formed part of the commercial sector of the site. It caused residents to band together because they felt that by accepting large chains into their suburb, it would decrease the uniqueness of their community.

“…when you think about how it would be sensible to think well of course the franchises are going to come in but I wasn’t thinking that far and now you actually see it and it’s happening so quickly. I spoke to a resident from Gordon last week. I was telling her about what was happening to our community and she said ‘oh it’s happened in Gordon already’. Now they had a little village shopping centre…FRANCHISED! And I fear that’s what’s going to happen here in Oatley and I’m just waiting for people to wake up!” (Interview Cooper 2008).

The property developer for the site Ren Gaitti explained that despite community opposition, the Coles site was doing extremely well: “This is now the highest per square metre trading Coles store in NSW…this year they are going to reach $20 million and only expected $12 million.” (Interview Gaitti 2008). However questions arise concerning who Coles is providing its services to? For example, is it attracting more people from outside the area instead of the Oatley West community? Is it still a successful development if it is?

Anne Wagstaff was worried about the effect that urban consolidation would have on the commercialisation of Oatley West. There is concern of a loss of social interaction as a result because “we know our newsagent down the street and the fruit and vegetable shop – they’re lovely people…but I suspect they are not going to last much longer because of Coles down the street. These local business people work in the area, live in the area – whereas Coles workers aren’t locals and it’s not run by communities and these people haven’t got a vested interest in the community.” (Interview Wagstaff 2008).

The importance of small businesses to facilitate in sustaining a sense of community and place is considered to be vital. Anne Carroll, who is an active member of the Ku-ring-gai Preservation Trust, explains:

“Once you remove small shops they’re not replaceable. This hastens the break down in the community once you’ve got this redevelopment which is not only taking place in terms of the residents, but is also taking place in relation to the commercial/retail side of things and the two things interact…those little community shops/businesses which I like to describe as the glue that keeps the community together because it’s always those tiny little things that you do to one another that reflect a good community and good community pride. If
there is no support for these small businesses then they bleed away...the community is being opened up; threads are being pulled out and ultimately the whole place will disintegrate if we are not careful.” (Interview Carroll 2008).

Ultimately introducing large commercial businesses into village-like suburb centres is a complex issue which also involves economics and power of the giant food chains. Commercial activity is strongly encouraged in the SMS 2005 to enhance liveability. However it does not prescribe what typology should be endorsed within village centres. This is one aspect of urban consolidation which residents feel is a prominent issue and is affecting their sense of belonging.

5.2.3 Metropolitan Wide Vision versus Local Vision

The final issue which arose was the relationship between the objectives and goals of the SMS 2005 and the vision of the local community. Phillip Sansom stated that “it’s very hard to acknowledge what the State Government is doing.” This is reflected in the surveys by the residents of Lindfield East and Oatley West (see figure 5.13) as they feel that there is no local comprehensive plan that has been established for the local community. They have asked questions such as how is community to be enhanced and preserved whilst implementing urban consolidation?

So why does the community of each suburb feel this way? Andrew Sweeney explains that “…the conflict comes in that we have a regional issue in how to manage population growth. The strategy is trying to designate where that growth can occur which is a valid thing. The community have not bought into the metro strategy and are kind of going, well, why have we got to have all these units to fill all these places? Isn’t there another strategy that can be put in place to avoid that happening?...that’s the unbelief in the strategy.” (Interview Sweeney 2008).

![Figure 5.13 - Do you think the vision for a more sustainable Sydney reflects the vision of community at the local level?](image-url)
This ‘unbelief in the strategy’ may be arising because of the impact that these increased density developments are having on communities, or the ineffective consultation process.

“I think the uncontrolled development is like a tidal wave – it just hits and that’s what’s happening right now…whereas if we build from the town centre people would see the sense in it. It’s hard to see that there is a plan for this because there isn’t at the local level…so although they’ve got the aspirations of the metro strategy which I probably think are valid…I don’t think we need the intensity they are suggesting because these town centres haven’t got that much capacity and it should probably be a lot less in the town centres.” (Interview Shelley 2008).

The State Government stands firm in what it has done. “It’s our role to look at the 30 year out perspective…so if we know that we’ve got to provide for 640,000 more dwellings over a 30-35 year period then that’s what we do. We want to work with local government and find a strategy…it’s good to work with local councils because we feel they are the ones who know most about their local area – we just tell them the strategic objectives and principles that we want to see implemented.” (Interview Hamilton 2008). It may be that this perspective needs to be better communicated to local residents? They would then gain a better understanding of the relationship between the state and local vision. Better still, local community consultation needs to feel it can actually influence outcomes.

In terms of urban consolidation and its implementation, Patrick Troy expresses, “It should be staged more sensitively. What we are ending up with is the uncontrolled development of the Metropolitan Strategy and I think that’s the poor local impact that we’re seeing.” If there is no integrated vision between both the State Government and local councils and communities, how will urban consolidation ever be a successful policy outcome socially?

This chapter has illustrated the perceptions of residents about social impacts of urban consolidation on the middle-ring suburbs of Lindfield East and Oatley West. Chapter 6 explores the way in which urban consolidation can be managed to address the effects of urban consolidation on existing residents’ sense of place.
This chapter explores present Government measures to manage urban consolidation and its social implications. This is expressed through the analysis of residents’ surveys and interviewee responses to current practice, and exploration of government initiatives. Chapter six then draws the findings of this thesis together to develop planning recommendations to assist local planners in handling sense of place and urban consolidation.

6.1 Perceptions of Current Practice

The process and management of urban consolidation is a complex issue to understand. This section of this chapter studies the perceptions of current practice of urban consolidation from the results of the qualitative research undertaken.

The Department of Planning has laid down the fundamental objectives of providing housing within the SMS 2005. Peter Hamilton supports the plan’s vision:

“It’s common all around the world where once cities get to a certain size then people become more interested in lifestyle choices and that’s what seems to be happening in Sydney at the moment as people are not prepared to live 1.5hrs away from work. More and more people are choosing to live in different household types…it’s about location and proximity to work, recreation and living standards…we are striving to achieve this.” (Interview Hamilton 2008).

Local councils have the majority of the responsibility as to how they meet the targets set as the strategy does not inform local councils exactly how it should be undertaken (Interview Hamilton 2008). Consequently, there is scope for interpretation and creative innovation. As each LGA is distinct, urban consolidation has been put into practice differently, reflecting local priorities and responses. Phillip Sansom expresses how the policy has been implemented in his ward area:
“We went through and plotted every block that was under and over 1,000 square metres, to demonstrate to the Department of Planning that there was still ability to provide an increased density that was sensitive to the environment and could justify increasing the density. Our Foreshore Scenic Protection Local Environmental Plan is really good because it’s helped protect a number of smaller blocks of land but still met a potential land increase in those areas. It’s a realistic way of increasing density at the same time, maintaining good planning principles and significantly protecting the natural environment of our LGA.” (Interview Sansom 2008).

There have been incidences where local councils have lost partial responsibility as to how urban consolidation is implemented. For example, Ku-ring-gai Council has shown opposition towards being proactive about the SMS 2005 requirements (Interview Hamilton 2008). As a result of the growing population and the need for more housing, the Minister of Planning has overtaken various sites that are located in close proximity to transport nodes in the LGA. One site is located in Lindfield East opposite the train station. Maureen Shelley explains:

“The Minister’s site will take six storey developments and normally you wouldn’t have six storey developments in what is supposed to be a village. Lindfield is classified in planning terms as a village, so it’s taking high building and increased density that I consider to be outside the requirements of the Metropolitan Strategy. Thus, we have an inherent contradiction as there is multi-storey development within a village.” (Interview Shelley 2008).

Lindfield is expected to increase its housing supply by 3,000 new dwellings, which is the largest increase to a centre in the Ku-ring-gai LGA (Interview Shelley 2008). Tony Recsei points out the importance of planning ahead:

“There’s going to be a hierarchy of centres – some are big and some are small. Lindfield is going to be a smaller centre. It is already a small centre which developed without government intervention, but by increasing densities around centres, that’s forcing things onto people that may not work out. Whereas if people voluntarily do it, they do it for good reasons and I don’t think it’s possible for government to predict – it’s too complicated to predict what’s going to grow where … it should grow naturally and we shouldn’t force it onto the population. Trying to plan events in extremely complex situations is
impossible…and it’s an extremely complex situation where people choose to live and where people choose to work.” (Interview Recsei 2008).

The Local Environment Plan is a statutory document which facilitates the implementation of the consolidation policy. However it is also perceived to have its defects as Phillip Sansom states “…to be honest I think the LEP is a blunt document whereby you only ‘tick’ boxes and then it’s done…it doesn’t look at the heart of the development in terms of how the development will affect the suburb socially, especially if there numerous developments being built at once.” (Interview Sansom 2008). Members of resident action groups also feel that the current controls are not doing their suburbs any justice. In particular, Anne Carroll explains that “We’re not getting place appropriate planning. We want to examine an area and see what type of development that would be suited to and plan that precinct down to the very last detail. But at the moment we’re not getting that.” (Interview Carroll 2008). Maureen Shelly further elaborated on the subject matter of statutory planning legislation at the local level:

“Unfortunately as I tell my residents constantly, what they’re talking about is common sense and what we’re dealing with is regulation and the two things are completely different, so they’ll say “it’s not safe to increase traffic in front of a primary school that already has a poor parking and access and this is only going to make it unsafe for our children. And I’ll go “YEP”. However the Minister when he re-zoned the land for higher density considered the traffic impacts so we can’t take traffic into account anymore because it’s out of our hands…out of our control and that’s what regulation is. It’s a pain.” (Interview Shelley 2008).

This highlights the misconceptions that residents and councils have towards the current process. Patrick Troy is also concerned the policy is based on accomplishing “number projections” rather than being founded on principles important to residents (Interview Troy 2008). Survey respondents had concerns relating to the process of urban consolidation, such as the community being despondent about planning as they do not trust the process to deliver outcomes. Also residents affirmed there are no options presented in terms of how developments could be placed and that there was very limited opportunity to engage in the process. Andrew Sweeney is particularly apprehensive about what happens to the small village centres of these suburbs:
“Residential lots along the periphery of the village centre are very easy to amalgamate. You can get four lots together and get 50 units on it…whereas it’s a lot harder with the existing commercial area…All the developers are going in and doing the easy stuff which is demolishing the old house on the periphery of the town centre and they’re not doing the hard stuff – not even I would do it as a developer because it does not work. So we’re going to have a double effect of creating all these new developments on the edge but nobody is going to do the heart. Government or Council won’t do the heart because it’s not considered to be their job. So we’ll get a couple of things like a significant amount of urban decay in the core, whereas around the perimeter will be renewed in my mind.” (Interview Sweeney 2008).

Despite all the views presented, residents from the surveys asserted that they were not against changing the built form. Ted Cooper endorses this by saying “I’ve heard people say the residents in Oatley West don’t accept change. That is absolute rubbish. People here do accept change; it’s just a matter of how much and how quickly it’s done and what the replacement is…if it’s better or worse. We’re not going to go along with stuff that is destroying the reasons why we all value this place…it’s why people support saving this suburb.” (Interview Cooper 2008). Anne Wagstaff believes in order to ensure proper implementation of urban consolidation, “we need some honesty and transparency from the Council and somebody that is working for the community and not just big business or their own interests.” (Interview Wagstaff 2008).

Stakeholders such as The Department of Planning, councils, developers and residents are the primary ‘influencers’ on implementation. They each have their own interests and they overlap and compete with each other (Interview Hamilton 2008). Various interviewees stated that during the implementation phase, competing interests are always highlighted and focussed upon. (Interview Hamilton, Cowley, Wagstaff, Gaitti 2008).

By concentrating on the aligned interests of each stakeholder, it is possible for all to share the benefits of a successful transformation of existing suburbs (Interview Hamilton 2008). Aligned interests which were analysed from the interviews are explained below in Table 6.1 Stakeholders Aligned Interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder involved:</th>
<th>Aligned Interests:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Planning (Source: Hamilton)</td>
<td>• Achievement of population and employment targets in existing urban areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interview 2008 | • More efficient use of transport and other infrastructure  
| Source: Sansom, Shelley, Interviews 2008 | • Places that achieve social wellbeing and reduce social problems  
| Council | • Achievement of SMS 2005 housing targets and revitalisation direction  
| Developers (Source: Gaitti Interview 2008) | • Residents that are happy with their living environment  
| Residents (Source: Surveys, Cowely, Wagstaff, Carroll, Cooper Interviews 2008) | • Efficient use of Council assets  
| | • Opportunities to invest in new projects  
| | • Increasing residential and commercial returns and market interest  
| | • New town centre that provides a new community focal point  
| | • A greater variety of retail, commercial and entertainment opportunities within walking distance  
| | • Civic spaces that serve as a ‘backyard’ for people living in higher densities  
| | • Improved transport, traffic and accessibility options  
| | • A greater choice of dwelling types and locations  
| | • Opportunities to work and live the local area  

These aligned interests highlight the social opportunities that can be put into practice within the urban consolidation policy, to enhance social liveability for residents.

### 6.2 Local Government and Social Issues

Councils around NSW are obligated to provide services to mitigate the social issues of its communities. This section describes the procedures which local government have embraced to enhance social liveability within their communities. Through the inspection of the policy documents of various local councils, current local government practice has been assessed.

#### 6.2.1 Local Government and Social Needs.

Chapter four illustrates that Ku-ring-gai and Hurstville City Councils are gradually increasing in population. Both these consent authorities have no specific policy relating to urban consolidation and sense of place. Also, there is no policy within NSW LGAs that specifically focuses on peoples’ sense of place. However a policy document exists whereby the social issues have been addressed within the Ku-ring-gai Council’s community plan and Hurstville Council’s social plan. This policy is mandated and has been prepared under the provisions of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 1999*. The role of this policy is to identify and meet the needs of its residents in service provision and emerging social issues.
Chapter 6 – Managing Urban Consolidation at the Local Level

by taking into account seven target groups, including: children, young people, women, older people, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Hurstville Council 2004, Ku-ring-gai Council 2006). This policy identifies the ethnic/cultural parameters of the LGA which is only one aspect that contributes to residents’ sense of place.

Ku-ring-gai Council has dedicated a section of its plan to the priorities it has for its community. This is as a result of generic issues arising from consultation with the community. The section also highlights their importance and “provides some direction and focus for Council and stakeholders in addressing broad based planning needs” (Ku-ring-gai Council 2006, p.32). Yet the priorities which have been listed such as completing a town centre plan for suburbs such as Lindfield by the end of 2006 have not occurred. This highlights the council’s lack of success whilst aiming to achieve some of their objectives.

Despite all the actions and responses that are addressed to cater for the community’s needs, the policy from both Councils fails to take into consideration the development and maintenance of a sense of place. Instead focus has been placed on issues such as mobility and accessibility, community facilities, information access and communication and consultation (Ku-ring-gai Council 2006). Through their inability to address urban consolidation or a sense of place within the context of social planning, Ku-ring-gai and Hurstville Councils lack the scope and perhaps expertise to effectively manage the issue.

6.2.2 Place Management

Individual councils around the Sydney Metropolitan Area have implemented an initiative in order to enhance the socio-cultural aspects of their community by means of Place Management. The concept was originally established by Parramatta Council called Community Capacity Building and is a “new model for Local Government in New South Wales” (Parramatta Council 2006). Community Capacity Building focuses particularly on place, which it identifies as people who work, live, or socialise in a particular neighbourhood or geographic location. The Council have also recognised place may be centred around something physical or a community asset or issue (Parramatta Council 2006). The logic that is behind this concept is that it “enables long term community-driven social change, rather than short term ‘quick fixes’.” (Parramatta Council 2006).

In order to implement the concept, the council has delegated three ‘Community Place Development Officers’ to cover the North-Western, North-Eastern and Southern areas of the
LGA (Parramatta Council 2006). These officers work in partnership with residents and other stakeholders to identify key local issues, community assets and provide the social and community development skills needed. There are also two ‘Community Capacity Building Officers’ who are employed to recognise community strengths across the entire LGA (Parramatta Council 2006). A socially functional society will enhance and preserve a sense of place. Parramatta Council has identified that consulting with the community helps society to function properly.

### 6.2.3 Community Consultation

For the purposes of this thesis and the results of the qualitative research, community consultation is considered to be a significant process to assist in implementing urban consolidation. Residents’ suggestions can aid in preserving the sense of place within an existing suburb as they experience it on a daily basis. Below are two examples of how consulting with the community can be an effective and efficient process.

Kiama Council is located 90 minutes drive south of Sydney and, like Lindfield East and Oatley West, is currently in the process of renovating its town centre. In order to complete the research of what was expected, a Charrette process was adopted by council as it was seen as a “time and cost-effective, stakeholder-collaborative, and design-based process for resolving complex and usually controversial urban projects” (Kiama Council 2002, p. 2). A consultant team was hired by the Council, made up of urban designers, architects, economists, traffic engineers, feasibility analysts and planners. Kiama Council described the challenges and opportunities for the town centre in a report. The consultant team then proposed initiatives to strengthen Kiama’s town centre along with possible impediments. A key feature of this process was the way in which the community was included in the process.

The Charrette was regarded as succeeding in being able to maximise the opportunity for community consultation and their involvement in the preparation of place-based plans (Kiama Council 2002). Hundreds of residents participated and actively suggested ideas and solutions to achieve the objectives of the Charrette Process. Residents contributed to an integrated process incorporating environmental, economic and social issues at all levels from architecture to the broader urban structure. As discussed in Chapter three, residents are active shapers of their environment and sense of place and therefore their perceptions play an important role in preserving the socio-cultural elements of the area whilst renewing it. The
outcomes produced have been reviewed by the Council who will determine the most appropriate outcomes and recommendations.

Another representation of effective and efficient community consultation occurred for the Edmonton Town Centre which is located within Cairns Regional Council in North Queensland. This council is currently experiencing one of the fastest growing population rates in Australia, with more than 3.5 per cent annual growth. This is regarded as being well above the State and National average (Cairns Council 2008).

Cairns Regional Council has determined that the Edmonton Town Centre will be master-planned. It is envisaged that the area will encompass residential dwellings, shops, offices, restaurants, dining and entertainment services and facilities and be planned to integrate land uses with transport networks, with a particular focus on public transport opportunities (Cairns Council 2008). In order to get the community actively engaged in the decision-making process, Enquiry-by-Design workshops have been organised. This is a “non-binding, collaborative and interactive process”, which involves many stakeholders (including residents) to “establish principles and develop plans” for the future development of the precinct (Cairns Council 2007, p.7).

The Enquiry-by-Design process provides an opportunity for an interactive forum to examine and debate ideas. Although the outcomes are not substituted for the normal processes of statutory approvals and development implementation, it provides a framework for resident involvement, resulting in them having a “greater sense of understanding and ownership of the final outcomes.” (Cairns Council 2007, p.7). This inevitably enhances sense of place and identity for existing residents.

Parramatta, Kiama and Cairns Council have all followed strategies to maximise input from residents to the political process. They are processes that could easily be adopted in all councils within NSW to ensure one aspect, sense of place, is preserved.

6.3 Government Initiatives

Across Sydney Metropolitan Area, planning at the local and state government level has been increasingly focussed on looking after the socio-cultural aspects of suburbs (Interview Hamilton, Sansom 2008). This section of this thesis seeks to investigate the initiatives which
have been created by local and state government relating to the management of urban consolidation and sense of place.

6.3.1 Local Government Level

The primary initiative is the Integrated Planning and Reporting Model devised by the NSW Department of Local Government (DLG). The model arose for several reasons, including growing expectations of local government; the NSW Local Government Reform Program announced in 2003; alterations to council’s planning and operating environment; and more planning innovation so councils are better equipped to achieve the aims within the model.

The DLG completed studies that indicated that a majority of local councils fall short in planning beyond three years, or only budget for one year (DLG 2006). This raises the question of short term strategic forecasts and planning; how successful will strategic planning ever be if it fails to have long term projections? Additionally, it was acknowledged that as a result of the complexity of local planning procedures and instruments, numerous councils are finding strategic planning to be problematic. The DLG recognised the existing structure as being disjointed and a contributing aspect for local councils’ failure for future planning and originality (DLG 2006). It was also recognised that the social and community plans were often not used to inform planning and there is a lack of good working relationships with other agencies that are responsible for actions identified in councils’ plans. (DLG 2006).

The Integrated Planning and Reporting model encompass a variety of aims including improving the integration of statutory planning and reporting by councils as required by the Local Government Act and the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act; strengthening councils strategic focus; encouraging sustainability planning; and ensuring the Local Government Act and the Department of Planning’s Guidelines support a strategic and integrated approach to planning and reporting by councils.

Two discussion papers were released in 2006/2007 called “Planning a Sustainable Future” and “Asset Management Planning for NSW Local Government”. These papers include long term strategic planning and management of community assets (DLG 2006). These have assisted the development of the Integrated Planning and Reporting model, which has been formulated along with ample consultation to meet the challenges of greater strategic focus that is long term and proactive; greater flexibility which focuses on that outcomes and not the process; and integrating planning for better decision making. (DLG 2006).
Within the integrated framework of this proposed model, a significant theme in the strategic plan is focusing on building sustainable communities. This plan would have a minimum ten year time frame, which would roll forward with each newly elected council. It would state the community’s main priorities and aspirations for the future and the long term objectives for achieving them. It also has to be based on sustainability principles to adequately address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership considerations (DLG 2006). Specifically, it must also reflect the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights. In addition it must give due regard to relevant state, regional, and catchment plans and strategies and be developed in consultation with the community. In order to implement these requirements, the DLG have not prescribed how council is required to do this in an attempt to provide greater flexibility.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Model has not yet been adopted and changes to relevant legislation are still required for its implementation. However they envisage the model to be implemented during the 2008 to 2012 period. If instigated, this strategy would place greater importance on developing and maintaining sense of place within communities whilst urban consolidation is being implemented.

6.3.2 State Government Level

At the State level there is limited information and services available to help communities maintain and preserve their sense of place. However a website source exists and is an initiative originally founded by the NSW Premier’s Department called ‘communitybuilders.nsw’. The Department of Community Services Communities Division is now responsible for managing the site. It aims to help local communities share ideas on how to enhance and strengthen their community (NSW Government 2005). The site was developed as a response to the desire expressed by communities to access information about what others are doing to make their communities “safer, healthier, inclusive, and more vibrant and enterprising” (NSW Government 2005). It assists in promoting awareness of the importance of maintaining sense of place through community enrichment.

The ‘communitybuilders.nsw’ website offers the opportunity for different government departments and community groups to come together as users and contributors (NSW Government 2005). This illustrates that the site has been established as a means to position the State Government as an information facilitator rather than just a sole provider of service. Another innovative concept is the reliance on the Online Strategy of the NSW Government...
to extend the access to information technology to community users. The site also gives effect to the strategy by promoting an awareness of the benefits of the web for finding information on community building and for communication with other community builders.

With the growing realisation of the potential impacts of urban consolidation and its impact on a sense of place, one would assume there to be a rising number of local and state government initiatives poised to address these impacts. This thesis has addressed the issue by developing the following planning recommendations in the next section.

6.4 Recommendations

It is evident from the investigation above that specific focus has not been placed on sense of place as a result of urban consolidation. The recommendations that follow have been formed upon initiatives previously mentioned, in conjunction with the concerns raised by relevant stakeholders earlier in this chapter.

6.4.1 Community Policy

The DLG’s Integrated Planning Model is regarded as valid and would inevitably steer councils to think long-term about their area. Despite the abolition of a community/social plan requirement from local government, this thesis recommends that a Community Policy be mandatory for all councils within the Sydney Metropolitan Region. This Community Policy would advocate community empowerment through consultation and engagement of planning processes. Anne Wagstaff asserts “we want more involvement and influence in what occurs to our suburb. Local Government could do so much more if they just took into account what we had to say…it would be a much nicer place that reflects the people who live here.” (Interview Wagstaff 2008). Therefore the development of the policy would include consulting the existing residents in order to identify needs facing their community and the actions that would best resolve those needs. Previously, Councils have had to formulate their own community/social plan. However, the intent of this policy is to give ‘power to the people’ by allowing them to implement the objectives themselves whilst council monitors the progress. This ensures that a growing relationship can form between council and existing residents as they work in unity to maintain a sense of place. Lennon, in her article also suggests a better outcome “By harnessing the requirements and expectations of current residents into tangible outcomes, councils can help to articulate the community’s value proposition and what it should be striving for as a place to be.” (Lennon 2008, p.10).
6.4.2 Community Based Planning Process

Apart from the Integrated Planning Model which would enforce the community strategy, there is also another approach which could be adopted by councils to enhance and maintain sense of place and community in the face of urban consolidation. A ‘Community Based Planning Process’ would effectively provide all stakeholders involved with a long-term strategic vision. The implementation of urban consolidation would be done sensitively to mitigate its effects on existing residents’ sense of place.

This process essentially would involve the engagement of residents by, for example, having a community representative constantly on the planning panel. It would also entail consulting existing residents by means of the Charrette or Enquiry-By-Design processes. It is fundamental that residents’ perspectives and suggestions are heard because “we think that our input would help preserve a piece of our identity that has evolved from our suburb” (Interview Cooper 2008). A vision would result from the consultation process in which a development strategy that includes various feasibility and market assessments and studies would form. This strategy would convey a variety of options in which the vision could be delivered most resourcefully. The council would then create a ‘staging plan’ in order to control the construction of increased developments. Residents feel that “it’s just happening too quickly…it almost feels like it’s not my home anymore because I don’t recognise places as much” (Interview Carroll 2008).

Once these initial phases are completed, council can come to an agreed project brief in which different options are presented. These options encompass where these buildings will be placed and how it will be integrated within the existing built environment. The response from the surveys indicate that residents feel they don’t have a choice in what happens and believe a suitable choice should be made based upon the needs of their community. Hence, each option will be assessed according to the results of the consultation process and key advice from other external representatives. As a result of this process a master plan document would be produced. This forms the foundation upon which urban planners can develop a development control plan for the site. There are many beneficial outcomes that could result from this process which are illustrated further in figure 6.1 Alternative Community Based Planning Process below:
OUTCOME:

- Residents feel they have actively engaged in contributing to the development of their suburb whilst highlighting important elements they want preserved that contribute to their sense of place and community.

- Master plan that is multidimensional addressing the key issues that are important to the community.

- Importantly it has the buy in and ownership of the community.

- It is a real master plan covering social, environmental, cultural and economic outcomes → 4 dimensional

- Management structure for staging and funding. Transition of transformation is sensitively controlled.

Figure 6.1 - Alternative Community Based Planning Process

Agree Project Brief

- Systematic options
- Assessment Against criteria
- Preferred scheme
- Master plan Document
- Urban planning Development Control Plan

Engagement Process not one way communication

Consultation to understand and inform the options: Enquiry By Design Charrette Process

Capturing Vision: Shared prioritised values and common ground. Create core values reference point and test point.


Staging plan and authority intervention: Key infrastructure investment.

Outcome

Source: Author 2008
6.4.3 Other Recommendations

Other recommendations relate to local planners and providing opportunities for improving and sustaining their knowledge of social planning. This will ensure that they are better prepared in enhancing sense of place as a result of urban consolidation. Parramatta Council in its Community Capacity Building model for example has demonstrated that there is a need for planners to get involved in community in which they work. Thus it is suggested that planners take a more active role engaging themselves with community groups. This may produce a variety of advantages such as building a greater relationship between both planners and residents of the community.

The closing recommendation lies within planning education. More specifically, an increased amount of value should be placed on social planning. Student planners and graduated planners need to be more mindful of social issues and the significance of social planning. To accomplish this outcome, supplementary social planning modules should be supplied within university planning degrees. In terms of keeping up-to-date with evolving social issues, courses (along with existing courses offered) should also be made available to local planners.

This thesis acknowledges the various problems linked with the implementation of the recommendations presented. Whilst there is no scope to address any of these, the recommendation are considered to be valid and feasible planning solutions to support local planners in the management of a sense of place as a result of urban consolidation.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has examined the viewpoints of current practice of urban consolidation. Government policies and initiatives have also been reviewed, with particular attention to how sense of place can be enhanced. Chapter six has also argued that limited focus has been placed urban consolidation’s impact on sense of place and how to manage it. This chapter has provided applicable recommendations to facilitate planners to proactively attend to the topic of concern.
The final chapter of this thesis synthesises the previous six chapters in terms of relevant research, findings and recommendations. Chapter seven addresses how the original research statement and objectives of the thesis have been met. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research based upon findings in this study.

This thesis has examined urban consolidation and its impact on sense of place. One of the main drivers for the introduction of urban consolidation has been the actual as well as projected population growth of Sydney (SMS 2005). This in conjunction with land shortage, has created intended to achieve the more efficient use of available land whilst taking into account economic, environmental and social factors. This thesis has focussed upon the social dimension of planning.

Attempts have been made to consolidate Sydney’s population since the 1980s. The current planning initiative for urban consolidation is the SMS 2005, which presents housing projections to the year 2031. It points to continuing population growth with its processes upon available land. This thesis has identified Transit-Oriented Development as a specific type of urban consolidation process, as the Department of Planning is specifically encouraging development around transport nodes.

Apart from the economic and environmental impacts, this thesis has also determined that urban consolidation is impacting on residential communities in particular, their perception of urban consolidation and its impact on their view of place. The extent of these perceptual issues is not thoroughly acknowledged and this thesis has endeavoured to reveal them.

The character of suburban environments is changing due to urban consolidation. This thesis has identified the significance of cultural elements in a suburb that enhance sense of place.
and contribute to sense of community, seemingly endangered by urban consolidation and the related planning process. It recognises the emotional relationships that are established through existing cultural elements and how they affect residents’ sense of belonging. Urban consolidation is a rapid catalyst for change which may disturb the existing built form and thus residents’ connection with place. Consequently the social stability within the suburb may decrease if urban consolidation is not implemented sensitively.

It has been recognised the impact of urban consolidation is place and culture specific (Interview Troy 2008). This thesis has tested this specifically with two middle-ring suburbs located in the northern and southern sectors of Sydney. Both suburbs, namely Lindfield East and Oatley West, share similar characteristics. They are predominantly low-density but this traditional character is now threatened by the more intense built form of urban consolidation. Whilst this thesis is grounded in historical and current literature and data, particular emphasis has been placed upon the fieldwork undertaken in both suburbs. Qualitative methods, via in-depth interviews of various stakeholders effected by urban consolidation, was the predominant research technique employed. To a lesser extent quantitative methods, via the completion of surveys, represents the views of existing residents in these middle-ring suburbs.

An audit was also completed illustrating what type of urban consolidation developments exist in each suburb. This was supported by observational photographs provided the researcher of this thesis and resident action groups, such as Friends Of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc. The primary and secondary sources employed provided a human perspective to urban consolidation research that is lacking in current literature. Key representatives and residents’ comments were also utilised to develop the recommendations presented within this thesis.

As indicated within the introduction, the aim of this thesis was to address the following research statement:

**The social consequences of urban consolidation have largely been overlooked by planners and politicians. Residents perceive that urban consolidation is diminishing their sense of place. A planning framework needs to be established which can address this situation in order to foster and preserve the sense of**
community that exists in these areas, while continuing to meet the broader environmental and economic objectives of urban consolidation.

In order to consider the above research statement, it was necessary to address the following research questions:

- Does Sydney’s urban consolidation policy include a social dimension that values residents’ identification with their existing sense of place?
- What is the value or significance to urban planning of existing residents’ identification with their sense of place?
- Is this sense of place identification a meaningful construct for urban consolidation planning?
- What evidence is there that a sense of place has influenced urban consolidation planning within middle-ring suburbs?
- How can planners utilise the outcomes of this study in future planning activity within the urban consolidation policy?

The following summation confirms the research and findings of this thesis.

**Urban Consolidation**

Chapter two has identified that the urban consolidation policy is currently embedded within the SMS 2005. Urban consolidation is a response to the urban dynamic explained in Chapter one which is driven by population growth. This strategy has a vision for 2031 in which 190,000 new dwellings are to be found in the existing urban fabric (Bunker et al 2005).

This provision of housing in this policy through TOD, has currently undermined the social context in which this housing is delivered. This thesis has identified that the social issues within this policy have not been given precedence like the economic and environmental implications. In particular, identification, maintenance and enhancement of sense of place have not been given much consideration. The urban consolidation policy has blended the social issues within each chapter, which can be seen as devaluing the importance of social planning.

Planners need to anticipate and recognise the socio-political factors which are at work in local communities to nurture the existing sense of place, as well as foster acceptance and adaptation to the new. Urban consolidation must address this potential negative outcome by a more sensitive and tuned response to the existing communities sense of place.
Sense of Place

Chapter three investigated the quality of life and the existing characteristics of middle-ring suburbs. It has emphasised how suburban living has grown to become a way of life for many Sydneysiders. Each suburb contains its cultural landmarks and heritage which make up its history. These socio-cultural elements of the suburb form the foundation whereby some social matters of engagement are formed. This enhances residents’ the sense of community and belonging to the suburb. This thesis has also identified that emotional relationships with place fosters an environment for social support, which promotes community development. It is important that sense of community is enhanced by maintaining sense of place.

Planners need to understand what ‘place’ means to existing residents. This will ensure future plans do not deteriorate residents’ relationship that they have with the existing built form. Planners need to recognise the significance of sense of place towards significantly contributing towards the enhancement of local communities. Urban consolidation has the opportunity to enhance and revitalise communities’ sense of place, as this is what is expected of the SMS 2005.

Perceptions of Sense of Place

Chapter four and five presented the case studies selected to ascertain how sense of place is affected by urban consolidated developments. The two middle-ring suburbs of Lindfield East and Oatley West contain wide streetscapes and predominantly single dwelling houses. Urban consolidation in the form of villas, townhouses and units has changed the existing built form character. It has been identified that residents surveyed have established personal and community ties with the existing character of their suburb. Residents’ fondness for their suburban environment has assisted in establishing and maintaining their sense of place.

The urban consolidated developments are perceived as a threat to residents’ sense of place. This is due to the abrupt change to the built environment, which is altering the socio-cultural aspects of the suburbs at a fast rate. Interview and survey data signals residents feel they can no longer identify themselves with the increased density developments which are visually different and almost alien to the landscape.

Three recurring issues arose within the analysis of the interviews and surveys, namely a) the need for greater community consultation, b) the introduction of iconic commercial activity, and c) the metropolitan wide vision versus local vision. This chapter demonstrated that if not managed appropriately, urban consolidation will have profound impacts upon sense of place.
in established suburbs. In addition, the investigation of sense of place revealed that there is potential for urban consolidation to enhance sense of place in existing communities, should local government adopt appropriate planning principles, processes and policies which emphasises consultation. This is also a management issue which will have its own implications.

**Managing Urban Consolidation Locally**

Chapter six explored the current practice of urban consolidation through the viewpoints of the interviewees and residents surveyed. The analysis, together with the results, demonstrate that there are enormous problems, to the extent that social planning is either ineffective, missing, inchoate or perverted by stakeholder pressure and their capacity to subvert planning principles.

This chapter was also dedicated to providing a set of recommendations relating to managing urban consolidation and its impact on sense of place. The planning recommendations provided were based upon research compiled and analysed within this thesis, including qualitative interviews and to a lesser extent quantitative surveys. To achieve a planning environment in which the social implications of urban consolidation can be managed, this chapter identified urban consolidation as a state issue requiring cross-jurisdictional attention. As such there needs to be greater collaboration between state and local government to make sure the targets set are feasible and sustainable economically, environmentally and socially. In particular, it is important that changes to planning legislation be adopted mandating that councils develop community policies and community based development control plans in an attempt to develop and maintain sense of place within local communities. This will avoid the criticism that state wide goals subvert local aspirations.

There has been significant research completed on the economic and environmental benefits or weaknesses of urban consolidation. However, there has been little academic study placed on its social implications, more specifically, its impact on of sense of place. As such numerous aspects of the topic still warrant further investigation:

- Other than this thesis, there is limited research specifically addressing the impact of urban consolidation on a sense of place. It is believed that impact of increased density developments upon a sense of place in existing middle-ring suburbs around the Sydney Metropolitan Region, merits further investigation. Furthermore studies assessing a sense
of place through detailed quantitative methods could assist in improving the understanding of a sense of place as a result of urban consolidation.

- The existing sense of place studied within the 600 metre radius of the train station also affects residents outside the radius boundary. These residents are also still apart of the suburb. How is their sense if place affected by the urban consolidation being implemented? Further qualitative research would help investigate this.

- This thesis specifically focussed on the existing residents’ perspectives of urban consolidation. It is suggested that further qualitative research is also required in relation to the new residents who are moving into the increased density developments. Investigating how they feel about the sense of place in the suburb would increase understanding about the topic this thesis discusses.

- Issues such as the type of commercial activity that urban consolidation attracts, and the SMS 2005 vision compared to the vision of the local community were disclosed. Whilst these issues were briefly discussed within this thesis, it is recognised that they warrant specific focus if local planners wish to effectively manage the maintenance of a sense of place in local established suburbs.

- Further exploration is needed on how socio-cultural elements within a suburb are identified and form some of the fundamentals upon which sense of place is maintained.

It is normal for planning to be been focussed upon land use and the built environment. However, it is people who make a community and it is on these people that local planners should focus more attention. Every suburb has a sense of place. Planners must recognise that a sense of place in suburbs is a significant contributor to the functioning of that area. Every endeavour should be made to foster and enhance sense of place within the communities, as well as focussing on the broader economic and environmental implications of urban consolidation. This thesis has identified that established middle-ring suburbs with development in close proximity to transport nodes are particularly vulnerable to declining levels of sense of place as a result of urban consolidation. As urban consolidation is further implemented, it is essential that planners adopt planning strategies which give due weight to social outcomes of the changes they design.
Appendix 1.

Further in-depth interview questions.
The following includes the questions asked to the relevant stakeholders. Due to scope limitations, not all the questions have been included. Furthermore, these questions were the ones that I prepared, but the interviewees’ responses caused me to ask more which are not listed below.

**Local Developer Questions:**
- Please describe the target market for medium-high density developments.
- What are the lifestyle patterns of people who live in villas, townhouses and flats, compared to people who live in single dwellings?
- What are the best attributes of urban consolidation?
- What are the worst attributes of urban consolidation?
- Is there anyway to get a balance between the two?
- How do you go about choosing places that would be suitable for increased density developments?
- Why have you chosen to build increased density development(s) in this suburb?
- What do you think about Council’s planning controls in this area? Please Explain.
- Can you explain what design factors you incorporate into these developments to help make them integrate with the existing character of this suburb?
- Is there any type of community consultation that occurs when these types of developments are proposed?
- What measures do you think could be implemented to ameliorate the change in sense of place as a result of urban consolidation?

**Councillor and Department of Planning Questions:**
- When I say Lindfield East/Oatley West, what do you think of?
- What is happening to the built environment in this suburb?
- Why has the government pursued policies aimed at increasing residential housing densities?
- As a Councillor, what are your perspectives of this suburb and the urban consolidation that is occurring in the suburb?
- How do you go about choosing places that would be suitable for increased density developments?
- What is your opinion of the relationships between the residents of this suburb and these new developments? Please Explain.
- How important do you think social interaction is within communities?
- What planning measures do you think are fundamental in regards to urban consolidation when you want to maintain and enhance sense if place?
- Is there any type of community consultation that occurs? How constructive do you find this?
- What do you think about the objectives of urban consolidation as a state wide vision versus local community vision and objectives?
- What is your vision for this suburb?

**Resident Action Group (Friends of Lindfield, Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment, Friends of Oatley, Oatley Residents Association) Questions:**
- How long have you lived in this suburb?
- When I say Lindfield East/Oatley West, what do you think of?
- What is the purpose and role of your resident action group?
- What do you feel are the positive aspects of this suburb?
- What do you feel are the negative aspects of this suburb?
- How do you feel about the following in your suburb?
  - Crime
- Pollution
- Noise
- Public transport
- Public utilities
- Traffic

- What is community for you?
- Do you feel a strong sense of place and belonging within the community of this suburb? Can you please elaborate as to why/why not you feel/do not feel this sense of place?
- What are your thoughts about the increased density developments that have been built in your suburb?
- Are there any issues that you can identify with these developments? Please Explain.
- In your opinion, how have the new residents that have moved into these developments integrated with the exiting resident of this suburb?
- What do you think about community consultation?
- What is your vision for this area?

**Social Researchers and Tony Recsei Questions:**

- What constitutes a socially functioning community?
- How do you think sense of place forms?
- What will happen if a suburb does not function socially?
- Could you please tell me the benefits of living in a suburb that has a sense of place?
- Are there any disadvantages to living in a suburb which has a sense of place?
- What kind of people do you think like living in an area with a sense of place?
- How important do you think it is to preserve sense of place in each suburb?
- Do you think that population impacts of the social make-up of a suburb?
- How important is social interaction within communities?
- What do you think about social capital in communities? Please Explain.
- What are your views on urban consolidation and sense of place?
- Are there any implications for social stability and cohesion as a result of urban consolidation? Please Explain.
- Do you think there is a balance between the goals of the metropolitan strategy and the goals of the community in Sydney? Please Explain.
- What social issues should be considered in regards to urban consolidation?
- What do you think should be done to ensure that sense of place is maintained in each suburb?
- How can different professions work together to ensure that sense of place is maintained as a result of urban consolidation? Please Explain.
Appendix 2.

Aerial view of dwelling surveys in Lindfield East and Oatley West.
Appendix 3.

Survey prepared for existing residents in the case study area
Survey to residents

Project Title:
Urban Consolidation – Its impact on sense of place.

My name is Christina Heather and I am a student enrolled in an undergraduate Town Planning degree at the University of New South Wales. I am carrying out a survey research for the purpose of my final thesis project about community and changing suburbs.

I would like to ask you some questions about this. It should not take long. I can assure you that the information collected is confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes. Your name will not be recorded on this survey and you will not be associated with the results in any way.

i. How long have you lived in this suburb?

0-2 years  3-6 years  7-10 years  10+ years

ii. Do you feel there is a sense of community in your area?

YES       NO

Why is this for you?________________________________________________________

iii. Do you think sense of community is:

Strong    Medium    Low?

iv. How do you feel about the social services and organisations that are provided to you in your suburb?

Completely satisfied  (1)  (2)  (3)  (4)  (5)  (6)  Completely dissatisfied
v. Are you an active member in any local community groups or organisations?

Little    Some    Significant

vi. What do you feel is the predominant style of development in your suburb at present?

Low Density    Medium Density    High Density

Do you like it?

YES    NO

vii. Do you feel that urban consolidation (increasing densities via townhouses, villas and flats) is good for your community?

YES    NO    DON’T KNOW

viii. Have you built a relationship with the people who live in higher density developments?

YES    NO

ix. Do you feel the change in built form is changing the sense of community in your area?

YES    NO

If yes, how:_________________________________________________________

x. How do you rate your community as a result of these new urban consolidation developments?

a) Friendly    (1)    (2)    (3)    (4)    (5)    Unfriendly
b) Attractive   (1)    (2)    (3)    (4)    (5)    Unattractive
c) Low crime rate (1)    (2)    (3)    (4)    (5)    High crime rate
d) Uncrowded    (1)    (2)    (3)    (4)    (5)    Crowded
xi. Do you think your local community should have more involvement in what developments occur in your suburb?

YES  
NO

If yes, why?____________________________________________________

xii. Overall how do you rate success of maintaining and preserving the sense of community in this suburb whilst introducing increased density developments in the future?

[ ] Fantastic
[ ] Good
[ ] Modest
[ ] Don’t like it, or
[ ] Dreadful idea

xiii. Do you think that the vision for a more sustainable Sydney reflects the vision of the community at the local level?

YES  
NO

Why/Why not?____________________________________________________

xiv. Do you think that medium-high density contributes to reducing the impact of climate change?

YES  
NO

Why/Why not?____________________________________________________

xv. Anything else you would like to say concerning urban consolidation and community?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________
Appendix 4.

UNSW FBE ethics approval documentation.
5th July 2008

Application No: 85037
Project Title: For better or worse: The social implications of urban consolidation.

Attention: Christina Heather
Student Number: 3132447

Dear Christina,

Thank you for your application requesting approval to conduct research involving humans. The Panel has evaluated your application and upon their recommendation, has attached the decision below.

Please be aware that approval is for a period of twelve months from the date of this letter, unless otherwise stated below.

All further information/documentation (if any) is to be submitted to FBE HREAP via Student Centre. Please submit originals plus four copies. Email submission will not be recognised.

**Decision**

Approved with conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items that must be completed before research can commence:</th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is unclear who is being surveyed/interviewed, and/or how they will be selected or approached. Please forward this onto the HREA Panel to complete your file.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will need to prepare or modify your Project Information Statement to include the necessary information. Please make sure it includes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The UNSW Letterhead, with affiliation to the Faculty of the Built Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assurance of voluntary participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assurance of confidentiality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Your contact details (e-mail address and/or mobile phone number only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Your Supervisor's contact details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Missing Revocation statement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The phrase, &quot;Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (Tel: 9385 4234, Fax: 9385 6648, Email: <a href="mailto:ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au">ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au</a>)&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will need to obtain a letter of support from the organisation's management, especially when you intend to interview employees. This letter of support must conform with Form 6. Please forward all letters to HREAP to complete your file.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will need to complete a FBE Fieldwork Application, and obtain approval to carry out your fieldwork. This must be obtained prior to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your application is approved; however, there are certain things you must do, before you may conduct your research. Please see below for details, and your responses will assist us in completing your file.
physically conducting your research.

Advisory comments:

1. According to your time schedule, your research has already been done, or partially been done. Since we cannot grant approval retrospectively, please check the validity of the timing stated on your application.

2. Should you or your participants be making photographic, video or audio recordings that include people, please be aware that:
   - Recordings in public places do not generally require the permission of the people who are in those public places. However, this will depend upon the sensitivity of the subject matter and the situation.
   - If you will be specifically identifying any person in photos or videos which you intend to publish, you will require their signed consent.
   Photographs or videos of identifiable people on private property should not be made without their consent, even when taken from public property.

Approval is granted to the applicant for a twelve month period from the date of this letter, on condition that:
   - The applicant fully understands, and agrees to ensure, that all questions put in questionnaires, interviews, and surveys, must strictly comply with the protocols, policies and rules of UNSW in relation to research data collection and must meet the overriding requirement of UNSW for 'minimal ethical impact' in research (the applicant is referred to: http://www.ro.unsw.edu.au/ethics/human/minimal_ethical_impact.shtml); and
   - When required or applicable, Letters of Support (conforming to Form 6) will be obtained with a copy of each letter kept by the Course Authority to be made available to the HREAP when requested.

Any approval to conduct research given to the applicant Researcher is done so on the condition that the applicant Researcher is at the date of approval: (a) a Student undertaking an approved course of study in the FBE; or (b) a member of Academic Staff in the FBE. If, at any time subsequent to the date of approval and prior to completion of the research project the applicant Researcher ceases to be either of (a) and (b) above, then any prior approval given to the applicant Researcher to conduct will be deemed to be revoked forthwith. The applicant Researcher must inform the FBE HREA Panel immediately upon any change, or possible change, to the applicant’s status that may affect any prior approval given by the Panel to the applicant Researcher to conduct research.

Evaluation Authority:

Michael Brand (Convener)
FBE HREA Panel

Copy to: Susan Thompson, Supervisor

Approving Authority:

Jim Plume
Head of School
Faculty of the Built Environment
**Bibliography.**


Casey, E.S. 1993. *Getting back into place: Toward a renewed understanding of the place-world*, Indiana University Press, USA.


Department of Local Government. 2006. Department of Local Government, viewed 13th September 2008. [http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/Scripts/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getpdfhits&DocId=1584&Index=C%3a%5cdtSearch%5cUser Data%5cAllDocuments&HitCount=22&hits=5e4+5e5+6be+6bf+1c82+1c83+208c+208d+2135+2136+22ba+22bb+230c+230d+2331+2332+235a+235b+2367+2368+2378+2379+&.pdf](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/Scripts/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getpdfhits&DocId=1584&Index=C%3a%5cdtSearch%5cUser Data%5cAllDocuments&HitCount=22&hits=5e4+5e5+6be+6bf+1c82+1c83+208c+208d+2135+2136+22ba+22bb+230c+230d+2331+2332+235a+235b+2367+2368+2378+2379+&.pdf).


Kennedy, B. Sydney and suburbs: A history and description, AH & AW Reed Pty Ltd, New South Wales.


Lennon, S. 2008. ‘How councils can make a difference in economic development by nurturing the preconditions for a prosperous community’, Australian Planner, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 8-11.


Wickens, B. 2005. ‘Oatley has the lot’, *The St. George Leader*, 6 October, p. 19.
The University of New South Wales
Faculty of the Built Environment
Planning and Urban Development Program

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

Course: PLAN 4132 - Thesis Project

By signing this Cover Sheet I certify:

1. that this assessment item is my own work, except where acknowledged, and has not been submitted for academic credit elsewhere, and acknowledge that the assessor of this item may, for the purpose of assessing this item:
   • reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or,
   • communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the assessment item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking);

2. that I have read and understood the University rules in respect of Student Academic Misconduct;

3. that I have not received assistance from anyone in the research, preparation or presentation of this assessment item, other than assistance provided or approved by the lecturers/tutors for this course; and

4. that I have not knowingly breached copyright or other intellectual property rights of another party in the research, preparation or presentation of this assessment item.

☐ INDIVIDUAL STUDENT:
Student number: 23132447 Student name: Christina Heather Student signature: Heather Date: 7/11/08

☐ GROUP SUBMISSION: (each student in the group must sign below)
Student number: Student name: Student signature: Date:
Student number: Student name: Student signature: Date:
Student number: Student name: Student signature: Date:
Student number: Student name: Student signature: Date:
Student number: Student name: Student signature: Date: