Hordern Park, Palm Beach

Reserve Number: 0016
Street Address: Adjacent to 38 Florida Rd, Palm Beach

1. Category & Description

1.1 Location and Description

Hordern Park is located at the southern end of Cabbage Tree Boat Harbour, Palm Beach and occupies 0.68ha. Boundaries are defined by Ocean Road, which separates the Reserve from the beach, Florida Road and residential properties. There is a small developed area with a formed path which extends to Florida Road.

1.2 Land Tenure and Property Description

The Reserve is owned by Council, being described as Lot 2 in FP 938890 (also known as Part Portion 18 in DP 8427. The land is zoned 6(a) Open Space - Existing Recreation A.

1.3 Category of Land

The Reserve is community land under the Local Government Act 1993. It is categorised as a natural area and further categorised as bushland and watercourse. It meets the definition of urban bushland described in State Environmental Planning Policy No 19 - Bushland in Urban Areas.

2.0 Natural and Cultural Heritage

2.1 Topography, Geology and Soils

Hordern Park extends from mid slope to the footslopes above the coastal dune system along a creekline. The gully sideslopes become longer and steeper initially then the footslope dominates the gradient. The soils of the initially gentle undulating landform are the deep sandy podsols of the Tuggerah soil landscape, which present an extreme erosion hazard if disturbed.

The geology of the colluvial footslope is the Newport Formation shales and sandstones of the Narrabeen Group. The fine-grained sediments form yellow podsols on sandstone and brown, red and gleyed podsols on shale.

These soils have been mapped as the Watagan soil landscape and present a severe erosion hazard if disturbed, whilst the slopes are prone to mass movement.

2.2 Hydrology

The Reserve is in the lower end of the catchment and is the last point prior to the beach and discharge into the ocean. There is a creekline running through the Reserve, receiving runoff from the catchment above.

2.3 Vegetation

The vegetation of the western part of Hordern Park is Spotted Gum Forest dominated by Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata)* and Cabbage-tree Palm (*Livistona australis)* which grades to a stand of Cabbage-tree Forest. Associated tree species include Rough-barked Apple (*Angophora floribunda*). The small tree and shrub layer includes Cheese Tree (*Glochidion ferdinandi*), Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii)*, Blueberry Ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*), Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia)*, Bolworra (*Eupomatia laurina*), Breynia (*Breynia oblongifolia)*, Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum),* Rough-fruit Pittosporum *(P. revolutum)* and planted Cedar Wattles (*Acacia elata*).

The fern-dominated groundlayer includes False Bracken Fern (*Calochlaena dubia)*, Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis*), Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Kidney Weed (*Dichondra repens*) and Scurvy Weed (*Commelina cyanea),* and the climbers Snake Vine (*Stephania japonica ssp. discolor)*, Water Vine (*Cissus hypoglauca)*, Native Rasberry (*Rubus arvifolius)*, Scrambling Lily (*Geitonoplesium cymosum)*, *Glycine sp*. and Golden Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia scandens)*.

The Cabbage-tree Palm Forest is considered a significant community which has a limited distribution in Pittwater, and the conservation status of the Spotted Gum Forest, is considered significant in NSW.

2.4 Fauna

The dominance of Spotted Gum and Cabbage-tree Palm in Hordern Park is likely to attract a range of bird species including Topknot Pigeon, honeyeaters and lorikeets. Gliders, in particular Squirrel gliders, known to feed on Spotted Gum, Cabbage-tree Palm and especially Coast Banksia, may also be attracted. Tree hollows in the Reserve provide shelter for birds and aboreal mammals, and the thick though weed-infested understorey would provide shelter for reptiles, small birds and frogs.

Council's Habitat and Wildlife Corridor Conservation Strategy maps the Reserve as "Corridor R " which indicates smaller Reserves likely to have very modified habitat or suffering adverse edge effects. These can be enhanced by a planting program or by allowing natural regeneration.

2.5 Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Sites

There are no recorded Aboriginal sites within the Reserve, although there is potential for sites such as axe grinding grooves and engravings to occur in the area.

There are no known European Heritage sites in the Reserve.

3.0 Significance and Objectives

3.1 Statement of Significance

Hordern Park is significant because:

- ❖ it contributes to the landscape quality Palm Beach and provides a record of the original landscape and the changes wrought by urban development,
- ❖ it includes samples of significant plant communities, Cabbage-tree Palm Forest which is very restricted and Spotted Gum Forest which has conservation significance at the State level,
- ❖ it includes samples of significant plant species including Bolworra (*Eupomatia laurina)* which has local conservation significance,
- ❖ it provides an important corridor link between remnant littoral and coastal woodland and forest communities at this northern limit of the peninsula, and provides habitat for a wide diversity of fauna species in the context of urban bushland in the Sydney region,
- ❖ it is an educational resource and a contact point with nature for residents, and
- ❖ it allows urban residents to undertake informal recreational pursuits in a littoral bushland setting.

3.2 Management Objectives

The management objectives for Hordern Park are:

- to protect the natural features of the Park, particularly the significant Spotted Gum Forest and Cabbage-tree Palm Forest plant communities and significant plant species;
- ❖ to maintain a natural range of structural and floristic diversity of bushland within the Park, and adequately manage the bushland/ urban interface in relation to fire management, weed management and stormwater management;
- ❖ to protect human life and property in and adjacent to the Park and maintain ecological processes in the Park by seeking to maintain a near-natural fire regime in the body of the Park and aim to ensure that no species of plant or animal becomes extinct in the Park as a result of the fire regime;
- ❖ to control introduced animals within the Reserve;
- ❖ to provide opportunities for low impact recreational, scientific and educational use of the Reserve, and
- ❖ to encourage community and neighbour participation in bushland management.

4.0 Management Issues

4.1 Weed Invasion

Many of the trees and emerging palms are being suppressed by a thick weed layer dominated by Morning Glory and Lantana, and a range of garden escapes, particularly Honeysuckle. The road batter and drainage pipe works have had an impact on the native community. Other weeds species present include Camphor Laurel, Coral Tree, Large and Small Leafed Privet, Fish-bone Fern, Crofton Weed, Wandering Jew and Balsam. There is also a stand of Giant Reed and Bamboo.

4.2 Bush regeneration

A team of bush regenerators have weeded the top of the Reserve, adjacent to a section of the creekline which has a lower level of Lantana invasion. Continued maintenance of this area should occur. The path, numerous drainage lines and long boundary edges fragment the area. To undertake bush restoration, areas need to be divided into workable areas with objectives to achieve habitat maintenance, expansion of worked areas and accessibility.

4.3 Stormwater Management

Stormwater has been redirected into the Reserve from the road surface and adjoining residences. Four piped outlets discharge into the Reserve from Florida Road. Of these, only one discharges into a natural watercourse, the others result from redirected runoff from upper catchment development. Pacific Road properties discharge directly into the Reserve causing the path to scour and accelerating erosion. One drain has been sandstone-lined but all have altered the water regime below the road embankment. The increased moisture levels and degraded water quality will continue to contribute to the weed issues in this Reserve.

4.4 Fire Regime

Management of the fire regime in Hordern Park will be undertaken by the Warringah Pittwater Bush Fire Management Committee in accordance with Circular C10 - Planning for Bush Fire Prone Areas. The Reserve will be regularly monitored for fuel loadings and any hazard reductions required will be undertaken in accordance with the Draft Fuel Management Plan.

Ecological considerations will be assessed by Council Environmental Staff to determine methods of hazard reduction.

4.5 Management of Native Fauna and Introduced Predators

Hordern Park provides good habitat for fauna with a variety of habitat components. The winter flowering Spotted Gums and Cabbage-tree Palms encourage diversity and year-round food availability. A Pittwater wide public awareness campaign will address the value of bushland as habitat for fauna and how residents can be responsible neighbours by ensuring that domestic cats and dogs do not roam in the Reserve. Interpretive signs can assist this. Feral cat and fox predation is an issue that needs to be addressed through a Pittwater-wide control strategy.

4.6 Access, walking tracks and recreation

An established track, which requires regular maintenance, provides access between the beach and Florida Road. Within the Reserve access across two bridges has been blocked by Lantana. Prior to allowing access, the timber work needs to be inspected.

Lawn, used by picnickers and beachgoers, dominates the front of the Reserve. Closeby, retaining works have been used to stabilise the bank and pathway.

4.7 Boundaries and neighbours

There is a need for public awareness on the part of adjoining residents as to the value of bushland. It is particularly important that they understand the effect their actions may have on its integrity, in particular linking vegetation dumping to weed invasion and fire hazard, pollution from stormwater runoff with weed invasion, and the control of domestic animals with local extinction issues.

5.0 Performance

Management Objectives	***Performance Targets (Actions)***	***Responsibility***	***Completion date***	***Capital cost***	***Recurrent Cost***	***Performance Measures***
Weed Control & Bush Regeneration	Follow up bush regeneration	Natural Resources	When funds secured	Seek detailed costs of contract program	As required	Regeneration program commenced
Management of native fauna & introduced predators	Public awareness campaign for responsible pet ownership & feral animal program Interpretive sign	Natural Resources & Compliance	When funds available as well as ongoing programs	Ongoing	Costed within a Pittwater wide feral animal control program	An increase in native fauna in the Reserve
Fire Management	Ensure appropriate fire regime	Natural Resources & Fire Control	Ongoing		Staff time	Fire regime protects property & biodiversity
Access, walking tracks & recreation	Inspect bridges for safety & determine action	Natural Resources	As required		Seek detailed costs on an as needs basis	Safe walking access through the reserve
Boundaries & neighbours	Encourage community awareness re stormwater outlets & vegetation dumping	Natural Resources	Ongoing & when funds available		Staff time	Good resident practices and improved awareness of the bushland