

# Empire Bay



- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  1: Cottage Foreshores       |  7: Community Centres & Schools |
|  2: Open Parkland Foreshores |  8: Mixed Use Corridor          |
|  3: Sandplain Bungalows      |  9: Rural Hamlets               |
|  4: Open Parkland            |  10: Scenic Buffer              |
|  5: Woodland Hillsides       |  11: Scenic Conservation        |
|  6: Village Centre           |  |

## Empire Bay 1: Cottage Foreshores - Existing

## **Existing Character**

Almost totally cleared of original vegetation, small to medium lots with dual frontages to a narrow access street plus an open waterfront reserve or private foreshores that are studded with jetties and boatsheds, forming a visually-prominent and scenically-distinctive suburban water frontage.

Behind a natural beach, a turfed foreshore reserve supports a scattering of large trees that shade picnic tables, and jetties that service marine businesses.

Adjoining this foreshore, houses are set behind small front gardens surrounded by low fences and hedges, predominantly early-to-mid Twentieth Century cottages or bungalows that are modestly-scaled timber framed single storey buildings, with occasional modern single storey brick houses. Traditional cottages and bungalows conserve a historically-distinctive link with the original residential settlement, and vary in their condition from heritage restorations to modified buildings that retain their original architectural form, scale and lightweight cladding.

On the narrower lots, cottages are sited close to their neighbours, forming a wall of buildings along the waterfront that relies for its scenic distinctiveness upon the modest scale of individual buildings plus a consistent pattern of pitched roofs and shady verandahs or glass-fronted sunrooms.

On the larger lots, cottages have wide side setbacks that provide waterviews from the street through gardens shaded by distinctive large trees and shrub-beds, often supporting freestanding garages. Facing the waterfront, open turfed gardens maintain panoramic waterviews from dwellings.

## **Empire Bay 1: Cottage Foreshores - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These areas should remain low-density residential foreshores where new buildings complement the scenic and architectural qualities of surviving early Twentieth Century cottages that remain highly-distinctive elements of Gosford City's identity.

Ensure that new structures complement the siting and informal scenic character displayed by traditional foreshore cottages. Surround all buildings with gardens that retain existing trees and also accommodate clusters of new shady trees to provide distinctive backdrops facing both waterways and streets. Maintain waterfront setbacks that are similar to neighbouring properties. Prevent the appearance of a continuous wall of buildings along any street or waterway by providing at least one wide side setback, or by stepping front and rear facades to create deep courtyards that are planted with shady trees.

Avoid disturbing natural landforms, and for properties that are floodprone, elevate habitable floors with low-impact construction such as suspended floors and decks rather than extensive landfilling. Facing the waterfront, avoid terraces, fences or outdoor structures that would disrupt the desired informal landscape setting, or compromise the privacy and amenity enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings. On properties with a direct waterfrontage, ensure that new jetties are traditional white-painted timber piers, and that boatsheds are modestly-scaled by reflecting both the form and features of traditional timber-framed sheds. Maintain the informal qualities of streets that are flanked by shady trees, with wide verges and no kerbing.

In order to reflect the modest character of traditional early Twentieth Century cottages, minimise the scale and bulk of all new buildings and extensions. Use simple pitched roof forms such as hips, gables or skillions, with wide eaves and gentle pitches to minimise the height of ridges. Use stepped floorplans or divide floorspace into linked pavilion structures that are capped by individual roofs and flanked by landscaped courtyards. Any facades that are taller or longer than those of traditional cottages should be screened by a combination of extra setbacks from the ground storey, stepped forms, wide balconies and verandahs. Preferably, provide parking in open carports or as detached garages that are screened by shady trees. For dual occupancy developments in particular, street and waterfront facades should have asymmetric designs in order to suggest the appearance of a traditional cottage.

To complement the scale and design character of traditional cottages, a "light-weight appearance" is preferable for all visible facades. For example, incorporate large windows, timber-framed balconies or verandahs, plus painted finishes and some sheet or board cladding rather than extensive plain masonry. Also, each new dwelling should display a traditional "street address" with verandahs and living rooms or front doors that are visible from the street, and avoid wide garages that would dominate any frontage.

## **Empire Bay 2: Open Parkland Foreshores - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

Cleared of vegetation, residential lots that were originally large with dual frontages to the street and the waterway have been subdivided, with lots now facing either a narrow access street or a private foreshore studded with jetties plus occasional over-water boathouses that form distinctive waterfront features.

Along the water, houses are generally set close to a seawall and one predominantly modern medium-sized two storey brick or timber buildings with multiple balconies and broad frontages designed to capture panoramic waterviews.

Sited close to their neighbours, houses form a continuous waterfront wall screened by projecting jetties and moored boats. Waterfront gardens are simple open areas of turf set behind seawalls, maintaining panoramic views.

On lots facing the street, two storey houses are often elevated above basement car parking to capture panoramic waterviews above the roofs of foreshore buildings. These dwellings are generally surrounded by simple turfed gardens with scattered shrubs and small trees, and often fenced along all boundaries.

## **Empire Bay 2: Open Parkland Foreshores - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These should remain low-density residential foreshores where the informal open but leafy character of prominent backdrops to Gosford City's coastal waterways are enhanced by new dwellings that are surrounded by shady gardens.

Ensure that new structures do not dominate these foreshore settings or disrupt development patterns that are evident upon their surrounding properties. Avoid disturbing natural slopes and on properties that are floodprone, use low-impact construction such as suspended floors and decks rather than extensive landfilling to elevate habitable floors. Ensure a leafy character for these prominent backdrops by conserving any existing trees that are visually-prominent foreshore features, as well as planting gardens with low hedges and trees that are predominantly indigenous, arranged in clusters to maintain existing panoramic views. Maintain the informal character of existing wide street verges that are dotted with shady street trees.

Facing waterfronts in particular, avoid retaining walls, tall fences or extensive terraces that would visibly compromise the desired leafy character. Use fences that are low or see-through, or plant low hedges to maintain glimpses of the waterfront from street frontages. For properties with a direct waterfrontage, ensure that new boatsheds are modestly-scaled and reflect the architectural features of traditional timber-framed sheds. New jetties should be compatible with the style and visual impact of traditional timber piers.

Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of foreshore development by surrounding buildings with leafy gardens that maintain waterfront and street setbacks similar to the surrounding properties. Provide at least one wide side setback or step the shape of front and rear facades.

Minimise the scale and bulk of new buildings or additions to existing dwellings by reflecting elements of traditional foreshore bungalows. Use irregular floorplans to create well-articulated forms, such as linked pavilions that are separated by courtyards and capped by individual roofs. All roofs should be gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, flanked by wide eaves and verandahs to disguise the scale of exterior walls. Facing the waterfront, disguise the visual impact of upper storeys by a combination of extra setbacks from the ground floor plus shady balconies and verandahs.

Reflect traditional coastal architecture and minimise the scale of prominent facades by using extensive windows and lightly-framed verandahs plus a variety of materials and finishes rather than expanses of plain masonry. All dwellings should display a "street address" with verandahs or decks, and living rooms or front doors that are visible from the roadway. Avoid wide garages that would visually-dominate any front façade or block views between the dwelling and the street. Locate and screen all balconies or decks to maintain existing levels of privacy and amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings.

## **Empire Bay 3: Sandplain Bungalows - Existing**

## **Existing Character**

Largely cleared of original vegetation, a regular grid of medium-sized lots on very gentle slopes is situated below wooded residential hillsides, behind a foreshore of houses and cottages.

Facing narrow access streets that are flanked by broad grassed verges, houses maintain consistent front setbacks and form near-continuous walls of buildings.

Dwellings are predominantly early-to-mid Twentieth Century cottages or bungalows that are modestly scaled timber framed single storey buildings, with some modern medium-sized brick houses of one or two storeys. The surviving traditional cottages and weekenders preserve a historically-distinctive link with early residential settlement, varying in their architectural condition but generally retaining traditional architectural forms and lightweight cladding.

Modest garden areas to the front and rear of cottages are turfed and planted with shrubs and trees, sometimes retaining scattered woodland remnants as corridors or copses along rear boundaries. Occasional side yards provide access to garages that are concealed discretely to the rear of dwellings.

The newer houses are elevated above defined flood levels, set close to side and front boundaries, and often have wide garages that dominate their street frontage. Gardens surrounding these houses are generally small and open, landscaped with a variety of small trees and shrubs.

## **Empire Bay 3: Sandplain Bungalows - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These areas should remain low-density residential neighbourhoods where new buildings complement the architectural character of mid-Twentieth Century bungalows that are distinctive streetscape features of the older Brisbane Water suburbs, and the existing sparse tree cover is enhanced by additional plantings.

Ensure that new structures complement the siting of surviving traditional bungalows nearby. Surround each dwelling with a leafy garden to accommodate shady trees and shrubs that are mostly-indigenous, planted as corridors or clusters along back fences and street verges. Maintain street setbacks that are similar to neighbouring properties. Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of buildings along any street or laneway by providing at least one wide side setback or by stepping the shape of front and rear facades.

For new dwellings and additions to existing dwellings, reflect the modest scale and simple articulation of traditional mid-Twentieth Century bungalows. Roofs should be simple hips, gables or skillions without elaborate articulation, gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, and flanked by wide eaves to disguise the scale and bulk of exterior walls. Use stepped floorplans, or divide floorspace into linked pavilion structures that are capped by individual roofs and separated by landscaped courtyards. Any facades that are taller or longer than those of neighbouring dwellings should be screened by an extra setback or by balconies and verandahs. Preferably, provide parking as open carports or in detached garages that are screened by shady trees.

In order to complement the scale and design character of traditional bungalows, a "light-weight appearance" is preferable for facades that are visible from the street. For example, incorporate large windows plus timber-framed balconies or verandahs, plus painted finishes and some sheet or board cladding rather than extensive plain masonry. Also, provide a traditional "street address" with verandahs and living rooms or front doors that are visible from the road and rear laneways. Ensure that wide garages do not visually-dominate any facade or rear-lane frontage.

Facing the street, maintain the informal qualities of existing wide street verges that are dotted with shady street trees. Plant the boundaries facing streets and laneways with hedges or shrubs to allow a filtered view from each dwelling, rather than using fences that are tall and opaque. Screen terraces and balconies to protect the privacy and amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings.

## **Empire Bay 4: Open Parkland - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

Recent residential subdivisions of medium-sized allotments, or redevelopment on older subdivisions with medium-sized lots that have been totally cleared of original vegetation, situated on low-lying land adjacent to foreshore reserves or wetlands, opposite and neighbourhoods of traditional cottages and bungalows.

Facing medium-width access streets flanked by open grassed verges, wide-fronted modern brick houses of one and two storeys have consistent front setbacks and form a continuous wall of buildings that lines one side of the street.

Small front gardens accommodate driveways that lead to garages attached to dwellings, with larger private gardens located to the rear and surrounded by tall fences. Gardens are generally open, sometimes planted with a variety of small trees and shrubs.

#### **Empire Bay 4: Open Parkland - Desired**

##### **Desired Character**

These should remain low-density residential neighbourhoods where existing streetscape quality and amenity are enhanced substantially by further “greening” of gardens and street verges, enhancing the present leafy settings around each dwelling.

Minimise disturbance to any existing trees that are visually-prominent, and avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development along any street. Locate buildings behind front setbacks that appear similar to their surrounding properties, and provide at least one wide side setback or step the shape of front and rear facades. Plant clusters of trees and shrubs throughout each garden to screen buildings and driveways, as well as to provide shady backdrops to the roadway. Plantings in front gardens and along street verges should include some taller trees that are indigenous. Facing the street, emphasise a leafy garden character by limiting the width of driveways, using front fences that are low or see-through or hedges of shrubs.

Minimise scale and bulk by stepped floorplans and building forms. Front or rear facades that are taller than neighbouring dwellings should be screened by balconies, verandahs, stepped forms or extra setbacks. Roofs should be gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, and flanked by wide eaves to disguise the scale of exterior walls.

Construction should be predominantly brick-and-tile, varied by some board or sheet cladding. All dwellings should display a traditional “street address” with verandahs or decks, and living rooms or front doors that are visible from the roadway. Avoid wide garages that would visually-dominate any front façade or block views from the dwelling to the street. Locate and screen all balconies or decks to maintain the existing levels of privacy and amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings.

#### **Empire Bay 5: Woodland Hillsides - Existing**

##### **Existing Character**

Established residential subdivisions of medium to large-sized lots, on partially-cleared slopes that are moderate to steep, covered by open woodland that form a scenically distinctive backdrop visible from the waterway, from village centres and surrounding residential areas.

A semi-regular pattern of lots faces either a wide arterial thoroughfare or narrow access streets that meander across the hillsides, flanked by swales and sloping wooded verges.

Houses are generally set well back from the street, either elevated on the hillsides or set below street level, with panoramic waterviews through trees and above the roofs of dwellings located on the slopes below.

Dwellings vary from modestly-scaled single storey timber framed bungalows to medium sized brick houses of one and two storeys.

The size and siting of dwellings retains deep rear yards plus substantial front and side yards, conserving woodland that ranges from an open canopy of scattered remnants to near-continuous corridors along front and rear boundaries.

On lots that fall from streets, garages are sited close to the street, either free-standing or attached to dwellings, while elevated lots incorporate driveway access to garages that are located above street-level.

Gardens are predominantly an open understorey of planted shrubs and turf below the woodland canopy, with fencing generally confined to back yards only.

## **Empire Bay 5: Woodland Hillside - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These should remain very leafy low-density residential hillsides, conserving natural and scenic qualities of the bushland backdrops that are fundamental features of Gosford City's identity, where landscape settings that adjoin bushland reserves are not dominated by new development.

Conserve natural and scenic characters of wooded hillside properties plus unformed road verges by retaining natural slopes and the continuity of tree-canopy that is provided by existing bushland remnants. Complement the established tree canopy by new plantings that are predominantly indigenous, and do not plant any identified noxious or environmental weeds. Facing all boundaries, emphasise a leafy garden character by avoiding tall retaining walls, fences that are not see-through, elevated structures such as terraces or pools, and steep driveways that would visibly compromise the existing bushy hillside character.

In areas that are defined as bushfire prone, hazard must not be increased by inappropriate new plantings or structures. Minimise the extent of cleared asset protection zones by fire-resistant siting, design and construction for all new structures plus effective management of gardens. The ideal compromise between desired scenic quality and hazard-reduction would limit clearing to thinning of the canopy to establish breaks between existing trees. Screen or shield all verandahs, windows, roofs and suspended floors to prevent the entry of sparks and flying embers.

Avoid disturbing natural slopes and trees by appropriate siting of structures plus low-impact construction such as suspended floors and decks rather than extensive cut-and-fill. On the steeper sites, locate parking next to the street in structures that are designed to blend with their natural setting. Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development along any street or hillside by locating buildings within setbacks that are similar to their surrounding properties, and by providing at least one wide side setback or stepping the shape of front and rear facades.

Minimise the scale and bulk of buildings by strongly-articulated forms that sit beneath the canopy, with floor-levels that step to follow natural slopes and irregular floorplans, such as linked pavilions that are separated by courtyards and capped by individual roofs. Front or rear facades that are taller than neighbouring dwellings should be screened by balconies, verandahs, stepped forms or extra setbacks. Roofs should be gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, and flanked by wide eaves to disguise the scale of exterior walls.

Minimise the scale of prominent facades by using extensive windows and verandahs plus a variety of materials and finishes rather than expanses of plain masonry. Where dwellings would be visible from their road frontage, display a traditional "street address" with verandahs or decks, and living rooms or front doors that are visible from that roadway. Avoid wide garages that would visually-dominate any front façade. Locate and screen all balconies or decks to maintain the existing levels of privacy and amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings.

## **Empire Bay 6: Village Centre - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

Located at the end of a suburban main road, a waterfront centre accommodates community gatherings and services the local community's retail needs.

Surrounding a village square with a landmark war memorial, single storey corner stores and two storey shop-top houses overlook a foreshore reserve with a public wharf.

Formed by wide paved streets, this square has informal kerbside parking surrounded by open turfed verges.

This centre is separated from the adjoining neighbourhood of houses and cottages by streets, and the modest scale of shops and shop top houses generally is compatible with that residential neighbourhood. A variety of commercial advertising signs are arranged informally across awnings, shopfronts and the sidewalls of stores.

## **Empire Bay 6: Village Centre - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

This should remain a low-intensity centre that services primarily residents from the surrounding suburb but also includes some shop-top accommodation, where the civic-and-urban design quality of a neighbourhood landmark is enhanced by new development that encourages street activity.

Promote on-street activity by maximising the continuity of shop-windows facing all street frontages within the “village”, and incorporate awnings, colonnades or balconies in all buildings as shelter for pedestrian frontages.

Ensure that new developments (including alterations to existing buildings) do not dominate their predominantly low-rise residential surroundings, and maximise the amenity of all pedestrian frontages. Facing the street, shop-front facades should have a zero setback and a maximum height of one storey, with any taller storey set back behind terraces or balconies to maintain a modest, pedestrian-friendly scale as well as the current level of midday sunlight that is available along the footpath. Also ensure that the height and siting of new buildings preserve current levels of privacy, sunlight and visual amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings and their private open spaces.

Adapt features of traditional mainstreet shopping villages to reflect the established pattern of low-density suburban dwellings. Buildings should be designed to maximise the number of retail tenants along all street frontages. Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development or uniform building heights along any street, and vary both the shape and height of all visible facades, with roofs and parapet heights that step from one building to the next, and any street corners that are emphasised by taller forms. Roofs should be simple hips, gables or skillions without elaborate articulation, gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, and flanked by wide eaves that shade upper-storey terraces as well as disguising the scale of exterior walls. In general, the walls of all upper storeys should be screened by an extra setback plus a balcony or a verandah. Adjacent to any detached dwelling, wider allotments also should provide a landscaped setback from the side boundaries.

Disguise the scale and bulk of new buildings. All visible facades should employ extensive windows that are shaded by lightly-framed balconies, verandahs or exterior sunshades, plus painted finishes and some board or sheet cladding rather than expanses of plain masonry. Side and rear facades should match the design quality of the street frontage.

Provide shopper parking at the kerbside, and locate any additional off-street parking behind shops with unobtrusive vehicle entrances that minimise disruption to shopfronts and their associated pedestrian activity. Screen driveways and outdoor parking courtyards by hedges and shady trees. Contribute to co-ordinated street improvements that include dedicated pedestrian crossings, footpaths, landscaping and lighting to provide safe and secure settings for informal social interaction. Building colour schemes and commercial signs should be co-ordinated and limited in size and number to promote the identity of this local centre, rather than emphasising corporate sponsorship.

## **Empire Bay 7: Community Centre + School - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

Fronting an arterial thoroughfare, this primary school has a scenically-distinctive character and backdrops of tall woodland or partly-cleared farm lots.

School buildings are arranged as a compound of linked pavilions, surrounded by large playgrounds with scattered tall woodland remnants that contribute to a scenically-distinctive main road frontage. The school presents a high level of activity along its road frontages.

## **Empire Bay 7: Community Centre + School - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These properties should continue to provide community, educational and recreation services according to the needs of their surrounding residential population. The scenic and civic qualities of prominent vegetated backdrops to Gosford City's waterfronts, major roads and residential areas should be protected as well as enhanced by future development, infrastructure or landscape improvements, and by open space management.

Protect the habitat and scenic values of remnant bushland, wetland or salt marsh by retaining natural slopes and by avoiding further fragmentation of the tree canopy, particularly mature bushland remnants along any ridge, slope, waterway or road frontage that provide scenically-prominent backdrops.

Enhance the recreation and scenic potentials of playing fields by masterplanned improvements that satisfy a wide range of recreation needs, including clustered shelter plantings around existing ovals and pitches, walking trails and seating, and amenities buildings. Around carparks and along street frontages in general, protect the safety of children by footpaths that are flanked by landscaped barriers to channel pedestrian traffic towards defined road crossings.

Ensure that new developments (including alterations to existing buildings and infrastructure works) do not dominate their natural or landscaped settings, or their predominantly low-rise residential surroundings. Surround buildings with landscaped settings that maintain the scenic quality of prominent bushland backdrops or existing corridors of planted trees. Ensure that the height and siting of new structures also preserve levels of privacy, sunlight and visual amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings and their private open spaces. Complement the bushland canopy by planting all setbacks, courtyards and parking areas with shrubs and trees that are predominantly indigenous. Along front boundaries, provide for surveillance and safety by planting hedges or using fences that are low or see-through.

Promote high levels of visible activity around buildings by adopting elements of traditional “mainstreet” shopping villages, including extensive windows and building entrances that are located to reveal indoor activity. Incorporate footpaths, verandahs or colonnades to concentrate pedestrian access between clearly-identified building entrances and surrounding streets or carparks.

Minimise the scale and bulk of new buildings and avoid the appearance of uniform building heights along any street by well-articulated forms. Divide floorspace into separate pavilion structures that are surrounded by landscaped courtyards, and vary the shape and height of facades, particularly to identify major entrances. For visually-prominent facades, incorporate extensive windows that are shaded by framed verandahs or exterior sunscreens, and display some variety of materials or finishes rather than expanses of plain masonry or metal cladding. Roofs should be gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, and flanked by wide eaves or verandahs that disguise the scale of exterior walls.

### **Empire Bay 8: Mixed-use Corridor (Scenic Buffer) - Existing**

#### **Existing Character**

Fronting an arterial thoroughfare, this ribbon of mixed activity has a scenically-distinctive setting with tall woodland as well as partly-cleared small farm lots, and it includes rural businesses plus a tavern and service station, traditional bungalows and a recent residential subdivision.

Houses include traditional coastal bungalows fronting the original line of this main road, plus a row of recently-completed two storey duplexes, that display a modest scale, capped by pitched roofs, with verandahs and light-weight or composite construction that are typical of traditional cottages or weekenders. Gardens are simple areas of open turf with scatter woodland remnants and small shrubs behind low front fences.

Farm lots that have been cleared in the past sit behind traditional post-and-rail fences, with modestly-scaled timber framed single storey dwellings and scattered outbuildings set against a densely-wooded backdrop. Redevelopment of some lots has compromised their original scenic quality, with natural or semi-rural character of these main road frontages now dominated by large structures and commercial signs.

### **Empire Bay 8: Mixed-use Corridor (Scenic Buffer) - Desired**

#### **Desired Character**

This should remain a ribbon of low-impact retail, business and residential activities, where the distinctive semi-rural and natural qualities of prominent backdrops to Gosford City’s major tourist routes are preserved by future road works and by developments that maintain leafy settings, as well as by limiting the proliferation of business signs.

Maintain existing informal scenic characters of hillside and roadside properties together with meandering road verges by retaining natural slopes and preventing further fragmentation of the tree canopy, particularly mature bushland remnants that provide scenically-prominent backdrops to a major tourist route or nearby properties. Limit the intrusion of structures upon their landscape setting by concentrating new development within existing cleared areas. Use low-impact construction such as suspended floors and decks rather than extensive cut-and-fill, particularly on elevated slopes and near bushland. Locate large buildings to preserve existing vistas from the road towards natural scenic backdrops.

In areas that are defined as bushfire prone, hazard must not be increased by inappropriate new plantings or structures. Minimise the extent of cleared asset protection zones required for dwellings by fire-resistant siting, design and construction for all new structures plus effective management of their grounds. The ideal compromise between the desired scenic quality and bushfire protection would limit hazard-reduction clearing to the understorey plus

thinning of the canopy to establish breaks between existing trees.

Maintain the informal character of existing semi-rural hillsides by avoiding front and side fences that are not see-through, tall retaining walls and extensive terraces or substantial parking courtyards that would be visible from any road frontage or nearby property. For street fences, a see-through post-and-rail style is preferred. Surround all buildings with extensive garden setbacks, planted with trees and shrubs that are predominantly indigenous to complement the established canopy. Noxious or environmental weeds must not be planted, and existing infestations should be controlled.

In order to minimise their scale and bulk, all new buildings that would be visible from any road or nearby property should reflect the modest character and simple articulation of traditional farm buildings. For example, divide floorspace into separate pavilion structures that are surrounded by landscaped courtyards. Roofs should be simple hips or gables without elaborate articulation, gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges and flanked by wide eaves or verandahs to disguise the scale of exterior walls. (In bushfire prone areas, screen all verandahs and roofs to prevent the entry of sparks and flying embers.)

To disguise the scale and bulk of new buildings, a light-weight appearance is preferred for all facades that would be visible from the road. For example, incorporate extensive windows and verandahs, paint finishes and some sheet or board cladding rather than expanses of plain masonry, Ensure that outbuildings are compatible with the scale and design of the primary building upon each property, particularly by using roofs with eaves and similar pitches.

Complement the desired streetscape quality of road frontages by preventing the proliferation of business signs. Pylons should be limited to one per development and designed to complement landscaping along the road-frontage. Building signs should be attached in consistent locations such as along awnings or fascias, and limited in both size and number.

## **Empire Bay 9: Rural Hamlets - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

Established clusters of rural residential allotments, each ranging from one to two hectares in area, surrounded by dense woodland backdrops that are scenically and ecologically distinctive, and varying from a regular pattern of deep narrow lots on gentle slopes that face a long straight access street, to irregular patterns of hillside lots along a crescent-shaped street.

Medium to large single storey modern brick dwellings are set in partly-cleared woodland, surrounded by a planted parkland understorey of shrubs surrounded by turf.

Remnant woodland is conserved with the substantial street frontage setbacks, and varies density from scattered copses to a near-continuous canopy, either screening or framing individual dwellings. The tranquil semi-rural atmosphere of these areas is accentuated by traditional post-and-rail rural fences.

Nearby, adjacent to a wetland reserve, a rural residential subdivision is currently under construction, screened from surrounding road frontages by a corridor of dense woodland.

## **Empire Bay 9: Rural Hamlets - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These should remain rural-residential buffers between surrounding urban areas, where the scenically-distinctive qualities and amenity of existing secluded settings are preserved by very-low density residential development plus low-impact rural activities or businesses that are associated with a dwelling.

Retain natural slopes and prevent further fragmentation of the tree canopy in order to maintain habitat values and informal scenic characters of hillside or valley properties, plus meandering roads with unformed verges. Along creeks, ridges, slopes or road frontages, conserve all mature bushland remnants that provide scenically-prominent backdrops visible from any road or nearby property. Limit intrusion of structures upon their landscape setting by concentrating new buildings in existing clearings, and using low-impact construction such as suspended floors and decks rather than extensive cut-and-fill, particularly on elevated slopes or near bushland.

In areas that are defined as bushfire prone, hazard must not be increased by inappropriate new plantings or structures. Minimise the extent of cleared asset protection zones by fire-resistant siting, design and construction for all new structures plus effective management of gardens. The ideal compromise between desired scenic quality and hazard-reduction would limit clearing to the understorey plus thinning of the canopy to establish breaks between existing trees.

Maintain the informal character of existing semi-rural hillsides by avoiding tall retaining walls, extensive terraces or broad driveways that would be visible from any road or nearby property, and provide boundary fences that are see-through such as traditional post-and-rail designs. Surround all buildings with extensive garden setbacks, planted with new trees and shrubs that are predominantly indigenous to complement the established canopy. Noxious or environmental weeds must not be planted, and existing infestations should be controlled.

In order to minimise their scale and bulk, all new structures that would be visible from a road or nearby property should reflect the modest character and simple articulation of traditional farm buildings. For example, divide floorspace into a series of linked pavilion structures or wings of rooms that are surrounded by landscaped courtyards, and preferably, provide parking in carports or separate garages. Roofs should be simple hips or gables without elaborate articulation, gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges and flanked by wide eaves or verandahs to disguise the scale of exterior walls. (In bushfire prone areas, all verandahs, roofs and suspended floors must be screened to prevent the entry of sparks and flying embers.)

Disguise the scale of facades that are visible from the street by incorporating extensive windows and verandahs, some painted finishes rather than expanses of plain masonry, and avoid wide garages that would visually-dominate any frontage. Ensure that outbuildings are compatible with the scale and design of their associated dwelling, particularly by using a similar roof pitch and wide eaves.

## **Empire Bay 10: Scenic Buffers - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

Along an elevated ridgeline, large residential lots are located on moderate to steep slopes in a largely undisturbed woodland setting, contributing to the scenic and ecological values of a continuous natural ridgetop that is visible from the waterway and surrounding residential areas, as well as forming a buffer between neighbouring suburbs.

Lining the arterial thoroughfare, two separate areas include large residential allotments and rural residential properties that contribute to the quality and habitat values of a wooded ridgetop reserve, where buildings are modestly-scaled and either screened or framed by substantial woodland remnants.

## **Empire Bay 10: Scenic Buffers - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These should remain rural-residential buffers where the scenically-distinctive semi-rural and natural qualities of prominent backdrops to Gosford City's major roads and tourist routes are preserved by appropriate very-low density residential developments associated with low-impact rural activities, and by small-scale businesses or community and educational facilities that have a modest impact.

Retain natural slopes and prevent further fragmentation of the tree canopy in order to maintain habitat values and informal scenic characters of hillside or valley properties, plus meandering roads with unformed verges. Along creeks, ridges, slopes or road frontages, conserve all mature bushland remnants that provide scenically-prominent backdrops visible from any road or nearby property. Limit intrusion of structures upon their landscape setting by concentrating new buildings and pavements in existing clearings. Use low-impact construction such as suspended floors and decks rather than extensive cut-and-fill, particularly on elevated slopes or near bushland.

In areas that are defined as bushfire prone, hazard must not be increased by inappropriate new plantings or structures. Minimise the extent of cleared asset protection zones by fire-resistant siting, design and construction for all new structures plus effective management of gardens. The ideal compromise between desired scenic quality and hazard-reduction would limit clearing to the understorey plus thinning of the canopy to establish breaks between existing trees.

Maintain the informal character of existing semi-rural hillsides by avoiding tall retaining walls, extensive terraces or

broad driveways that would be visible from any road or nearby property, and provide boundary fences that are see-through such as traditional post-and-rail designs. Surround all buildings with extensive garden setbacks, planted with new trees and shrubs that are predominantly indigenous to complement the established canopy. Noxious or environmental weeds must not be planted, and existing infestations should be controlled.

In order to minimise their scale and bulk, all new structures that would be visible from a road or nearby property should reflect the modest character and simple articulation of traditional farm buildings. For example, divide floorspace into a series of linked pavilion structures or wings of rooms that are surrounded by landscaped courtyards, and preferably, provide parking in carports or separate garages. Roofs should be simple hips or gables without elaborate articulation, gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges and flanked by wide eaves or extensive verandahs to disguise the scale of exterior walls. (In bushfire prone areas, verandahs, roofs and suspended floors must be screened to prevent the entry of sparks and flying embers.)

Disguise the scale of facades that are visible from the street by incorporating extensive windows and verandahs, some painted finishes rather than expanses of plain masonry, and avoid wide garages that would visually-dominate any frontage. Ensure that outbuildings are compatible with the scale and design of their associated dwelling, particularly by using a similar roof pitch and wide eaves. Any commercial signs should be limited in size and number.

## **Empire Bay 11: Scenic Conservation - Existing**

### **Existing Character**

A continuous natural backdrop that include woodland reserves plus undeveloped privately-owned woodland properties, visible from the waterway, and arterial thoroughfare plus surrounding residential suburbs and forming a landscape backdrop that is scenically-prominent and ecologically-distinctive.

Elevated above residential hillsides and incorporating rock outcrops, this ridge top forms part of the Coastal Open Space System, and also includes privately-owned lands where the scale and siting of any development has preserved the exceptional visual prominence of this landscape. This ridgetop maintains a broad buffer between neighbouring suburbs.

## **Empire Bay 11: Scenic Conservation - Desired**

### **Desired Character**

These landmark reserves should remain near-natural buffers between residential areas, where active environmental management conserves the ecological and scenic qualities of Gosford City's unique forested hillsides and ridgetops.

Conserve the natural qualities of hillside and ridgetop reserves by preventing further clearing of bushland, and avoid any land-management activity that would compromise the long-term diversity, vigour and habitat value of natural plant communities occurring in these reserves. Control any infestations of noxious or environmental weeds, and progressively repair any disturbance to landforms or natural vegetation using bush-regeneration techniques. Employ ecological best-practice for bushfire hazard reduction, for example mosaic burns, in order to strike a balance between conservation, scenic quality and public safety.

Where recreational or infrastructure works are necessary, ensure that natural landscape settings are not dominated by the size, siting, design or construction of new structures. Avoid disturbing natural slopes and bushland by locating works or structures primarily within existing cleared areas. Where there is no reasonable alternative, allow minor clearings in locations that have a lesser ecological value, where effective long-term management of bushland ecology would not be compromised and where the extent of scenic bushland backdrops that are visible from major roads, waterways or surrounding neighbourhoods would not be interrupted. In sloping areas and close to bushland, very-low impact construction such as light-weight framed structures with suspended floors and decks should be used, and cut-and-fill techniques should be avoided.