

Killcare Heights



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Killcare Heights 1: Open Parkland Ridge - Existing

Existing Character

Situated at the head of a coastal escarpment, moderate slopes that have been almost totally cleared of original vegetation form a prominent skyline visible from Killcare Beach and the main tourist route.

A wide access street flanked by kerbing and narrow verges meanders along the ridge, flanked by a regular pattern of medium to large lots, often with retaining walls, garden fences and garages constructed hard against the road alignment.

Large to very large brick houses of two to three storeys with wide frontages are sited to capture panoramic coastal views from multiple balconies that are elevated above street level. Minimal separations between neighbouring dwellings together with consistent front setbacks create a street frontage that appears as a continuous wall of buildings.

Gardens incorporate small trees and shrubs planted along the street frontage, while back yards overlooking the escarpment remain as simple open turf, preserving panoramic views above drifts of wind-blown coastal heath that cling to the steep slopes below.

Killcare Heights 1: Open Parkland Ridge - Desired

Desired Character

This should remain a low-density residential backdrop where the scenic potential of a prominent elevated setting is enhanced by further “greening” of gardens and street verges, and new development does not dominate the adjacent bushland reserve.

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. Screen or shield all verandahs, windows, roofs and suspended floors to prevent the entry of sparks and flying embers.

Avoid disturbing natural slopes plus any existing trees that are visually-prominent, and ensure a leafy character for this prominent backdrop to an ocean beachfront. Plant gardens and street verges with clusters of trees and shrubs that are predominantly indigenous species and represent a low bushfire hazard. Do not plant identified noxious or environmental weeds next to the bushland reserve. Facing the escarpment in particular, avoid tall retaining walls or fences, elevated structures including terraces or pools, and steep driveways that would visibly compromise the desired leafy ridge top character.

Retain existing ground levels along all boundaries, and facing the ridge top, use 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 the desired leafy setting. Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development by setting all building works back from the exposed ridges, locating buildings behind front setbacks that are similar to the surrounding properties, and providing at least one wide side setback or stepping the shape of front and rear facades.

Minimise the scale and bulk of buildings by stepping floor-levels to follow natural slopes and by using irregular floorplans that create well-articulated forms. For example, divide floorspace into linked pavilions that are separated by courtyards and capped by individual roofs. Roofs should be gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, and flanked by wide eaves to disguise the scale of exterior walls. Facing the escarpment, disguise the impact of any upper storey by a combination of extra setbacks from the ground floor plus shady balconies and verandahs.

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. 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 between the dwelling and the street. Locate and screen all balconies or decks to maintain the existing levels of privacy and amenity that are enjoyed by neighbouring dwellings.

Killcare Heights 2: Woodland Ridge - Existing

Existing Character

Two ridge-top locations, one flanking a main suburban thoroughfare and forming a backdrop to Brisbane Water, and the other at the head of a coastal escarpment adjoining the National Park and providing a prominent skyline feature that is visible from Killcare Beach.

On moderate to steep slopes, a near-continuous canopy of woodland remnants surrounds large dwellings. Straddling the main access road to Killcare, medium to large lots contain substantial rock outcrops as well as a woodland canopy, providing scenically distinctive frontages to this significant tourist route.

Overlooking the ocean, medium lots face a narrow local access street flanked by wide verges with dense screens of woodland or grass studded with native street trees.

Facing the thoroughfare, allotments are visible from two frontages, with medium to large two storey houses either elevated or set below street level, with substantial setbacks that conserve remnant woodland and substantial rock outcrops along the street, either screening or framing individual dwellings. Facing the ocean beach, houses are surrounded by a woodland screen, with a low canopy that rises to roof height. Predominantly of brick, houses are designed to blend with natural surroundings, and do not dominate this highly visible landscape.

Gardens vary from near-natural woodland to small areas of turf and shrubs planted beneath a canopy of woodland remnants.

Killcare Heights 2: Woodland Ridge - Desired

Desired Character

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

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.

Conserve natural and scenic characters of wooded ridge top properties plus unformed road verges by retaining existing 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, elevated structures including terraces or pools, steep driveways or opaque fences that would visibly compromise the existing leafy hillside character. Define boundaries by fences that are low or see-through, or by hedges.

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 behind front and rear 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. Roofs should be gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges, and flanked by wide eaves to disguise the scale of exterior walls. Facing escarpments, disguise the impact of any upper storey by a combination of extra setbacks from the ground floor plus shady balconies and verandahs.

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 the 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.

Killcare Heights 3: Woodland Hillside - Existing

Existing Character

A semi-regular pattern of allotments, situated on gentle to moderate slopes across the crown of a scenically-prominent coastal headland, and flanking two main roads that are tourist routes.

A canopy of open woodland survives in front and rear gardens on medium-sized lots, facing access streets with narrow pavements flanked by grassed verges that also support scattered woodland remnants.

Houses are predominantly two storey brick, with some timber dwellings. Siting, street setbacks and the separation between neighbours vary, generally providing medium to large gardens that conserve canopy trees, either screening or framing individual buildings.

Gardens vary from dense screens of remnant woodland along street frontages to a more-open mixture of shrubs and turf planted below a canopy of woodland remnants.

Killcare Heights 3: Woodland Hillside - Desired

Desired Character

These should remain very leafy low-density residential hillside, 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.

Killcare Heights 4: Open Parkland Hillside - Existing

Existing Character

Two separate areas located along the crown of a coastal headland, substantially cleared of original vegetation and flanking the main tourist route.

Across gentle to moderate slopes, a regular pattern of medium to large allotments faces narrow access streets that are flanked by grassed verges.

Houses vary from modestly scaled one and two storey timber cottages to contemporary designs of two storeys, constructed of brick or timber. On elevated sites with moderate slopes, dwellings are sited well behind the street frontage, elevated above street level with multiple balconies that capture panoramic ocean views.

Gardens are open, with a mix of planted shrubs and small trees surrounded by turf, preserving available views and accentuating the open parkland atmosphere.

Killcare Heights 4: Open Parkland Hillside - Desired

Desired Character

These should remain low-density residential hillside where existing streetscape quality and amenity are enhanced substantially by further “greening” of gardens and street verges.

Minimise disturbance to natural slopes and any existing trees that are visually-prominent. Retain existing ground levels along all boundaries, and on the steeper slopes, use low-impact construction such as suspended floors and decks rather than extensive cut-and-fill.

Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development along any street or hillside. Locate new buildings behind front setbacks that are similar to their surrounding properties. Provide at least one wide side setback or step the shape of front and rear facades, and plant clusters of trees and shrubs throughout each garden to screen buildings and driveways, as well as to provide shady backdrops to the roadway. Facing the street, emphasise a leafy garden character by gardens and street verges planted with taller trees that are indigenous plus hedges of shrubs, and avoid wide driveways, tall fences or multiple retaining walls.

On hillside that are scenically-prominent, minimise the scale and bulk of buildings by stepping floor-levels to follow natural slopes and by using irregular floorplans to create well-articulated forms. For example, divide floorspace into linked pavilions that are capped by individual roofs and separated by courtyards. Front or rear facades that are taller than neighbouring dwellings should be screened by balconies, verandahs 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. 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 a 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.

Killcare Heights 5: Scenic Buffers - Existing

Existing Character

Farming properties plus a cluster of large residential lots, partially cleared with some redevelopment for rural residential purposes, lining local thoroughfares and tourist routes, and adjacent to national parks.

Ranging from cleared paddocks to an open canopy of partially-cleared woodland, that is surrounded by near-natural woodland backdrops, these properties are scenically prominent and provide distinctive frontages along important thoroughfares.

One and two storey brick houses plus outbuildings have substantial set backs from the main roads, and are either screened by an overhanging canopy of trees, or set behind substantial farmhouse gardens.

Along road frontages, traditional rustic fencing and screen plantings complete the scenically distinctive character of blocks that provide visually-significant buffers between national parks and the coastal residential suburbs.

Killcare Heights 5: 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.

Killcare Heights 6: Scenic Conservation - Existing

Existing Character

Properties that are scenically and ecologically distinctive, including national parks with coastal woodland and heath, plus rural residential allotments that retain woodland in a near-natural state where development has been minimal, facing the main thoroughfares and tourist route.

Across slopes that are located below residential ridgeline, a wooded reserve provides a scenically-distinctive foreground to dwellings, plus a substantial scenic buffer that has exceptional visual prominence from coastal vantage points.

Killcare Heights 6: Scenic Conservation - Desired

Desired Character

These should remain near-natural buffers where the ecological and scenic qualities of Gosford City's distinctive ridgetop reserves are conserved by very-low impact residential development upon existing private properties supported by active environmental management.

Conserve the natural qualities of hillside properties and reserves by minimising further clearing of bushland, and avoid any land-management activities that would compromise the long-term diversity, vigour and habitat value of natural plant communities that are associated with public reserves. New structures should be sited within existing clearings. Only where there is no reasonable alternative to accommodate a new structure upon an existing property, minor clearing might be acceptable in locations with a lesser ecological value, provided that effective long-term management of bushland ecology would not be compromised and where the extent of bushland backdrops that are visible from major roads, waterways or surrounding neighbourhoods would not be diminished. Avoid cut-and-fill construction, and employ very-low impact techniques such as light-weight framed structures with suspended floors and decks. Control existing infestations of noxious or environmental weeds, and progressively repair any existing disturbance to landforms or natural vegetation using bush-regeneration techniques.

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. Regular garden management should maintain separation between canopies and remove accumulated leaf litter by ecological best-practice techniques such as mosaic burns that strike a balance between conservation, scenic quality and public safety.

Minimise the scale and bulk of any new building that would be visible from a road or nearby property. For example, divide floorspace into linked pavilion structures that are surrounded by shady verandahs, and preferably provide parking in separate garages or outdoors. Roofs should be simple hips or gables without elaborate articulation or extensive valleys, gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges and flanked by wide eaves and verandahs that disguise the scale of exterior walls. All verandahs, windows, roofs and suspended floors must be screened to prevent the entry of sparks and flying bushfire 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.

