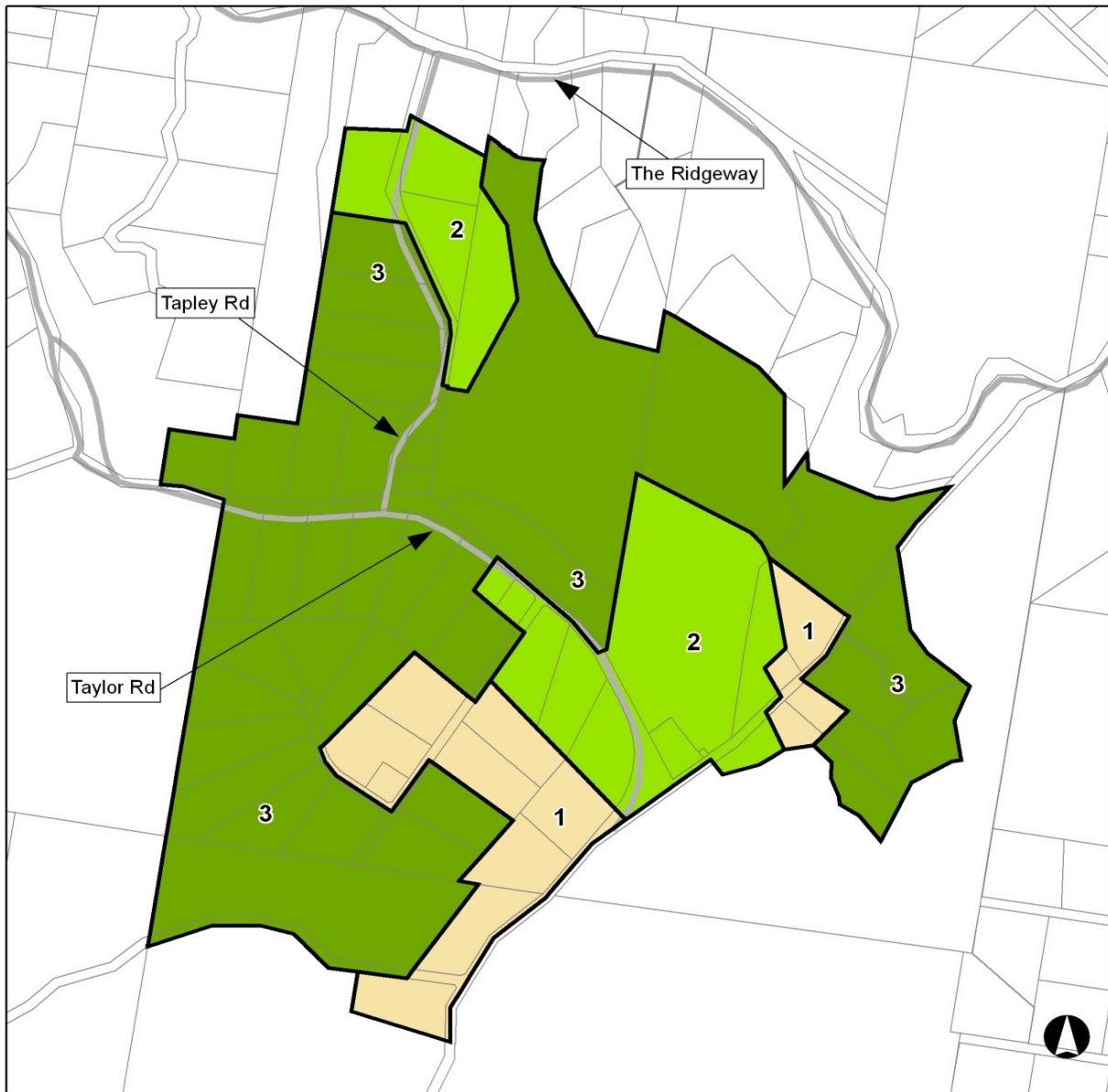




Mount Elliot



-  1: Rural Hamlets
-  2: Scenic Buffer
-  3: Scenic Conservation

Mount Elliot 1: Rural Hamlets - Existing

Existing Character

Situated on gentle to moderate slopes that are concealed from residential areas and major roads, the subdivision of original farms has created clusters of rural-residential properties that range from one to two hectares. Flanking cul-de-

sacs or facing access streets that do not carry through-traffic, these clusters of properties contribute to the scenically-distinctive buffers that separate neighbouring valley suburbs.

Concealed behind forested ridgetops and other rural-residential areas that are scenically-prominent and distinctive, these properties support very low density residential development, and landscape settings are not dominated by buildings.

Although the majority of gentler slopes have been cleared substantially, bushland remnants survive as substantial copses across the steeper slopes, plus corridors and isolated trees along street frontages as well as the side and rear boundaries, often next to forested properties that are a significant bushfire hazard.

Winding along ridgetops, access roads display an informal scenic quality that is typical of traditional rural areas, with pavements that are often narrow or gravelled, flanked by grassed swales or embankments that support tall forest remnants overhanging the roadway, or avenues of deciduous trees and shrubs planted to screen dwellings.

Dwellings are mostly medium to large one and two storey houses, capped by pitched roofs, surrounded by extensive verandahs, and associated with outbuildings.

Dwellings are either set close to the road and screened by a dense mix of planted shady trees and shrubs, or are sited well back from the road frontage and surrounded by extensive gardens or paddocks. Gardens range from an open canopy of bushland remnants above turfed natural slopes, to open paddocks. Along the road frontages, fences are mostly traditional rural-style post-and-rail that complement the informal streetscape character.

Mount Elliot 1: 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.

Mount Elliot 2: Scenic Buffers - Existing

Existing Character

Either small bushland reserves in urban areas, or the subdivision of original valley farms to create broad bands of rural-residential properties that range from one to two hectares, providing bushland or semi-rural backdrops to residential areas and roads that carry substantial volumes of through-traffic.

Situated on gentle to moderate slopes, these areas are predominantly elevated and they contribute to the scenically-distinctive buffers that separate neighbouring valley suburbs.

On the rural properties, although original forest has been cleared substantially from the majority of gentler slopes, bushland remnants survive as substantial copses on the steeper slopes, with corridors and isolated trees along street frontages, side and rear boundaries. Providing scenically-distinctive local landmarks as well as habitat, bushland is often associated with an understorey of noxious or environmental weeds. Generally supporting very low density residential development, these landscape settings are not dominated by buildings.

Dwellings vary widely in size and style, from early-Twentieth Century timber-framed farm cottages, to medium and very large one and two storey brick houses set upon extensive benched foundations. Most dwellings are capped by pitched roofs, surrounded by extensive verandahs, and associated with outbuildings.

Dwellings are either set close to the road, generally screened by a dense mix of planted shady trees and shrubs, or are sited well back from the road frontage and surrounded by extensive gardens or paddocks. Gardens range from an open canopy of bushland remnants above turfed natural slopes, to open paddocks, and natural landforms on some properties have been extensively modified to create terraces that are surrounded by avenues or dense screens of planted shady trees. Along the road frontages, fences are mostly traditional rustic post-and-rail designs that complement the informal streetscape character.

Winding along ridgetops, access roads serving the rural properties display an informal scenic quality that is typical of traditional rural areas, with pavements that are often narrow or gravelled, flanked by grassed swales or embankments supporting tall bushland remnants that overhang the roadway, or avenues of deciduous trees and shrubs planted to screen dwellings that are set close to their street frontage.

Bushland reserves in the urban areas are difficult to sustain and manage due to their high proportion of edge-to-area, and their immediate proximity to residential properties. On most reserves, the understorey suffers from substantial infestations of noxious or environmental weeds.

Mount Elliot 2: 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.

Mount Elliot 3: Scenic Conservation - Existing

Existing Character

Properties that are extensively forested, located along ridgetops plus adjacent slopes that are moderate-to-steep, conserving scenically-distinctive backdrops to residential areas and major thoroughfares, as well as providing buffers that separate neighbouring valley suburbs.

Forming part of Council's reserve network, or private residential properties, these areas remain in a substantially-natural condition, and they conserve indigenous plant communities as well as contributing to fauna corridors that have regional ecological significance.

On private properties, any buildings are confined to very small clearings. Due to the overall vegetation density, all properties are exposed to a significant bushfire hazard.

Public access roads have the informal character of gravelled tracks or narrow pavements that are hemmed between dense stands of tall trees and a natural understorey.

Mount Elliot 3: 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.

