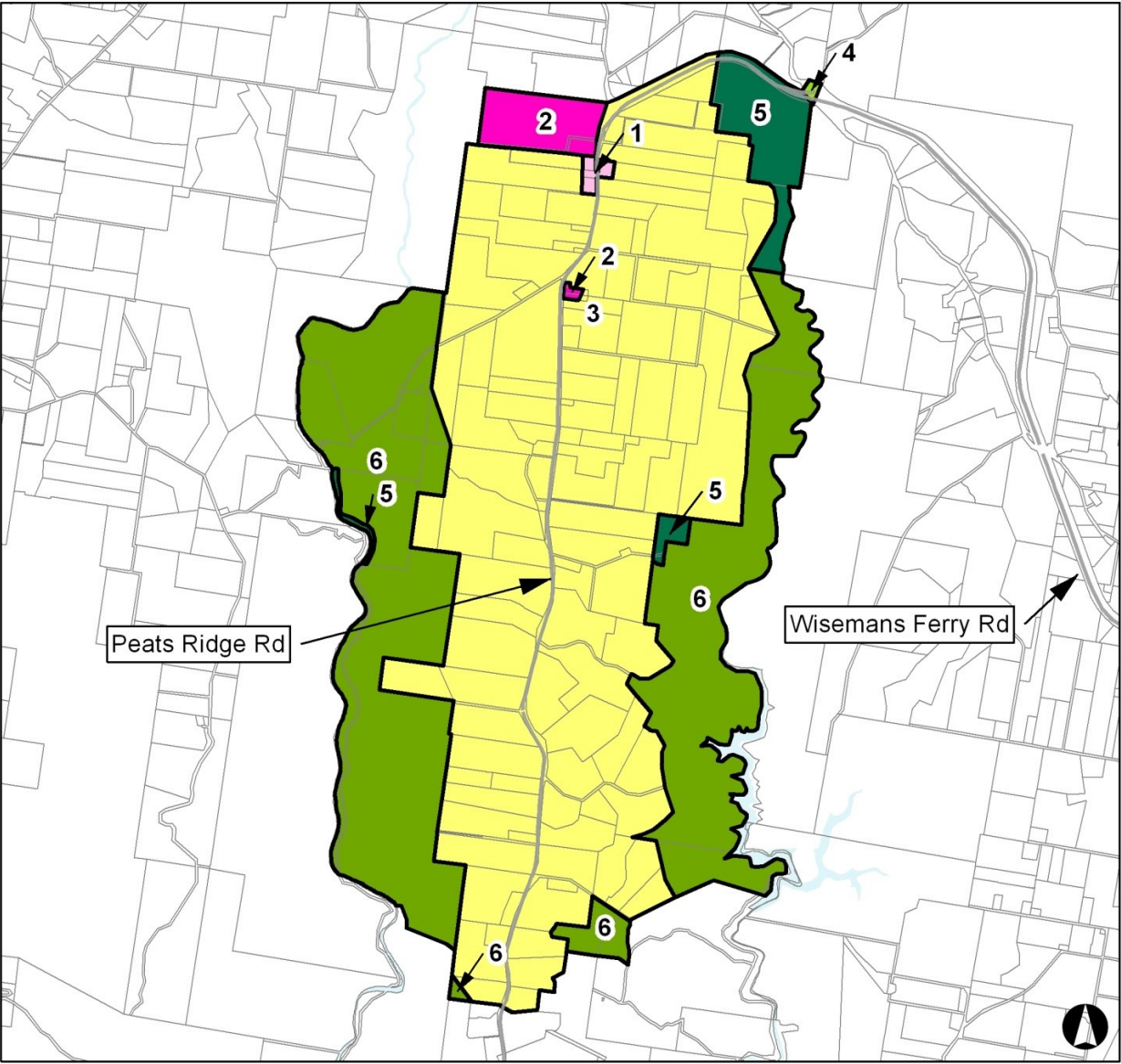


Peats Ridge



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Peats Ridge 1: Village Centres - Existing

Existing Character

In a prominent location on a major tourist route, this well-established cluster of corner stores and businesses provide services to surrounding residents and rural businesses, as well as visitors to this area.

Simple single storey brick shops are sited behind parking forecourts next to the road, while other businesses are located in sheds that are setback from the road and surrounded by open yards. Sheds vary from traditional timber-framed structures clad in corrugated iron to newer industrial-style steel buildings. This centre currently includes a service station.

Most businesses are advertised by an array of signs that are attached to buildings as well as placed along their immediate road frontage.

Peats Ridge 1: Village Centres - Desired

Desired Character

This should remain a low-intensity centre that services residents from the surrounding area as well as visitors, and also may incorporate low-scale accommodation. Future redevelopment, including alterations and additions to existing buildings, should complement the quality of surrounding scenic settings as well as enhancing existing standards of urban design quality along the main street.

Enhance the scenic quality of predominantly-natural settings. Retain existing trees as well as planting new trees to provide avenues along street verges and leafy backdrops to each building. Next to any neighbouring dwelling, provide wide setbacks as buffers that accommodate a screen of existing or new trees.

Maximise pedestrian amenity along all street frontages. Provide shop-windows across almost the entire frontage of each retail building, protected from sun and weather by awnings or lightly-framed colonnades and balconies that sit next to kerb-side parking. Adjust building forms to maximise midday sunlight along the footpath, and encourage outdoor seating in locations that are sunny, sheltered and commercially-visible. Maintain a modest pedestrian-friendly scale by screening any second storey facing the street with terraces or balconies. Provide shady front gardens for any residential buildings, together with a traditional “street address” that includes verandahs and living rooms or front doors which are visible from the road. For all buildings, avoid wide garages that would visually-dominate any facade or interrupt pedestrian activity along street frontages, and also conceal all storage areas from streets.

Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development or uniform building heights along any street. Vary both the shape and height of all visible facades, with roofs and parapet heights that step from one building to the next, and street corners that are emphasised by slightly-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.

Disguise the scale and bulk of new building works. All visible facades should employ extensive windows that are shaded by wide eaves, lightly-framed balconies, verandahs or exterior sunshades, together with painted finishes and some board or sheet cladding rather than expanses of plain masonry. Upper storeys should provide an extra setback from the walls below, or a screen of balconies and verandahs. Side and rear facades should match the design quality of the street frontage.

Provide parking in locations that are appropriate for a small retail village. In addition to kerbside parking, locate additional off-street parking to the rear of buildings, accessed by unobtrusive vehicle entrances that do not interrupt the continuity of shopfronts and 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.

Peats Ridge 2: Community Facilities + Schools - Existing

Existing Character

Fronting major tourist routes, significant services for the surrounding residential community are provided by a school

and a privately-owned golf course.

The school property has been substantially-cleared of original vegetation, but grounds include tall planted trees that are a local landmark and may have some local historical significance. On the golf course, corridors of bushland remnants are retained between fairways and along property boundaries.

The school is a timber-framed structure that dates from the early-to-mid Twentieth Century, and that maintains links to agricultural traditions of the surrounding area. Club buildings are simple brick structures that are located next to substantial carparking areas.

Peats Ridge 2: Community Facilities + Schools - Desired

Desired Character

These properties should continue to provide educational and recreation services according to needs of local and / or regional populations. The scenic and civic qualities of prominent vegetated backdrops to Gosford City's major roads and residential areas should be protected as well as enhanced by future development of buildings, infrastructure and landscaping, as well as by appropriate open space management.

Protect the habitat or scenic values of existing trees by retaining natural slopes and avoiding further clearing of canopy, particularly mature bushland remnants along any slope or road frontage that are scenically-prominent.

Enhance the recreation and scenic potentials of landscaped areas and playing fields by co-ordinated 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.

Ensure that new developments (including alterations to existing buildings and infrastructure works) do not dominate natural and streetscape settings. Surround buildings with landscaped areas that maintain the scenic quality of prominent bushland backdrops or existing corridors of planted trees. Ensure that height and siting of new structures preserve the current 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 street boundaries, provide for surveillance and safety by planting hedges or by using fences that are low or see-through.

Promote high levels of visible activity around buildings by adapting elements of traditional shopping villages, such as extensive windows and building entrances which are located to reveal indoor activity, as well as footpaths, verandahs or colonnades that concentrate pedestrian movements around clearly-identified building entrances, carparks and surrounding streets.

Facing any road, avoid the appearance of long buildings or uniform height-structures. Use well-articulated building forms, such as a series of linked pavilion structures that are capped by individual roofs and surrounded by landscaped courtyards. For visually-prominent facades, vary the shape and height of walls to identify major entrances, 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.

Peats Ridge 3: Agricultural Plateau and Hillsides - Existing

Existing Character

Flanking major tourist routes as well as local roads, these areas were substantially cleared of their original vegetation to accommodate a variety of rural activities that originally included traditional horticulture and livestocking.

Situated upon gentle to moderate slopes, these areas are part of larger private land holdings which also include areas of bushland located on steeper slopes that are not suitable for agricultural uses. Along the boundaries of many properties and paddock fencelines, narrow rows of bushland remnants contribute to the distinctive rural character of these areas. However, some properties are no longer actively managed for agriculture, and their scenic landscape character has begun to deteriorate as cleared paddocks are overrun by environmental weeds.

Over recent years, many properties have been converted to capital-intensive uses such as horse studs, shed-based poultry farms, hot-house flower growing, mineral water-wells and large rural dwellings. The traditional rural character of some open landscapes is being transformed by large sheds and elaborate front fences that are associated with these new uses. In addition to these uses, there is considerable interest in tourist-related developments which currently are not a permissible land-use, and there remains the possibility that State Government planning policies will permit future development of quarries.

Typically, dwellings in these areas are not visually- or scenically-intrusive. Although buildings vary widely in size and style from mid-Twentieth Century timber-framed cottages to large one and two storey brick houses, they tend to be sited well back from road frontages, or are screened by substantial bands of bushland remnants or by planted front gardens.

Quarrying of hard rock and sands occurs on a number of former agricultural properties according to state government planning policies and regulations. Visual effects of these intensive developments appear to be associated with impacts upon the natural environment.

Peats Ridge 3: Agricultural Plateau and Hillsides - Desired

Desired Character

These areas should remain productive rural landscapes that accommodate broad-hectare agricultural or livestock activities, together with a scattering of residential and small-scale tourist activities that do not interfere with the preferred primary-productive uses. Future development and land management, including major developments such as extractive industries, should not compromise scenically-distinctive qualities of backdrops to Gosford City's major tourist routes.

Conserve scenic qualities and habitat values by retaining natural slopes and visible rock outcrops, as well as by preventing further fragmentation of the existing bushland canopy. Conserve existing bushland remnants that provide scenically-prominent backdrops to any road or nearby property, particularly trees that are located along road verges and frontages, as well as along the side and rear boundaries to each property. Screen any large existing structures as well as restoring the desired pattern of "green" boundaries by planting new trees that are predominantly-indigenous. Noxious or environmental weeds must not be planted, and existing infestations should be controlled. Concentrate new buildings and works within existing clearings, away from prominent ridgelines, watercourses or any areas that are prone to flooding. Use low-impact framed construction with suspended floors rather than masonry structures that require extensive cut-and-fill, particularly on visually-prominent slopes or next to bushland.

Achieve bushfire asset protection zones preferably by thinning the canopy to establish breaks between existing trees. Locate new dwellings and accommodation buildings to avoid extensive additional clearing, and use fire-resistant design and construction techniques for all new structures as well as effective land management. Screen all verandahs, windows and suspended floors to exclude bushfire embers and sparks.

Complement the existing informal landscape quality of buildings scattered across paddocks or slopes that are surrounded by trees. Locate all new buildings and works (other than roadside stalls) well back from road frontages, and vary both siting and form of adjacent structures in order to avoid the appearance of continuous walls of development or visually-dense clusters of buildings. Promote the natural or informal scenic qualities of existing road verges and frontages by avoiding opaque fences, urban-style entrance walls, extensive landfilling or terracing, and large commercial signs. Conceal wastewater treatment systems, and ensure that any discharges would not compromise the composition or scenic quality of bushland, encourage weed growth, or affect water quality within any watercourse.

Ensure that new buildings would not visually-dominate any property within these scenically-prominent settings. Minimise scale and bulk by using strongly-articulated forms, such as stepped floor-levels that follow natural slopes, and irregular floorplans, such as linked pavilions that are capped by individual roofs and separated by landscaped courtyards. Roofs should be simple forms without elaborate articulation, with wide eaves plus gentle pitches. Use extensive windows and shady verandahs, as well as a variety of exterior finishes and cladding rather than expanses of plain masonry or metal sheeting. Ensure that outbuildings are compatible with scale and design quality of the principal structures upon any property by using similar roof pitches and eaves, plus appropriate exterior materials and finishes.

Peats Ridge 4: Scenic Buffers (Private Properties) - Existing

Existing Character

Visible from major tourist routes, these areas are moderate-to-steeply sloping portions of rural properties which are not suitable for primary production.

Ranging in condition from partly-modified to natural, these areas accommodate bushland and include numerous watercourses. They complement the scenic and ecological values of nearby bushland reserves, and significantly expand Gosford City's natural asset base as well as contributing to scenic qualities of the City's peri-urban areas.

Peats Ridge 4: Scenic Buffers (Private Properties) - Desired

Desired Character

These should remain buffers between farming properties and bushland reserves, where existing natural and scenic qualities of backdrops to Gosford City's major tourist routes would not be compromised by further clearing, by intensive development that would be visually-intrusive, or inappropriate land management.

Conserve natural scenic qualities and habitat values by maintaining natural slopes, rock outcrops, stream banks, and existing bushland that includes mangroves and marshes along shorelines. Minimise further clearing by concentrating new buildings and works within existing clearings, away from scenically-prominent foreshores or hillsides, as well as away from watercourses and low-lying areas that are prone to flooding. Where further clearing cannot be avoided, conserve bushland in blocks that have a low proportion of perimeter-to-area in order to promote sustainable long-term management, in locations that maintain existing scenic quality and that also provide effective habitat for native fauna. Avoid exotic trees as well as any identified noxious or environmental weeds, and control any existing infestations. Use low-impact framed construction with suspended floors rather than masonry structures that would require extensive additional cut-and-fill, particularly on visually-prominent slopes or next to bushland.

Achieve bushfire asset protection zones preferably by thinning the canopy to establish breaks between existing trees. Locate new dwellings and accommodation buildings to avoid extensive additional clearing, and use fire-resistant design and construction techniques for all new structures together with effective land management to reduce bushfire hazard. Screen all verandahs, windows and suspended floors to exclude bushfire embers and sparks.

Complement the scenically-distinctive quality of bushland backdrops. Vary both the siting and form of adjacent structures to avoid the appearance of continuous walls of development or visually-dense clusters of buildings. Avoid tall opaque fences and retaining walls, as well as wide terraces and driveways that would be scenically-intrusive. Conceal wastewater treatment systems and ensure that any discharges would not compromise the composition or scenic quality of bushland, encourage weed growth, or affect water quality within any stream.

Ensure that new buildings would not visually-dominate any scenically-prominent backdrop to the River or major tourist route. Minimise scale and bulk by using strongly-articulated forms, such as stepped floor-levels that follow natural slopes, and irregular floorplans, such as linked pavilions that are capped by individual roofs and separated by landscaped courtyards. Roofs should be simple forms without elaborate articulation, with wide eaves plus gentle pitches to minimise height and scale of each building. Use extensive windows and shady verandahs, as well as a variety of exterior finishes and cladding, rather than expanses of plain masonry or metal sheeting. Ensure that outbuildings are compatible with scale and design quality of the principal structures upon any property by using similar roof pitches and eaves, together with complementary exterior materials and finishes.

Peats Ridge 5: Scenic Buffers (Reserves) - Existing

Existing Character

Adjacent to bushland on sloping portions of rural properties, these isolated reserves contribute to the continuity of bushland at Gosford City's western edge, enhancing habitat and linkages together with scenic quality of the surrounding rural areas that are visible from major tourist routes.

For these isolated parcels of remnant bushland, management over the long term will be complicated and their natural integrity may be compromised by the incursion of environmental or noxious weeds.

Peats Ridge 5: Scenic Buffers (Reserves) - Desired

Desired Character

These isolated reserves should remain near-natural buffers to surrounding rural areas, where active environmental management enhances the natural and scenic qualities of bushland backdrops that are visible from Gosford City's major tourist routes.

Conserve existing natural qualities by retaining existing slopes and minimising further clearing of natural vegetation. Protect the long-term diversity, vigour and habitat value of natural plant communities in these reserves by appropriate design and construction for infrastructure works, and by effective land-management. Control any infestations of noxious or environmental weeds, and progressively repair any existing disturbance to landforms or bushland with natural bush-regeneration techniques. Employ ecological best-practice for bushfire hazard reduction in order to strike a balance between environmental quality and public safety.

Advise surrounding residential property owners about the natural and scenic values of bushland and bushland remnants within these reserves, encouraging private management of gardens to prevent the spread of noxious or environmental weeds. Prosecute illicit dumping of garden waste or rubbish.

Peats Ridge 6: Scenic Conservation - Existing

Existing Character

These natural plateau and ridgetop areas include National Parks and major local reserves.

Providing expansive natural backdrops to rural areas and tourist routes, these areas are scenically- and ecologically-significant, and provide a landscape barrier to the westwards expansion of urban development within the Central Coast region.

These areas also conserve extensive aboriginal cultural artefacts and values.

Peats Ridge 6: Scenic Conservation - Desired

Desired Character

These areas should predominantly remain as conservation or water reserves that are cornerstones of Gosford City's environmental identity, preserving natural and scenic features that are important elements of Aboriginal heritage, as well as scattered remains of the early colonial settlement.

Conserve the long-term diversity, vigour and habitat value of natural plant communities within reserves by preventing development, land-management or activities that would be intensive or intrusive. Maintain natural slopes, rock outcrops, watercourses and stream banks, as well as all existing bushland including mangroves and marshes near foreshores. Avoid further clearing by confining new works to existing clearings, and away from scenically-prominent foreshores, hillsides or road frontages, as well as away from watercourses and low-lying areas that are prone to flooding. Where clearing cannot be avoided, locate works to minimise natural and scenic impacts. Use low-impact framed construction with suspended floors rather than masonry structures that would require extensive additional cut-and-fill, particularly on visually-prominent slopes or next to bushland.

Apply best-practice ecological management techniques to remove noxious and environmental weeds, as well as for bushfire hazard reduction works that strike a balance between environmental quality and public safety.

Conserve Aboriginal artefacts and cultural sites.

