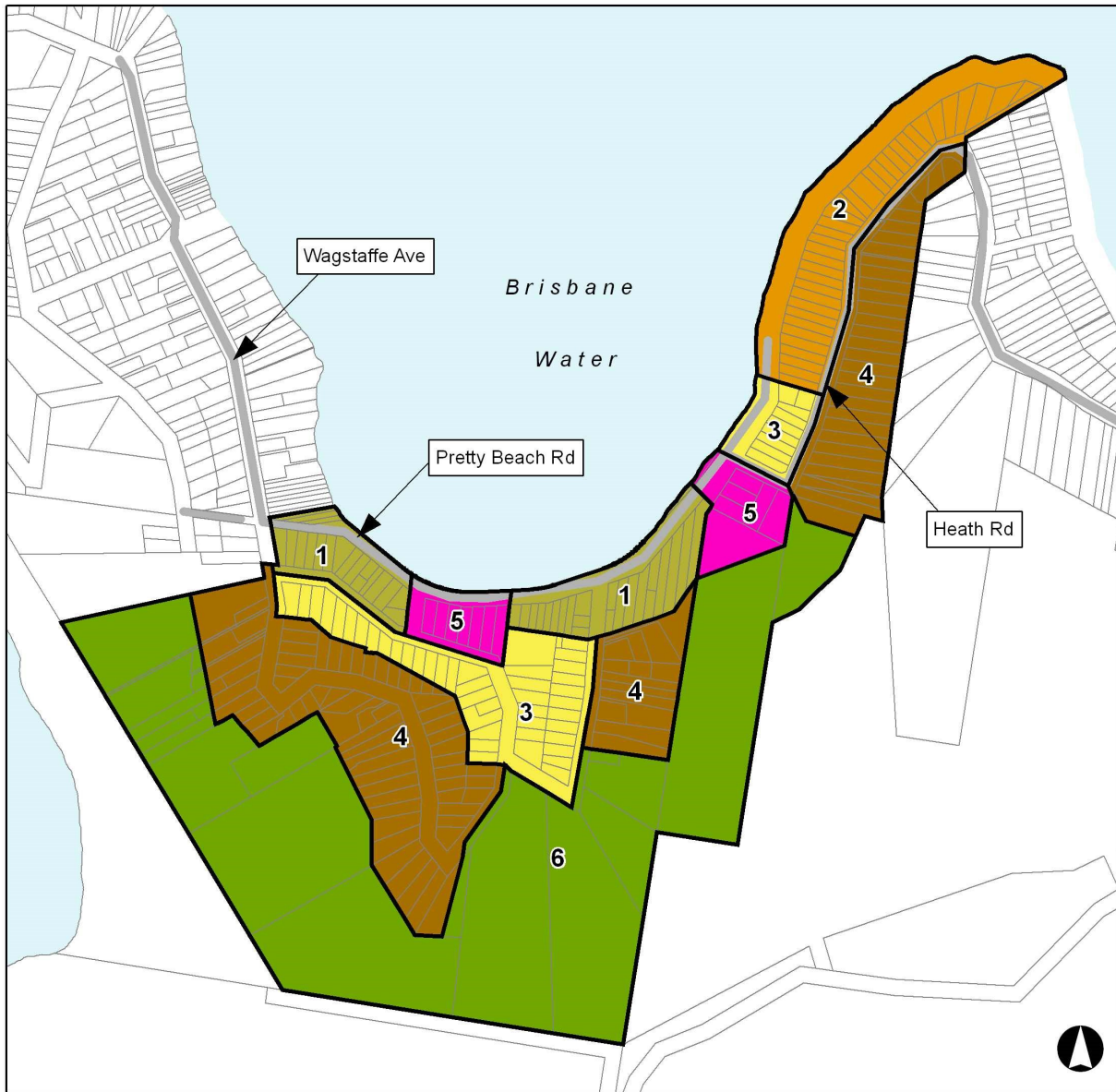


Pretty Beach



-  1: Cottage Foreshores
-  2: Wooded Headland
-  3: Prominent Open Hillside
-  4: Woodland Hillside
-  5: Community Centres & Schools
-  6: Scenic Conservation

Pretty Beach 1: Cottage Foreshore - Existing

Existing Character

Largely cleared of original vegetation, small to medium lots fronting the suburban main road, opposite an open foreshore reserve, forming a waterfront that is visually-prominent as well as scenically distinctive.

Houses are sited close to the street, behind a wide grassed verge, and vary from traditional early-to-mid Twentieth Century cottages or bungalows that are modestly-scaled single storey timber-framed buildings, to medium-sized brick or timber houses of two storeys and a few recently-completed dual occupancy developments.

Clusters of traditional cottages on narrow fronted lots retain an historically-distinctive link with the original residential settlement, and vary in their condition from heritage restorations to substantially-modified buildings that nevertheless retain their original architectural form, scale and light-weight cladding.

Set close to neighbouring properties, houses form a waterfront wall 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.

Traditional cottages rely upon on-street parking or freestanding garages that are constructed at the street frontage or to the rear of dwellings.

The small garden areas are open, with turf and a scattering of small shrubs surrounded by low fences.

The foreshore road sits on reclaimed land, behind a seawall. Tidal foreshores include clusters of mangroves and seagrass beds.

Pretty Beach 1: Cottage Foreshore - 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. 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.

Pretty Beach 2: Wooded Headland - Existing

Existing Character

Partly cleared of original vegetation, an elevated wooded foreshore with small to medium lots is set behind an unformed road reserve, adjoining wooded hillsides and providing a scenically-prominent waterfront backdrop that is visible from the waterway, nearby centres and residential areas as well as the suburban main road and tourist route.

Along that road, kerbing and a footpath are flanked by allotments on gentle to moderate slopes, with panoramic waterway views beneath the woodland canopy.

To capture panoramic views, houses have been sited close to the street frontage but are set below street level. Dwellings vary from traditional early-to-mid Twentieth Century cottages or bungalows that are modestly-scaled single storey timber-framed buildings, to medium-sized architecturally-designed timber houses of two storeys that step down the hillside and blend with their surroundings.

Substantial setbacks from the foreshore together with front and occasional side setbacks provide space for conservation of a scenically-distinctive open canopy of woodland remnants. Consistent street front setbacks provide small front gardens, either level areas of turf planted with shrubs and trees or sloping banks with a mix of planted natives and conserved remnants, with carports and garages built along the street frontage. Foreshore gardens vary from an open understorey of planted shrubs and turf below a woodland canopy, to a screen of woodland.

Pretty Beach 2: Wooded Headland - 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 prominent coastal landmarks 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 headland properties plus the unmade road reserve 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, 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 the street or foreshores 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 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. 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 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.

Pretty Beach 3: Prominent Open Hillsides - Existing

Existing Character

Largely cleared of original vegetation, small to medium-sized lots with panoramic views are situated below wooded hillsides and above the foreshore.

Either facing narrow access streets that are flanked by wide grassed verges, or lining the suburban main road, allotments on gentle to moderate slopes have panoramic waterway views.

Houses are sited to capture views, and vary from traditional early-to-mid Twentieth Century cottages or bungalows that are modestly-scaled single storey timber-framed buildings, to medium-sized brick houses of two storeys.

Siting of dwellings varies, retaining garden areas to the front, rear and sometimes the side for turfed areas that are planted with shrubs and trees, and conserving woodland remnants around the older cottages. Garages are either sited beside the street as open platforms, as free-standing structures, or are attached to dwellings.

The foreshore road sits on reclaimed land behind a low seawall, flanked by a wide grassed verge and leading to a public boat-ramp.

Pretty Beach 3: Prominent Open Hillsides - Desired

Desired Character

This prominent backdrop to Gosford City's waterways and major roads should become a leafy low-density residential hillside, where new developments do not dominate their landscape setting, and improved standards of scenic-and-urban design quality are achieved by leafy hillside gardens around each dwelling.

Enhance the scenic potential of cleared hillside properties and road verges by retaining existing natural slopes in gardens and along street verges. Plant clusters of trees and shrubs throughout each garden to screen buildings and driveways, as well as to provide shady backdrops to roadways. Facing each street or any vantage points located downhill, emphasise a leafy garden character by planting taller trees that are indigenous plus hedges of shrubs, and avoid tall retaining walls, elevated structures including terraces or pools, and steep driveways that would visibly compromise the desired leafy hillside character. In any garden that is close to a bushland reserve, do not plant identified noxious or environmental weeds.

Avoid disturbing natural slopes by 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 would blend with the desired leafy setting. Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development along any street or hillside by locating buildings behind front or rear setbacks that appear similar to their 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 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, 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. 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 dwellings 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.

Pretty Beach 4: Woodland Hillsides - Existing

Existing Character

Residential subdivisions of medium to large lots, on wooded hillsides with panoramic waterway views, merging with a

ridgetop national park reserve, and forming a scenically-distinctive backdrop to the waterway, to village centres and residential areas.

Fronting either a main road with formed edges and substantial retaining walls, or narrow access streets that are flanked by swales and sloping verges, an irregular pattern of lots on moderate to steep slopes enjoys panoramic waterviews through the trees and above roofs of dwellings on slopes below. Along access streets and the main road, water views are available either above or beside the smaller dwellings.

On lots above the street, houses are set well back and elevated to capture views through the canopy, or on lots that fall from the street, houses are set below street level but with small front setbacks.

Dwellings vary from traditional early-to-mid Twentieth Century cottages or bungalows that are modestly-scaled single storey timber-framed buildings to medium-sized pole homes of two to three stepped storeys.

Siting of dwellings varies, with garden areas large enough to conserve woodland that varies from an open canopy of scattered remnants to a continuous canopy overhanging a partly-modified natural understorey and screening dwellings.

Garages are generally open carports sited beside the street, free-standing or attached to dwellings that are sited below the street, or driveway access up to undercroft carports beneath dwellings sited above street level. Gardens vary from an open understorey of planted shrubs and turf below the woodland canopy, to partly-modified woodland.

Pretty Beach 4: Woodland Hillsides - 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.

Pretty Beach 5: Community Centres + Schools - Existing

Existing Character

Facing the main access road and separated from the immediate foreshore, two separate areas provide places for community gatherings as well as community facilities.

A medium-sized local reserve with a scattering of small shady trees includes a children's playground plus tennis courts, opposite an open foreshore with a public wharf.

Backed by a densely wooded hillside, a public school incorporating both permanent and demountable buildings is located opposite a foreshore reserve that includes a swimming enclosure and changing sheds.

Pretty Beach 5: Community Centres + Schools - 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 by retaining natural slopes and by avoiding further fragmentation of the tree canopy, particularly mature bushland trees along any slope or road frontage that provide scenically-prominent backdrops.

Enhance the recreation and scenic potentials of playing areas by masterplanned improvements that satisfy a wide range of recreation needs, including clustered shelter plantings around existing courts and playgrounds, 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.

Pretty Beach 6: Scenic Conservation - Existing

Existing Character

A continuous ridgetop national park reserve, supporting undisturbed woodland that is linked to wooded residential hillsides. Forming a backdrop to the residential suburb, this reserve is both scenically and ecologically distinctive, and

a prominent feature visible from the waterway, major tourist routes and surrounding residential areas.

Large residential lots are located on moderate to steep slopes in a largely undisturbed woodland setting below a ridgetop national park reserve, overlooking wooded residential footslopes and the coastal waterway, contributing to scenic and ecological values of the undeveloped ridgetop that is visible from the waterway and surrounding residential areas.

Pretty Beach 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.

