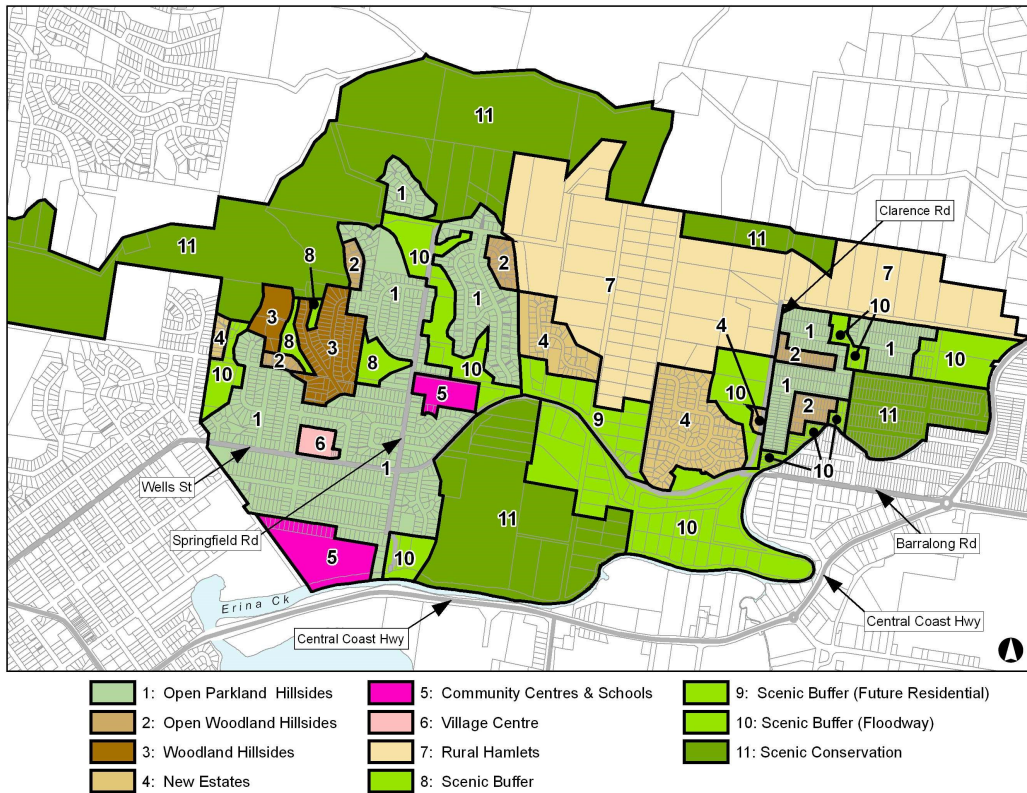


Springfield



Springfield 1: Open Parkland Hillside - Existing

Existing Character

Residential neighbourhoods that are situated on gentle to moderate slopes almost entirely cleared of their original vegetation, where gardens that have been planted with shrubs and small trees are maturing, creating a leafy but open parkland character that contributes to the quality of local streetscapes.

Allotments are predominantly medium-sized but vary in shape, facing streets with narrow kerbed pavements, flanked by wide turfed verges that extend across front gardens without fences. Overlooking the Erina Creek floodplain, an old subdivision has small narrow allotments facing narrow streets that are mostly flanked by wide unformed verges.

Houses are a mix of timber-framed bungalows dating from the 1950's and 60's, plus newer brick-and-tile buildings that are generally medium-sized, of single or double storey construction and elevated above basement garages on the steeper slopes. On the wider allotments, bungalows in particular have wide side setbacks for driveways to rear garages, while the newer buildings are sited close to their neighbours. The appearance of streets that are lined by near-continuous walls of buildings is avoided by the overall variety of building designs and front setbacks combined with leafy front gardens.

Generally, the newer houses have broad street facades that are often dominated by wide garages. The older bungalows are modestly-scaled buildings, capped by pitched roofs with shady eaves, and they incorporate traditional front facades with living rooms, verandahs or glazed sunrooms.

Occasionally, front or rear gardens accommodate isolated tall bushland remnants that provide distinctive local landmarks.

Springfield 1: Open Parkland Hillside - Desired

Desired Character

These should remain low-density residential hillsides 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 hillsides 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.

Springfield 2: Open Woodland Hillsides - Existing

Existing Character

Low density residential neighbourhoods in elevated locations that are generally visually-prominent, located adjacent to bushland reserves, semi-rural properties or overlooking the Erina Creek floodplain. On slopes that range from gentle to steep, original vegetation has been thinned or cleared from street frontages, but a scattered bushland canopy survives, partly-screening buildings and forming a scenically-distinctive backdrop that is visible from major roads, waterways and surrounding residential areas.

Allotments are mostly medium-sized, facing medium-width paved streets flanked by kerbing, with grassed verges extending across front gardens that have been substantially cleared of original vegetation. Adjacent to Erina Creek, an old subdivision has smaller narrow fronted lots flanking narrow streets with broad unformed verges.

In all of these neighbourhoods, street verges and front gardens are dotted with a variety of planted trees plus isolated bushland remnants, partly-screening buildings and contributing to the leafy quality of streetscapes. Along most rear boundaries, corridors or copses of tall bushland remnants are visible above rooftops, providing visually-prominent neighbourhood features and contributing to the scenic quality of neighbouring bushland that is visible from surrounding areas.

Houses are mostly modestly-scaled one or two storey dwellings set into hillsides, sometimes elevated above basement garages, and of project-style brick construction or clad with weatherboards. Siting varies according to slope and to the design of each dwelling, producing varied streetscapes, notably on the steeper slopes that retain denser vegetation. Street facades incorporate a traditional mix of balconies and verandahs, living rooms and entrances.

Springfield 2: Open Woodland Hillsides - Desired

Desired Character

These should remain low-density residential areas where the existing scenic quality and amenity of prominent hillsides are enhanced substantially by further “greening” of gardens and street verges in order to screen new development and to complement the open bushland canopy that surrounds most dwellings.

Maintain the semi-natural character of hillsides by retaining existing natural slopes throughout gardens and along street verges, and by conserving bushland trees that are visually-prominent features. Complement the established

canopy by planting trees and shrubs that are predominantly indigenous throughout all garden areas and along street verges. Do not plant identified noxious or environmental weeds in any garden that is close to a bushland reserve. Facing all boundaries, emphasise a leafy garden character by avoiding tall retaining walls, elevated structures such as terraces or pools, and steep driveways that would visibly compromise the leafy 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 desired bushy setting. Avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development along any street or hillside by locating buildings behind front and rear setbacks 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 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. 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.

Springfield 3: Woodland Hillsides - Existing

Existing Character

Elevated hillside locations where bushland has been thinned or partly cleared, where low density residential development is sheltered beneath a near-continuous canopy of forest remnants that extend across both front and rear gardens. Substantially concealing buildings, this forest canopy provides scenically-distinctive backdrops that are visible from major roads, centres, waterways and surrounding residential areas, as well as enhancing the natural qualities of neighbouring bushland reserves that are scenically- and ecologically-significant.

Allotments are generally medium-sized, facing winding access streets that are paved, flanked by kerbing and grassed verges that extend into front gardens accommodating tall canopy trees that partly-screen houses from street frontages as well as immediate neighbours.

Dwellings vary from one to two storeys, and are medium-to-large. Designs and siting range from the regular alignment of conventional brick-and-tile structures located on gentler slopes to irregular siting of pole-structures elevated above steeper slopes.

Gardens generally have a cleared understorey, and are mostly planted with turf and shrubs beneath the bushland canopy. On the steeper slopes, there are scattered rock outcrops, and decks or balconies provide outdoor living space that is directly accessible from indoors. Parking is provided in carports located at the street frontage or in basement garages accessed via driveways that are often very steep.

Springfield 3: 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.

Springfield 4: New Estate - Existing

Existing Character

A variety of modern subdivisions, either recently-completed or currently under construction, on gentle to steep slopes that often have local valley views, and sometimes forming backdrops that are clearly visible from surrounding residential areas. Almost entirely cleared of original vegetation, these areas have small-to-medium sized allotments that accommodate small gardens around large new project-style dwellings, resulting in landscape settings that are dominated by brick-and-tile buildings plus paved roadways. Along some ridgelines, thin corridors of isolated bushland remnants provide local landmarks that are scenically-prominent, but that are unlikely to survive over the medium term.

Subdivisions incorporate irregular networks of access-streets and cul-de-sacs, sometimes curved to follow topographic contours, flanked by kerbing and narrow grassed verges that extend into open front gardens on the gentler slopes. Recently-constructed houses range from medium to large, constructed upon benched platforms or above tall basement walls, sited close to neighbouring buildings and forming near-continuous walls of development along hillsides and enclosing streets. Front facades are frequently dominated by wide garages and driveways.

Springfield 4: New Estate - Desired

Desired Character

These should become leafy low-density residential neighbourhoods where high standards of streetscape, urban design quality and amenity are achieved by dwellings that are set behind shady street trees and surrounded by lush gardens.

Avoid disturbing natural slopes along boundaries, and locate buildings behind front setbacks that are similar to their surrounding properties. Also avoid the appearance of a continuous wall of development along any street by providing at least one wide side setback or by stepping 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 roadways. On

properties near any bushland reserve, garden plantings must not include any identified noxious or environmental weeds. Front gardens and street verges should include some taller trees that are indigenous. A leafy garden character should be emphasised by limiting the width of driveways, and using front fences that are low or see-through, or by planting hedges of shrubs.

Minimise the scale and bulk of buildings by floor-levels that step to follow natural slopes and by irregular floorplans that create well-articulated forms. 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.

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.

Springfield 5: Community Centres + Schools - Existing

Existing Character

One very large reserve plus a primary school, providing significant gathering places for the community, as well as green backdrops that contribute to the scenic or civic qualities of foreshores and surrounding residential areas.

The landscape character of these properties varies from open playing fields to a campus of school and community buildings that are surrounded by substantial open spaces where corridors and copses of tall trees provide scenically-prominent shady backdrops.

The school is a modern campus-style development and extensions are currently under construction. Pavilion-style buildings of one and two storeys are surrounded by playing fields and garden areas. Flanking the main school entrance, a community building and mural demonstrate significant involvement by residents in local affairs. Parking for teachers and residents is located on-street, but does not affect neighbouring residential properties.

Adjoining a major creek, a substantial series of playing fields creates an open backdrop to nearby residential areas, accommodating significant week-end gatherings and sporting events. Along the creek shores, a corridor of bushland remnants provides a scenically-distinctive backdrop to these playing fields.

Springfield 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, 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.

Springfield 6: Village Centre - Existing

Existing Character

In a highly-visible corner location facing a major local thoroughfare, a single storey building accommodates several shops flanking an indoor arcade, overlooking playing fields set into a hillside that has been cleared entirely of original vegetation.

Displaying a low standard of civic design, this building is set behind a parking forecourt and contains a number of operating shops with excellent street exposure, as well as other shops that are concealed and currently are not tenanted.

Springfield 6: Village Centre - Desired

Desired Character

This should remain a low-intensity centre that services primarily residents from the surrounding suburb but that also might include 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.

Springfield 7: Rural Hamlets - Existing

Existing Character

Situated on gentle to moderate slopes that are concealed from residential areas and major roads, rural-residential properties ranging from one to two hectares are clustered along cul-de-sacs, contributing to the extent and the scenic quality of non-urban lands that separate neighbouring residential suburbs.

Supporting very low density residential development, these properties accommodate a range of buildings that do not dominate their landscape settings. The majority of gentler slopes have been cleared substantially, but bushland remnants survive as substantial copses and corridors across the steeper slopes and along street frontages as well as along side and rear boundaries, often next to bushland reserves or properties that are a significant bushfire hazard.

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, and overhung by tall forest remnants as well as avenues of deciduous trees and shrubs.

Houses are mostly medium to large, one or two storeys and capped by pitched roofs, surrounded by extensive verandahs plus scattered outbuildings.

Houses are either set close to the road and screened by a dense mix of planted shady trees and shrubs, or sited well back 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, complementing the informal streetscape character.

Springfield 7: 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.

Springfield 8: Scenic Buffers - Existing

Existing Character

Narrow ridgetop reserves of near-natural bushland on moderate to steep slopes that extend from the principal coastal reserves, passing between residential subdivisions and providing scenically-prominent backdrops to residential areas, as well as contributing to the quality of major scenic backdrops that are visible from waterways, major roads and surrounding suburbs.

These corridors of remnant bushland have a high ratio of edge-to-area that compromises their ecological integrity and complicates bushland management over the long term, with natural understoreys exposed to the impacts of rubbish, unauthorised clearing for recreation access, and incursion by environmental or noxious weeds.

Springfield 8: Scenic Buffers - Desired

Desired Character

These ribbon reserves should remain near-natural buffers to surrounding urban areas, where active environmental management enhances the natural and scenic qualities of bushland backdrops that are visible from Gosford City's waterways, major roads and surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

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

Where pedestrian desire lines are significant, provide low-impact pathways and boardwalks.

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

Springfield 9: Scenic Buffer (Future Residential) - Existing

Existing Character

Rural-residential properties that have been substantially cleared of original vegetation, located on gentle to moderate slopes facing a major local thoroughfare, as well as contributing to scenically-distinctive buffers between residential areas.

Zoned for urban development, future development of these areas offers the opportunity to achieve best-practice environmental planning and urban design.

Springfield 9: Scenic Buffer (Future Residential) - Desired

Desired Character

Future low-density residential development of these areas should maintain existing scenic and natural qualities of these distinctive backdrops to urban areas and major roads, as well as achieving the highest standards of urban and scenic design.

Maintain existing natural and scenic qualities of these hillside properties by retaining bushland in locations that are scenically-prominent, particularly as backdrops along ridges and upper slopes, plus front and side boundaries. Conserve bushland in parcels that protect any threatened plants and maintain a network of effective habitat for native fauna, configurations with a low proportion of perimeter to area to enable sustainable long-term management. Near any stream, maintain natural slopes and provide buffers that are wide enough to protect the stability of banks, conserve buffers of existing vegetation and protect the safety of future properties. Where stream banks have been cleared, prevent further erosion by re-contouring disturbed landforms and restoring a buffer of indigenous plants.

For residential subdivisions, appropriate planning and construction should conserve any bushland remnants along street verges, local reserves and the rear boundaries of future allotments. Individual allotments should be large enough to accommodate clusters of shady trees around future dwellings, particularly in front gardens as leafy backdrops to local streets.

Future residential development should avoid the appearance of continuous walls of buildings along any street or hillside by providing each dwelling with at least one wide side setback, or by stepping the shape of front and rear facades to create courtyards that can accommodate shady trees. The scale and bulk of dwellings should be minimised, for example by strongly-articulated forms, floor-levels that are stepped to follow natural slopes, and by roofs that are gently-pitched to minimise the height of ridges.

To minimise the scale of future dwellings facing any street, incorporate extensive windows that are shaded by framed balconies or verandahs, wide eaves and exterior sunscreens, and walls with some painted finishes rather than expanses of plain masonry. Provide a traditional "street address" for each dwelling, and ensure that verandahs, decks and living rooms or front doors are visible from the street. Avoid wide garages, tall fences or retaining walls that would visually-dominate any frontage. Locate and screen all balconies and decks to protect the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.

Springfield 10: Scenic Buffers (Floodways) - Existing

Existing Character

Narrow corridors of bushland along watercourses and around former farm dams, or low-lying residential properties that have been partly cleared, providing scenically-prominent backdrops to major roads and surrounding residential areas.

Concealed from a major local thoroughfare behind dense screens of tall bushland, low-lying semi-rural properties are associated with corridors of bushland along stream-banks, providing scenically-distinctive backdrops to major roads and surrounding residential areas. These properties support a variety of modestly-scaled dwellings that are surrounded by verandahs, capped by pitched roofs and associated with a variety of out-buildings, mostly set well-back from street frontages.

Flanked by new residential areas, watercourse reserves support tall bushland remnants in a condition that varies from thinned to near-natural. However, the configuration of these reserves with a high ratio of edge-to-area and their location adjacent to back boundaries of residential properties inevitably compromises their ecological integrity and complicates bushland management over the long term, with natural understoreys exposed to the impacts of rubbish, unauthorised clearing for recreation access, and incursion by environmental or noxious weeds.

Springfield 10: Scenic Buffers (Floodways) - Desired

Desired Character

These ribbon reserves should remain near-natural buffers to surrounding urban areas, where active environmental management enhances the natural and scenic qualities of bushland backdrops that are visible from major roads and surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Conserve the natural qualities of bushland reserves by maintaining existing stream banks and slopes, and by minimising further clearing of natural vegetation. Avoid any land-management activities that would compromise the long-term diversity, vigour and habitat value of the natural plant communities that occur in these reserves. Control any infestations of noxious or environmental weeds, and progressively repair any disturbance to landforms or bushland using natural bush-regeneration techniques. Employ ecological best-practice for bushfire hazard reduction, for

example mosaic burns, in order to strike a balance between scenic quality and public safety.

Where pedestrian desire lines are significant, provide low-impact pathways and boardwalks.

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

Springfield 11: Scenic Conservation - Existing

Existing Character

Areas with extensive bushland in a near-natural condition located along ridgetops plus adjacent slopes, as well as along floodplains, conserving ecologically- and scenically-distinctive backdrops that are visible from waterways, major roads and residential areas, and contributing to buffers between neighbouring suburbs.

Either part of Council's coastal reserve network, or private residential properties, these areas conserve indigenous plant communities as well as contributing to fauna corridors with a regional ecological significance. Due to the overall vegetation density, hillside properties in particular are exposed to a significant bushfire hazard.

On private properties, buildings are confined within very small clearings.

Access roads have the informal character of gravelled tracks that are hemmed between dense stands of tall trees and natural understorey.

Springfield 11: Scenic Conservation - Desired

Desired Character

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

Conserve the natural qualities of 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, particularly on flood-prone properties where elevated floor levels are required, 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.

