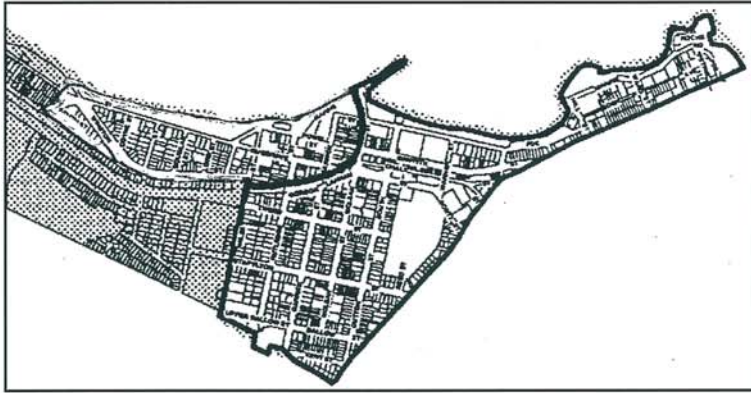


3.7.4 Character Area 1.4: Coolangatta



Note: Coolangatta is a local character area within the Beach Strip Character Area. This visual diary focuses on the particular landscape character elements that contribute to the overall character of Coolangatta. Coolangatta and the associated hills and headlands are a visual node and a "timeless gateway" to the city as identified in the Planning Scheme.

Subdivision and land use is therefore conventional. The early grid pattern is broken only by the oceanfront and headlands and by the border which separates Coolangatta from its sister city of Tweed Heads.

Little remains of the earliest buildings at Coolangatta but some evidence remains of subsequent development in the early years of the 20th century.

Griffith Street remains the commercial centre and resort hotels and guest houses have been constructed between the area and the oceanfront and clustered in the lee of the headland.

The border fence and gates that until recently were a characteristic of the area, have now been removed but the sense of the border remains at Boundary Street running along the ridge of the headland between Queensland and New South Wales.

The headland itself is an important landmark and tourist destination. Coolangatta symbolises the southern boundary of the Gold Coast, and the long strip of beach that extends to Main Beach forty kilometres to the north.

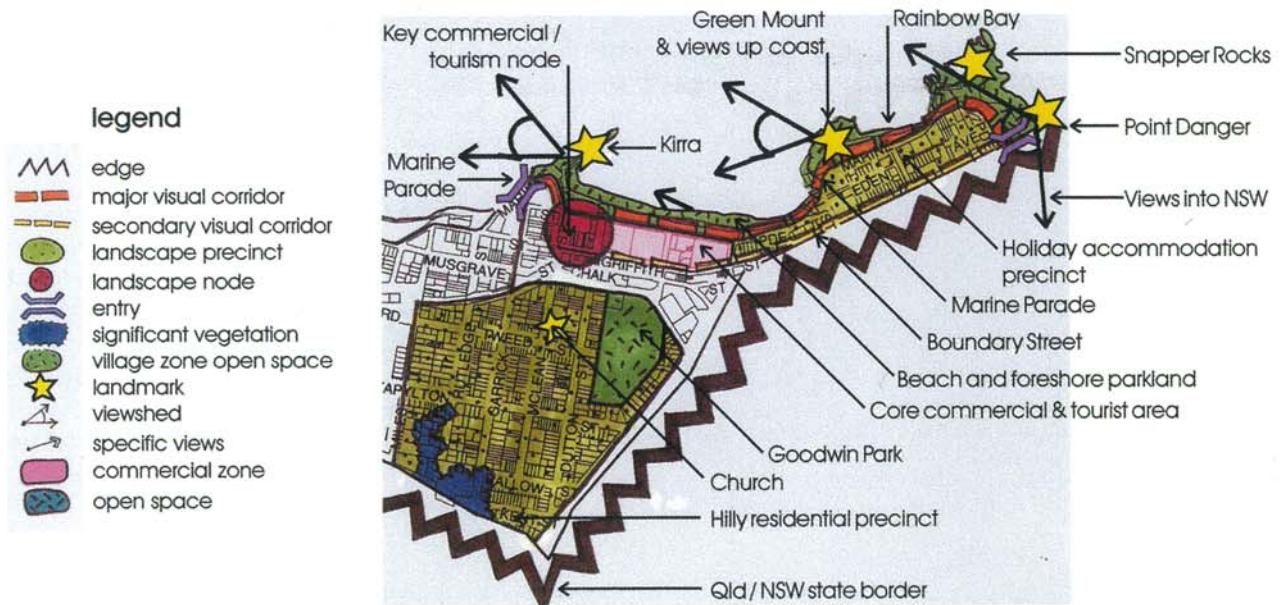
Extract from the *Gold Coast Urban Heritage & Character Study*, Gold Coast City Council, 1997

A Vision for the Future of Coolangatta

Coolangatta continues to be one of Australia's important beachfront destinations. With its walkable and diverse landscape, it hums with the flow of people between the beach, the shops and the residential areas. Its high quality facilities and public spaces, its human scale and its calmed traffic create a great setting for residents. Its vibrant mix of activities and character promote Coolangatta as a festive place for visitors. Residential areas hug the meandering hills shaded by a dense green canopy of trees that is subtly removed in character from the 'resort' areas of the village/commercial centre. The foreshore has been improved and the village's parks and streets enhanced to maintain Coolangatta's Australian landmark status a tourist destination.



Character Map



Existing Landscape Description

Coolangatta is a dynamic village/community located on a coastal dune bordered by two headlands. The large areas of open space adjacent to the beach with landmark Norfolk Pines, provide a strong landscape character for the area. The undulating topography and leafiness of the residential areas provides a green backdrop to the coastal high rise. The coastal drive from Kirra to Point Danger is identified as a key scenic route in Gold Coast City Planning Scheme and is a famous vista recognised by tourists. Traditionally a holiday area unlike any other on the coast, Coolangatta retains many of the older style guest houses and many cultural memories of holidays and the beach, all of this nestled amongst the new high rise and commercial development. The area has a strong grid pattern originating from its first settlement in the 1880s complemented by the greenness of the headlands which creates a gateway quality to the village/commercial area. Coolangatta also has historical importance as one of the earliest settlements in the region and a unique boarder town. Its southern-most beaches mark the boundary of the Gold Coast. Coolangatta is one of the most dramatic and unique gateways of the city.

Important Landscape Elements

- ▶ Coolangatta Beach, Greenmount, Rainbow Bay & Snapper Rocks
- ▶ Point Danger and lighthouse
- ▶ State boarder to NSW – timeless gateway (as identified in the Gold Coast Planning Scheme)
- ▶ Large areas of open space adjacent to beachfront incorporating landmark Norfolk Is. Pines
- ▶ Strong contrasting topography of coastal dune, headland and hills is very evident

- ▶ Points and headlands act as city wide strategic landmarks
- ▶ Contrast of the built form on the foreshore to the green, undulating hills of the residential area behind
- ▶ Small concentration of high rise contributing to a perceptual visual edge to the city
- ▶ Grid pattern of subdivisions from the 1880s
- ▶ Remains of the Jack Evans Porpoise Pool

Important Views & Vistas

- ▶ Extensive views from Greenmount north along the coast line to Surfers Paradise
- ▶ Views from Point Danger into NSW
- ▶ Views onto green points and headlands from the beach
- ▶ Marine Parade forms part of a primary visual corridor and scenic route with the city

Social & Recreational Issues

- ▶ Accommodating tourism whilst maintaining current quality of lifestyle for residents and tourists
- ▶ Preserving “carnival” and holiday atmosphere throughout the year
- ▶ Maintaining headlands and points as green/ non-developed landmarks
- ▶ Minimising further overshadowing of high rise onto streets and beach
- ▶ Preserving the remaining natural environment
- ▶ Upgrading the foreshore park area
- ▶ Addressing public space safety at night
- ▶ Increasing pedestrian access around the village centre
- ▶ Improving the rear of the shopping area, the laneways and the backs of lots - visually and functionally



Residential Streetscape

- ▶ Streetscape view is predominantly 'green'
 - ▶ Distinctive rock retaining wall contributes significantly to the character of local area
 - ▶ Little use of front boundary fencing
 - ▶ Development follows landform
 - ▶ Variety in landform
 - ▶ Cultural vegetation provides landmarks within the residential area
 - ▶ Private landscaped areas complement both the streetscape planting and the character of the remnant vegetation
 - ▶ Public service facilities do not dominate streetscape
- ▶ Streetscape view is predominantly that of built structures
 - ▶ Front fencing dominates the streetscape and reduces the amenity of the local streetscape
 - ▶ Built form disregards the landform
 - ▶ Little visible cultural vegetation or retained remnant vegetation reduces the character of the local streetscape.
 - ▶ Private landscaped areas have a resort style landscape treatment that does little to contribute to the leafy green character of the local streetscape
 - ▶ Public service facilities dominate streetscape



Commercial Built Form

- ▶ Scale and massing of built form complements the village character of the core shopping area
 - ▶ Light, integrated awning cover provides shade and enclosure to the streetscape
 - ▶ Facade is articulated and varied
 - ▶ Signage does not dominate built form - appropriate to the size and design of the buildings
 - ▶ Variety of uses that interface with the street environment, encourages activity contributing to the village character
- ▶ Scale and massing, including colours and materials, dominates the streetscape and detracts from the village character of the core shopping area
 - ▶ Heavy, dominant awning cover is bland and uninteresting
 - ▶ Signage and building utility areas dominate the streetscape
 - ▶ Inward facing uses that do little to encourage activity on the street thus reducing the village character



Commercial Streetscape

- ▶ Planting areas incorporated into car parking layout
 - ▶ Planting complements both the streetscape and the built form and provides shade and amenity
 - ▶ Seating areas incorporated as part of the streetscape environment
 - ▶ Use of planting areas provides amenity thus encouraging streetscape activity
 - ▶ Links and lanes between streets are safe and accessible
 - ▶ Footpath is of high quality and is well shaded and maintained
- ▶ Little or no planting incorporated into on street car parking areas
 - ▶ Built form dominates the streetscape
 - ▶ Absence of planting reduces amenity and shade
 - ▶ Little or no areas for public seating reduces activity on the street
 - ▶ Built form is bland and uninteresting and presents a backdoor to the street
 - ▶ Lanes are service oriented corridors with poor pedestrian facilities and negative character
 - ▶ Footpath is run-down, creates glare and lacks character





Beach Open space

- ▶ Large open space areas broken up by clumps of coastal native vegetation
- ▶ Location of vegetation enables a variety of open, filtered and enclosed views through the open space and beach areas
- ▶ Character of vegetation supports the naturalness of the dunal environment
- ▶ Furniture well located under shade
- ▶ Clear and defined walking paths
- ▶ Western boundary line of open space is defined by cultural plantings of Norfolk Island Pines
- ▶ Area feels open and exposed
- ▶ Minimal use of native coastal vegetation
- ▶ Little variety in views – views primarily open
- ▶ Inappropriately located park furniture



Single Lot Housing - Builtform



- ▶ House appears visually less bulky due to the design and use of particular materials and colours
- ▶ House addresses the street, garage or car parking is not visible
- ▶ House sits well into the existing landscape and landform
- ▶ Absence of fencing along street frontage
- ▶ House is setback from street with green, leafy garden that contributes to the amenity of the streetscape environment and character of the local area
- ▶ Garage dominates the street frontage
- ▶ House does not address the street, materials and colours appear hard and solid
- ▶ Tall, solid fencing with no permeability creates a visual barrier to the street
- ▶ Private garden landscape is not visible and therefore reduces the streetscape amenity and character of the local area



Residential Units - Built Form



- ▶ Built form appears visually less bulky due to design and use of particular materials and colours
- ▶ Line of roof complements landform
- ▶ Units address the street in a friendly manner, no formalised fencing structures
- ▶ Private landscaped areas are visible and contribute to the amenity of the local streetscape
- ▶ Built form does not dominate the hillside views or topography
- ▶ Car parking areas are not visible
- ▶ Scale and massing of built form dominates ridgeline and streetscape
- ▶ Design and siting contributes little to the retention of the topography or to the local streetscape character
- ▶ Built form feels isolated from the street
- ▶ Solid fencing structure forms a visual barrier to the street
- ▶ Private landscaped areas are not very visible and contribute little to the leafy green streetscape environment





Village Public Areas

- ▶ Surface treatments are predominantly soft with some hard surface elements
- ▶ Scale, materials and colours fits in with the character of the surrounding area
- ▶ Mature vegetation is incorporated into the design providing shade and general amenity
- ▶ Structures are simply designed, well located and versatile

- ▶ Large expanses of hard surfacing creates the perception of a hot and barren environment
- ▶ Little mature shady vegetation reduces amenity and landscape character
- ▶ Street furniture and other built structures located inappropriately e.g. location of seating in the open without shade



Village



Beach Access & Walkways

- ▶ Pathway is shaded and protected using predominantly native coastal species
- ▶ Pathway is visually and physically interesting due to siting and use of appropriate vegetation
- ▶ Furniture is discrete and of appropriate materials, scale and colour
- ▶ Predominate views are natural or green

- ▶ Pathway is abutting car parking area
- ▶ Areas feels hot & barren and thus reducing amenity and contributing negatively to the local character of the beachfront
- ▶ Layout and design of pathway creates little visual interest
- ▶ Furniture and service facilities are dominant and in view - materials, colour and location reduces the amenity and local character of the beachfront



Shade Shelters - Open Space Areas

- ▶ Shelters appear lightweight due to the design and use of particular materials and colours
- ▶ Design reflects the coastal beach character of Coolangatta
- ▶ Structures are open and permeable, maintaining views through
- ▶ Shelters are well located near pathways and integrated with appropriate vegetation

- ▶ Shelter appears visually bulky due to design and use of materials and colours.
- ▶ Design is not open or transparent and does little to maintain views through
- ▶ Design does little to reflect the local beach character of Coolangatta
- ▶ Minimal use of complementary vegetation



Ridgeline

- ▶ Skyline incorporates landmark cultural vegetation and architecture
- ▶ Built form complements the line of the topography
- ▶ Built form is visually less bulky due to design and to particular use of materials and colours
- ▶ Remnant vegetation is retained as part of development
- ▶ Views are predominantly 'green'

- ▶ Skyline is dominated by built form with a variety of heights and designs
- ▶ Little remnant vegetation has been retained during development
- ▶ Built form design and location does little to complement the form of the topography

