

3.1 Introduction

The Gold Coast City Planning Scheme identifies ten character areas within the city. These character areas were primarily derived from information identified in the Gold Coast Urban Heritage and Character Study. These areas were determined by their geographical topography, land use and history. Visual diaries have been developed to explain in simple terms particular generic elements of landscape character that contribute to the character areas identified in Gold Coast City Planning Scheme Map SP10 on page 18.

Visual Diaries have been developed for all of the character areas identified in the Planning Scheme Map SP10. The degree of communication and guidance on landscape character for each of these character areas has been determined by the current and type of development pressure within the particular character area. For example the Bay Island Character Area is under less pressure from development in comparison with the character areas of the Canal Estates, Beach Strip or Suburban Estates.

The Gold Coast Urban Heritage and Character Study has also identified fifteen (15) local character areas within these primary character areas. Some of these local character areas have been selected for more detailed and specific visual diaries. Selection was derived from an assessment of the current development pressure and the position of the area within the framework of past, current or future planned Council studies including Local Area Plans. Some of the local areas that have been selected for more detailed visual diaries include: 1.1 Mermaid Beach, 1.2 Burleigh Heads, 1.3 Tugun/Bilinga, 6.1 Currumbin Valley and 6.2 Mudgeeraba. It is recommended that other local character areas in Gold Coast City be studied as soon as possible to complete the City’s Visual Diaries.

- 1.0 The Beach Strip**
 - 1.1 Mermaid Beach**
 - 1.2 Burleigh Heads**
 - 1.3 Tugun / Bilinga**
- 2.0 The Bay Islands**
- 3.0 Hope Island Estates**
- 4.0 Broadwater Area**
- 5.0 Southport**
- 6.0 River Valleys and Mountains**
 - 6.1 Currumbin Valley**
 - 6.2 Mudgeeraba**
- 7.0 Albert Corridor**
- 8.0 Beenleigh and Sugar Canes**
 - 8.1 Eagleby**
- 9.0 Suburban Estates**
- 10.0 The Canal Estates**

Colour coding has been used to allow for easy identification and retrieval of information. Each primary visual diary character area is colour coded to match the colour coding for the character areas on the Planning Scheme Map SP10. The more detailed visual diaries for local character areas are shown as the same colour code as the primary visual diary character area it is within.

3.2 Valuable things about a Local Area

The visual diaries discuss things which the community and planning / design professionals consider desirable in particular areas. The desirable, or valuable things about an area’s landscape vary, however, the following is a list of the type of things which give value:

1. Complexes of outstanding features - which individually may not be of the highest significance but which combined are outstanding.
2. Networks of landscape features which offer an unfolding visual experience, such as a scenic routes.
3. Features or areas that are unique or one of a remaining few. For example the clumps or Norfolk Island Pines along various beach fronts.
4. Features or areas that are the best of their kind, or which exhibit the best example of characteristics common to a group of features.
5. A feature or area that if degraded or destroyed could not be recreated.
6. Features which show natural or cultural processes, like seasonal variation in foliage or colour.
7. Places of architectural significance.
8. Places of historical significance.
9. Elements with strong associations with great people or events.
10. Distinct street character areas.
11. Groups which form a public/social amenity.
12. Notable examples of a particular style or period.
13. Elements or things of strong geographical significance.
14. Significant landscapes - including open spaces which are important for land form, silhouette or landscape quality.
15. Conservation of locality.

3.3 What is Landscape Character?

The character of a landscape could be described as the qualities of everything that we can see outdoors: the visual mix of streets, parks, views and structures as seen by people looking out of buildings, walking or driving through the city. The character of a particular landscape is affected by its particular space,

the characteristics of the space, changes over time to a space and by the way a site is experienced, either by individuals or as a communal experience (Mongard, 1991, p1). More detail about landscape character and city image can be found in Part One and Two of this Policy.

3.4 Elements that contribute to Landscape Character

The visual diaries in this policy focus on a number of elements, which can be described to guide landscape character:

- ▶ History and existing development/built form context,
- ▶ The qualities of the existing landscape (natural or manmade),
- ▶ The social and recreational aspects of an area,
- ▶ Important views and vistas,
- ▶ The visual structure of the area,
- ▶ Image comparisons of desired / not desired character components, such as streetscape, open space, buffers, landform, built form, signage and infrastructure.

The visual diaries are thus a summary of the intended broad/generic landscape character of different parts of Gold Coast City. Developer, planners and the community should first identify their site within the Gold Coast City Planning Scheme (Maps SP10, 11, 12, 13 & 14) regarding whole of city character issues, and then go to their specific character area for guidance on the generic elements that contribute to the landscape character of sites and places.

These visual diaries support and guide Local Area Planning instruments for the interpretation of landscape character.

3.5 Adaptability

Landscape character is a changing and evolving element that develops over time. These visual diaries are representative of the character of Gold Coast City as of the year 1999/2000, and are designed to be reviewed and updated in response to

the dynamics of character and the results of other studies being undertaken, including Local Area Plans, and other nonspecific planning studies.

3.6 Community Consultation

The images chosen as desirable and undesirable in the visual diaries of the specific local character areas, i.e. Mermaid Beach, Currumbin Valley, Mudgeeraba, Burleigh Heads and Tugun/Bilinga, have been directed in reference to community consultation workshops, discussions with Councillors and Council Officers and analysis and interpretation by the study team.

During the workshops, community members from selected interest groups were asked to place stickers on photos

nominating them as either 'good' or 'bad' in relation to their ideas about the desired character for that particular area.

These ideas were then further developed and evaluated: the desired and undesired character photos emerged from this process.

For detailed transcripts regarding the community input, refer to the Appendix: Community Consultation Summary of Meetings and Character Areas.

Gold Coast Character Areas Planning Scheme Map – SP10

