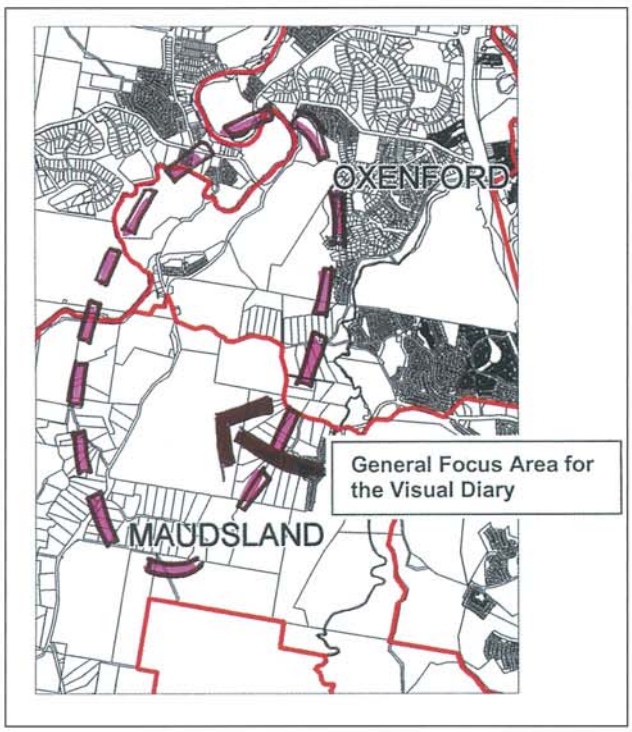
3.12.3 Character Area 6.3: Maudsland

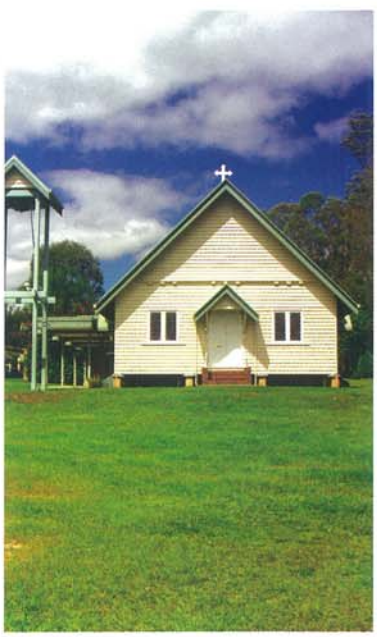
Vision

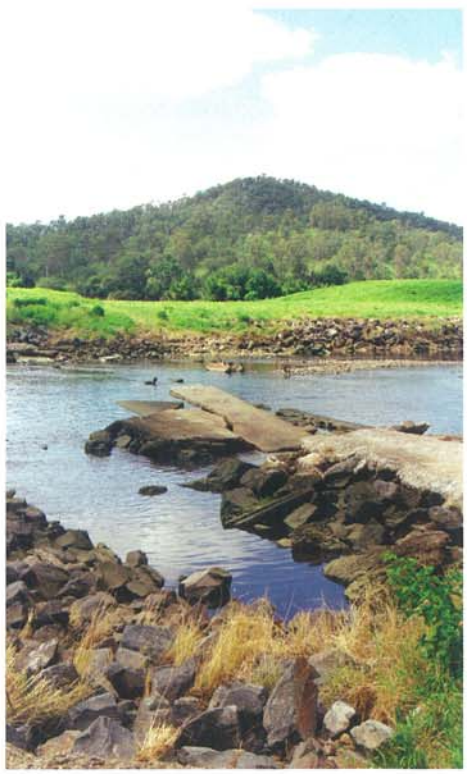
The continuous extent of forested slopes and bushland lends Maudsland a strong rural sense of place. The area feels different to the urban corridor adjacent to the Gold Coast Highway since it has a rural rather than suburban landscape quality. The Upper Coomera Village retains its compact hamlet character, with buildings consolidating the existing main street by incorporating verandas and active frontages, and focusing around communal open spaces.

Maintaining and enhancing the scenic quality of the laneways is very important for retaining the rural feel of the area. The maintenance of long distance views over country and river, minimal road widths, meandering roads and well vegetated road verges are all important issues for retaining the scenic quality of local roads.



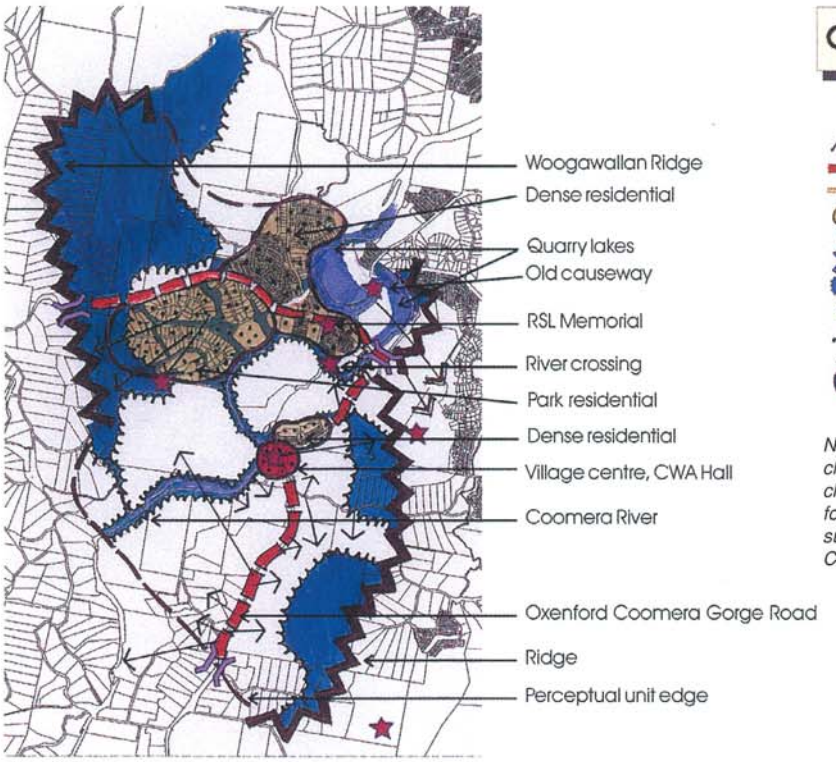
Note: Maudsland is a local character area within the River Valley Character Area. This Visual Diary focuses on the particular landscape character that contributes to the overall character of the general focus area of Maudsland.

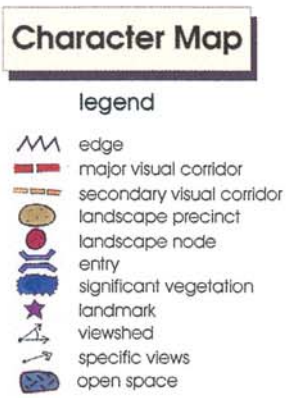




The vegetated ridges and hilltops are important scenic features and they will remain in a natural, bushland form to preserve the sense of a "green valley". The visual buffer of the river and the creeks will be conserved and enhanced by further plantings and rehabilitation in degraded areas. They will link to an integrated system of networked bushland that creates important habitats and recreation resources, and divides residential development areas into small niche housing areas nestled into the landscape. New residential areas should focus on developing a rural rather than suburban character and this can be achieved through implementing the design guidelines that form part of this Visual Diary. In order to preserve the bushland covered skyline and the natural edges to the focus area, housing and development will be carefully sited.

Character Map





Note: For the purposes of clarity, this character map describes landscape character elements not only within the focus area of Maudsland but also the surrounding local landscape of Upper Coomera/Coomera.

Existing Landscape Description

The Maudsland area has a diverse landscape with variation in topography, vegetation cover and natural features. The dominance of natural elements and the mix of bushland and cleared land or paddocks, create a rural or "country" character. The area has a series of ridges and associated hilltops that are well vegetated, providing a green backdrop for defining the visual edge to the Maudsland area. The elevated areas provide many vantage points for views into the area and to the region beyond. Panoramas of the Gold Coast and encroaching urban areas lie to the east. To the west lie panoramas of the Coomera Valley with the Tamborine Mountains serving as a scenic backdrop. Other major features that are important to the visual quality of the area are the Coomera River and Salt Water Creek. Both these watercourses form physical boundaries and serve as a visual buffer to encroaching urban development.

Important Landscape Elements

- Coomera River & riparian vegetation
- Vegetated corridors & links to the river & other important remnant vegetation
- Small compact village centre
- Views across pastureland to rural homesteads
- Minimum builtform visible on foothills and vegetated ridgelines
- Gentle transformation from flat open plainlands to treed escarpments
- River crossings
- Nerang State Forest
- Wongawallan Ridge
- Saltwater creek
- Rural roadways

Important Views and Vistas

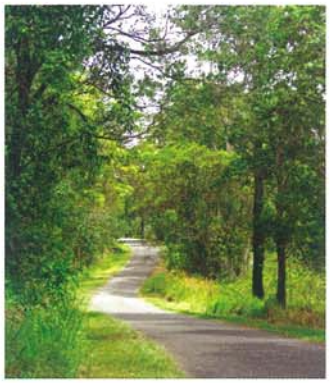
- Views to open grasslands, pastureland and other agricultural uses
- Glimpses of the Coomera River
- View across open fields to rural homesteads
- Views across fields to escarpments
- Extensive views to surrounding ridgelines and beyond

Social & Recreational Issues

- Population density
- Subdivision of large rural lots into small rural residential blocks contributes to the potential loss of rural character
- Expansion of village centre inappropriately
- Introduction of domestic animals
- Architecture of new housing

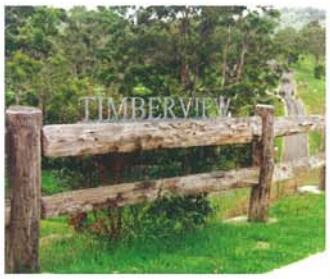
Character desired

Character not desired



Rural Streetscapes

- Soft, grassed, permeable edges to the road
- Positive streetscape value through appropriate fencing & informal use of planting
- Fencing & vegetation give definition to road edge
- No kerb & channel
- Built form set back with minimal accesses onto road
- Wide, hard surfaced, formalised road edge
- Minimal shade trees, remnant vegetation or structured planting to soften road edge



Residential Estate Entries

- Form of entry statement does not dominate surrounding landscape
- Materials & colours reinforce the character of the local rural landscape
- Fencing is transparent. Views into the estate are retained
- Informal, low level planting minimises maintenance & irrigation required
- Site characteristics contribute to entry experience
- Entry dominates surrounding landscape
- Design, materials & colours are typical of an urban residential development
- Road layout & surface treatment is visually dominant, road surface has little permeability
- High maintenance resort style landscaping
- Entry statement is the primary identifier of the estate

Drainage Corridors - Residential

- Visually appropriate & 'natural' through use of vegetation & natural materials
- Vegetated & shady
- Natural drainage system enhanced
- Minimal use of revetment material
- Defined riparian area
- Low maintenance
- Principles of dual use drainage systems not achieved
- Hot & dry - treatment does not contribute to the local character and amenity
- Minimal vegetation for stability or aesthetics
- Large scale manipulation of landform resulting in 'unnatural' character
- Maximum use of revetment material
- Unidentified riparian area
- High maintenance

Residential Buffer

- Width appropriate to function, ie. wide buffers to busy roads, smaller buffers for internal area privacy
- Wide, deep buffers with appropriate density of planting for function
- Variation in height, form & species
- Long lived native species
- Buffer contributes to the amenity of the area
- Width inappropriate for function ie. width too small to provide a visual screen
- Inappropriate species for particular growing conditions, unsuitable form, scale or densities
- High maintenance
- Character & design have a negative contribution to local streetscape

Character desired

Character not desired

Ridge Lines

- Development complements topography through appropriate siting and built form
- Minimum use of cut and fill
- Maximum retention of remnant vegetation - less visual impact
- Development forms not intrusive - colours, materials and siting have low visual impact
- Areas for building platforms require large areas of cut and fill and large scale clearing of vegetation
- Development does little to complement existing landform
- Design of buildings, in combination with colours, materials and siting detracts from 'naturalness' of ridgeline.

Property Entries

- Entry does not dominate streetscape / road frontage due to design being visually less bulky through choice of materials and colours
- Built form is transparent, view sheds are preserved
- Trees as entry markers
- Driveway materials & surrounds have permeable surfaces & soft lines
- Fence a solid barrier, view shed blocked
- Form, materials and plants are typical of suburban residential developments
- Entry creates hard edge to streetscape / road frontage
- Driveway materials consist of large areas of impermeable hard surfacing

Fences

- Fencing is transparent. Design, scale and materials are visually non bulky & reflect an appropriate rural character
- Planting forms and locations are simple utilising species appropriate to the local character of the area
- Fencing enhances long distance rural views
- Fencing creates a visual barrier. Scale, materials and lack of transparency does little to reinforce the appropriate local rural character
- Minimal maintenance within private garden area negatively impacts on the character and pride in the local neighbourhood
- Fencing inhibits long distance rural views to surrounding foothills

Built Form

- Housing visually complements the landscape through design, siting & use of visually light weight materials
- Front fence is semi transparent & integrated with the landscape
- Retention of remnant vegetation provides a strong local character
- Scale & form of building complements existing landform & landscape features
- Private landscaped areas contribute positively to the streetscape
- Design & materials promote principles of energy efficiency
- Development form dominates the landscape through the use of extensive clearing and visually heavy weight materials
- House footprints are bulky. Materials & colours do little to complement the rural character
- Building footprint has maximum site coverage which leaves little room for landscaped areas and backyards
- Private landscaped areas does little to contribute positively to the landscape character
- Landform is not complemented by built form - maximum use of cut and fill
- Design & materials do not promote principles of energy efficiency

Character desired

Character not desired

Residential Streetscape

- Street tree species utilised provide shade & amenity
- Trees contribute positively to local streets
- Low maintenance/single trunked species
- Fence form & location appropriate to street character - transparent & integrated with planting
- Road layout conducive to safe flow of traffic
- Opportunities for on street parking
- Predominate views are green & varied
- Kerb & channel does not dominate streetscape
- No large areas of hard surfacing in road verge areas

- Streets trees are inappropriate species, providing little shade or general amenity
- Trees are high maintenance & in poor health
- Road layout gives 'gun barrel' effect to street
- Minimal opportunity for on street parking
- Predominate views are hot & barren due to predominance of bitumen & monotonous built form
- Large open areas of hard surfacing
- Roadway design increases storm water run off

Landform

- Minimal use of cut & fill will encourage diversity in housing style
- Vegetation retained as part of site development, ie. Minimum clearing has occurred
- Layout of road partially contributes to rural character
- Minimal manipulation of landform - little cut & fill
- Landscape appears predominately green & cool
- Existing overland water flows are maintained

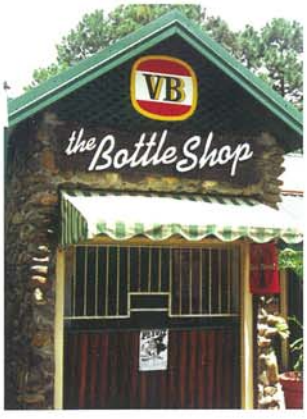
- Maximum use of cut & fill for building pads will encourage slab on ground construction & decrease diversity in built form
- Retaining walls to each block
- Mass clearing of vegetation as part of site development
- Layout of road does not complement landform or rural character
- Landscape appears predominately hot & dry
- Existing overland water flows are interrupted

Commercial

- Traditional 'main street' configuration provides links to village past
- Built form is simple & addresses the street in a friendly manner
- Carparking area does not dominate the streetscape
- Scale and design of signage is appropriate to built form
- Vegetation provides an important visual backdrop

- Carparking and public facilities dominate streetscape
- Built form appears bulky in design & use of materials & colours
- Signage is cluttered & dominant in streetscape
- No vegetation to integrate built form or provide cues for rural character

Signage



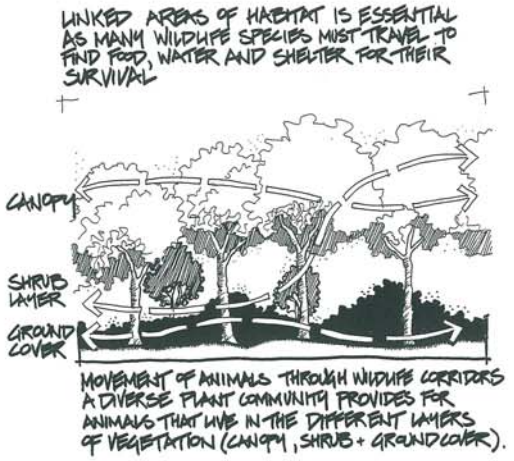
- Small scale signs utilising natural materials
- Signage scale is appropriate to builtform
- Signage is uncluttered & is integrated as part of building design and aesthetic
- Signage contributes to local village streetscape amenity

- Large scale signs - obtrusive colours and size
- Sign face is solid and dominates streetscape
- Signage is cluttered (varied forms & colours) & dominates streetscape
- Signage is not integrated as part of building design and aesthetic
- Sign close to road edge

Design Guidelines

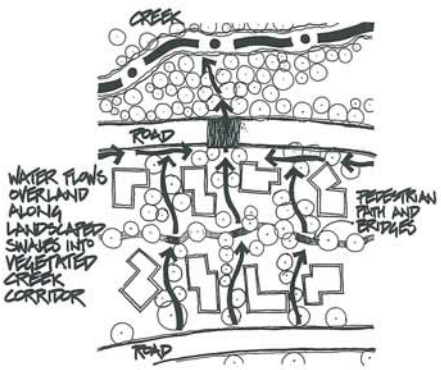
The following are guiding principles to protect the landscape:

1. Establish wildlife corridor: Along creeks and hilltops and connecting them to the broader landscape. Cats and dogs are a problem in wildlife areas and a local strategy for controlling them is required.



2. Maintain natural drainage: Use landscaped ditches for overland flow instead of piping stormwater underground, and protect creek.

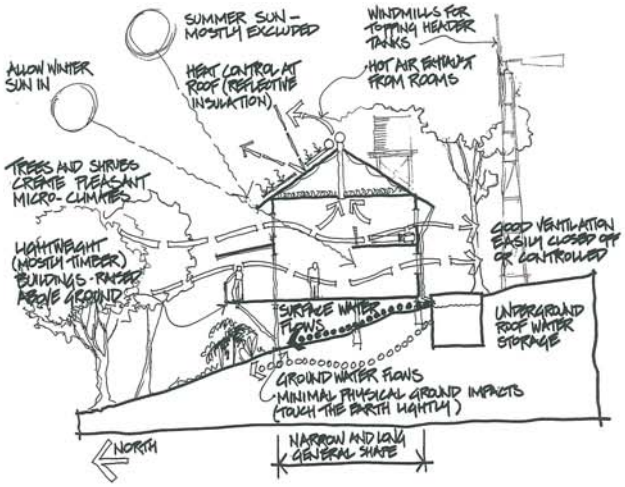
3. Develop good site microclimates: Maximise use of trees and vegetation for shade and wind protection, and natural water bodies for cooling.
4. Protect existing bush habitat: Built in cleared areas, minimise clearing of vegetation for buildings and roads and further extend habitat through plantings of indigenous species.
5. Treat sewerage and grey water locally: Use composting toilets and vegetation to filter water before it flows into creeks and rivers.



6. Preserve landscape character: Protect significant trees, creeks and ridge top vegetation and views.
7. Preserve the natural land form: Build shallow bed, kerbless roads along contours, and buildings on stumps to minimise cutting and filling (and ugly scars) on slopes.
8. Develop water self-sufficiency: Use rainwater tanks and re-cycle grey water for domestic use.
9. Preserve good agricultural land: For local food production and market gardens of organic fruit and vegetables.
10. Balance built areas and open space: Provide easy access to facilities for passive recreation in natural areas.

There are also a number of strategies for environmental sustainability which can be adopted in the design of buildings.

1. Design for minimal land impacts: Protect natural hydrology by building on raised platforms.



2. Design for community: Build a mix of housing types and forms to provide for varied housing needs. Design buildings to address the street and facilitate community life and safety.

3. Design for waste reduction: Incorporate provisions for composting toilets and composting of food waste into building design.
4. Design for minimal energy consumption: Employ climatic design and low energy materials.

Modified from the Environmentally Friendly Village Proposal, 1996.