

Note: Tugun/Bilinga 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 Tugun/Bilinga.



Tugun and Bilinga

From the Currumbin headland south to the traffic interchange and the Tweed Heads Bypass is the long and narrow strip of Tugun and Bilinga.

Probably subdivided in the early 1950s, the area was constrained to the west by the presence of the south coast railway which ran close to the beach at that point. The exceptionally wide road reserve (Golden Four Drive) is the site of that earlier transport corridor. The beachfront road which shows in earlier maps is no longer present, having been lost to the sea in subsequent years.

To the west of the highway, original wetlands have been reclaimed for use as the Coolangatta airport. The resultant openness and absence of development emphasises the narrowness of the strip.

To the east of the highway, new multi-story development has taken place in recent years, and this development is of a limited height because of its proximity to the airport. Some early housing and tourist apartments dating from the 1950s survives.

Notwithstanding its unusually extended and thin form, the area has substantial character. Mature pines line the Gold Coast Highway for much of its length in this area. Commercial development is limited to a particularly urban centre at the northern end, and the width of the highway and the openness to the west gives this area its unique character.

Tugun/Bilinga forms an introduction to the more intensively developed urban centre of Coolangatta immediately to the south.



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

A Vision for the Future of Tugun / Bilinga

Tugun/Bilinga remains a distinct coastal village and an important entry point for the city, particularly from the airport. It retains its low scale beach lifestyle character of built form and is complemented by appropriate coastal vegetation in informal configurations within new development and public open space areas. Views from the beach back to Tugun/Bilinga will be mostly enhanced by the vegetated

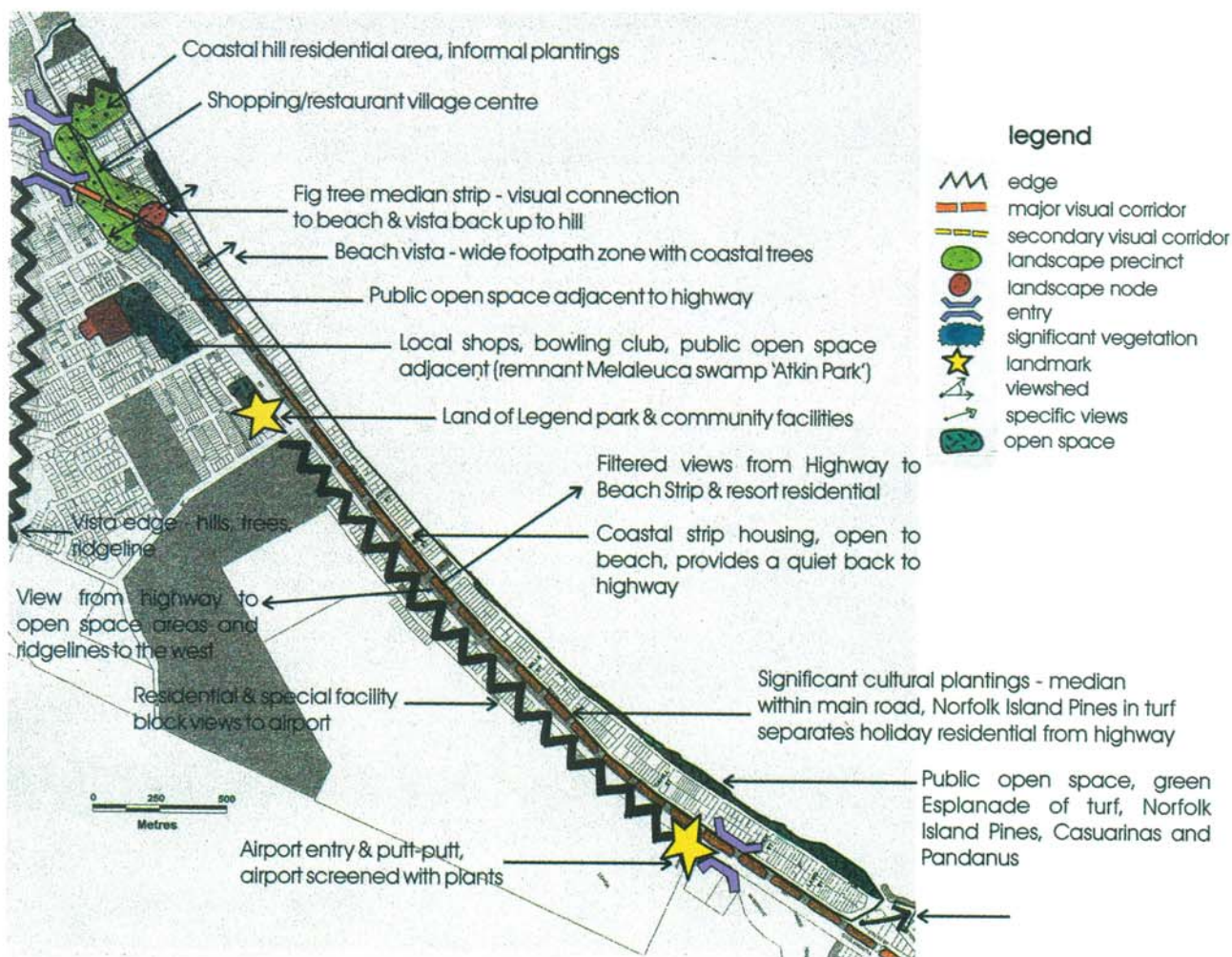


ridgeline to the west and private landscape works that will complement the natural dunal character of the beach. Built form will be appropriate to the beach character in scale, mass and materials, and will complement existing low scale development.

Open space areas adjacent to the Highway remain informal with the use of turf and mature/remnant coastal species. The avenue of Norfolk Island Pines along the Highway Strip will be reinforced as a landmark within the area. Clear views will be retained from the highway across Golden Four Drive into the developed areas adjacent to the beach.



Character Map



Existing Landscape Description

Tugun/Bilinga is a long flat area distinguished by four distinct character zones: the sanctuary area, the commercial area of Tugun, the coastal hills and finally the coast strip. The area adjacent to the sanctuary is generally low scale, with informal plantings of paperbarks and other wetland species. The commercial area is a distinct village centre that fronts the highway impacted by high use of lighting and signage. The coastal hill area is a quiet, secluded area with associated remnant plantings. It provides a green backdrop for the area, and gives the entire suburb a feeling of naturalness. The coastal strip is a quiet, thin area with a fairly open character divided by the highway. Views of the open space from highway contributes significantly to the identifiable open landscape character of the area. This area also has an intimate relationship to the beach.

Tugun/Bilinga is the entry point to the city from the airport. The highway dominates the area. Running parallel to the highway is Golden Four Drive which has avenue plantings of Norfolk Island Pines and offers views down adjoining streets to the beach.

Important Landscape Elements

- ▶ Open space areas west of the highway
- ▶ Avenue planting of Norfolk Island Pines between highway and Golden Four Drive
- ▶ Tugun Hill & ridgeline
- ▶ Intact dunal system present in many places
- ▶ Public open space areas close and adjacent to beach & highway

Social & Recreational Issues

- ▶ Coastal village lifestyle
- ▶ Family holidays
- ▶ Strong sense of community

Important Views & Vistas

- ▶ Filtered views from highway to the beach
- ▶ Views from highway to Tugun Hill & open space areas to west
- ▶ Vistas over housing to hills in the background



Tugun Village Commercial

- ▶ Cultural plantings provide scale and enclosure and also contribute positively to streetscape character
- ▶ Carparking integrated into streetscape with planting
- ▶ Signage is of an appropriate scale, size and arrangement with relation to built form
- ▶ Signage detracts from character of the area through inappropriate forms, scale and clutter
- ▶ Resort style landscapes do not complement the local coastal character of the area
- ▶ Carparking is open and exposed – minimal integration with vegetation



Tugun Village Streetscape

- ▶ Planting provides vertical enclosure to the street
- ▶ Informal planting of coastal species that provides shade and character
- ▶ Resort style planting does not complement local coastal character of the area
- ▶ Formal configurations
- ▶ Species do not provide enclosure or shade to streetscape



Unit Development - Built Form

- ▶ Built form set back from street
- ▶ Built form visually less bulky due to design, materials and colours, therefore minimising a perceived hard edge to streetscape
- ▶ Vegetation reinforces coastal character and enhances visual links to the water
- ▶ Vegetation assists in integrating built form with the street
- ▶ Building form appears to dominate the streetscape due to visually bulky building design, materials and siting
- ▶ Plant species do not reinforce local coastal character of the area
- ▶ Fencing and building design reinforces a hard edge to street



Single Lot Housing

- ▶ Housing design visually complements the landform through design, siting and use of lightweight materials
- ▶ Private landscape areas contributes significantly to the character of street and softens the built form
- ▶ Development form dominates hill
- ▶ Development does not visually complement the natural landform
- ▶ Private landscape areas are not integrated with the street and therefore reduce streetscape amenity



Gold Coast Highway

- ▶ Vegetation type and location promotes views from highway to beach across Golden Four Drive
- ▶ Streetscape maintains strong vertical elements of Norfolk Is Pines
- ▶ Vegetation reinforces strong edge to highway
- ▶ Boulevard character
- ▶ Planting provides unity in street edge
- ▶ Lack of strong visual definition in road
- ▶ Lack of unity along street edge



Character desired

Character not desired



Open Space Areas

- ▮ Retention of existing vegetation
- ▮ Rehabilitation with local native species
- ▮ Simple informal design
- ▮ No formal structures or garden beds
- ▮ Pedestrian access and links to other open space areas
- ▮ Existing vegetation is not maintained
- ▮ Rehabilitation does not utilise local native species
- ▮ Principles of dual use drainage system not achieved
- ▮ Open space linkages minimal with poor physical and visual access



Esplanade

- ▮ Housing design diverse, built form utilises less bulky building design and materials
- ▮ Built form set back from street
- ▮ Fencing low and transparent
- ▮ Private landscape areas reinforces the coastal character of the area
- ▮ Solid fencing dominates streetscape and presents a hard edge to the street
- ▮ Design of development does not promote integration with the street
- ▮ Private landscape areas utilise species which detract from the local coastal character of the area



Esplanade