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The City of Gold Coast is focused on protecting areas on the Gold Coast with a particular local identity, natural resource base or development character. The primary intent of this place analysis is to provide a resource to ensure character elements are appropriately considered in future development decisions at Kirra which forms part of the southern Gold Coast strip.

The Kirra neighbourhood centre, located along the ocean front is the central focus of a small residential suburb, which has an intimate character and is characterised by large expanses of parkland along the oceanfront with distinctive mature vegetation.
KEY URBAN CHARACTER ELEMENTS

The key character elements and special qualities identified for Kirra are summarised below.

- One sided commercial/retail strip with activity nodes with interspersed residential.
- The neighbourhood centre is framed by natural features.
- The street grid and associated road widths inform the proportion of building height.

- A high quality public realm with northern aspect and attractive outlook.
- A legible gridded streetscape which is generally flat and easily accessible and diversity of open space of varying forms.
- Framed to the east by Kirra Hill and Mount Murraba ridgeline forming elevated outlooks with iconic views.
- Existing sense of Gateway created by open space and existing views.

- Marine Parade and Musgrave Streets facilitates direct public access along foreshore.
- Street grid creates ease of access and multiple route options including level visual and physical access to the foreshore.
- Coolangatta Road provides an alternative east-west connection to Coolangatta.

- A rich history as a destination and recreation landscape.
- Number of registered heritage places and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and community venues.
- An active holiday atmosphere and street life catering for local residents and visiting trade.
- The public realm and natural features create opportunities for social and cultural activities.

- A transition from high density taller buildings on amalgamated blocks to medium density development and low rise residential land use.
- Combination of clusters of mixed use, residential, retail and commercial along the esplanade.
- Zero setback frontage activated on the western side of the esplanade and returning on some side streets.
- Generally activated street frontages along the esplanade with level access to street and open space.
- Building height responds to natural landscape features including Kirra Hill, Mount Murraba and the mature Norfolk Pine trees along the foreshore.
Kirra is a small beachside suburb located on the southern Gold Coast immediately adjacent to the scenic Kirra headland, north of the regional centre of Coolangatta and south of the Gold Coast Airport.

Despite its small size, Kirra currently combines a mix of residential densities. Primarily high density, high and medium rise towers and unit accommodation occurs close to the beach and highway. Lower density land-use comprising of two-storey walk-up units and detached housing occurs adjacent to this strip which takes on a traditional suburban area as you move further inland from the beach.

The population growth anticipated in the city over the next 20 years will result in changes to places along the southern corridor.

The key to respecting the character of the Kirra area is to identify and understand the special aspects which the community relate to as a special place and ensure new development understands, respects and responds to this character to enhance its unique place qualities.
METHODOLOGY
This study follows a three step process of mapping the spatial, physical and cultural qualities that define the character of Kirra.

STAGE ONE
City and Suburban Context
This step reviews background information and undertakes a comprehensive place analysis including written, graphic and photographic representations and descriptions of the findings.

The process includes site visits, desktop analysis, and research;
• Desktop review of desired character statements in Gold Coast Landscape Character Study 2014, Gold Coast Urban Heritage & Character Study 1997 and Landscape Strategy Part 3: Visual Diaries and existing heritage studies.

• Undertake field survey to record character assessment at a village scale and analyse: What is ‘special’ and distinctive about this place.

• Undertake a comprehensive mapping exercise from a whole of city scale to a suburb scale to a local ‘neighbourhood’ centre scale to define the broad range of physical and cultural elements that influence the shape and character of Kirra including spatial definition of the neighbourhood centre in Kirra.

Three Scales of Mapping

STAGE TWO
Village Elements
An assessment of character elements identifying how they collectively contribute to the function, urban form and character.
Kirra is a beachside suburb located between the scenic Kirra headland and Coolangatta Creek on the Southern Gold Coast. The Southern Gold Coast curves in an arc to the eastern most point of the Gold Coast at Point Danger. Kirra is the northern most extent of the southern points of the Gold Coast which include Kirra, Greenmount, and Snapper Rocks and are recognised nationally and internationally as a World Surf Reserve in 2016. These southern points and headlands, were formed from the eruption of Wollumbin (Mount Warning) Shield volcano 23 million years ago. The headlands create protection and an orientation almost due north for the sandy beaches that run between the headlands which provides a highly desirable aspect and protection from the prevailing south easterly winds, and an attractive and liveable sub-tropical climate with hot summers and mild winters, as illustrated adjacent.

What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

- The Gateway to the southern Gold Coast points, on the doorstep of Coolangatta at the opposite end of the Gold Coast to Surfers with good access from major roads
- Attractive location with an almost due north orientation, direct access to the beach and with protection from prevailing south easterly winds created by Kirra Hill
- Iconic right hand surf break of Kirra Point and part of the Gold Coast’s 8th World Surfing Reserve a world surfing destination
KIRRA IS A BEACHSIDE SUBURB LOCATED BETWEEN THE SCENIC KIRRA HEADLAND AND COOLANGATTA CREEK ON THE SOUTHERN GOLD COAST
CITY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The Gold Coast Landscape Character Study 2014 maps 10 Landscape Character Types for the city, of which five apply at Kirra. The five city-wide landscape character types which are found in Kirra are illustrated below and a summary of the landscape character elements specific to the Kirra centre that are recognised at a whole of city scale are referenced in Table 1.

A full detailed description of signature elements and focal points, elements of importance, elements that reinforce character and anomalies for each landscape character type can be found in the Gold Coast Landscape Character Study 2014.

Table 1: Regional Landscape Character Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature elements focal points</th>
<th>Elements that reinforce character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ocean as seen from elevated viewpoints.</td>
<td>Norfolk Island Pines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beaches which as a landscape element provide a major point of difference between the Gold Coast and other cities.</td>
<td>Clean safe water for water based recreation (e.g. swimming and boating).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landmark views of the northern sweep of coastline from Burleigh, Currumbin and Point Danger.</td>
<td>Opportunities for viewing water from bridges, esplanade roads and public open space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major headlands which are visually prominent at a regional scale.</td>
<td>In urban and highly developed tourist areas, tall buildings close to water without obscuring public views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bands of vegetation along watercourses.</td>
<td>View corridors from and between buildings to the ocean, river and beach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views of forested hills, with distant higher mountains behind.</td>
<td>Accessibility of the beach, both visually and in terms of use by visitors and residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally prominent hills in many areas eg. ‘Kirra Hill’.</td>
<td>Coastal native vegetation including revegetated dunes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undulating topography.</td>
<td>Norfolk pines are a significant landscape element.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established vegetation in residential areas.</td>
<td>Vegetation lining waterways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views and glimpses of the ocean, rivers, creeks, from public areas, including ‘Timeless Gateways’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Routes on water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views to headlands from the beaches and from one headland to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views to and from beaches, plus glimpses from surrounding streets and public open spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views from roads, public open spaces and recreational water bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct boundaries between developed and undeveloped open space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic routes from Point Danger to Kirra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible water (ocean, rivers, bay or canals) as seen or glimpsed from elevated viewpoints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated places which allow views to mountains, high-rise built form, water, patches of bushland and landmark views.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Landscape Character Types Overlay

- Water/watercourses and estuary
- High-rise development
- Coastal headlands and beaches
- Bay islands and Spit
- Lowlands
- Coastal plains and low hills
- Foothills
- Distinct valleys
- Mountains
- Gold Coast regional boundary
- Pacific Motorway and GC Highway

Regional Context Map
HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Geographic Heritage Frameworks (GHF’s) established in the 2014 Gold Coast Landscape Character Study capture the patterns of development of the Gold Coast and the tangible evidence of heritage landscapes that exist in the suburb.

Of the nine Geographic Historic Frameworks identified in the study, four are applicable to Kirra. Table 2 explains the Heritage framework that has been identified in Kirra.

Landscape Heritage Overlay

- Heritage hub/village
- Movement routes and hubs
- Beaches foreshores
- Canal areas
- Coastal development
- Broadwater and Lower Coomera River
- Northern rural plain
- Hinterland foothills and valleys
- Western Ranges, tablelands and valleys
- Gold Coast regional boundary
### Table 2: Heritage significance of Kirra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Historical Framework Landscapes</th>
<th>Statements of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Movement Routes &amp; Hubs</td>
<td>The cultural significance lies in the heritage evidence, the intangible heritage and its settings. It includes historical movement routes, tracks, roads, railways, bridges, the airport, boating ways, ferries, the villages, community hubs and gathering places through the Gold Coast's history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> The Beaches &amp; Foreshores</td>
<td>The cultural significance lies in the high aesthetic and social appreciation of the beaches and their associated foreshores and open space, the headlands and coastal waterways and the streetscape plantings and urban views from the beaches and esplanades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> South Coast Development Strip</td>
<td>The cultural significance lies in the strip pattern of development formed between the beaches and the wetlands of the coastal plain, the differences and social values of each locality along its length and the aesthetic values of the streetscapes and beach and esplanade views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G</strong> Hinterland Foothills &amp; Valleys</td>
<td>The cultural significance lies in the historical pattern of movement routes, rural and residential developments over these landscapes, the aesthetic appreciation of both the historical landscape form and vegetation cover wherever it can be appreciated, and the distant viewscapes of the ranges and tablelands to the west.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
03 SUBURBAN CONTEXT
The following is an overview of the key urban elements found at a suburb scale, and how the neighborhood centre relates to the surrounding suburbs.

**URBAN STRUCTURE**

The urban structure of Kirra is largely constrained by the natural landscape features and man-made edges.

- Kirra is located at the Southern end of the Gold Coast where the city (and the State of Queensland) contracts to a small 0.8 kilometres wide strip between the State border and the Coral Sea in the Pacific Ocean.
- The movement of traffic predominantly north south through Kirra with Coolangatta Road bisecting the suburb and the Gold Coast Highway feeding travellers along the beach frontage which forms a unique gateway experience to the southern Gold Coast points.
- Diffuse edges of Coolangatta Creek to the north and Kirra Hill which forms a solid edge to the south for an otherwise flat suburb.
- National Park headland, with distant views to Mount Warning and the hinterland. Views appreciated from vehicles, beach fishermen and pedestrians.
Broad Structure of Kirra

- Strong vistas on major roads
- Gateways
- Defining ridgeline frame
- QLD/NSW border
- Historic rail route
- Indicative Kirra area
- Kirra Neighbourhood centre
Pedestrian pathways up Kirra Hill

Kirra southern gateway

**What’s special about Kirra’s place character?**

- Strong relationship with the beach and waterways, flanked to the east by the Coral Sea in the Pacific Ocean and north by Coolangatta Creek
- Framed by a prominent coastal headland of Kirra Hill on its southern edge, with the ridgeline extending west to Mount Murraba and ultimately forming part of the border ranges
- Flat coastal lowland behind the remnant coastal dune system leading to coastal plains and foothills to the west of the airport
- Strong sense of entry and arrival through “timeless gateways”: at the northern entry with an arrival view of the ocean and at the southern entry where the highway kisses the beach as it wraps around Kirra Point with panoramic views north over the full arc of the Gold Coast beaches which is particularly prominent from elevated lookout positions
- Long views over coastal lowlands and waterways to mountain backdrop of the McPherson Range and other geographic features such as The Cougals and Springbrook
- Large amount of regional passing traffic on Gold Coast Highway
TOPOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

TOPOGRAPHY

Kirra is sited on the flat coastal lowlands, but is nestled in the lee of Kirra Hill, which creates a physical and visual barrier to Coolangatta. The ridge extends west to Mount Murraba and the reservoir with tree lined streets and densely vegetated ridgelines creating a green back drop on the skyline. The eastern side of the top of the headland boasts a world class lookout and the public asset of the Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre (previous Coolangatta State School). The ocean side of Kirra Hill is a steep rocky scarp with the Gold Coast Highway cut into its base and a wide pedestrian promenade (Concrete Boardwalk) providing an excellent coastal viewing path along the foreshore.

The beach around the point is subject to accretion and erosion of sand and features rock outcrops that stretch into the water with a large groyne (The Big Groyne) that defines a strong edge to Coolangatta Beach. Beach replenishment north of the surf club has covered most of the Kirra Little Groyne, and created a wide sandy beach and dunal buffer area forming an edge to the popular linear grassed open space along the Kirra foreshore. The beach replenishment has created a wide buffer and in places a slightly elevated profile to the Gold Coast Highway reminiscent of the old sand dunes.

Coolangatta Creek bisects the suburb and forms part of the gateway at Kirra’s northern edge and with the adjoining verge spaces from the surrounding roads forms a valuable tree lined green space in the back streets of Kirra. Coolangatta Road with its wide verges and mature street trees runs parallel to this line to the south, with the old South Coast Railway reserve footprint sandwiched in between.
LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

A number of forms of open space are evident in the suburb:

- **Natural open space**: modified passive open space along Coolangatta Creek and the wide road reserves on the vegetated ridgeline and the dunal buffer to the beach, the beach and the ocean
- **Physical open space**: active open space areas including the linear beachfront park, The Kirra Sports Club located on Miles Street for active pursuits, formalised sporting events and the connections between
- **Other open space**: the use of Public land, State land and schools including Miles Street Reservoir, Coolangatta State school, Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre grounds and lookouts, provide passive recreational opportunities explore non-standard open space provisions bolstering traditional open space needs.

The Beachfront Park (incorporating Gilltrap Park and Roughton Park) features with continuous Oceanway pathway, advanced Norfolk Pines and other public infrastructure, playgrounds, picnic shelters, barbeques and facilities prove a popular respite to the beach and an opportunity for families to linger longer in a popular beachside park. It is also popular for events including Cooly Rocks on Surf Precinct, the Kirra Kite Festival etc.

The beachfront is connected around Kirra headland via the pedestrian ‘boardwalk’ with viewing shelters connecting back into the Coolangatta foreshore. Another connection over the headland includes winding paths and steps, popular for the more active exercisers.

The precinct is bisected by a central green spine running parallel to the beach line that follows the line of Coolangatta Creek and the old South Coast Railway line, continuing through an obscured pedestrian and open space connection via the vegetated cutting of the Old rail route and the elevated green backdrop of Kirra Hill.

The Percy Pease Park is a triangular shaped wedge of open grass with advanced Norfolk Pines west of the Kirra Beach Hotel with bus stop and path along its northern edge. This prominent location offers some breathing space on the otherwise built form dominated edge and enhances the sense if arrival into Kirra, but is underutilised due to its isolation from passing pedestrians with a masonry wall along its northern edge.

The Kirra Sports Club is located on Miles Street servicing the Kirra, Coolangatta and Tweed Heads residents. It encompasses the whole block to Appel Street and the border and works in tandem with the Coolangatta State School to the north as a publically accessible space and southern green edge to Kirra, complemented by the vegetated ridge of Mount Mawarra.

Most open space features mature vegetation particularly Norfolk Pines or advanced Eucalypts, good public access to the beach, playgrounds, boardwalks/walkways and facilities. Open vistas over the relatively flat landscape through the open space and road system create views to the ocean horizon line, hinterland and the wind swept vegetation on the Kirra Hill green forming a back drop.

**Public Green space features dotted through Kirra include:**

- Percy Pease Park
- Roughton Park
- Gilltrap Park
- Tom Mustchin Park
- the Coolangatta Creek reserve
- the Kirra railway cutting, wide street verges with mature street trees
- Coolangatta State School grounds
- Len Peak Oval
- Miles Street Reserve public green space around Kirra Hill Reservoir
- Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre.
Section A: Coolangatta Creek to Kirra Hill

Natural Open Space
- Creeks and waterways
- Canals and lakes
- Public open space
- Study area
- Ridgeline
Section B: Border to Beach

Physical Open Space

- Community facilities
- Creeks
- Public open space
- Walking trails and key routes
- Study area

1. Oceanway
2. Kirra Boardwalk
3. Link to Tweed Heads West
4. Old rail cutting
What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

The beach and coastal headland are of critical importance to both residents and visitors to Kirra:

- as a continuous form of publicly accessible open space/parkland from Bilinga to Point Danger and the Tweed River;
- as an area with multiple passive and active recreational opportunities;
- as a site of high scenic amenity and natural beauty;
- as an access to the Coral Sea in the Pacific Ocean for recreation.

| Large interconnected open space assets particularly the foreshore parkland and Kirra Boardwalk |
| Range of active and passive open space experiences |
| Organised community recreation and sporting groups that activate the facilities |
| Flat terrain along the foreshore allowing good pedestrian walkability and cycling opportunities and access to views via elevated lookouts |
| ‘Ant trails’ staircases ascending Kirra Hill connecting to viewing opportunities and public open space |
Beach Foreshore Parklands

Open space connection through old rail cutting
HISTORY AND HERITAGE

It is likely the Kirra and Coolangatta area and the associated waterways and ocean provided a rich coastal marine environment that supported food and freshwater requirements for the indigenous inhabitants.

Anecdotally, the name Kirra means ‘leaf’ or ‘boomerang’ in native dialects.

Interestingly, the geological history of Mount Warning and the formation of the Gold Coast Southern points is what Captain Cook used in 1770 when navigating the east coast with local landmarks including Point Danger and Mount Warning.

This reflects the early use of the ocean and subsequently the Rivers as a means of transport and trade between coastal towns like Tweed Heads and into hinterland towns such as Murwillumbah, supporting rural activity. Evidence of this early maritime transport lies in the name, when the brigantine “Coolangatta” was wrecked off the Tweed Bar in 1846, it resulted in the naming of Coolangatta and Coolangatta Creek. The wreck was subsequently unearthed in the 1970s after significant beach erosion events and various pieces of wreckage exists in numerous locations around the Gold Coast.

The spectacular vistas from Kirra along the arc of the Gold Coast are captured in early photography and sketches with the mountain backdrop beyond the coastline.

Urban development at Kirra was associated with the original development in the Coolangatta area at the turn of the century. Some sandmining occurred in the vicinity of Coolangatta Creek and along Tugun, followed by draining and regrading Coolangatta Creek for residential development.

The early 1910s saw the beach bathing and camping popularity of the foreshore, quickly followed by the development of guest houses, beach kiosks and an operating three storey SLSC club house operating on the beach in 1922, and the Kirra Beach Pavilion in 1936, Kirra soon overtook Coolangatta in terms of popularity.

Post war the beaches were used by the US army for Convalescent Camps and subsequently formalised beach camp grounds. Numerous cyclones and storms occurring in 1946, 1951 and 1954 and culminating in 1974, wreaked havoc on the Kirra beaches resulting in loss of sand and damage to property and infrastructure. It also corresponded with a hiatus in development pressure in the area, with the lack of beach access a deterrent for potential purchasers.

As a small suburban footprint some local businesses were established to service the local residents. However, Coolangatta and Tweed Heads were, and remain today...
the main town centres for most shopping and service needs, with Kirra operating smaller corner stores, milk bars and cafes for the tourist sector, and Kirra Hotel opening in 1956.

The beach culture started in 1900 to 1950s. This experienced further development into a surf culture in the 1960s and 70s, when the barrelling waves of Kirra Point were seen as some of the best tube riding waves in the world, producing world champions including Michael Peterson, Peter Drouyn, Peter Townend, Wayne Deane and Rabbit Bartholomew.

After extensive erosion, two groynes were built at Kirra in 1972 to assist with sand replenishment among various other “improvements”, including ultimately the construction of the Tweed Bypass sand pumping system and extensive beach reclamation as we experience today. This provides a barrier and sand bank to combat cyclonic wave action but it has been to the detriment of Kirra Beach as a world class surf break.

The South Coast Rail route was removed in the early 1960s and further development of residential and multi-unit development occurred to the border during the 1970s and 80s. The Coolangatta School was moved from Kirra Hill to its current position in Stapylton Street in the late 1960s.

This development and proximity to the airport experienced competing interest with the development in Surfers Paradise in the 1970s, with airport traffic encouraged by TAA to ‘turn left’ at the highway. Coolangatta and Kirra commenced a competing redevelopment of high-rise through the 1990s and 2000s with redevelopment of coastal property along the Gold Coast highway alignment, including the Kirra Surf development visible from the airport, which created a marker at the corner of Coolangatta Road and Musgrave Street.

There are a number of places in the Kirra area that are entered in the Gold Coast Local heritage register. In addition, a number of heritage landscapes are illustrated on the attached plans and schedule for the Kirra area but these are not considered exhaustive. The attached plans and timeline reflect key eras of development and associated framework landscapes illustrating both spatial and temporal change in the suburb, providing tangible evidence of the story of the development of Kirra. These landscapes illustrate the social and cultural heritage of the suburb and are summarised under the key themes of the heritage landscapes mapping.
Kirra Beach Hotel, 2014

Kirra Pavilion, 1950s

Kirra sand replenishment little groyne, 1990s

Aerial over groyne at Kirra, 1990s

Beach reclamation, 1975

Blue and red bus lines, 1950s

Kirra beach camping, 1960s

Kirra Beach Hotel, 1960s

Images sourced: City Libraries Local Studies Collection
What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

The route of Gold Coast Highway kissing the beach at Musgrave Street, running parallel along Marine Parade and wrapping around Kirra point.

The route of the original South Coast Rail including the cutting through Kirra Hill.

Iconic views of the Gold Coast skyline, the hinterland and the Kirra point break.

Iconic surf break of Kirra Point (part of the Gold Coast’s 8th World Surfing Reserve) a world surfing destination.

Heritage listed Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre with public access to viewing platforms and public open space.

Kirra Surf Lifesaving Club and Pavilion.

Kirra Shelter shed (reconstructed).

Traditional holiday destination and accommodation with the old Railway Station and Kirra Camp.

Home of “Kirra Surf”.

Coolangatta Creek, The wreck of the Coolangatta and the Coolangatta Heritage walk.
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

Social and cultural elements of Kirra include:

- Indigenous links to first Australians (a rich coastal marine environment that supported food and freshwater requirements). Anecdotally, the name Kirra means ‘leaf’ or ‘boomerang’ in native dialects. However, this report does not explore the pre-European habitation and relationship to place that would have been held by the original peoples. The abundance of clean water, the protection from the southerly winds, the ocean and the creek is still an appealing recreational resource for the current community.

- Coolangatta State Primary School (Public), Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre (including Kirra Hill Art Gallery and Museum), Kirra Surf Lifesaving Club, Kirra Surfriders Club (1962-2012).

- Festivals and Events including Cooly Rocks on and the Kirra Surf Precinct (September) the Kirra Kite Festival (November), Kirra Saltfest Surf Festival and Bleach Festival.

- Tourist accommodation, Caravan Park.

- Restaurants, Cafes, Hotel, Retail and commercial outlets including Kirra Surf and Pizza Hut.

What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

An active local community organised through community groups, schools, sporting clubs, surf clubs and community services that reflect an established catchment of residents who share a passionate interest and sense of ownership of the amenity of open spaces, creeks and estuaries, and sandy beaches.

- Residential detached dwellings.

- Proximity to Coolangatta – old Jazz Club, entertainment, shopping, Post Office, Churches, markets, Gold Coast Bleach Festival, Cooly Rocks On etc.

- Proximity to Southern Cross University (Gold Coast Campus) adjacent the Gold Coast Airport (a 25-minute walk or 10 to 15-minute bike ride from Kirra Beach).
Kirra Surf Life Saving Club

Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre

Kirra Kite Festival

Cooly Rocks On Festival (Coolangatta)
Kirra Hill events

Bleach Festival on beach foreshore

Kirra Saltfest Surf Festival

Kirra Caravan Park
Festival events on beach foreshore

Kirra cafes and restaurants on Musgrave Street
VISUAL SETTING AND VIEWS

KEY VIEWS

Key views and vistas within Kirra have determined to inform the visual sensitivities of Kirra in its landscape context. These have been identified based on a combination of site visit and desktop review.

1. Panoramic views from Kirra Hill
   - Ocean views
   - Views north to Surfers
   - Views to Cougals over airport
   - Views to southern headlands
   - Views to local hills and Coolangatta

2. Gateway views on arrival at Kirra

3. Promenade views from Musgrave St, Marine Parade, Foreshore Park and Beach

4. Framed views along North-South avenues

5. Framed views - Railway cutting

6. Internal Coolangatta Road views
What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

- Distinctive setting with strong arrival Gateway along the beachside promenade
- Grid of street frame local view lines to key landscape elements and assists in orientation, wayfinding and sense of space
- Long views from lookout over coastal lowlands to mountain backdrop
- Long views from the lookout and the boardwalk to the northern Gold Coast with the full arc of the coast and south to Point Danger
- Open space has high scenic amenity values
URBAN FORM

The Gold Coast Highway traffic feeding into Kirra results in a one-sided, linear neighbourhood centre with its tourist retail and commercial facilities running in an east/west direction along Musgrave Street. This provides a northerly orientation to a pedestrian retail frontage 1 kilometre in length of neighbourhood centre between Kirra Surf and the Kirra Hotel. A cluster of older fibro shops and flats and the Kirra Beach Hotel occur at the intersection of Miles Street, Musgrave Street and Marine Parade.

The urban development with northern orientation to the coastline is unique within the Gold Coast. This active edge overlooks Musgrave Street, to a linear foreshore parkland with mature vegetation and facilities that access the beach beyond. This coastal relationship of public land along the foreshore is relatively limited on the Gold Coast strip development except for a number of examples e.g. parts of Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach, Miami, Burleigh, Currumbin and Coolangatta.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The original settlement occurred south of the Gold Coast Highway parallel to the beach. This linear form was dictated by the Gold Coast Highway as the primary route for transport between Surfers Paradise and Coolangatta with several road “deflections as you approach North Kirra, the Kirra SLSC Pavilions and wrapping around Kirra Hill. Fortuitously, the beachside alignment of the highway resulted in the legacy of open space preserved along the beach frontage.

Despite the topography, the grid pattern of streets extends from Coolangatta, west over Kirra Hill, into the flat Kirra area where the north–south Avenues continue perpendicular to the beach. Miles Street is the dominant north south link to Tweed Heads. Further clues to the QLD/NSW border like the Livestock Spray Treatment Facility, and the road maintenance on Miles Street, are not obvious to most observers, and the suburb appears to merge south with Tweed Heads. The east-west grid tends to re-align north of the Kirra Ridge due to the skewed alignment of the Coolangatta Creek drainage line which consequently dictated the alignment of the South Coast Rail route and Coolangatta Road.

ROAD NETWORK

The Road network consists of two primary east west carriageways, the old Highway feeding directly into Musgrave Street and Coolangatta Road parallel to the beach. Coolangatta Road, featuring wide verges and mature street trees runs to the south of and parallel to Coolangatta Creek, continuing over Kirra Hill and into Coolangatta to form Tweed Street. The street network runs off this spine in a north south direction (with approx. 5° offset) setting up a rectangular grid pattern, influenced by the beach, the creek and also the topography of Kirra Hill. The grid of streets also provide strong view lines to vegetated ridges beyond the suburb and glimpses to the beach and the water assisting with orientation and wayfinding.

Miles Street forms the primary north south street into Tweed Heads. This network facilitates legible and efficient access in the suburb through an efficient grid structure. Musgrave Street runs parallel to the beach line before deflecting into Marine Parade at the Kirra Hotel and SLSC and wrapping around Kirra Point providing a beachside esplanade experience.

The Gold Coast Highway diverts south at the Airport, forming the Pacific Motorway and bypassing Kirra on its western edge diverting southbound traffic to meet the Tugun Bypass and Pacific Motorway.
What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

The promenade along the beach and Marine Parade wrapping around Kirra Point, cutting the edge of Kirra Hill with its rocky outcrops and groynes and clean peeling surf

Legibility of grid structure for circulation and for context, views, vistas, orientation and amenity

Neighbourhood centre on one side of the road and the parkland and beach opposite
VILLAGE CONTEXT
LAND USE, LOT SIZE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Key observations of the existing land-use, configuration and pattern of lots and ownership in the neighbourhood centre of Kirra and the immediate surrounding streets include:

- The neighbourhood centre is characterised by its one sided linear character along Musgrave Street with the Kirra Surf Development, The Kirra Beach Hotel and The Kirra SLSC slightly separate from the main spine but bookending the centre.
- Many of the original low density long narrow lots of the original subdivision pattern have been amalgamated into larger mixed use, residential medium to high density and commercial uses close to the beach. As you move further from the beach to Winston Street much of the original narrow lots and walk up flats still exist along with detached dwellings.
- The neighbourhood centre is predominantly medium density with pockets of high-rise along the foreshore and detached residential further from the beach.

Land use

The one sided centre is comprised of a mix of land uses taking advantage of passing traffic, the open space and the beach as an attractor and activator particularly with the panoramic northern aspect over water.

The other dominant land use in the neighbourhood centre is open space and community facilities which forms more than 50 per cent of the ultimate footprint if the beach is included. Coolangatta Creek also frames the southern edge of the neighbourhood center.

Some older dwellings in poor states of maintenance and vacant lots reflect future possible development sites. The surrounding suburban area is predominantly residential with some light industrial trades and service business along Appel Street behind the school.
Land Use

- Commercial / Retail
- Mixed Use
- Medium / High Density Residential
- Detached Housing
- Community Buildings
Mixed-use Commercial and Residential

What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

- Legibility of the primary vehicle access along the beach
- Grid structure for circulation and context, views, vistas, orientation and amenity
- Narrow and compact neighbourhood centre bounded by natural features and the border
- Development focused on the beach and natural headland frame
- Neighbourhood centre core caters more for a short term transient and visitor population with a limited diversity of businesses

Commercial / retail

Douglas Street
BUILT FORM AND ARCHITECTURE

Built form of Kirra are extremely varied, with waves of development from holiday to permanent accommodation, from high-rise/multi-dwellings to single detached dwellings and include:

- tents, fibro beach houses, apartments and flats (brick and fibro walk-ups). The varied architectural styles and materials (e.g. modern beach architecture and reproduction Tuscan) held together by the landscape and coastal setting of ocean, creek, mature trees in the streetscapes, headlands and ridgeline backdrops.

- Current development progression of mid to high-rise modern architecture

Public and semi-public character buildings include:

- the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club (Queensland’s second oldest surf lifesaving club which was established in 1916)

- the Kirra Hill Community and Cultural Centre (2008) – previously the Coolangatta State School (originally opened in October 1920)

- the South Coast Railway previous alignment and elements (1903 - 1961) when sold off stimulated a redevelopment phase.

While there are some notable and recognisable buildings in Kirra, it is the eclectic nature of the built form and accessibility of the beach views that gives Kirra its’ character. The built form and architecture is varied in age, style and materials. There is a challenge in retaining this eclectic nature when refurbishing and redeveloping.

It is important that future developments enhance public realm and existing public open spaces, preserve the existing permeability of views and breezes enjoyed by. It is desirable for new development and refurbishments to encourage a coastal subtropical style to maximise liveability at this coastal suburb with sea breezes and a casual outdoor lifestyle. It needs to provide connection to the public realm allowing visual and physical access to the beach and public open spaces. This in turn leads to a safer and more engaged and dynamic community.
One and two-storey single detached residential dwellings (varied materials)

One-storey retail and commercial buildings (varied materials)

One and two-storey public buildings (varied materials)

Two-storey attached residential dwellings (varied materials)
Two-storey mixed use buildings (varied materials)

One storey retail and commercial buildings (varied materials)

Two-storey mixed use buildings (varied materials)

Four to six-storey multi residential apartments, with lift access (varied materials)
Seven to 15-storey multi residential apartments, with multi lift access e.g. 'Wyndham Resort' / 'Nirvana' / 'Iconic' (varied materials)

Four to six-storey multi residential apartments, with lift access (varied materials)
BUILDING CHARACTER

Kirra has a built environment that is diverse in age, form architectural character and quality.

Some key characteristics include:

• commercial neighbourhood centre – street awnings, overhead signage, legibility of car parking as extension of the street
• mixed-use fronting esplanade – open and accessible, contemporary alfresco style, integrated signage
• retail outlets to street residential – existing older style e.g. retro-fitted, small scale, fine grain, varied materials
• medium rise residential – articulated facades, balcony outdoor living, e.g. podium to street
• beachside residential – esplanade frontage - predominantly high-rise contemporary design and planning
• beachside residential – one, two and three storey residential, varied materials, styles and ages reflecting development cycles.

BUILDING FOOTPRINTS

Greatest site cover and reduced setback occur along Musgrave Street, with zero setback to the street frontage for mixed use and commercial developments. An exception to this is ‘GGs’, which is setback from the corner to allow for on-site parking. Generally zero setbacks to street preclude awning coverage and signage along Musgrave Street.

Larger building footprints occur on corner sites and along Musgrave where lots have been amalgamated.
Low, medium and high-rise buildings

Low-rise detached housing

Medium-rise unit building
What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

- The historic pattern of esplanade road, shop frontage and covered awning creating a village shopping experience opposite the beach.
- The variety of built form, materials and styles, particularly fibro flats, holiday motels and awning covered shop fronts.
ACTIVATION, STREET LIFE AND SIGNAGE

ACTIVATION AND STREET LIFE

The primary daytime activators at Kirra are the beach and the foreshore parkland. A number of daytime business activators occur in the centres strip which support an active street life with news agent, coffee shops and cafes from 5am, catering for early morning activation, servicing locals and accommodating day trippers and shoppers.

The beach and the streets that lead to the beach are also activators from the very early morning, with many people taking advantage of the beach for recreation including walk, ride and drive up for surfing, fishing, exercise and dog walking, leading to further activation in the neighbourhood centre.

Kirra Surf, the Kirra SLSC and Kirra Hotel are separated from the neighbourhood centre strip and provide beach side activation during the day and at night with associated off street car parking and their location forms bookends for the Kirra centre.

The majority of night time activation occurs in restaurants, bars, the Kirra Hotel and the SLSC and the sole bottle shop.

Kirra beach foreshore parkland

Restaurants with active street frontages - day and night activators

Night Time Activators

- Night time activators (Generally associated with food/beverage businesses)
- Neighbourhood centre built form
SIGNAGE

A range of signage types exist that contribute both positively and negatively to the character of Kirra. Much of the signage is placed to take advantage of the visual exposure of the main roads including the Gold Coast Highway, Pacific Motorway, Musgrave Street and Marine Parade. Note also that the scenic preference (what people prefer to look at) is high along the neighbourhood centre due to the exposure along the beachfront park, the beach and headlands and the ocean.

Billboard signs are limited to large advertising on the Kirra Surf corner facing north promoting surf ware and surf and imagery. This takes advantage of oncoming (predominantly south bound traffic) and solar access to the sign face. These signs promote the local business and the desirable characteristics of Kirra and the southern points: the surf.

Combined pylon signs are used at the Kirra neighbourhood centre cluster of shops and have integrated signage palettes for the collective of shops included.

Under awning-suspended signs and awning face signs both older/original scale and new modern interpretations promote business within and are generally low scale and reflect diverse business names, character, lettering and materials. Generally the scale of these signs promotes a village character and the concept of village consisting of a multiple of small businesses. At times clear line of sight to signage and business exposure and the desire for un-obstructed outlook to the open space results in limited street tree planting.
What's special about Kirra's place character?

The historic pattern of streetscape, shop frontage and continuous covered awning along Musgrave Street frontage and signage creating a village shopping experience and eclectic mix of businesses and tenancies.

Connection to the Public Realm allowing visual and physical access to the beach and public open spaces, promoting a safer, more engaged and dynamic community.
ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Access and movement retains the dominant east-west flow of vehicular traffic into Coolangatta and the settlement pattern which has established the urban grid pattern.

Vehicle access is well catered for with prioritised east-west movement and controlled intersections for the north-south Streets. This vehicle traffic is supported by numerous destination based private and public carparks which maximise access for visitors to the main attractions along the foreshore. Kirra is well serviced by public transport with regular bus stops and shelters.

Kirra is in close proximity to the Gold Coast Airport, Southern Cross University, Coolangatta and Tweed Heads (NSW).

A number of barriers or restrictions to movement also occur.

The desirable movements north-south from the Kirra to the foreshore and beach is via the verges with controlled intersections over the busy east-west roads, which tend to provide a barrier to this movement. The nature of the distractions of the beach and people along Musgrave Street creates a slower speed environment, where drivers tend to rubber-neck and cruise to check out the sights, creating a tendency to promote jaywalking and informal crossing of the Musgrave Street and Marine Parade, however as a result the safety of these north south crossings should be reviewed and could be improved.

The wide open space of reclaimed and regenerating beach dunes, create opportunities for ‘ant trails’ connecting from the parkland through the sand to the ocean edge, and with a number of staircases and winding paths ascending Kirra Hill connecting to viewing opportunities and public open space. Coolangatta Creek forms a “moat” like barrier to north south movement but creates a sense of private ownership for adjoining residents with informal access along its grassy banks. The steep northern side of Kirra Hill restricts pedestrian access which has to divert to the northern side of Marine Parade via the Boardwalk. The old railway cutting facilitates a semi-hidden access between Kirra and Coolangatta, but creates a barrier to a north south link along Rutledge and Garrick Streets.

STREETS AND PARKING

Most streets have parallel on street parking with some 90 degree parking provided along the park edge off Musgrave Street and Marine Parade.

Numerous public carparks service the open space. A number of private carparks neighbourhood centre business within the shopping centre.

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Pedestrian access is excellent in an east-west direction with flat terrain along the beach allowing good pedestrian walkability and bikeway opportunities and access to views, with continuous wide dedicated oceanway and numerous other paths. This connectivity includes features like pedestrian ‘boardwalk’ with viewing shelters around the Kirra Point headland with a unique “over the surf experience” which forms part of an extensive beachside park system from Bilinga to the Tweed River via the Coolangatta foreshore.
Pedestrian and Cyclist Movement

- Primary pedestrian routes
- Bikeway
- Key pedestrian connections
- Major pedestrian barriers
- Minor pedestrian barriers
- Signalised pedestrian crossings
- Roundabout
- Pedestrian crossings
Vehicle Access and Movement

- Primary vehicle route
- Secondary local access street
- On street 90 degree parking
- On street parallel parking
- Public carpark

- Private carpark
- Road reserve
- Old Railroad Reserve now public open space
STREETS

STREET TYPOLOGIES

Street typologies play a key role in the urban structure and amenity of Kirra with a range of road hierarchies, widths and characteristics. The streets cater for significant through traffic east-west and as well as distributing local traffic north south. Musgrave Street, Marine Parade, Coolangatta Road and Miles Street represent the “windows” in which users experience the suburb. These have been generously provisioned with appropriate verge widths, furnishings and landscape treatments which improve the user experience.

CHARACTER STREETS

Musgrave Street runs on the edge of the dune system parallel to the beach line before deflecting into Marine Parade at the Kirra Hotel and SLSC and wrapping around Kirra Point providing a beachside esplanade experience. This unique beachside road acts as a scenic tourist route looking over the surf, affording panoramic ocean vistas from the urban development of the northern Gold Coast and to the green hinterland distant backdrop to the north-west.

Coolangatta Road features wide verges and mature street trees in the road reserve runs parallel to Coolangatta Creek to the south. The street network runs off this spine in a north south direction (with approx. 50 offset) setting up a rectangular grid pattern, influenced by the beach, the creek and also the topography of Kirra Hill. The grid of streets also provide strong view lines to distant vegetated ridges beyond the suburb and glimpses to the beach and the water.
What’s special about Kirra’s place character?

The historic pattern of esplanade road, shop frontage and covered awning creating a village shopping experience opposite the beach

Marine Parade and Musgrave Street provides public connection to the beach front parkland and beach beyond

Efficient grid structure of streets and clear road hierarchy provides a range of options for circulation provides access to the major asset of the beach

Bus stops and shelters (public transport) and public parking areas in proximity to Parklands, SLSC and street side parking

Close proximity to the M1, Gold Coast Airport, Southern Cross University, and shopping centres of Coolangatta and Tweed Heads (NSW)

Hidden paths over Kirra Hill and the Railway Cutting and their associated story
The Kirra neighbourhood centre is a one-sided commercial strip located along Marine Parade and Musgrave Street on the ocean side of the suburb of Kirra. It is located at the foot of Kirra Hill extending west along the esplanade, and looks north through public parkland to the Coral Sea. The existing retail activities have responded to the opportunities of the passing traffic, to attract and service the needs of day trippers, holiday makers and locals. The population is subject to seasonal variation and other local services are provided at the larger shopping areas of Coolangatta and Tweed Heads. Traditionally Kirra has been a thoroughfare between the ultimate destinations of Coolangatta to the south and the rest of the Gold Coast to the north. Kirra remains a small, intimate neighbourhood centre in comparison to its larger district centres at Coolangatta and Tweed Heads.

The distinctive characteristics of the Kirra neighbourhood centre are the large parkland areas (containing distinctive Norfolk Island Pines, Pandanus, and Casuarina trees) and an esplanade road which runs parallel to the north facing beach and extends around a rocky point to create a publically accessible beachfront promenade. This extensive piece of accessible public open space wraps around Kirra Hill (containing windswept vegetation, Eucalyptus species and Cotton trees) and forms a gateway to Coolangatta. The proximity to and outlook of the beach and open space from the neighbourhood centre, reinforces the popularity of the retail and restaurants as an active edge looking out over the expansive public realm areas.

The beach and public parkland contrasts with the one sided retail strip opposite, and is a public open space asset for the medium density residential development nestled in behind which frames the beachfront.

Located perpendicular to the oceanfront esplanade, a grid of streets creates a strong and legible urban structure. The gridded street pattern provides north south access between the beach and the surrounding residential suburb and, is framed by Coolangatta Creek to the north and a ridgeline which extends from a prominent coastal headland at Kirra Hill to the south. An old heavy rail corridor extends to the south of Coolangatta Creek reserve, terminating to the east in a park containing a rail cutting which provides pedestrian access to Coolangatta. Located further to the south Coolangatta Road comprises central island street planting and wide verges which reinforce a green public open space spine that extends through the suburb and terminates at Kirra Hill. Some of the original narrow lot frontages and their associated fibro flats and two storey walk ups are evident in these side streets, but many of the esplanade lots have been amalgamated into larger integrated development sites within the vicinity of the Kirra neighbourhood centre. These developments have retained a built to boundary shop and restaurant frontage, with covered awnings and landscape treatments which take advantage of the northern aspect to the esplanade parkland and ocean.
KEY URBAN CHARACTER ELEMENTS

- One-sided commercial/retail strip with activity nodes with interspersed residential.
- The neighbourhood centre is framed by natural features.
- The street grid and associated road widths inform the proportion of building height.

- A high quality public realm with northern aspect and attractive outlook.
- A legible gridded streetscape which is generally flat and easily accessible and diversity of open space of varying forms.
- Framed to the east by Kirra Hill and Mount Murraba ridgeline forming elevated outlooks with iconic views.
- Existing sense of Gateway created by open space and existing views.

- Marine Parade and Musgrave Streets facilitates direct public access along foreshore.
- Street grid creates ease of access and multiple route options including level visual and physical access to the foreshore.
- Coolangatta Road provides an alternative east west connection to Coolangatta.

- A rich history as a destination and recreation landscape.
- number of registered heritage places and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and community venues.
- An active holiday atmosphere and street life catering for local residents and visiting trade.
- The public realm and natural features create opportunities for social and cultural activities.

- A transition from high density taller buildings on amalgamated blocks to medium density development and low rise residential land use.
- Combination of clusters of mixed use, residential, retail and commercial along the esplanade.
- Zero setback frontage activated on the western side of the esplanade and returning on some side streets.
- Generally activated street frontages along the esplanade with level access to street and open space.
- Building height responds to natural landscape features including Kirra Hill, Mount Murraba and the mature Norfolk Pine trees along the foreshore.