

“Hansens Head” and “The Gap” below add to the scenic qualities of this part of the escarpment. Spectacular views from Matthew, John, Waratah and Vernon Streets towards the headlands are available.

The road network of the older part of the settlement follows a loose Roman grid with streets aligned roughly in a north south and east west direction providing housing lots with a north south and east west aspect. The grid network is generally set by the depth of two residential blocks to provide street frontages to the lots. The lots are mostly rectangular in shape and have an area of around 900m²; lots close to the traditional quarter acre block dominate.

The streets provide for a general stepping of the building form within the landscape which assists in providing most dwellings with views towards the Pacific Ocean.

Streetscape Setting

Matthew Street generally follows the topography of the headland, with the long axis of the lots having either a north/south or north east/south west orientation.

The street is a wide Street with a 20m wide road reserve and a sealed pavement of 9-10m with kerb and gutter on both sides. Well maintained grass verges and a few low scale plantings are located within these verge areas. There is minimal fencing along the street frontage and indeed throughout the Precinct providing an open campus like setting. The only noticeable street furniture is the timber electrical power poles.

The changing grades and alignment of the street creates constantly changing views and vistas with glimpses of the headlands and ocean provided over the houses and between the houses when travelling along the street as a pedestrian or in a vehicle. A concrete footpath extends for a small part of the street.

Unlike most of Scotts Head's residential areas which have a perimeter road between the foreshore reserve and the residential properties, the Matthew Street North properties have direct access to the foreshore reserve; this creates significant benefits for individual residents but community challenges in managing access and the direct physical and visual impacts upon the reserve.

Private gardens along the south side of the street are generally neat and well-kept and well setback from the street. These gardens generally consist of lawns and low shrubs. Similarly the north side of Matthew Street has lawns and low shrubs and with the garden areas beyond occasionally punctuated by taller trees, in particular Norfolk Island Pines.



Streetscape view between headlands

Dwellings have a range of setbacks on the north side of Matthew Street with setbacks ranging from 3m to over 20m. On the south side, the setbacks are more consistent with a general setback of 6m. Interestingly, the built form on the south side is also more consistent with a predominance of 2 storey brick and tile dwellings whereas on the north side there is a more eclectic mix of building styles heights and forms.



Open character of Precinct

As stated earlier, the housing within the Matthew Street North Precinct comprises an eclectic mix of 1-2 storey detached dwelling houses.

Whilst there is a mix of housing stock, the following themes are prevalent:

- The majority of buildings appear to have been built around the 1970s and 1980s, some possibly originally serving as holiday cabins;
- Skillion and gable roofing predominate, with only two houses having predominantly hip roofing;
- Lightweight wall and roof construction is slightly more common than masonry construction; approximately 60% of houses have lightweight walls (including weatherboard, fibre cement and metal sheeting) whilst almost 70% of buildings have lightweight roofing;
- Single story is quite common being apparent in approximately 35% of houses (compared to less than 10% on the south side). This is partly influenced by type of construction in the period they were built, their ground level access to views and the current height limits;

Built Form and Character

The architectural fabric varies substantially between the south and the north side of the street; the north having a more lightweight coastal appearance and the south a more solid and masonry texture. Houses on the south side have a majority of roofs with masonry tiling and a majority of walls with exposed brick. Houses on the north side will be discussed in more detail below.



Example of varied building form

- Most buildings have decks facing the sea to capture both the expansive views and the sea breezes; these rear verandahs often have large eaves;
- Heights above natural ground level are generally below 6 metres, compared to the southern side of the street where they are generally above 6m.
- Walls are commonly of fibre cement sheeting, timber weatherboards or brick. Stone, tile and corrugated metal are apparent as wall cladding in a few cases.
- Roofing is more commonly metal deck; the remaining third of roofs are constructed with masonry tiles.
- Timber decks, screens and lattice are common, a few with masonry pier supports and steel cable wire handrails.
- Colours of buildings are generally off-whites, greens, and reds. Masonry walls are generally white or earth coloured.

The more recent house designs within the Matthew Street North Precinct have quite low pitched skillion roofs, the roofing kept low for the buildings to comply with minimum height levels. These buildings have a mix of masonry and lightweight appearance and are modern in character. These dwellings are quite organic in plan with larger footprints than the smaller, rectangular and traditional dwellings of the original village character.

On the south side of Matthew Street, front setbacks are generally consistent (often around six metres); west of John Street setbacks generally range from approximately 6 to 15 m (with two dwellings setback up to 24m).

Within the Matthew Street North Precinct the front setbacks range from approximately 3 to 15m (with the exception of No 8 being approximately 27m); rear setbacks range from approximately 3 to 15m;

Views, Heights and Setbacks

As stated previously, the Matthew Street North Precinct is located in an area of regionally significant scenic quality. The area has both intrinsic and extrinsic scenic values generally associated with the coastline; some significant views of the mountainous backdrop to the west are also present, but these are secondary to the primary view of the coastline.

While the enjoyment of views can be a subjective experience, there is general consensus with the following:

- Water views are valued more highly than land views;
- Iconic landscape views are valued more highly than non-iconic views;
- Whole views are valued more highly than partial or obscured views.

(Tenacity Consulting v Warringah, 2004
Land and Environment Court 140)

In this context, the views of the Pacific Ocean are highly valued and the iconic landscape views of Elephant Head and Hansens Head and the uninterrupted views from the Matthew Street North Precinct are also highly valued.

Most of the areas surrounding the Matthew Street North Precinct currently enjoy, to varying degrees, highly valuable views and the concept of view sharing in the development of controls is considered reasonable in this context. While it is not possible to preserve all views, it is generally appropriate that the current and potential views from a second level of a dwelling be protected from unreasonable impacts for the benefit of the locality as a whole.

The views enjoyed within the surrounding area of Matthew Street include the views over the roof level of the buildings in Matthew Street North and the views between the buildings provided by the combination of front, side and rear setbacks. It should also be acknowledged that highly valuable view lines are provided between the dwellings within the Matthew Street North Precinct itself resulting from the combination of building heights and setbacks. Accordingly, controls relating to both the height of buildings and setbacks (i.e. side, front and rear) need to be considered in combination; the overall building's envelope needs to be considered.

A standard set of controls across the Precinct is required to provide for equity. Given that it would be unreasonable to restrict buildings to single storey buildings, the controls should allow for two storeys and not require an unreasonable level of cut; DCP No. 3 generally permits a maximum depth of cut of 1.2m.

To test the reasonable level of view sharing, three height controls were tested, namely;

- a 5m height limit generally in accordance with the former DCP No. 3;
- an 8.5m height limit in accordance with the complying development provisions of the New South Wales Housing Code; and
- a 6.5m height limit representing an averaging between the 5m height under the former DCP No. 3 and the 8m height limit under the LEP.

These scenarios are shown in Figure 5 and were based on the view lines from the south side of Matthew Street from existing buildings at Nos. 13, 19, 23 and 31. The figure also shows the 8.5m height limit above these buildings which they could be redeveloped to in accordance with the NSW Housing Code.

As can be seen by Figure 5, the view lines from Matthew Street are variable depending upon the location, but reveal that a reasonable view is maintained of the important scenic elements from most properties with the 6.5m height limit.

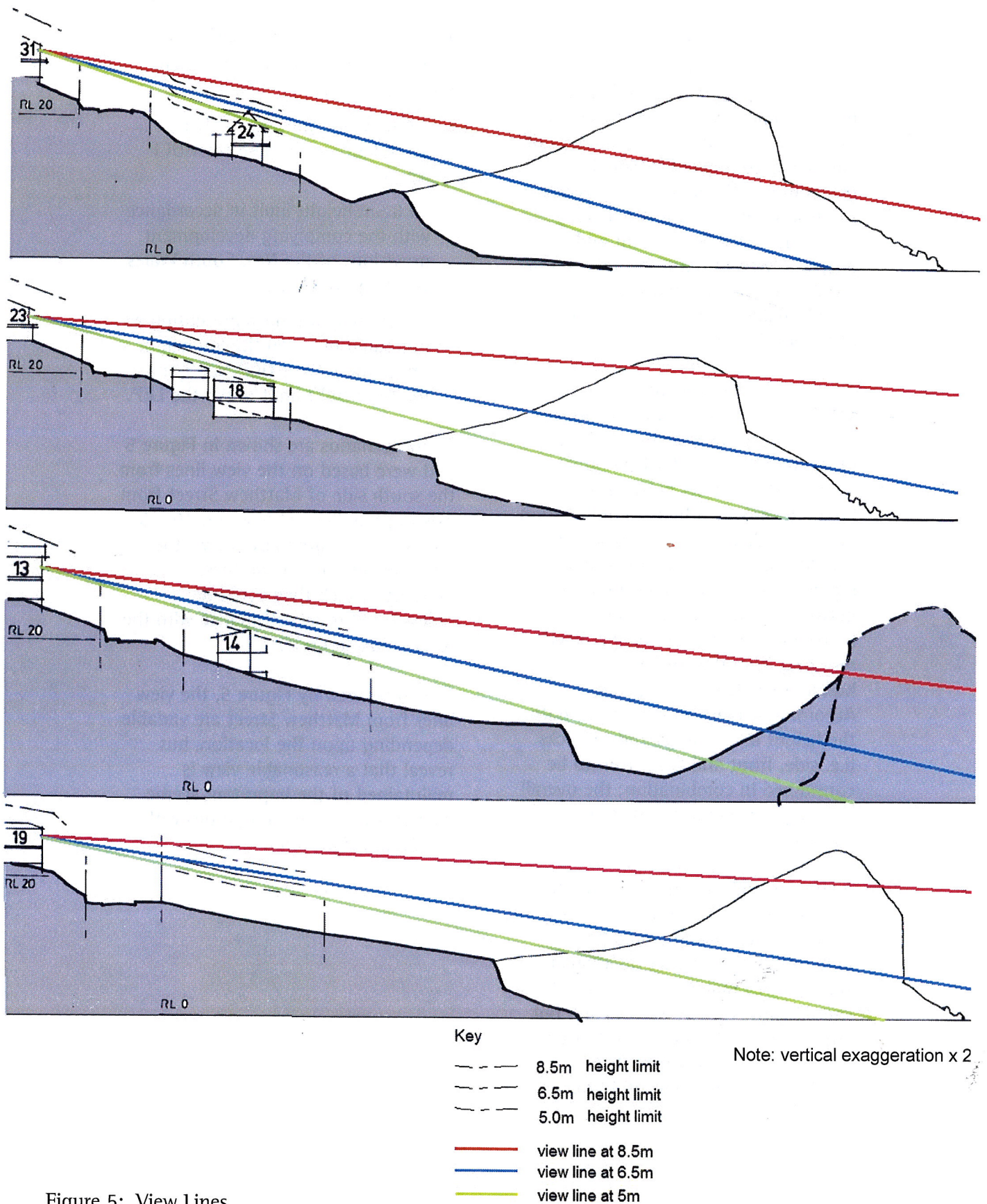


Figure 5: View Lines

Consultation

A community workshop was held on the 6 July 2009 at the Scotts Head Surf Club to gain an appreciation of the issues and concerns of the community in relation to future controls for the Matthew Street North Precinct. A total of 36 participants registered for the workshop.

The workshop comprised two sessions; the first session was an information session which provided details on the background to the existing controls, status of the project and a description of the urban design analysis undertaken.

The second session involved the participants working in four groups identifying the main features of the area and considering controls that would be appropriate from the group's perspective. A full copy of the Workshop outcomes is included in Appendix A.

The main themes from the workshop may be summarised as follows:

- Elephant Head, The Gap and Hansens Head are significant features;
- The village character is an important feature;
- The stepped natural amphitheatre is important to the character of area;
- Views along John Street and within area are of paramount importance;
- Mixed views on whether maximum density should be limited to single dwelling houses or dual occupancy; majority considered town house development to be inappropriate;
- A 5m height limit across whole area should be imposed; there was unanimous support for this;
- A wider side setback than 900mm should be considered, possibly larger setback at upper levels;
- Front setback should be in accordance with existing setbacks;
- A generous rear setback to reserve should be provided;
- Lightweight materials are favoured in design with some treatment of any brickwork;
- Landscaping should be low in scale and consist of indigenous species; Norfolk Pines are not favoured.

Note: the workshop was attended by only 3 registered participants from the Matthew Street North Precinct and this bias should be acknowledged.

Part 5 – Urban Design Issues

DCP No. 3 has a suite of controls applying to all development and has been structured to allow the incorporation of specialised controls applying to a particular place.

The issues relating to each control are outlined below and the recommended controls to deal with the issues are detailed in Part 6.

Desired Future Character

Issues

It is appropriate to outline a desired future character of an area as an outline of intent for the future that development and planning decisions can be measured against. The desirable future character represents a *preferred*, as opposed to an *inevitable*, future.

The urban design analysis has identified the following main desirable characteristics that should guide the future character of the area:

- a locality of magnificent, scenic beauty;
- an area with an open 'campus' like setting;
- a low density and low key and relaxed coastal setting;
- a landscape setting of low level vegetation

- a building form with a lightweight appearance that includes decks, verandahs, pergolas and the like; and
- an overall built form that sits within the landscape and allows for reasonable view sharing.

Density, Subdivision and Floor Space Ratio

Issues

Density can be effectively controlled by setting a minimum lot size and a maximum floor space ratio. The Precinct has a low density character with an existing average density of one dwelling per 832m².

A future density that provides a balance between maintaining the low density character of the area and allowing for a reasonable level of development is warranted. In this regard, three low density scenarios were considered to gauge the likely development opportunities. The three density standards considered are 450m², 500m² and 600m².

Table 2 below shows the dwelling yields from these scenarios.

Table 2: Matthew Street North Precinct Dwelling Yields

Street No.	Lot Area m ²	Additional Dwelling Yield		
		450m ²	500m ²	600m ²
2	1,425.8	2	1	1
4	981.1	1	0	0
6	981.2	1	0	0
8	981.4	1	0	0
10	981.5	1	0	0
12	981.6	1	0	0
14	751.5	0	0	0
14A	576.8	0	0	0
16	565.1	0	0	0
18	604.7	0	0	0
18A	525.5	0	0	0
20	828.5	0	0	0
22	662.2	0	0	0
24	662.2	0	0	0
26	980.4	1	0	0
Total	12,489.5	8	1	1

As can be seen by the Table, a standard of 500m² and 600m² excludes all properties, except one from being developed for an additional dwelling.

Accepting that dual occupancy development and secondary dwellings (i.e. two dwellings on a parcel of land) is a reasonable form of development in a low density zone, then a density standard of one dwelling per 450m² will allow for approximately half the sites (i.e. the larger sites) to be developed for this form of housing.

This standard of 450m² will also prevent multi-dwelling housing and attached dwellings on all but one allotment; multi-dwelling housing and attached housing refers to developments with three or more dwellings and includes townhouses. Multi-unit housing and attached housing are considered to be generally inconsistent forms of housing in this sensitive Precinct.

A density standard of one dwelling per 450m² is recommended.

The floor space ratio is the ratio of the gross floor area of the buildings on a site to the site area. The Gross Floor Area is defined under the new Standard LEP Template as follows:

Gross Floor Area means the sum of the floor area of each storey of a building measured from the internal face of external walls, or from the internal face of walls separating the building from any other building, measured at a height of 1.4 metres above the floor, and includes:

- a. the area of a mezzanine within the storey, and
 - b. habitable rooms in a basement, and
 - c. any shop, auditorium, cinema, and the like, in a basement or attic,
- but excludes:*
- d. any area for common vertical circulation, such as lifts and stairs, and
 - e. any basement:
 - storage, and
 - vehicular access, loading areas, garbage and services, and
 - f. plant rooms, lift towers and other areas used exclusively for mechanical services or ducting, and
 - g. car parking to meet any requirements of the consent authority (including access to that car parking), and
 - h. any space used for the loading or unloading of goods (including access to it), and
 - i. terraces and balconies with outer walls less than 1.4 metres high, and
 - j. voids above a floor at the level of a storey or storey above.

The floor space ratio is a useful tool for controlling the density of both buildings and land uses in an area. The floor space ratio helps determine the overall volume of building floor area and, as a consequence, it also helps determine the area available for landscaping.

With such large lots in the Matthew Street North Precinct, a high floor space ratio has the potential for encouraging and allowing very large residential buildings; the Matthew Street North Precinct is not an appropriate setting for 'MacMansions'. It is common in sensitive coastal environments to have a floor space ratio of 0.4:1 thereby generally allowing 40% of the site area to be developed for a single storey building.

As can be seen by Table 3 below, this ratio allows a reasonable sized dwelling on all existing lots and will also allow a reasonable sized dwelling on any subdivided lot. A dwelling with a gross floor area of 180m² (excluding garage area) would be permitted on a 450m² allotment; this area generally equates to a four bedroom dwelling. A floor space ratio limit of 0.4:1 is recommended.



Table 3: Matthew Street North Precinct Floor Space Ratio

Street No.	Lot Area m ²	Max House Area m ² (0.4:1 fsr)
2	1,425.8*	570
4	981.1*	392
6	981.2*	392
8	981.4*	392
10	981.5*	392
12	981.6*	392
14	751.5	330
14A	576.8	230
16	565.1	226
18	604.7	242
18A	525.5	210
20	828.5	331
22	662.2	264
24	662.2	264
26	980.4	292
Total	12,489.5	

* Properties with potential for subdivision, at 450m² minimum lot size.

Site Coverage and Landscaping

Site coverage refers to the building footprint; it is the area of the land occupied by buildings at grade. Unlike the floor space ratio control, it controls development at the ground level plane. Site coverage is defined under the Standard LEP Template as:

Site coverage means the proportion of a site area covered by buildings. However, the following are not included for the purpose of calculating site coverage:

- (a) any basement,*
- (b) any part of an awning that is outside the outer walls of a building and that adjoins the street frontage or other site boundary,*
- (c) any eaves,*
- (d) unenclosed decks, pergolas and the like.*

Site coverage is a useful planning tool for ensuring adequate land is set aside for landscaping and open space and can also assist in breaking up the building form; it assists in defining the future character of an area.

At present Matthew Street North Precinct has a very low site coverage of 25% which provides the sense of openness which characterises this Precinct. In determining a site coverage standard, it is important that a balance between maintaining the existing character and allowing a reasonable level of development is achieved. Consideration also needs to be given to the relationship to the floor space ratio to avoid consequential adverse impacts. For example, a very low site coverage can encourage taller buildings which can consequently lead to impacts upon views from the surrounding residences.

The site coverage standard should seek to encourage most of the building form to be single storey in compliance with the 0.4:1 floor space ratio.

The site coverage standard should also seek to prevent monolithic buildings or 'MacMansions' by requiring a disaggregation of building form; the existing character of the Matthew Street North Precinct is generally one of disaggregated smaller building structures. It is reasonable in any disaggregation control to ensure a three bedroom dwelling could be developed.

A maximum site coverage of 40% is recommended, together with a limit of 150m² site coverage for single storey building structures and 120m² for two storey building structures to break up the building form; this provides a greater incentive for single storey buildings and limits two storey buildings. This standard will enable around 40% of all sites to consist of a deep soil zone which assists with drainage, water quality and landscaping with native species. The deep soil zone is *that part of the site that is not built on, paved or otherwise sealed, where the soil is of sufficient depth to support the growth of trees and shrubs.*

In terms of landscaping, the existing character is an open landscape setting dominated by grasslands and low shrubs. To maintain this character and contribute to the existing biodiversity, it is appropriate to have a list of suitable species as a guide for future developments.

The species list should include species suited to this harsh coastal environment and should seek to avoid tall trees which have the potential to disrupt views. Consideration should also be given to preventing solid fences to maintain the open permeable character of the area.

Height and Setbacks

Issues

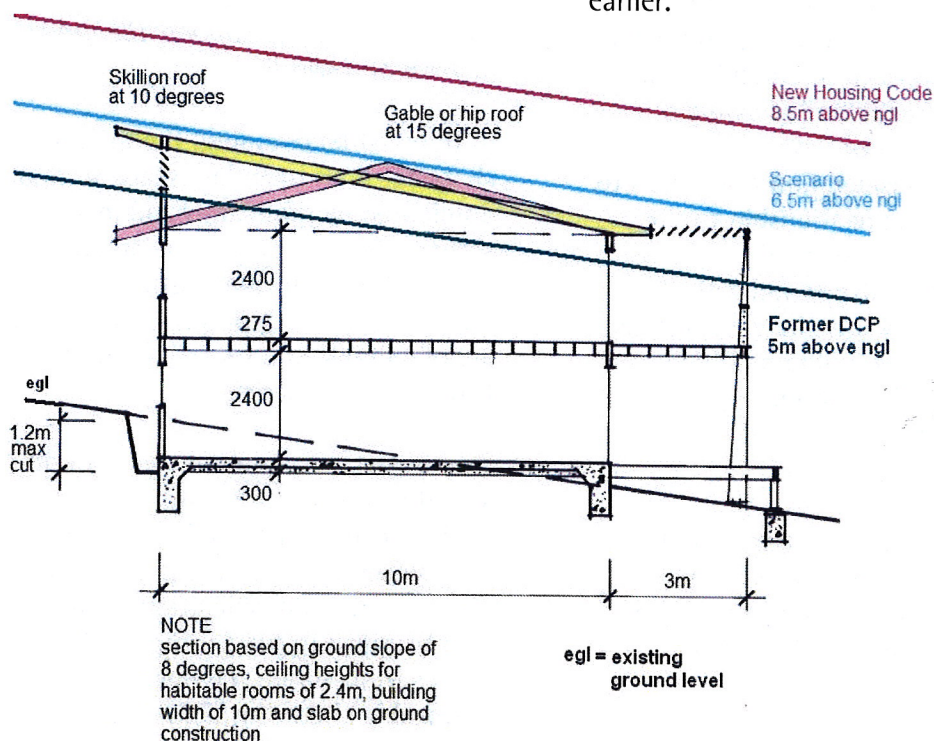
The combination of both height and setback controls dictate the overall building envelope. As stated earlier, the concept of 'view sharing' is considered appropriate in the determination of height and setback controls. Moreover, it is to be accepted that the height control is not to be so restrictive that a two storey dwelling is prohibited or excessive excavation is required. In terms of excavation, the Nambucca Shire Council has generally established a maximum cut of 1.2m under DCP No. 3 and it is appropriate from an equity and consistency point of view to adopt this standard.

Height is measured vertically from natural ground level to the highest point on the building.

Figure 6 shows the relationship between the three height scenarios discussed earlier for a typical site within the Precinct. As can be seen by Figure 6 a 5m height limit, as allowed under the former DCP No. 3, restricts the roof line and pitch of the roof and has implications for achieving a two storey building; this height limit encourages flat roofs with a pitch less than 5°.

Conversely, an 8.5m height, as allowed under the NSW Housing Code, provides an unnecessary level of flexibility in terms of floor levels and roof pitch. The 6.5m height limit provides a reasonable response in allowing for two storeys and a reasonable roof pitch of generally 15° for a gable or hipped roof and 10° for a skillion; these pitches are in keeping with the character of the Precinct and contemporary architectural practice which favours skillion roofs. The 6.5m height limit also allows for a reasonable view sharing of the main scenic quality elements described earlier.

Figure 6: Section - Height Scenarios



A 6.5m height limit is recommended. Moreover, a minimum front setback of 4.5m with a 5.5m setback to garages; a minimum rear setback of 6m; and a stepped side setback of 1.5m for single storey buildings and 3m for two storey buildings is also recommended.

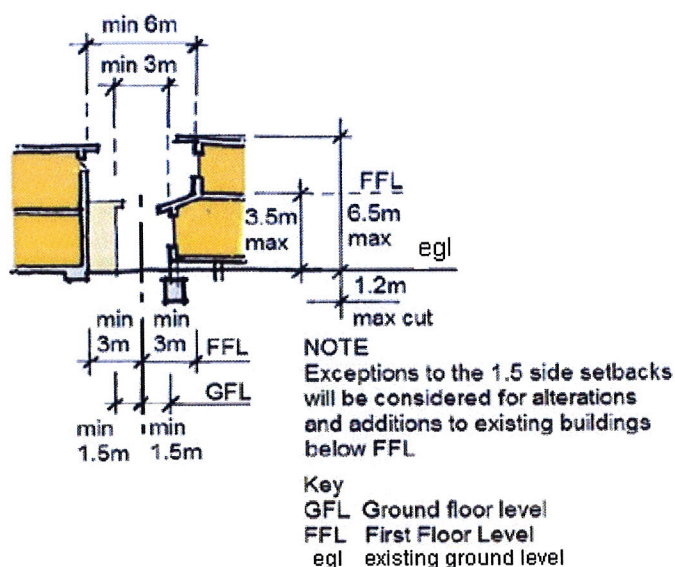
The front setback of 4.5m is consistent with the existing minimum setback and allows a reasonable sized front garden and assists with providing a reasonable envelope for single storey structures; a larger setback encourages two storey structures. An articulation zone should be encouraged in this setback area to provide for an active and visually interesting street frontage. It is recommended that this zone apply to a width of 50% of the frontage and a depth of 1m in front of the 4.5m building line.

The 5.5m garage setback will avoid garages dominating the streetscape and will allow space for tandem parking on the driveway.

The side setback of 1.5m will help provide a landscape strip and access way along the side of buildings and provide an overall setback of 3m between single storey structures (ie neighbouring properties). The setback is increased by a further 1.5m for two storey structures providing a 3m setback at this level and an overall setback of 6m between two storey buildings. The larger upper level setback is proposed because the upper level area provides greater opportunity for views between buildings and will help maintain the existing sense of openness (refer Figure 7 below).

The 6m rear setback will allow for a landscape transition between the foreshore reserve and building structures and will further assist in maintaining views from the rear of the properties in the Matthew Street North Precinct.

Figure 7: Recommended Set Backs



Building Design

Issues

As stated previously, the Matthew Street North Precinct has a mix of building design and forms. Nevertheless, the following building features are considered to be contributory to the design dialogue of this coastal setting.

- lightweight construction including fibre cement, timber and corrugated metal;
- limited masonry construction;
- broken building form and massing;
- outdoor living areas including timber decks, porticos and pergolas;
- generally neutral colours or colours that complement the existing natural landscape;
- an absence of fencing on most sites;
- northern orientation to take advantage of views and passive solar energy.