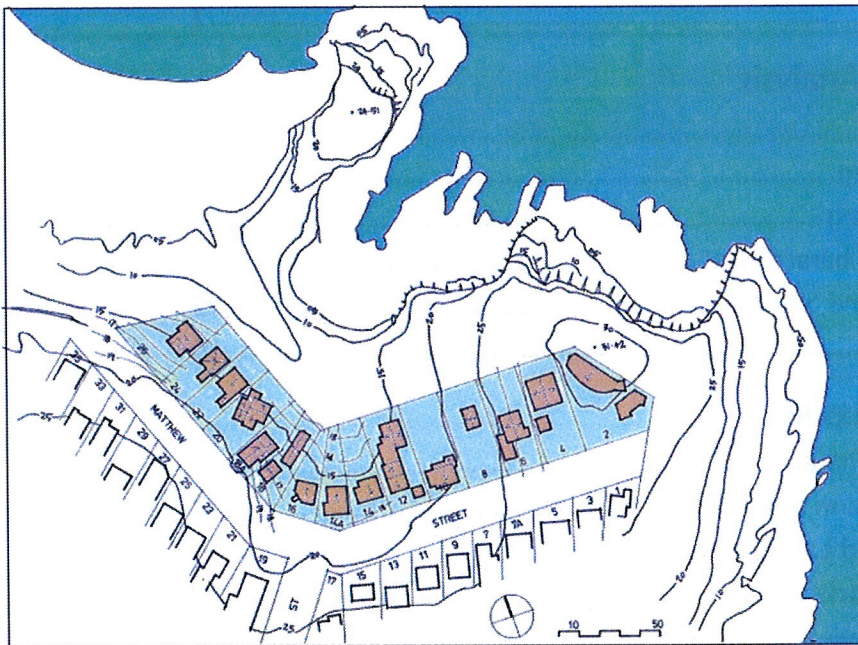


# Draft Urban Design Analysis

## MATTHEW STREET

### Scotts Head



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# Part 1 – Introduction

## Preamble

This document provides an Urban Design Analysis for the Matthew Street North Precinct. The recommended Design Controls, developed from this Urban Design Analysis are intended for incorporation into the Nambucca Shire Development Control Plan No. 3 – Residential Development. The controls will provide guidelines for new dwelling houses, additions and alterations to dwelling houses and dual occupancy within the Precinct.

## Background

The Nambucca Shire Council has had in place for many years a Development Control Plan (DCP No 3) which identified height controls through the Shire and specifically Matthew Street, Scotts Head. Whilst the DCP No 3 has generally been applied consistently over the years, there has been some ambiguity created in interpretation as to whether it imposes a strict 5m height limit or whether a building may extend to 8m in height in some instances.

The Nambucca Shire Council at its meeting on the 6 March 2008 considered a report dealing with a development application for additions to a two storey dwelling at 18A Matthew Street, Scotts Head. This property was identified under the DCP height maps as having a 5m height limit.

Consideration of the development application raised doubts about the interpretation of the 5m height limit under DCP No.3. A report was presented to Council wherein it was resolved “*That the application be refused as it does not comply with the DCP*” (No 3).

The applicant subsequently appealed, and the appeal was upheld by the Land and Environment Council; approval was granted to the application.

The matter regarding the appropriateness of a 5m height limit in the designated area of Matthew Street was again highlighted with the introduction of the NSW Housing Code, which provides an 8.5m height limit for complying development.

Council at its meeting on 18 February 2009 considered a report dealing with the implications of the NSW Housing Code and resolved:

*That Council commission an independent place based study of the north east side of Matthew Street to report back to Council regarding height limits and seek a variation to keep the height limit to 5m until this study is completed.....*

This Urban Design Analysis represents the place based study for the north east side of Matthew Street; referred to in this document as the “Matthew Street North Precinct” for simplicity.



## Introduction

This Urban Design Analysis has been prepared to inform the controls that will apply to future development within the Matthew Street North Precinct.

The Precinct lies on the eastern side of the Scotts Head Village which is located 14 km from Macksville. Scotts Head is a small coastal village with a population of approximately 800 people; it is formally identified as a “coastal village” under the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy.

The Precinct is one of the most strikingly scenic locations on the Mid North Coast and boasts a residential environment with a high amenity and sense of place; it is a residential Precinct nestled above a dramatic bluff and the Pacific Ocean. The protection of this amenity is at the forefront of this urban design analysis.

This Urban Design Analysis provides an examination of the inherent natural elements and the opportunities and constraints to development. The analysis provides the background to the recommended controls in Part 6 of this document.

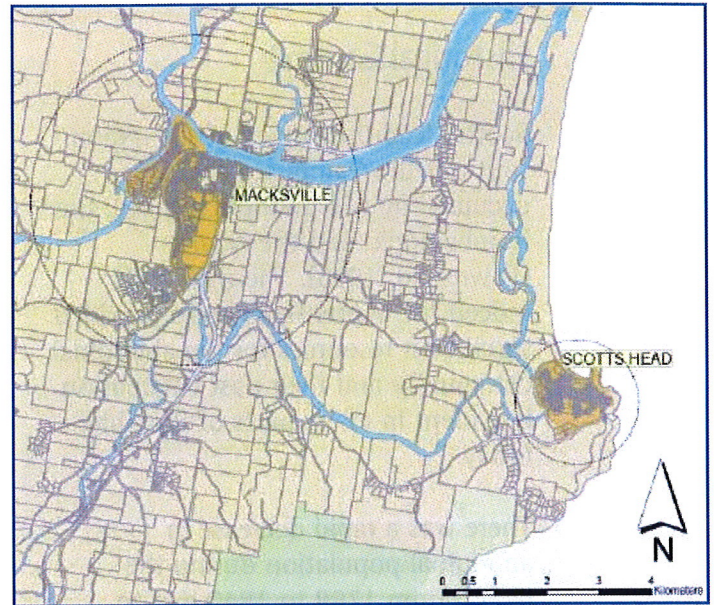


Figure 1: Locality

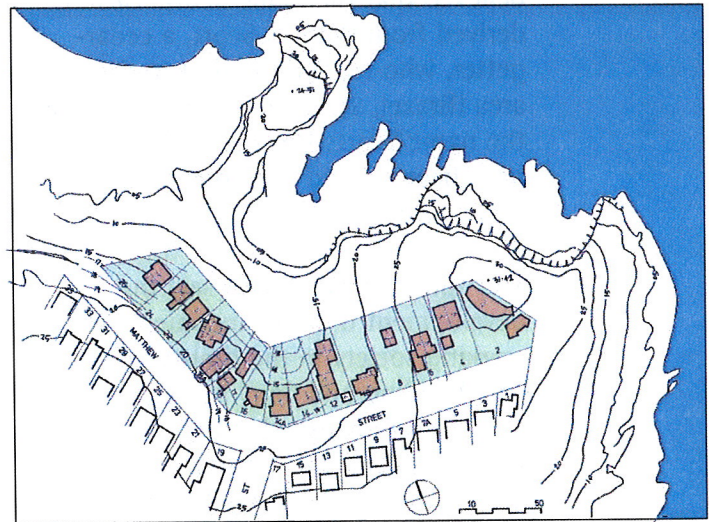


Figure 2: Matthew Street North Precinct

## Part 2 – Context

### Historical Context

Scotts Head forms part of the region south of the Nambucca that was occupied by two aboriginal tribes; the Kumbainggiri and the Ngaku (Townsend, 1993). The river and indeed the Scotts Head areas provided significant resources for the aboriginal community and their past occupation is evident in many parts of the Shire today.

There was a rapid decrease in aboriginal population during the period from 1788 to 1840 due to hostilities between the aborigines and the growing number of cedar-getters setting up businesses (ibid). It is believed that the name *Scotts Head* is derived from William Scott, a cedar-getter, who resided in a hut in the area (Brazel, 2000). Another theory for the name Scotts Head is that it may have been named after one of Captain Cook's crew.

The 1800s in Nambucca saw the development of a low income, hard working society in the timber felling, ship building and dairy farming industries (Townsend, 1993). In the 1800s Scotts Head area was owned by the Clegg family who then sold it to Matthew Wallace. Matthew Wallace subdivided the area and sold allotments in the early 1900s (NRMA website). Both Matthew Street and Wallace Street are believed to be named after Matthew Wallace.

Today Scotts Head is a residential and tourist village providing recreational opportunities (i.e. fishing, surfing, and bushwalking) with localised community and retail facilities.

### Locational Context

The land is located within the narrow coastal plain that stretches along this part of the coast. The plain is defined by the great divide that extends along the coastal line and defines many of the larger lower lying settlements such as Scotts Head. The western ridgelines provide a dramatic backdrop to these lower lying settlements.

The Matthew Street North Precinct is located at the eastern extremity of the residential areas within Scotts Head. The Precinct is "V" shaped and has an elevation of 25-30m above sea level and lies within a small amphitheatre defined by Matthew Street itself and the upper hill sides. The residential areas overlook a rocky bluff which includes the striking outcrop to the north known as "Elephant Head" and the southern knoll ("Hansens Head"). Below these headlands is a rocky cove known as The Gap. The area is afforded views of the Pacific Ocean and South West Rocks and Nambucca Heads in the distance.

The Precinct is part of an extensive foreshore reserve system that lies above this rugged part of the coast which is relieved by the relatively protected waters of Forsters Beach to the immediate north.



## Strategic Context

The Precinct is located within the 2(a) Residential (Low-Medium Density) Zone and has been developed in accordance with the zoning provisions; the area generally supports detached dwelling houses. Owing to the limited services available, the Scotts Head area has been identified for modest growth with only limited future residential and rural residential releases.

The Matthew Street North Precinct and the surrounding lands are to retain their current residential zoning under the New Local Environmental Plan (LEP) being prepared by Nambucca Shire Council and, as such, future development will be restricted to residential infill development. Despite the range of uses allowed under the current and proposed zones, the most likely redevelopment will be for new dwellings, dual occupancy developments and extensions and alterations to existing dwellings. In addition, it can be expected that some of the dwellings will be used for holiday accommodation; a growing regional trend in areas close to the beach with high scenic amenity.

Given the older nature of the existing housing stock and its inherent scenic qualities, it is anticipated that the Precinct will be under considerable pressure in the future for larger buildings accommodating a larger number of people. The urban design challenge is to allow for a reasonable level of infill growth and development while retaining the inherent character of the Precinct.



Figure 3: Extract from Mid North Coast Regional Strategy

## Part 3 – Planning Controls

### Existing Local Environmental Plan

The Matthew Street North Precinct is zoned “2 (a) Residential (Low-Medium Density)” under Nambucca Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1995. The LEP zone description is as follows:

*“The Residential (Low-Medium Density) zone is characterised by detached houses. Some small scale medium density housing development will be scattered throughout the zone. This housing will typically consist of dual occupancy buildings, townhouses and cluster houses at a scale compatible with detached housing. Scope is also provided to allow smaller lots and integrated housing in specially designed subdivisions.”*

The LEP allows single dwelling houses, integrated housing and dual occupancy development together with a number of other uses in the zone. The relevant standards are:

Minimum lot size 450m<sup>2</sup>  
(Integrated housing 232m<sup>2</sup>)

Height limit 8m  
(Need to consider DCP height limit also)

Table 1 Site area

Dwelling Size	Small Dwelling (55m <sup>2</sup> )	Medium Dwelling (55-85m <sup>2</sup> )	Large Dwelling (>85m <sup>2</sup> )
Minimum Site area	170m <sup>2</sup>	240m <sup>2</sup>	310m <sup>2</sup>

Attached and detached dual occupancy  
Lot size of 450m<sup>2</sup> and 600m<sup>2</sup> respectively.

### New Local Environmental Plan

Planning for the Shire is in a transitional phase with a new LEP being prepared to replace LEP 1995.

The Department of Planning is requiring all New South Wales Councils to review and update their current LEPs in accordance with the Standard Instrument Principal LEP 2006. Nambucca Council is in the process of developing the “Draft Nambucca Local Environmental Plan 2009” in accordance with this directive.

The provisions of the Nambucca LEP 1995 will continue to apply until such time as the Nambucca LEP 2009 is gazetted and becomes the principal planning instrument. Under the new LEP the Matthew Street North Precinct is proposed to be zoned “R1 General Residential”. This new zone will allow single dwelling houses, dual occupancy development, attached dwellings and multi dwelling housing.

The new LEP will also have standard definitions in relation to height, floor space ratio, gross floor area and site area.



## Development Control Plan

The Precinct will fall within the controls of the “Nambucca Shire Development Control Plan No. 3 – Residential Development”. DCP No 3 includes place based controls for the various urban areas in the Nambucca Shire (Part A) and specific dwelling type controls (Part B). DCP No 3 is structured to enable the incorporation of specific controls for the Matthew Street North Precinct.

## Regional Planning Controls

The land is subject to the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy. The Strategy establishes a four tier hierarchy of urban centres as follows:

- Major Regional Centres (i.e. Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Port Macquarie);
- Major Town Centres (i.e. Macksville, Kempsey, Foster-Tuncurry);
- Town Centres (i.e. Yamba, Nambucca Heads, Dorrigo); and
- Villages (i.e. Valla Beach, Woolli, Scotts Head).

Under this Strategy Scotts Head is designated as a Coastal Village which are recognised as smaller settlements with limited local services (refer Figure 3).

The Strategy is supplemented by the North Coast Urban Design Guidelines *that seek to provide design strategies and guidance that may inform the layout of future settlements, the expansion of existing settlements, and the design of new built form in order to maintain and improve the positive urban design characteristics of the region.*

Interestingly, Scotts Head is used as an example of a coastal village in the Guidelines for illustrating a methodology for studying and analysing urban design character for this typology. Matthew Street also figures predominantly in the photographic examples used to describe the character of the Scotts Head Area, pages 23-30 of the Guidelines. This Urban Design Analysis has been prepared in accordance with the North Coast Urban Design Guidelines.

The following key positive elements for coastal villages outlined in the Guidelines are noteworthy:

### Landscape:

- *Buildings are mostly setback from the coastal edge and are one to two storeys in height.*
- *Expansive areas of hardy, indigenous vegetation characterise the coastal edges, punctuated by rows of significantly larger trees such as Norfolk Island pines.*
- *Residential gardens are comprised generally of indigenous coastal habitat, low lying plants with exotic plants, conifers and few larger mature trees.*

- *Views to the ocean are accessible from properties on elevated sites; many residences located on lower lying land have introspective 'valley' views only.*
- *Natural landscape of hinterland is largely intact.*

#### Streetscape:

- *Low level coastal planting (with a few larger trees) is typical throughout residential streets.*
- *Views to the coast and surrounding landscape are limited to the coastal edge and elevated areas within the village.*
- *The original streets in the village have wider road reserves than the newer streets – typically, streets are symmetrical with grass verges, formed kerb and gutter treatments, and few pedestrian footpaths.*
- *There is little street hierarchy distinguishing commercial activity from residential streets.*
- *Both fences and plantings are used to define site boundaries although many dwellings have no fence to the street.*

#### Buildings:

- *Residential buildings are elevated and positioned to take advantage of the views and sea breezes; these buildings are often irregularly sited, with inconsistent but generous side setbacks.*
- *Residential buildings in the lower and flatter parts of the landscape have a more regular and consistent siting and setback.*
- *There is an eclectic mix of housing styles throughout the village provide a richer overall character.*

- *Eaves, verandahs, profiled steel roofs, timber cladding types are all common elements.*

#### State Policies

Development of land within the Matthew Street North Precinct is subject to a number of State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs). In terms of urban design, the critical policies are “SEPP No. 71 Coastal Protection” and “SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008”.

Under SEPP No 71 the following relevant matters are required to be taken into account when considering development within the coastal zone:

- *Aims of the Policy which seek to protect and better manage the NSW Coast.*
- *Existing public access along the foreshore is to be retained.*
- *Opportunities for new public access to the foreshore to be considered.*
- *Suitability of development in terms of type, location and design and its relationship with surrounding areas.*
- *Any detrimental impacts upon foreshore amenity, including overshadowing of foreshores or loss of significant views.*
- *Scenic qualities of the NSW Coast.*
- *Measures to conserve animals (including fish and marine vegetation) and existing wildlife corridors.*
- *The likely impact of coastal hazards and processes.*

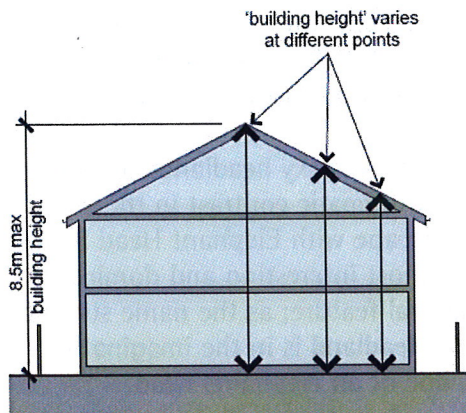


- *Measures to reduce potential conflict between land-based and water based coastal activities.*
- *Measures to protect Aboriginal culture and conservation and preservation of heritage items.*
- *Encouragement of compact towns and cities.*

Nambucca Shire Council is seeking an exemption to the SEPP for the Precinct to enable the controls resulting from this analysis to prevail.

As can be seen by the list of matters to consider under this policy, the protection of the foreshores and scenic qualities of the coast and heritage values are of paramount importance. Accordingly, it is appropriate that any future controls preserve the foreshore and scenic quality values associated with the scenic landscape of the Matthew Street North Precinct.

Under SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development) certain forms of residential development are exempt from requiring a development application; some development is allowed without approval and some developments such as single dwelling houses can be certified for approval by a private certifier. Relevantly, the SEPP allows a building to be built to a maximum height of 8.5m; refer diagram below.



## Part 4 – Urban Design Analysis

### Scenic Quality

Scotts Head has a relatively pristine coast line with beaches and rocky headlands unspoilt by urban encroachments. The scenic qualities of the area are regionally significant.

The two headlands (i.e. Elephant Head and Hansens Head) are the main focal points with the Pacific Ocean providing the dominant horizon line. The topographical relief provides the dramatic changes from constricted views between the headlands to expansive views over the ocean. The crashing waves, rocky outcrops and sandy beaches add to the contrasting visual and aural experiences.

The view shed from Matthew Street is relatively expansive in the higher areas of the Street, but is constricted in the lower part of the Street. An important vista is provided towards the terminus of John Street with Matthew Street. While there are a few trees (mainly Norfolk Island Pines) that interrupt the panoramic views provided along the Street, the Precinct generally has a sense of openness with many viewing opportunities over the lower single storey buildings and between the buildings. The properties within the Matthew Street North Precinct itself have uninterrupted views of the coast.

Figure 4 provides a summary of the main scenic attributes.

### Landscape Setting

The Matthew Street North Precinct sits within a setting dominated by its natural landscape elements. The rocky headlands (i.e. Elephant Head and Hansens Head) which are partly covered in low heath create an open and exposed ambience. The Precinct sits between two headlands creating a natural amphitheatre that exposes the area to both the coastal winds and the outstanding scenery associated with this rugged coastline.

The vegetation generally consists of the heath comprising mainly grasses and some dwarf heath plants stunted by the strong salt laden winds. This headland heath is occasionally broken by tall pine trees scattered throughout the Precinct. Some of the landscaped gardens associated with the dwelling houses also break up this low lying exposed landscape.

Matthew Street follows the contours of the land and provides a “V” shaped settlement with the low lying area at the apex of the V and the upper slopes north and south of the V aligned with the headlands. An informal drainage swale is located at the lower part of the Precinct.

The steep rocky headlands provide the most dramatic contrast in the landscape with Elephant Head being the most interesting and dominant natural feature; as the name suggests, the Headland is in the imaginative shape of an elephants head.



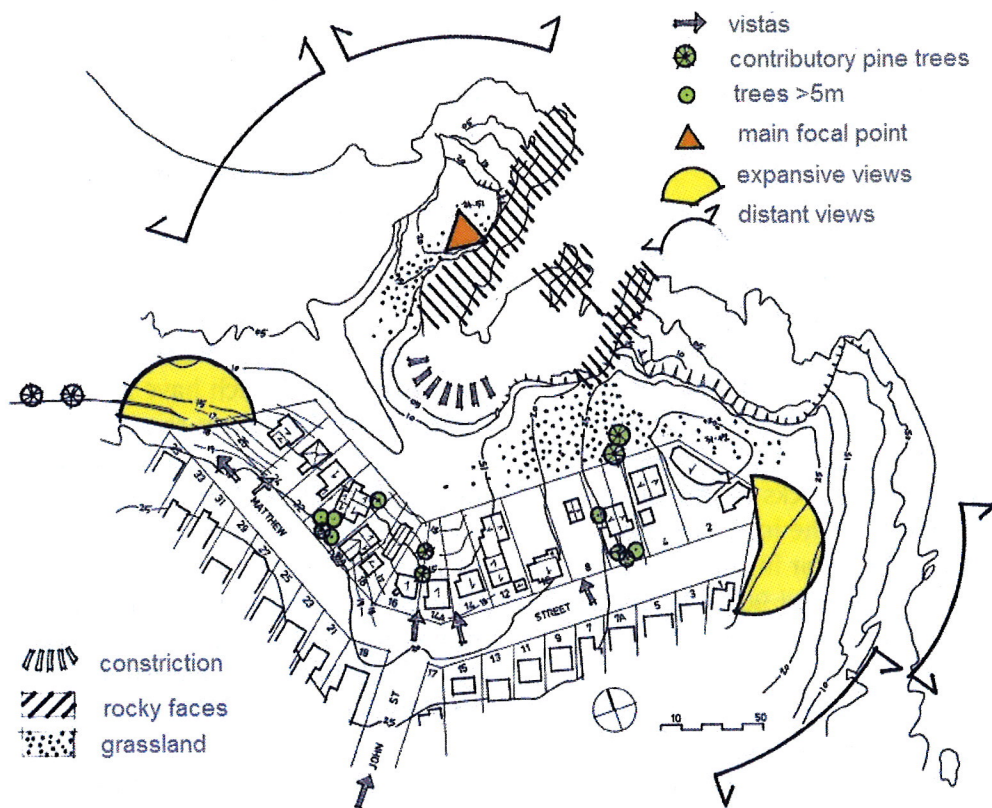


Figure 4: Scenic Quality



Elephant Head