

GEORGES RIVER FORESHORE SCENIC CHARACTER STUDY

PREPARED FOR GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL

JUNE 2023

FINAL REPORT

 **Ethos
Urban**

 **GEORGES
RIVER COUNCIL**



Executive Summary

The Georges River is one of the most important urban river systems in Australia. Where it meets the Georges River local government area (LGA), the river expands to create an intricate network of bays more resembling a coastal inlet than a river. In addition to providing an attractive physical environment that is emblematic of Sydney, this also creates a highly desirable living environment. Combined with Sydney's increasing population, this has placed significant pressure on the river's foreshore to accommodate increased development. This increased development runs the risk of compromising the attributes of the river that are valued not just by local residents, but also the broader Georges River community.

To address this issue, over the years the Georges River Council (and its predecessor Councils) has developed a comprehensive suite of local planning measures. In addition to conventional measures such as land use zoning, this includes provisions for Riparian Land, the Foreshore Area and the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA).

The FSPA is the focus of this Study. The FSPA applies under the Hurstville Local Environmental Plan 2012 (HLEP2012) to parts of the former Hurstville local government area (LGA) located to the west of the Como Bridge. Consistent with its intent to protect these values, it provides an additional set of considerations for development. It also works with other parts of the HLEP2012 to restrict subdivision.

As part of the preparation of its new local environmental plan (the Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021 (the GRLEP2021)) Council commissioned preparation of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper to review this suite of local planning measures. Based on consideration of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, Council proposed to maintain the existing provisions for Riparian Land and the Foreshore Area but make some changes to the FSPA. This involved extending the FSPA into parts of the former Kogarah LGA, and reducing the size of the FSPA in the former Hurstville LGA.

This proposal was subject to public exhibition as part of the GRLEP2021. A large proportion of submissions received by Council on the GRLEP2021 objected to the proposed reduction in size of the FSPA. While the

grounds for this objection were numerous, overall they expressed concern that the consequent removal of development restrictions under the FSPA would lead to overdevelopment and a loss or reduction in values. In particular, concern was expressed about loss of vegetation.

Scope of this Study

After considering these submissions, the Local Planning Panel (LPP) directed Council to maintain the existing extent of the FSPA. The LPP also directed Council undertake further investigations into the role, extent and zoning of the FSPA.

In response to this direction, Council commissioned this Study, called the Georges River Foreshore Scenic Character Study. It also commissioned a separate but complementary biodiversity Study. Consistent with the LPP direction, the focus of this Study is on the role, extent and zoning of the FSPA. The scope of the biodiversity Study is more narrow, focussing on vegetation. For the purposes of consistency, Council determined that the area to be considered as part of these studies was to correspond with that of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper.

Role of the FSPA

The current role of the FSPA under the HLEP2012 is to protect the values of the Georges River foreshore. While this includes a number of elements, there is an emphasis on scenic qualities and views. While mentioned, what constitutes scenic quality is not well articulated. A larger minimum lot size is also required in the FSPA.

The proposed role of the FSPA under the GRLEP2021 is similar to its existing role. However, there is greater emphasis on protection of environmental values, primarily related to vegetation. For example, development is to achieve 'no net loss of significant vegetation or habitat'. As with the HLEP2012, what constitutes scenic quality is not well articulated. Additional restrictions on subdivision for dual occupancies and requirements for greater landscaped area and design excellence are proposed in the FSPA.

Council planning policy, including the FSPA, exists within a broader planning framework that comprises a number of distinct but interrelated parts. Each of these parts is intended to have its own role. It is good planning practice to ensure that the intent and application of these individual parts is clear, and that there is no conflict or unnecessary duplication between parts. With reference to this planning framework, it is considered that its current emphasis on scenic qualities and views is the most appropriate role for the FSPA. For the purposes of this Study, scenic qualities are referred to by the umbrella term “scenic character”.

Other GRLEP2021 controls such as the Foreshore Area and Riparian Land and Watercourses has a clear and separate but related role in protecting the values of the Georges River foreshore. These complement the FSPA. For example, the emphasis of the Foreshore Area is on natural foreshore processes such as erosion, and the emphasis of the Riparian Land and Watercourses is on water quality. In addition, other measures such as zoning and height will also work to protect the values of the Georges River.

It is acknowledged that the FSPA contains biodiversity values. However, it is considered that the proposal to emphasise biodiversity in the FSPA under the GRLEP2021 is not the most effective way to address this matter. Rather, this has the potential to dilute the policy intent of the FSPA and result in confusion during implementation as part of the development assessment process. It is considered that the most appropriate way to protect these values is through the introduction of a new biodiversity overlay (in the form of a map and written controls as an “Additional Local Provision”) that can refresh, consolidate and strengthen existing biodiversity provisions.

On this basis, it is recommended that the FSPA be reviewed to ensure a clear and specific focus on scenic character, subject to the adoption of appropriate provisions to protect the biodiversity values of the area.

Extent of the FSPA

Given the role of the FSPA, consideration needs to be given to what is the foreshore, and what is its scenic character.

Strictly speaking, a foreshore is a narrow, continuous strip of land bordering a waterway, in this case the Georges River. On this basis alone, it can be argued that the FSPA in its current extent is too large. However, this neglects the fact that land that does not meet this conventional understanding can have a strong connection to the river. This is important, as development on such land has the potential, if not managed well through planning policy, to compromise the values of the Georges River. This can include overly large development, or development that does not integrate into its context.

Considering the role of the FSPA, it is considered that the foreshore comprises land that has a strong visual connection to the Georges River. This means is it visible from the river, including its Georges River and Sutherland foreshores, and exhibits a consistent scenic character.

Using GIS, the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper determined visibility based on landform. While sound, this has limitations as it does not factor in elements that can reduce visibility such as buildings and vegetation. To address this, this Study used LiDAR data in GIS to factor in buildings and vegetation. Given the complexity of this matter and the feasible capability of existing technology, the resulting map is an accurate representation of what can reasonably be considered to be visible from the river and as such be considered the “foreshore”. While land outside of this area may have value, it cannot be regarded as the foreshore and development in this area is unlikely to compromise the values of the Georges River. On this basis, should Council wish to protect these values, it is appropriate to find an alternative planning mechanism to do so.

Scenic character

Scenic character comprises elements in a particular combination that makes an area distinct and attractive.

To determine what constitutes the scenic character of the Georges River foreshore, analysis was undertaken of the presence and relationship of elements such as landform using GIS and photography (including a comprehensive suite of time series photos taken from the river). This analysis showed that elements common to the scenic character of the foreshore comprise water, the land and water interface, land rising upwards from the land and water interface and the sky. These can be considered “contributory elements”.

When viewed from the water and foreshore, the analysis showed that the overall composition of these elements was of water in the foreground, the land and water interface in the mid ground and the land rising upwards from the land and water interface and the sky in the background. Boating facilities, such as jetties and pontoons, are also often contributory elements in the foreground. This provides for a well-defined, complex yet ordered visual composition that creates a perception of openness and connection to nature and provides opportunities for views that can be considered panoramas.

Within this overall pattern, scenic character is different in the eastern and western parts of the foreshore as generally delineated by Tom Ugly’s Bridge.

The western part of the foreshore comprises an undulating landform, a complex coastline of headlands, peninsulas and bays, extensive tree canopy including at the land and water interface and visual dominance of natural (including curated) elements over human elements. In general, this can be considered a naturalistic foreshore. Of particular note is the escarpment. The escarpment is the steep, narrow area of land that separates the river from its broader hinterland which exhibits a more gently sloping, plateau type landform. From the foreshore, this area often dominates the landscape and views, and as such makes a particularly significant contribution to scenic character.

Conversely, the eastern part of the foreshore comprises a more level landform, a simpler, largely modified coastline, substantially less tree canopy overall and in particular at the land and water interface, built structures including jetties, pontoons, revetment walls, swimming pools and other structures between the land and water interface and built form, and a more dense, larger scale and newer built form. Overall, this can be considered an urban foreshore.

It is important to note that despite this overall pattern, how this scenic character manifests on the ground is complex, and includes a level of variance. Of particular note is the large, open and green space of Carss Park within the broader urban foreshore character east of Tom Ugly’ Bridge. Within the naturalistic foreshore in Lugarno and Oatley, there are pockets where much of the escarpment is occupied by buildings, and pockets where buildings are only located on its uppermost parts. In some places the skyline of the Hurstville CBD is visible in the far background.

This complexity means that the FSPA is not well suited to a one size fits all policy approach. Unlike zoning or height where a coarse, consistent and easily measurable blanket can be draped over an area including prohibitions, this will not work for scenic character. Rather, it requires an ability to consider things on merit and individual circumstances, including the ability of exercise informed, guided discretion where justified on environmental planning grounds. On this basis and drawing from this Study, it is recommended that the FSPA continue to be an “Additional Local Provision” containing objectives and matters for consideration. To assist in implementation, it is further recommended that Council provide further detail on what constitutes scenic character in the FSPA in the new Georges River Development Control Plan 2021.



Local character

Although land may not be visible from the Georges River, this does not automatically mean that it does not have value that is worthy of protection under local planning measures. To look into this, the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper analysed the Study area and found that it can be considered to comprise twelve (12) local character typologies. Each of these typologies was found to have a level of value.

Since the preparation of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, a number of matters have come to hand that are material to this finding. This includes submissions seeking review of these typologies, and Department of Planning and Environment’s (DPE) further development and refinement of its guidance on local character.

On this basis, this Study undertook a more detailed review of these typologies. This expanded the matters analysed under the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, and involved extensive desktop and field work. Of note, this included visiting every street in area.

This Study has found that the area can be considered to comprise nine (9) primary local character types, with a number of these types being further broken down into smaller local character precincts. In addition to this, the Study also prepared a profile for each of these types and precincts. This includes a description, as well as identification of matters such as threats and risks, and assessment of matters such as sensitivity to change and level of planning significance.

When assessed against the criteria of sensitivity and significance, three (3) of these local character areas are considered to warrant further protection in addition to principal development standards such as zoning, maximum building height and maximum floor space ratio. This Study recommends that character based provisions are included in the Georges River DCP2021 for:

- Character areas within the revised FSPA boundary
- Areas of ‘unique character’ that are outside the revised FSPA boundary but which have unique landscape and built form character

- Other character areas that have specific character that is to be considered in the assessment of development applications, that take precedence over existing suburb-based local character controls in the DCP.

Biodiversity

Subject to the findings of the separate biodiversity Study, it is recommended that a new biodiversity overlay be included in the GRLEP2021 to better protect trees and other forms of vegetation.

Zoning

While more recently expanding to encompass a broader range of matters, the focus of zoning has traditionally been on land use. On this basis, changing the zone of land can have a significant impact on a person’s ability to use their land. The majority of privately owned land in the FSPA is included in the R2 Low Density Residential zone (the R2 zone). Most publicly owned land, including parks and reserves, is included in the RE1 Public Recreation zone (the RE1 zone). Smaller areas are included in other zones, including the R3 Medium Density Residential (the R3 zone) and E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves (the E1 zone). The GRLEP2021 proposed to retain this overall pattern.

Consideration was given to this as well as other potential alternative zones available under the Standard Instrument, most notably the E4 Environmental Living zone (the E4 zone). Subject to other provisions, it is suggested that the current zoning pattern is the most appropriate to achieve a balance between protecting the scenic character of the FSPA and enabling reasonable, appropriate development to occur. In particular, the proposed objectives of the R2 zone require development ‘to promote a high standard of urban design and built form within a landscaped setting that enhances the local character of the suburb and achieves a high level of residential amenity. This is considered to clearly and succinctly articulate a key outcome sought for the FSPA.

The R2 zone is a closed zone. This means that unless a use is listed as being permissible, it is prohibited. It limits permissible development to low density uses such as dwelling house and dual occupancies and other uses that provide for the day to day needs of residents such as centre-based child care facilities. It also allows for jetties. These uses are broadly compatible with the scenic character of the FSPA.

By comparison, while the objectives of the E4 zone are aligned with the protection of scenic character, it is considered to unreasonably restrict land use permissibility. The only permissible residential use in dwelling houses. Due to it also being a closed zone, dual occupancies and jetties are prohibited.

The existing recreation and environmental zones are appropriate, having objectives and allowing uses that are broadly compatible with the scenic character of the FSPA. While an alternative zone is more appropriate for certain areas of land included in the R3 zone adjoining the river, it is acknowledged that this land is already largely developed or in an advanced stage of development and can be considered to both represent a small cluster of land. On this basis, its zoning is acceptable.

It is noted that the under the GRLEP2021 Council has proposed additional restrictions on subdivision for dual occupancies and requirements for greater landscaped area and design excellence within the FSPA. This is considered appropriate for the recommended revised and smaller FSPA. These provisions are also considered broadly acceptable within the larger FSPA that is recommended for coverage by the character locality provisions recommended for inclusion in the GRDCP2021. However, caution is urged in adopting design excellence provisions for a broad range of compliant uses (including dwelling houses) in this larger area. It is considered that this may be challenging to implement, is not necessarily

proportional to the level of risk to local character posed by such uses and the intended outcomes can be more appropriately addressed through the recommended local character provisions.

Findings and recommendations

The key findings of this Study include:

- the role of the FSPA is to protect the scenic character of the Georges River Foreshore
- the current mapped extent of the FSPA is too large, including land that cannot reasonably be considered to be related to the foreshore. This land is generally located at distance from the river. Development of this land allowed under zoning and other provisions is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts scenic character impacts
- the scenic character of the FSPA is not well articulated in local planning policy
- furthermore, the proposed changes to the FSPA under the GRLEP2021 to emphasise biodiversity are likely to result in a lack of clarity of policy intent and challenges in implementation in development assessment
- this scenic character comprises a number of common “contributory elements”, including water and the land and water interface
- scenic character varies between areas to the east and areas to the west of Tom Ugly’s Bridge
- east of the bridge scenic character can be considered an urban foreshore
- west of the bridge scenic character can be considered to be a naturalistic foreshore
- within this naturalistic foreshore, the escarpment is a key feature and is of particular importance to scenic character
- while there is a general east – west pattern, scenic character is complex and there are notable exceptions and variances

- while land located at distance from the river cannot reasonably be considered to be related to the foreshore, it still has value worthy of protection under local planning policy.
- this area has nine (9) primary local character types. A number of these types are further broken down into smaller local character precincts
- of these, three local character areas - Bush Suburban, Garden Suburban - Naturalistic and Rivers Edge - Contemporary warrant greater consideration in the local planning policy due to factors of sensitivity and significance
- existing zoning is appropriate to the FSPA and the local character areas
- other existing and proposed provisions such as larger minimum lot sizes are also generally appropriate

On this basis, the following recommendations are made:

- the FSPA be retained, but its mapped extent be reduced
- the text for the FSPA be reviewed to ensure a clear and specific focus on scenic character
- the FSPA continue to be an “Additional Local Provision” containing objectives and matters for consideration
- drawing from this Study, further detail on what constitutes scenic character in the FSPA is provided in the new Georges River Development Control Plan 2021
- Council considers including Bush Suburban, Garden Suburban - Naturalistic and Rivers Edge - Contemporary as areas of unique character within the Georges River DCP 2021
- Council adopts recommended amendments to

the Georges River DCP 2021 to include character statements for foreshore character areas, areas of unique character and other character areas as defined by the Local Character Study (October 2022).

- Council maintains existing zoning for the FSPA and the local character areas
- Council proceeds with community consultation in relation to proposed amendments to GRLEP2021 and GRDCP2021 as recommended by this Study.

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
Control	A numerical standard that is applied in a prescriptive manner
Council	Georges River Council
DA	Development application
DCP	Development control plan
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment
District Plan	Eastern City District Plan
GRDCP2021	Georges River Development Control Plan 2021. This is now in effect for the Georges River LGA.
GRLEP2021	Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021. This is the proposed LEP for the Georges River LGA. It is the result of Council consideration of submissions received as part of public exhibition, and includes a number of amendments such as the introduction of biodiversity matters in the FSPA text
GRLEP2021 as publicly exhibited	The GRLEP2021 that was publicly exhibited between 1 April to 31 May 2020
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
EPI	Environmental planning instrument, comprising a State environmental planning policy or local environmental plan
ESD	Ecologically sustainable development
FSR	Floor space ratio
GSC	Greater Sydney Commission
HELP	Hurstville Local Environmental Plan 2012. This is the current LEP for that part of the Georges River LGA formerly in the Hurstville LGA
KLEP	Kogarah Local Environmental Plan 2012. This is the current LEP for that part of the Georges River LGA formerly in the Kogarah LGA
LEP	Local environmental plan
LGA	Georges River local government area
LRHDC	Low Rise Housing Diversity Code
LSPS	Local strategic planning statement
Merit based assessment	Assessment of a matter that allows for reasonable flexibility to consider a range of possible solutions
Minister	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
Objective	A statement of a desired future outcome, generally expressed in a qualitative manner that enables merit based assessment
Panel	Local Planning Panel
Planning instrument	Any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• strategic plan (comprising regional strategic plans and district strategic plans) and local strategic planning statements• environmental planning instrument (comprising State environmental planning policies and local environmental plans)• development control plan

Abbreviation	Definition
Principal development standards	Matters addressed in Part 4 of the Standard Instrument
Provisions	Broad term covering objectives and controls
Region Plan	The Greater Sydney Region Plan - A Metropolis of Three Cities
Rezoning	Amendments to environmental planning instruments, in particular for land use zones and principal development standards such as height of buildings and floor space ratio
SEPP	State environmental planning policy
Standard Instrument	Standard Instrument—Principal Local Environmental Plan
State	The state of NSW
Strategic plan	A regional strategic plan, district strategic plan or a local strategic planning statement
The planning framework	Comprises planning instruments



Georges River Foreshore Study

PART A INTRODUCTION

Introduction

With a catchment of around 960sqkm that is home to 1.5 million residents, the Georges River is one of the most important urban river systems in Australia. While starting from fairly humble beginnings at its headwaters near Appin, the river dramatically changes shape before meeting Botany Bay, expanding to create an intricate network of bays and coves more resembling a coastal inlet than a river. This part is formally known as the 'Lower Estuary' (Georges Riverkeeper, 2020).

In addition to providing an attractive physical environment that is emblematic of Sydney, this also creates a highly desirable living environment. Combined with other changes such as Sydney's increasing population, this has placed significant pressure on the river foreshores to accommodate increased development. This increased development runs the risk of compromising the attributes of the river that are valued not just by local residents, but also the broader Georges River community.

To seek to address this issue, over the years the Georges River Council (and its predecessor Councils) has developed a comprehensive suite of local planning measures. This includes the Foreshore Building Line (FBL) and the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA). These measures complement the extensive framework of State planning measures covering matters such as coastal processes and urban bushland.

In 2018, Council embarked on a process of updating its two separate LEPs to better reflect current planning concepts and practices. This led to the preparation of the Georges River LEP 2021. To help inform its approach to the Georges River, Council commissioned preparation of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper.

Based on consideration of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, Council proposed to expand the FSPA to include land in the former Kogarah LGA and introduce local character typologies to provide better protection for the two different but closely related concepts of valued scenic character and local character.

Council also proposed to adopt these recommendations. It also proposed to concurrently reduce the amount of land in the former Hurstville LGA contained within the FSPA. If adopted, this would have the effect of allowing for less stringent development controls for typically smaller scale, lower impact development such as houses (dwelling houses) and duplexes (dual occupancies).

As part of public exhibition of the Georges River LEP 2021 in mid 2019, the proposal to reduce the spatial extent of the FSPA was one of the issues that attracted the greatest number of community submissions. While varied, most submissions were opposed to reduction in its area. As part of considering these submissions, the Local Planning Panel directed Council to undertake further investigations into the FSPA. These investigations are to be carried out to inform the role and function of the FSPA within the Georges River LEP 2021.



The drowned river valleys of Sydney

Consistent with the other major rivers in the Greater Sydney Region stretching from the Hawkesbury in the north to the Hacking River in the south, that part of the Georges River closest to where it meets Botany Bay is a drowned river valley, or 'ria', in geographic terms. Ria in this region share a number of distinct characteristics largely due to their interaction with the sandstone on which much of eastern Sydney is located. Most notably, this is complex and highly irregular foreshores. They also feature hilly landform, often including exposed sandstone outcrops, as well as small, sandy beaches or mudflats. Larger ria such as that of the Hawkesbury (Broken Bay) and Parramatta Rivers (Port Jackson / Sydney Harbour) feature small islands that are the summits of now largely submerged hills. This coastline is rare and distinct in Australia, and is immediately recognisable as being associated with Sydney.

Figure 1. Riverside development

Purpose of the Study

Consistent with LPP direction, the main purpose of this Study is to ‘further define the role, mapped extent and zoning of the FSPA’. Importantly, the intent of the Study is to use the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper as a platform, further developing and refining its key directions. This was considered particularly appropriate in recognition of the significant investment of time and energy the Georges River community made into reviewing its content and findings. In this sense, it is not a fresh start, but rather an addition to the existing body of knowledge. In addition, the Study is to be a technical, objective and evidence based document used to help inform Council’s subsequent setting of local planning measures.

Structure

The structure of this Study as follows:

- Part A: Introduction
- Part B: The Scenic character Foreshore Protection Area
- Part C: Local Character
- Part D: Towards an Integrated Local Planning Policy Response



Figure 2. Private jetties along The Promenade at Sans Souci



Figure 3. Tree canopy looking to the Georges River Foreshore



Figure 4. Foreshore along Jew fish Bay Baths

The Study Area

The Study Area comprises two parts:

- The primary Study area: covering that part of the Georges River LGA included within the proposed FSPA under the Georges River LEP 2021 as shown in figure 6.
- The secondary Study area: covering that part of the Georges River LGA that is visible from the foreshore of the Georges River (either the Georges River or Sutherland sides).

For the purposes of this Study, most attention will be given to the primary Study area. The primary Study area includes all or part of the following suburbs:

- Blakehurst
- Connells Point
- Hurstville Grove
- Kogarah Bay
- Kyle Bay
- Lugarno
- Oatley
- Peakhurst
- Peakhurst Heights
- Riverwood

- Sans Souci

Importantly, the primary Study area includes around 40km of shoreline along the Georges River and its embayments. This includes land adjoining:

- Boggyswell Creek
- Connells Bay
- Dairy Creek
- Edith Bay
- Great Moon Bay
- Gungah Bay
- Jew Fish Bay
- Kogarah Bay
- Kyle Bay
- Lime Kiln Bay
- Little Moon Bay
- Neverfail Bay
- Oatley Bay
- Salt Pan Creek
- Shipwrights Bay.

Georges River Facts

Type: urban river

Location: southern Sydney

Headwaters: Illawarra escarpment and Appin

Mouth: Botany Bay

Length: around 100 km long

Catchment area size: approximately 960 km2

Catchment area population: approximately 1.5 million people.

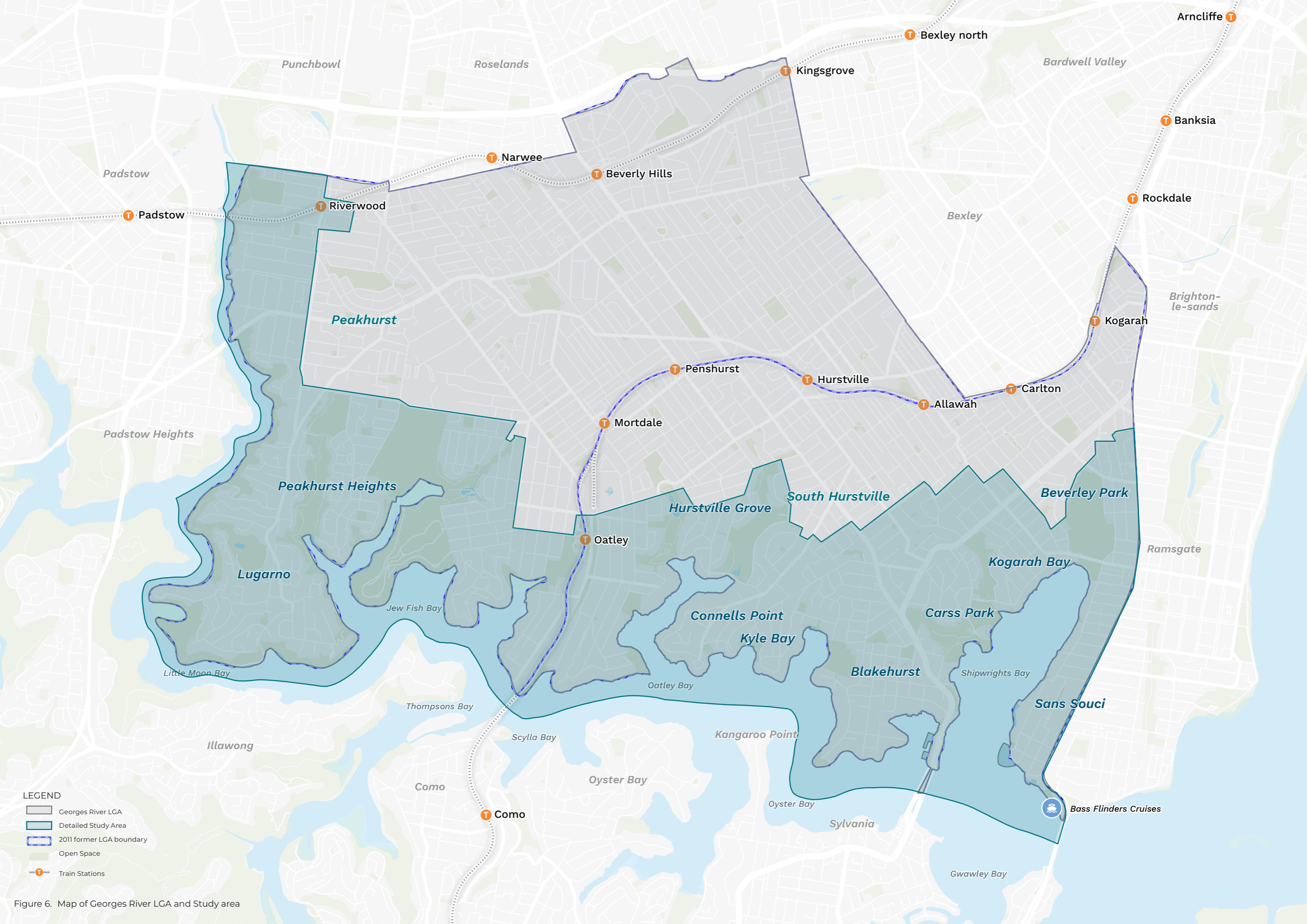
Fresh or salt water: fresh above Liverpool Weir and is tidal and saltier below the weir down to Botany Bay

Species of fauna: 454 (including aquatic and land animals), 30 riparian or riverside vegetation communities and 29 Endangered Ecological Communities.

Key tributaries: Bunburry Curran Creek in Glenfield, Cabramatta Creek in Cabramatta, Prospect Creek in Georges Hall, Williams Creek in Holsworthy, Salt Pan Creek in Padstow, Mill Creek in Menai, and the Woronora River in Illawong.



Figure 5. Riverside Development



- LEGEND
- Georges River LGA
 - Detailed Study Area
 - 2011 former LGA boundary
 - Open Space
 - Train Stations

Figure 6. Map of Georges River LGA and Study area

Planning Policy

Local planning policy under the GRLEP 2021 contains a large number of provisions that work together to shape the nature of development in the FSPA.

This includes principal development standards such as land use zoning (refer Figure 9), maximum FSR (refer Figure 10), and maximum building height (refer Figure 11). It also includes three (3) additional local provisions:

- “Foreshore Area” under clause ‘Limited development on foreshore area’
- “Sensitive Land” under clause Riparian land
- “Foreshore Scenic Protection Area”

The following are definitions of these key terms:

- Foreshore Area: means the land between the foreshore building line and the mean high water mark of the nearest bay or river
- Foreshore Building Line means the line shown as the foreshore building line on the Foreshore Building Line Map.
- Foreshore Scenic Protection Area: means any land shown on the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area Map.

The Foreshore Area and Foreshore Building Line cover a narrow strip of land immediately bordering the Georges River. While covering the same area, the FSPA also extends to include a substantially larger area.

While these terms identify land that is subject to their corresponding provisions, they do not define the foundational question of “what is the foreshore?” for the purposes of the FSPA. Compounding this, there is no recourse to original source material that supported their initial introduction.

This lack of a common technical reference point has created both policy and implementation confusion.

Council’s FAQ supporting the public exhibition of the Georges River LEP 2021 include the following description of the FSPA:

- ‘The FSPA is a continuous area along the foreshore that is visible from the Georges River with significant character, environmental and scenic values’.

While more helpful, it still does not clearly articulate key matters such as what constitutes scenic values for the purposes of development assessment.

The FSPA and other provisions

The FSPA also “triggers” a number of variations to standard development controls in other parts of the GRLEP2021. In summary, these are:

Subdivision

- larger lot sizes overall
- larger lot size for attached dwellings, dual occupancies, multi-dwelling housing
- larger lot size for subdivision of dual occupancies

Design excellence

- a requirement for design excellence

Landscaped areas

- larger landscaped areas.

The following tables show these variations. All references are to the GRLEP2021. Given lot sizes, the most substantive impact of these provisions is to restrict the number of lots suitable for attached dwellings, dual occupancies, multi-dwelling housing in the FSPA.

Use	Standard	FSPA
Proposed clause 4.1 Minimum subdivision lot size		
All	450sqm	700sqm
Proposed clause 4.1A Minimum subdivision lot size for dual occupancies		
Dual occupancy	300sqm	430sqm
Proposed clause 6.10 Design excellence		
Residential accommodation	FSPA	All irrespective of storeys, except secondary dwellings
Proposed clause 6.13 Landscaped areas in certain residential and environmental protection zones		
Dwelling house	20%	25%
Dual occupancy	25%	30%



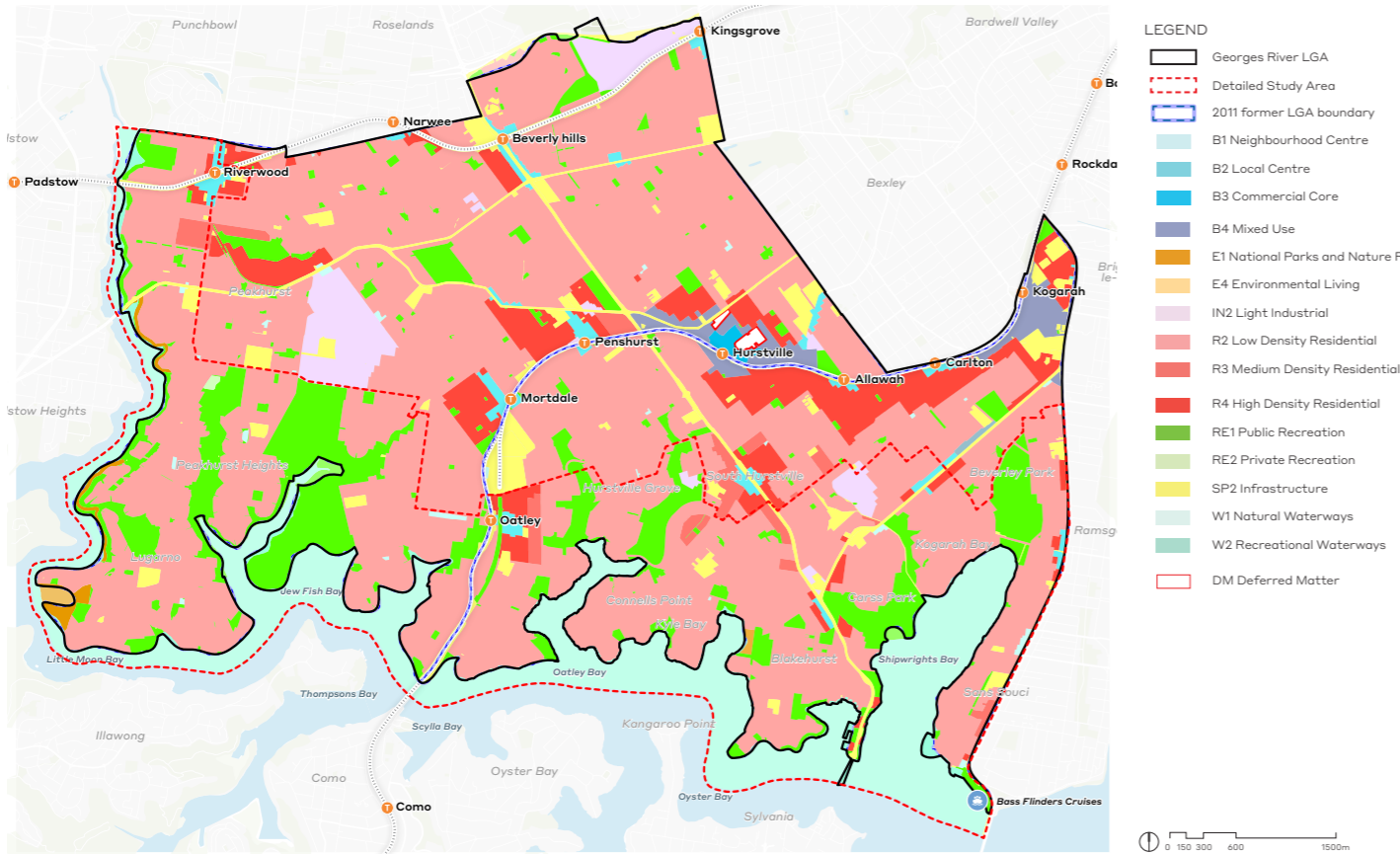


Figure 8. GR LEP2021 Land Use Zones

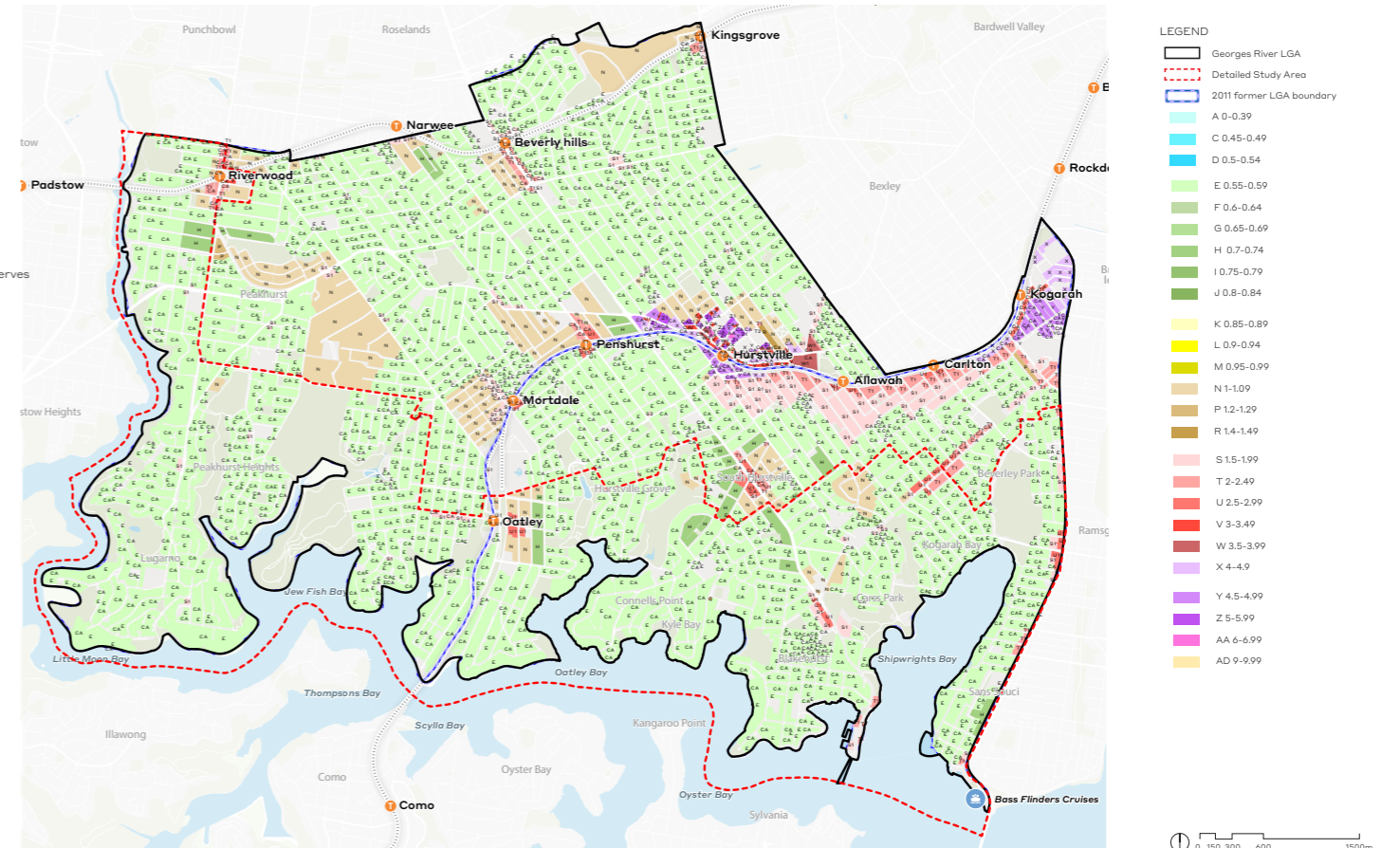


Figure 9. GR LEP2021 Floor Space Ratio

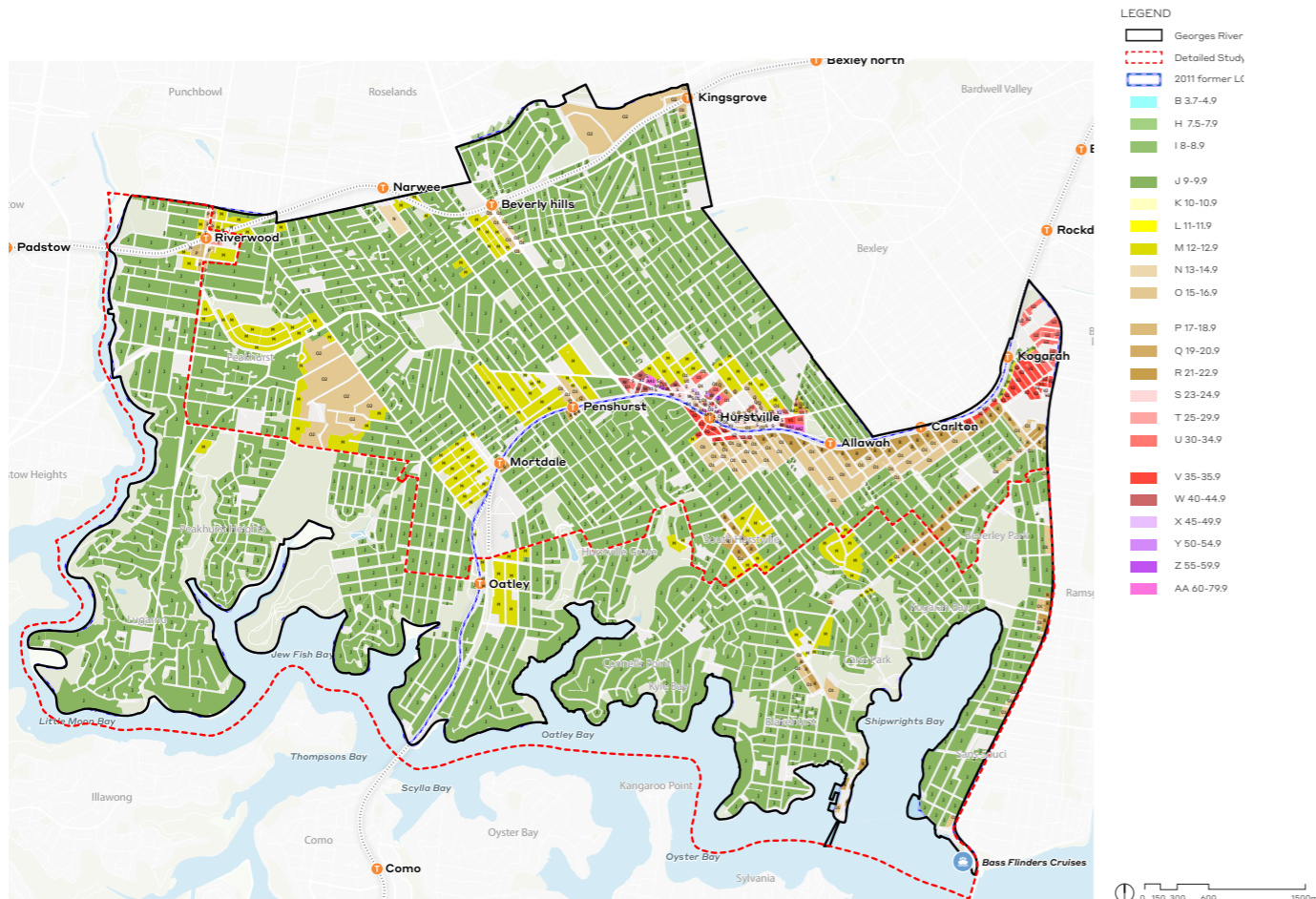


Figure 10. GR LEP2021 Height of Buildings

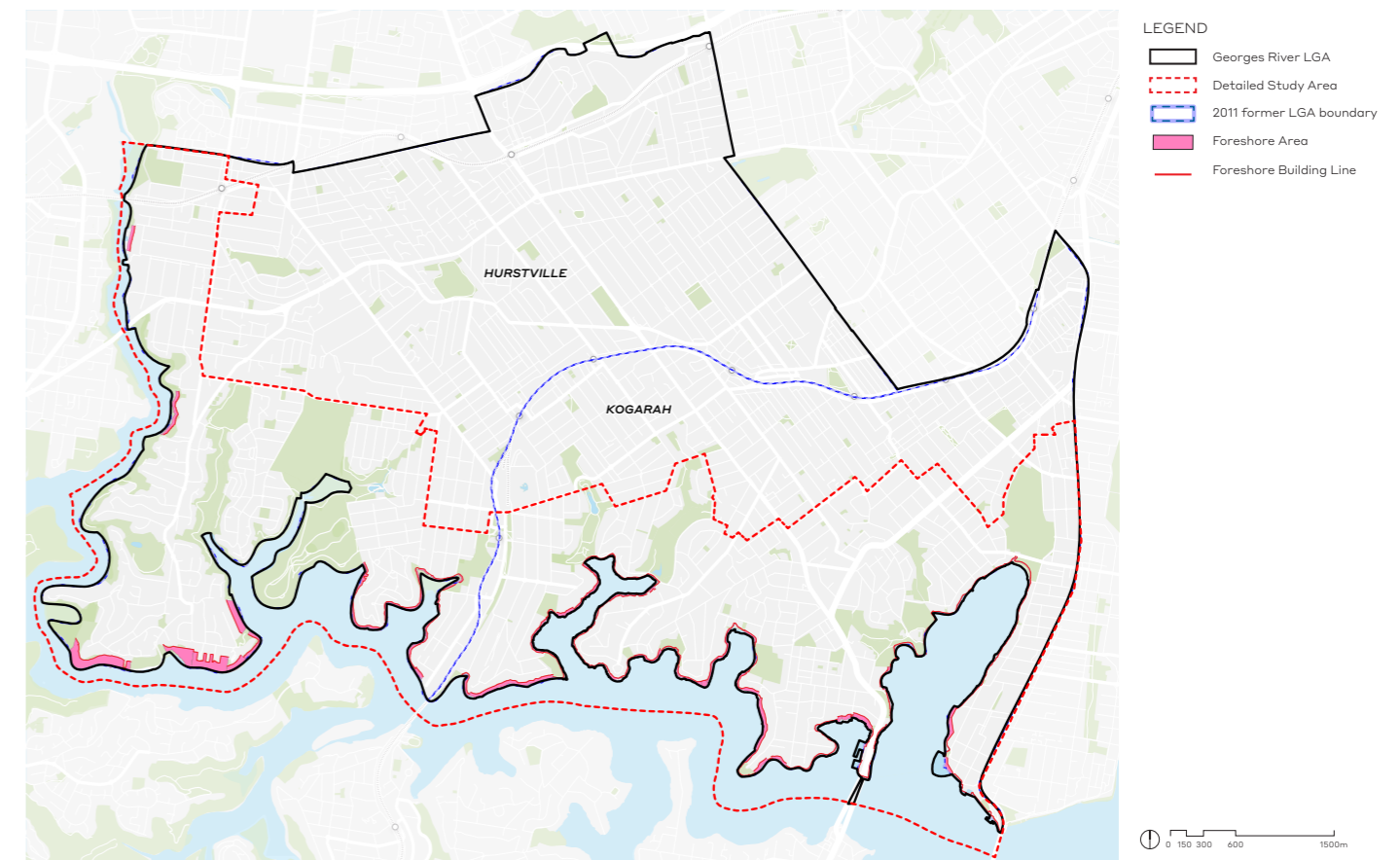


Figure 11. The Foreshore Area

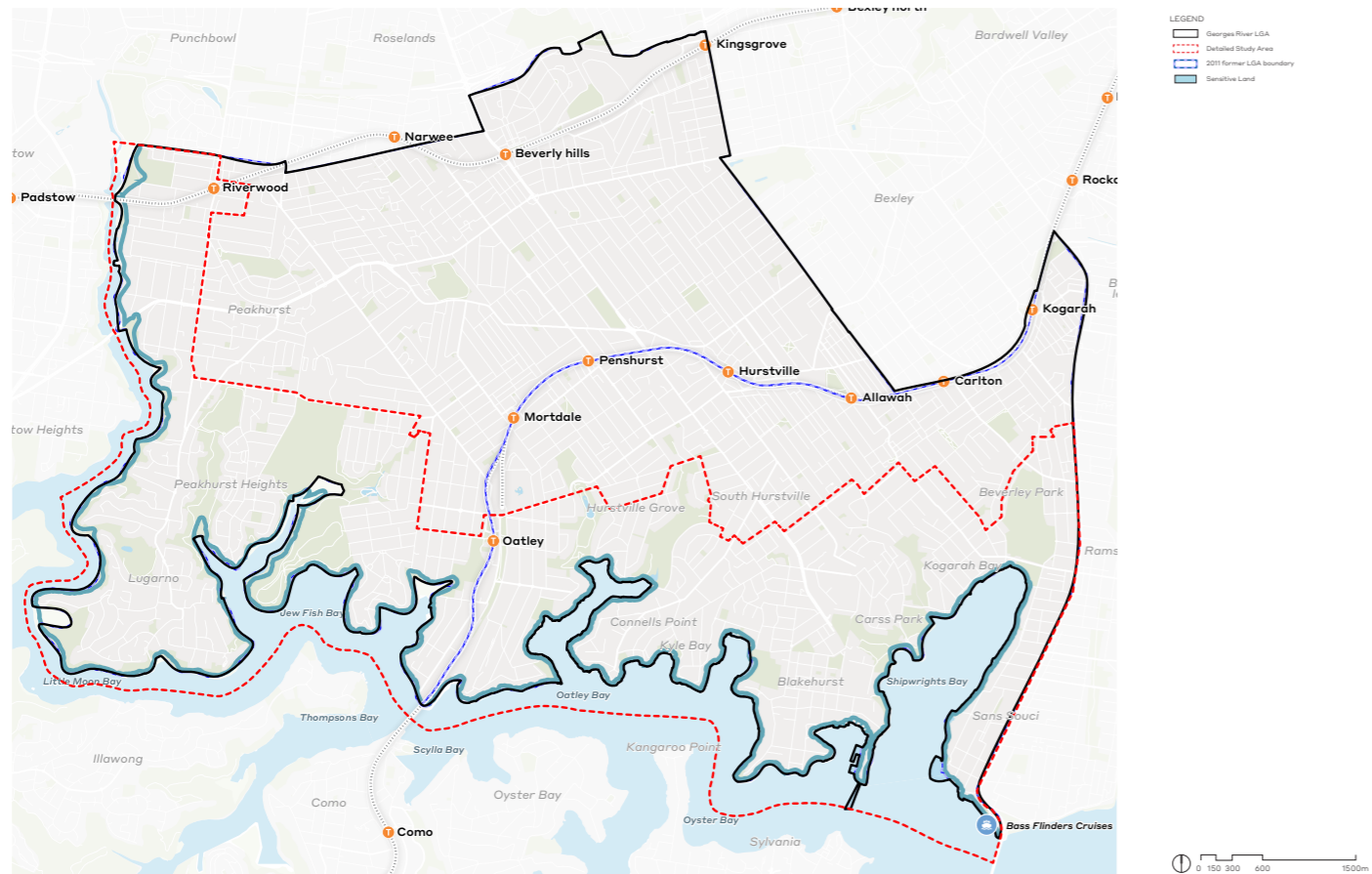


Figure 12. Riparian Land

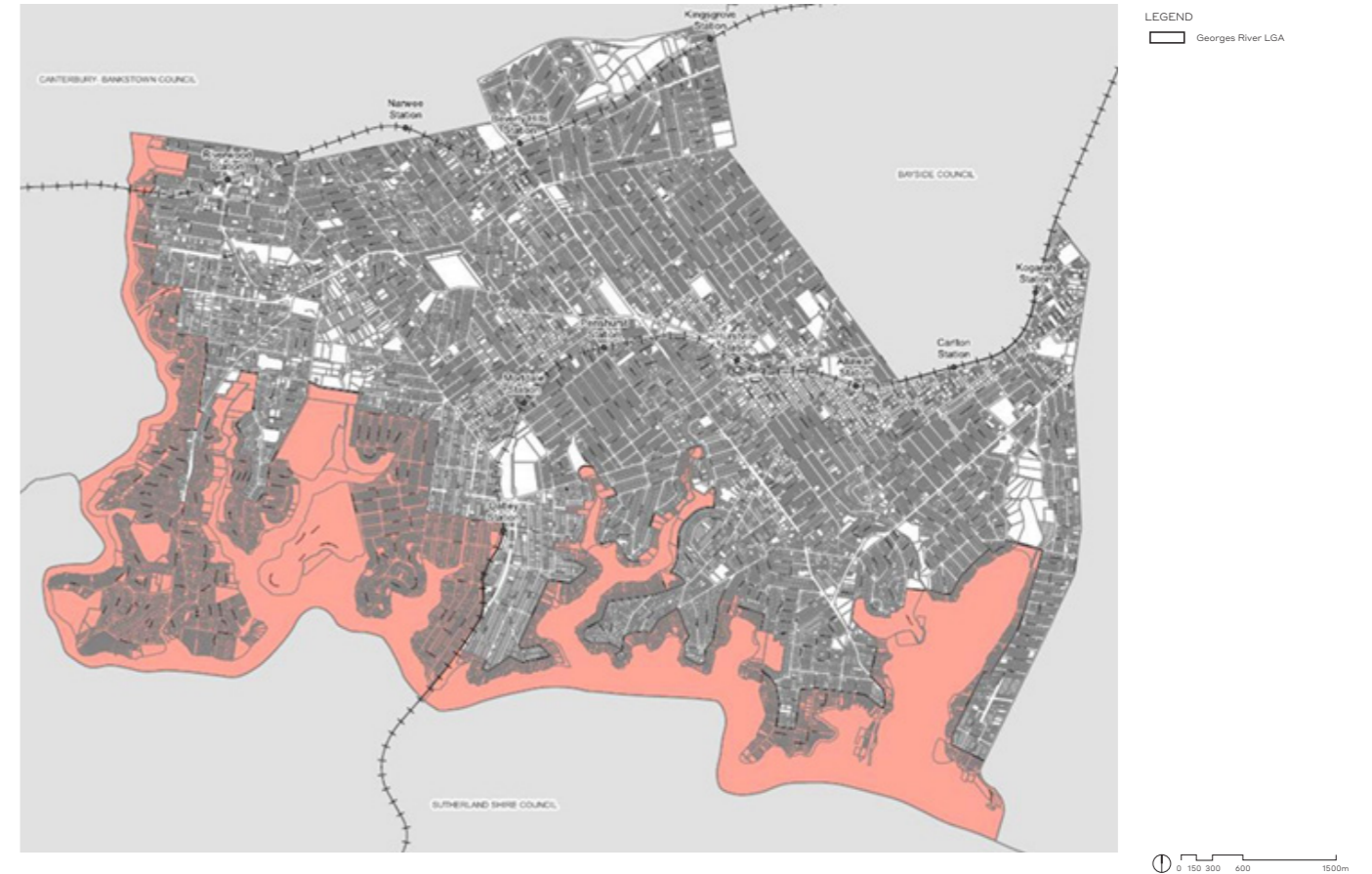


Figure 13. Current Foreshore Scenic Protection Area under GRLEP 2021

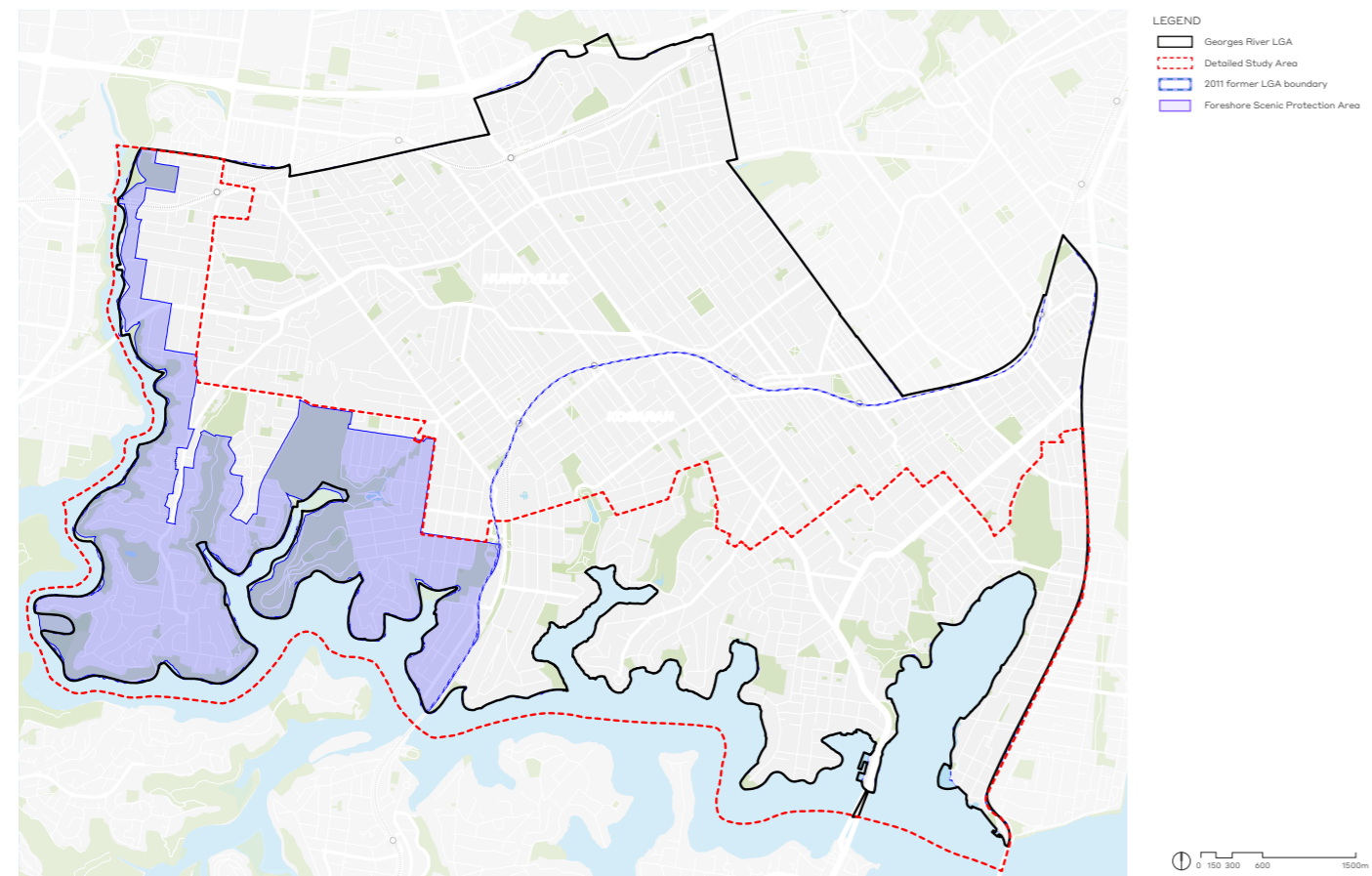


Figure 14. The former Foreshore Scenic Protection Area under the Hurstville LEP 2012

Background

The Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper

The Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper included a number of key matters, including:

- Identification of the values of the Georges River and its foreshore
- Identification of key threats to these values
- Identification of emerging directions for future local planning measures.

Values

Drawn from Council’s Community Strategic Plan 2028 and the Georges River Coastal Zone Management Plan, table 1 summarises the values of the Georges River and its foreshore.

Table 1 – Matrix of assessed values

Values	
Environmental Values	
E1	The river and its tributaries significance as an aquatic habitat for both flora and fauna
E2	The rivers role in the larger water management context including flooding, stormwater run-off and drainage
E3	The significant role the river plays in the linking of green spaces, remnant vegetation, forest cover and riparian vegetation
E4	Bushland reserves and remnant native vegetation within the Sandstone Dry Forests, Estuarine Mangrove Forests and the Sydney Foreshores Shale Forests
E5	Established vegetation along the banks of the river that contributes to the overall river health
Amenity Values	
A1	The many trail networks both walking and cycling, providing public access to the river foreshore
A2	The beauty and richness provided by the many bays, parks, reserves and waterways such as Salt Pan Creek
A3	The river banks and its foreshore vegetation, providing a naturalistic setting within an urban context
A4	Scenic character protection areas along the river foreshore
A5	Existing built foreshore assets that add to the character of the river foreshore
Recreational Values	
R1	The leafy green areas including regional parks such as Carrs Bush Park, Oatley Park and Gannons Park
R2	The areas capacity for various forms of recreation including water-based sports and activities, walking, cycling and team sports
Cultural Heritage Values	
C1	Significant cultural and heritage sites such as O’Brien’s Estate

Key threats to values

The following were identified as key threats to these values:

- Tree clearing
- Altered geology
- Additional jetty and marina infrastructure
- Larger scale development
- Continued incongruous contemporary styles in new developments.

Emerging directions for future local planning measures

The following table identifies the principles recommended to guide Council in considering local planning measures affecting the foreshore.

Table 2 – Principles recommended to guide Council in considering the local planning measures affecting the foreshore

Theme	Issue
Principle 1	Optimise consistency and linkages between existing plans, policies and strategies relating to the management of the foreshore environments including alignment with and integration of relevant policy outcomes and objectives of applicable State and Regional statutory plans and policies relating to the protection and management of foreshore environments, to ensure a clear line of sight in the hierarchy of plans.
Principle 2	Protect, maintain and enhance existing vegetation including urban tree coverage, high value coastal ecosystems, habitats and riparian vegetation.
Principle 3	Protect, maintain and enhance the connection of highly valued natural character features of foreshore edges and identify areas appropriate for environmental friendly development.
Principle 4	Protect and improve water quality and river health and incorporate the principles of water sensitive urban design.
Principle 5	New development to respect and contribute to the local character and reflect community values.
Principle 6	Development that is visible from key public open spaces must be sensitively sited and designed.
Principle 7	Maintain, improve and create new areas of public access to and along the foreshore.

A number of recommendations were also made. These included:

- ‘Character typologies such as Bush Suburban, Naturalistic Headland, Naturalistic, Semi-Natural, Parks and Reserves cannot accommodate significant change, (and) therefore will require further built form and land use controls, to ensure the values and key characteristics of these areas are retained’
- ‘(there is) opportunity to embed key character objectives, precincts and guidelines within the revised DCP to ensure foreshore values are retained to reflect the unique diversity of landscapes’.

Values vs Characteristics

Values and characteristics are often used interchangeably. While some people consider them to mean the same thing, others can have a different interpretation. As language can be quite complex when talking about the matters covered in this Study, and values and characteristics are so fundamental to understanding concepts and process, this creates a challenge. To solve this, for the purposes of this Study we have adopted the term ‘characteristics’. Unlike values, which can imply judgement such as positive or negative or good or bad, characteristics is objective – it simply means a particular attribute, regardless of value. This is important as the base unit for planning, as subsequent analysis and synthesis on matters such as scenic character and local character start to bring in judgements such as whether the Georges River community, say for example expressed in the Community Strategic Plan, generally like or do not like a particular on the ground outcome.



The subsequent planning proposal and concerns raised by the community

As part of preparing the Georges River LEP 2021, Council considered these findings along with a range of other matters in a process commonly known as the ‘planning balance’. Recognising the often competing priorities applying to the one area, the planning balance seeks to weigh up the relative importance of each matter when making a decision on local planning policy.

Part of the outcome of this consideration process was the proposed reduction in the extent of the FSPA applying in the former Hurstville LGA by excluding areas identified as having a lower sensitivity to change by the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper. Consistent with NSW planning practice, a planning proposal was prepared and made subject to public exhibition.

Over 40% of submissions received by Council in relation to the planning proposal addressed this proposed reduction. Key issues raised by the community as summarised by Council are as follows:

- Increase in housing density will impact flora and fauna in the area (specifically trees, parks, gardens and fauna)
- Held the ‘green and leafy’ character in high regard, and expressed concern that reducing the extent of the existing FSPA would erode this character
- All trees visible from the foreshore must be protected
- Concerns about pollution, in particular water pollution from increased density and the potential impacts from run off into the Georges River
- Objects to more development (i.e. more dual occupancies) and the associated amenity impacts such as traffic, on street parking, safety, privacy, and increase in demand for schools
- Council should undertake a full biodiversity assessment of the LGA to inform the development of the new LEP.

The direction of the Local Planning Panel

The Local Planning Panel (LPP) did not support the proposed reduction in the extent of the FSPA in the former Hurstville LGA. As a consequence, the existing boundaries of the FSPA were retained. New provisions were also inserted, including requiring an increased minimum landscaped area for certain types of development in the FSPA.

The LPP also recommended that:

- ‘Council as part of the preparation of the Local Environmental Plan in 2021/2022, further define the role, mapped extent and zoning of the FSPA, in both the former Hurstville and Kogarah Local Government Areas, having regard to those properties and ridge lines visible to and from the Georges River and its tributaries, and associated environmental protection applying to those areas in order to better reflect the objectives of Clause 6.7 of the Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021. This may include the consideration of additional environmental protection zones or modifications of the FSPA’.

Council has commissioned a separate biodiversity Study to inform the environmental protection aspects of this direction.

Updates to the Georges River Scenic Forshore Study following community submissions 2022

Following a community information webinar held in August 2021, Council received two community submissions to the Georges River Foreshore Scenic Character Study (2021). Based on submissions received, the project team have subsequently revisited and updated the proposed FSPA boundary and local character typologies.

A summary of updates include:

- **Jew fish Pt Headland:** Properties on the non-waterfront side of Marine Drive, Baker Street and Raymond Street which were previously identified as Garden Suburban - Naturalistic, are now included within the Rivers Edge - Semi Naturalistic Character Area and thus the proposed FSPA.
- **Freeman Avenue and Burke Street:** Properties on the non-waterfront side of Freeman Avenue and Burke Street, which were previously identified as Garden Suburban - Naturalistic, now form part of the Rivers Edge - Naturalistic Character Area and thus the proposed FSPA.
- **Llewellyn St and Boorara Avenue:** Properties along the non-foreshore side of Llewellyn Street and Boorara Avenue, which were previously Garden Suburban - Naturalistic, now form part of the Rivers Edge - Semi Naturalistic Character Area and thus the proposed FSPA.
- **Herbert Street and Algernon Street:** Properties on the non-waterfront side of Herbert Street and Algernon Street were previously identified as Garden Suburban - Naturalistic, now form part of the Rivers Edge - Semi Naturalistic Character Area and thus the proposed FSPA.
- **Lansdowne Parade:** properties at 70-86 Lansdowne Parade previously identified as Garden Suburban - Naturalistic, are now included within the Rivers Edge - Semi Naturalistic Character Area and thus the Proposed FSPA.

Further detail on the 2022 revisions can be found in the *Addendum to the Georges River Foreshore Scenic Character Study Report (2022)*.

Methodology

The LPP direction and Council's scope

Council has responded to the LPP direction by providing a comprehensive scope for this Study. The objectives of this Study as articulated by Council are as follows:

- Determine the role and function of the existing FSPA
- Assess the impact of the FSPA on development potential
- Evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the existing FSPA as a means of:
 - Protecting the landscaped character of the foreshore environment
 - Enforcing a homogeneous neighbourhood character
- Identify the extent of the visual catchment to and from the Georges River and its tributaries within the Study Area
- Identify areas with high environmental values and sight lines to the foreshore
- Develop a revised set of Character Typologies for properties located within the visual catchment
- Enable an enhanced understanding of the foreshore locality and its local character by integrating the findings with the Biodiversity Study
- Inform future amendments to the LEP 2021 and DCP 2021
- Consider alternative controls and provisions to better protect and enhance the scenic amenity and the environmental, social and character values of the foreshore.

Additional key considerations

In addition, the Study should:

- Be of a technical nature, and as such seek to be objective and shaped by evidence
- Recognise the substantial body of work undertaken as part of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, by using it as a platform and further developing and refining its key findings as opposed to starting afresh.

This acknowledges the valuable contributions of members of the community in expressing their views on this document and subsequent Council planning policy decisions.

Drawing from existing body of knowledge

In developing a methodology that would enable a considered response to this scope a substantial body of knowledge already present in the public domain was reviewed. The main documents considered were:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013)
- Local Character and Place Guideline (DPE, 2018)

Other documents considered included:

- Discussion Paper – Local Character Overlays (DPE, 2019)
- Local Character Clause: Fact sheet (DPE, 2020)
- Local Character Clause: Frequently asked questions (DPE, 2020)
- Guidance Note for Landscape and Visual Assessment (AILA, 2018)
- Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (TFNSW, 2020)
- Local Character Provision Explanation of Intended Effect (DPE, 2020)
- Local Character Provision Public Consultation (DPE, 2020)
- London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance (Mayor of London, 2012)
- PIMS (Planisphere, 2009)
- Planning System Circular PS 18–001 Respecting and Enhancing Local Character in the Planning System (DPE, 2018)
- Residential Visual Amenity Assessment, Technical Guidance Note 2/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019)
- Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor [2013] NSWLEC 1046
- South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005–2026 Implementation Guideline No. 8 Identifying and protecting scenic amenity values (Queensland Government, 2007)
- Tenacity Consulting v Waringah [2004] NSWLEC 140
- Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, undated)

- Understanding Neighbourhood Character, Planning Practice Note 43 (DELWP, 2018)
- Visual Landscape Planning in Western Australia (Western Australia Planning Commission and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2007)
- VisuLands Framework (Tviet et al, 2007).

All submissions received as part of the LEP 2021 exhibition were also reviewed as part of this Study.

The two key questions

The title of the FSPA has provided the starting point for two key questions that have guided development of our methodology:

- Question 1 - what is the foreshore?
- Question 2 - what is scenic?

What is the foreshore?

The GRLEP2021 defines the ‘foreshore area’ as ‘the land between the foreshore building line (FBL) and the mean high water mark of the nearest bay or river’. While variable, the FBL typically only includes land that has a boundary with the Georges River. As such, by association the foreshore area is typically a narrow band of land having a depth of around 20m back from the river’s edge.

Cross referencing to other relevant Acts and EPIs, including the Coastal Management Act and SEPP, the Standard Instrument, the Harbour REP and other LEPs that have foreshore clauses such as the Sutherland LEP, also shows that the planning interpretation of foreshore area is similarly narrow. For example, the Harbour REPP defines the foreshore as ‘land with a water frontage and land that is separated from the waterfront by a public reserve, road or open space’

Similarly, dictionary definitions also support this interpretation:

- “The part of a shore between high- and low-water marks, or between the water and cultivated or developed land” (Oxford Dictionary)
- “The part of the land next to the sea that is between the limits reached by high and low tide, or any part of this land that does not have grass or buildings on it” (Cambridge Dictionary)
- “Beside the sea, a lake, or a wide river, the foreshore is the part of the shore which is between the highest and lowest points reached by the water” (Collins Dictionary)

- “a strip of land margining a body of water; 2: the part of a seashore between high-water and low-water marks: (Merriam Webster Dictionary).

On this basis alone, this suggests that the existing mapped extent of the FSPA under the HLEP2012 and proposed under the GRLEP2021 is too large.

However, this neglects the fact that land that does not meet this conventional understanding can have a strong connection to the river. This is important, as development on such land has the potential, if not managed well through planning policy, to compromise the values of the Georges River.

Considering the role of the FSPA, it is considered that the foreshore comprises land that has a strong visual connection to the Georges River. This means it is:

- Visible from the river, including its Georges River and Sutherland foreshores; and
- Exhibits a consistent scenic character.

What is scenic?

Neither the HLEP2012, the KLEP2012, the GRLEP2021 or the Standard Instrument define the term ‘scenic’. There is no recourse to background information as documents addressing the original introduction of the FSPA cannot be accessed. In particular, at face value there appears to be minimal justification of the existing FSPA, as it does not correspond with typical physical features such as ridges that are used to delineate the boundaries between areas having different character.

On this basis, reference was made to the common understanding of the term as articulated in dictionaries. The Cambridge Dictionary defines scenic as ‘having or allowing you to see beautiful natural features’. This is supported by other dictionary definitions such as the Oxford Dictionary (‘having beautiful natural scenery’ and the Merriam Webster Dictionary (‘of or relating to natural scenery’). While most parts of this definition can largely be measured, the incorporation of a highly subjective concept in the form of ‘beauty’ poses some challenges for practical application in planning.

In order to help overcome this, planning has sought to better quantify what ‘beauty’ means. A key way in which this has been done is through the use of the concept of ‘amenity’. According to the NSW Government (2020), amenity can be considered to be ‘the pleasantness, attractiveness, desirability or utility of a place, facility, building or feature’.

With reference to the scope of this project, the visual aspects of amenity are of the greatest relevance. The GLVIA3 defines ‘visual amenity’ as ‘the overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area’. Visual amenity is often also known as ‘scenic character’.

For the purposes of this Study, the terms scenic character has been broadly defined to mean elements in a particular combination that makes an area look:

- 1. Distinctive; and
- 2. Attractive.

The inclusion of “distinctive” is drawn from DPE’s definition of character:

- “Character is what makes a neighbourhood distinctive and is the identity of a place. It encompasses the way it looks and feels. It is created by a combination of land, people, the built environment, history, culture and tradition including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and looks at how they interact to make a distinctive character of an area”.

The addition of “scenic” acknowledges the concepts of beauty, amenity and visual amenity.

Through this addition, scenic character is related to, but different from, local character. Furthermore, while every area has a local character, it may not be scenic. For example, a coherent industrial area can also be a local character area, but is not necessarily of scenic character. This distinction is not always well understood, and can result in confusion.

Measuring scenic character

For the purposes of this Study, the scenic character of the Georges River foreshore needs to be measured in a way that provides a meaningful evidence base to help inform planning policy. This is challenging due to the complexity of the subject matter. For example, there are a range of approaches, theories and practice on scenic character.

In terms of theory, there is generally a distinction between evolutionary theories such as ‘biophilia’ and ‘prospect-refuge’ and cultural theories such as ‘topophilia’ and genius loci’.

In terms of approaches, Lothian (1999) proposed a distinction between the objectivist approach, in which visual quality is viewed as inherent to the landscape and the subjectivist approach which visual quality is considered a construct of the observer. Tviieg et al provide a comprehensive overview of the detail of these approaches. Within the subjectivist approach a distinction can be made between positivistic models that consider measurable physical features of landscapes as drivers of preference, and phenomenological models that focus on individual’s personal experiences as a way to understand the underlying meanings of human–environment transactions (Ohta 2001; Thwaites and Simkins 2007). Both positivistic and phenomenological approaches generally accept that landscape quality derives both from what is in the landscape and from the observer. These approaches differ, however, in the relative importance they ascribe to these two components (landscape versus observer). Daniel and Vining (1983) have summarized the different approaches to Studying visual landscape quality as being five ‘models’ that can be placed on a dimension ranging from objectivistic to subjectivistic.

As we consider it to be the most appropriate balance between robustness and practicality for the NSW planning system, the approach adopted by this Study is a combination of the formal aesthetic model and the psychosocial model. Consistent with Tviet et al, this enables characterisation of the landscape, in this case the Georges River foreshore, as an object.

Similar to approaches and theories, there is a broad range of practice in terms of scenic character. Most notably this includes the scenic beauty estimation (SBE) method developed and applied by the US Department of Forestry. However, we consider this practice to more suited to natural, as opposed to urban landscapes such as the Georges River foreshore. On this basis, we have based our methodology on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), which is a widely accepted and used international methodology (AILA, 2018).

The role of views

As has been noted, scenic character is perceived by people through views. On this basis, views are an important consideration as part of this Study.

Due to a complex landform that includes escarpment, hills and long ridges, there are many and varied opportunities for views to the Georges River from parts of the FSPA. Views to water, and in particular visually attractive waterways such as the Georges River, are highly valued.

On this basis, people will also often seek to capture these views as part of development within the private domain.

This can lead to innovative and place responsive design. However, it can also result in some less desirable outcomes, including:

- Built form being more evident, which the has the potential to reduce the scenic character experienced from the public domain
- The blocking of views obtained from other properties, often those immediately up-slope, can experience.

In general, these less desirable outcomes arise from inappropriate siting, scale, form or detail such as materials and colours.

What is a view?

While there are many individual definitions of a view, in general it can be considered to be that part of the landscape that can be seen from a particular location, called a “viewpoint”.

Views comprise two key aspects:

- 1. Components: what is in them, such as trees and houses
- 2. Composition: how are they composed, such as trees being located further away and to the left.

Components

The fundamental building blocks of a view are “elements” and “features”.

In accordance with the GLVIA3, elements are defined as “individual parts which make up the landscape, such as, for example, trees, hedges and buildings”.

Features are “particularly prominent or eye-catching elements in the landscape, such as tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines”.

Composition

Views occur through ‘view planes’ based on distance (Planisphere, 2018) as follows:

- Foreground
- Mid-ground
- Background.

They sometimes also include a backdrop, in particular where appearing behind a landmark building.

As it is context dependant, there is no universal distance that distinguishes each of these view planes. For example, in a highly urban environment such as a CBD the background may be located close to the viewer, while in an expansive, open environment such as the outback the background may extend for many kilometres and only end with the line of the horizon.

Types of view

There are many types of views. Planisphere (2016) broadly catalogue views as follows:

- Point to point view (or vista): a directed view from a particular point in the landscape, to another point of interest, such as a landmark or feature
- Point to area view (or panorama): a general view from a particular point in the landscape, to a wide area
- Area to point view (or vista): a directed view from a general area to a point of interest, landmark or feature in the landscape
- Area to area view (or panorama): a view from a general area to a wide area, or a general view from one area to another.

A number of planning authorities have further developed and refined such broad catalogues by reference to context. For example, under the London View Management Framework Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Greater London Authority (2012) groups views as follows:

- London panorama
- Linear view
- River prospect
- Townscape view.

Valuing views – general preferences

Whether a view has value is ultimately a subjective matter, and is influenced by cultural factors. Despite this, research suggests (AILA, 2018) that there are some commonalities in human preferences. There is a general preference for water and natural elements over urban scenes, and mountains and hills over flat land. In addition, views that exhibit the following characteristics are generally preferred than those that do not:

- Views which include both a mid-ground (with some detail discernible) and a background
- Views with skyline features
- Views which include focal points
- Views dominated by, or with a high proportion of attractive features (such as ocean or mountains)
- Panoramic views with a number of such distinctive elements.

Valuing views – detailed assessment

In addition to these preferences, value can be determined by detailed assessment against place and people factors.

Place factors can be either intrinsic or variable. Intrinsic factors include assessment of visual characteristics (components and composition) against formal aesthetic factors such as line and colour, and perceptual factors such as scale and complexity. Variable factors change according to the viewpoint, and include matters such as whether it is in the public or private domain, and viewing distance, direction and angle.

People comprises the type of person who is exposed to the view, the number of people exposed to the view and the social and cultural value of the view.

The following break out box outlines how the GLVIA3 approaches valuing views.

Valuing views: the GLVIA3 approach

The GLVIA3 suggests considering the following factors when assessing the value of a view:

- Context, or setting
- The accessibility to the public of the viewpoint
- The potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected
- The viewing direction, distance (i.e. short-, medium- and long-distance views) and elevation
- The nature of the viewing experience (for example static views, views from settlements and views from sequential points along routes)
- The view type (for example panoramas, vistas and glimpses)
- The type and relative numbers of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected
- The location, nature and characteristics of the chosen representative, specific and illustrative viewpoints
- The nature, composition and characteristics of the existing views experienced at these viewpoints, including direction of view
- The visual characteristics of the existing views, for example the nature and extent of the skyline, aspects of visual scale and proportion, especially with respect to any particular horizontal or vertical emphasis, and any key foci
- Elements, such as landform, buildings or vegetation, which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views.

Significance of views

While a view may have value, this does not mean that it is intrinsically worth protecting under the planning framework.

As with other similar matters such as heritage, it is often helpful to consider significance. Planisphere has developed a set of matters to consider when assessing the place and people factors of a view to determine significance. These are:

- Exemplary: How representative or illustrative is this view? Is it 'the best' of its type? Is it exemplary within the local, regional or state context?
- Iconic: Is the view instantly recognisable? Is it symbolic for its visual qualities? Has it been represented in art, photography, literature etc.? Is it iconic within the local, regional or state context?
- Scarce: How uncommon or rare is the view? Is the view a 'one off' that is not available nearby or elsewhere in the Study area? Is it scarce within the local, regional or state context?

A view is either significant, or not significant. Views that are not significant do not generally warrant protection under local planning policy. Where significant, the following levels apply:

- Moderate: local or district significance
- High: regional significance
- Exceptional: State, national or international significance.

It is recommended that the threshold for protection of a view in the local planning framework is where a view is assessed as having a high level of significance.

Managing views

Views considered to have a high level of significance can be managed through various aspects of local planning policy, including LEPs, DCPs or supplementary guidance. For example, the London View Management Framework sets up a comprehensive planning policy basis (equivalent to using an LEP, DCP and supplementary guidance) for managing views considered to be of value to the character of the city. This includes a number of key measures of note that can be broadly summarised as follows:

- Seeking to retain visibility of landmarks through restricting the height of development between the viewer and the target of the view
- Seeking to retain the legibility and prominence of the target of the view by controlling what can happen in its backdrop
- Tailoring the approach according to the importance of the view.

Reference to heritage documents addressing setting are particularly helpful in helping set the scope for how local planning policy can best manage views. Historic England (2017) considers the following matters to be ‘particularly important’:

- Position in relation to relevant topography and watercourses
- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc).

To both support policy and recognise and address the inherently variable nature of views, many Councils require that an applicant for development prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) as part of a DA.

The approach for a VIA depends on whether the view is obtained from the private domain of the public domain.

Private views

It is a long established planning principle dating back to a Supreme Court judgement in the 1930s that no one has the right to own a view from their property. This means that you cannot claim a current view enjoyed from your property across someone else’s land or the public domain as your own.

However, this can cause some challenges. To deal with this, some Councils have included provisions around view sharing into their local planning frameworks. Roseth SC in his judgement in Tenacity Consulting v Waringah [2004] NSWLEC 140 defined view sharing as:

- ‘The notion of view sharing is invoked when a property enjoys existing views and a proposed development would share that view by taking some of it away for its own enjoyment’.

In this judgement, Roseth SC established a four step process, or chain of reasoning, designed to help guide a determination on view sharing.

Judgements in other similar planning jurisdictions such as the UK have supported the notion that the bar is generally set very high for adverse impacts on views to have any degree of weight as a ground of refusal for some types of development, in particular renewal energy infrastructure such as wind turbines which are considered to have substantial other benefits to the community as a whole.

As with all planning matters, decisions on private views should be made on a balance of considerations. For example, due to the importance of economic factors, under its draft City of Sydney Central Sydney Planning Strategy, the City of Sydney states that preservation of views obtained from the private domain is not a key consideration on the basis that it may render Central Sydney, which is a key economic centre, “uncharacteristically sterile”.

The nature of private views in the Georges River foreshore

There are many types of views to the Georges River from the Study Area. In large part they are dependent on the arrangement of landform, lots and blocks and the public domain, in particular roads. Where land slopes upwards away from the river and a street is parallel, this sets up the opportunity for views from the front of houses over typically one, and maybe more, rows of other houses. Where the street is perpendicular, there is more opportunity for views from the public domain down the street. However, views can typically only be obtained from the side boundary of houses, and must overcome a layering of many other houses. Conversely, homes opposite parks, such as at Carss Bush Park, enjoy ‘borrowed landscape’ that also provides unobstructed views to the river. Here, the challenge in with public agencies such as Council undertaking works that may block or occlude views such as the planting of vegetation or erection of amenities.

Public views

Compared to private views, it is widely acknowledged that the protection of views seen from the public domain is in the public interest, and therefore within the remit of the Act. While typically addressed in NSW in a broad way, some sophisticated local planning frameworks – notably that of London via the London View Management Framework and the City of Sydney through the draft Central Sydney Planning Strategy – provide comprehensive, well considered and place specific protections for public views.

While there is no consistent or determinative method for undertaking a VIA in NSW or Australia, most competent VIAs follow a process set down by widely accepted best practice such as the GLVIA3. The GLVIA assesses proposed changes to view based on a three step process that considers:

- Sensitivity of the view to the nature of change proposed
- Magnitude of the change being proposed
- Significance of the nature of change proposed.

This framework is broadly compatible with the process articulated in the planning principle established for the consideration of views form the public domain by the Roseth SC in Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor [2013] NSWLEC 1046.

Desirable outcomes for views

Consistent with current NSW planning practice, there is a general bias towards ensuring that any proposed change integrates with or is compatible with the current view. This means that discordant development, by virtue of attributes such as location siting and form, is to be discouraged. However, as has been noted in key judgements that have informed planning principles (Project Venture Developments v Pittwater Council [2005] NSWLEC 191), the Land and Environment Court states that to be compatible, ‘development does not need to be the same’:

- '22 There are many dictionary definitions of compatible. The most apposite meaning in an urban design context is capable of existing together in harmony. Compatibility is thus different from sameness. It is generally accepted that buildings can exist together in harmony without having the same density, scale or appearance, though as the difference in these attributes increases, harmony is harder to achieve.
- '23 It should be noted that compatibility between proposed and existing is not always desirable. There are situations where extreme differences in scale and appearance produce great urban design involving landmark buildings. There are situations where the planning controls envisage a change of character, in which case compatibility with the future character is more appropriate than with the existing. Finally, there are urban environments that are so unattractive that it is best not to reproduce them.'

As can be seen, much of the debate around compatibility considers scale, and in particular height and bulk. In *Veloshin v Randwick Council* [2007] NSWLEC 428, Roseth SC established a planning principle to guide consideration of matters of height, bulk and character. This planning principle was instrumental in the Department's notable recommendation of refusal for the proposed Star City tower in Pyrmont in 2019.

When is incompatible development appropriate?

Development that is incompatible with its existing context is not always inappropriate. A prime example in Australia is the Sydney Opera House, which was at odds with the nature of Bennelong Point. Often this development becomes a landmark. It is for this reason that the bias towards compatibility should be considered in context and in the merits of the case, and having due regard to good design. This requires skilled evaluation, and should be part of a broader set of considerations. The 'degree to which good design can overcome or integrate strong contrasts (e.g. Sydney Opera House, Eiffel Tower) is largely a matter of subjective opinion' (AILA, 2018)



Introducing Local Character

With reference to the LPP direction and Council's scope, consideration of the FSPA extends beyond scenic character to also include local character.

For the purposes of this Study, this has been guided by DPE's Local Character and Place Guideline, supported by other relevant material as referenced in this Study.

Character and Place

Character and place are two different but closely related terms. Under the Local Character and Place Guideline, the NSW Government defines character and place as follows:

Character:

Character is what makes a neighbourhood distinctive and is the identity of a place. It encompasses the way it looks and feels. It is created by a combination of land, people, the built environment, history, culture and tradition including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and looks at how they interact to make a distinctive character of an area. Local character is distinctive, it differentiates one area apart from another. It includes the sense of belonging a person feels to that place, the way people respond to the atmosphere, how it impacts their mood, their emotional response to that place and the stories that come out of peoples' relationship with that place. Local character contains many different facets. It is important to understand character in a holistic way, which involves examining the relationship with people and the social, environmental and economic factors of place. Global trends across these factors have shaped places over time and will continue to have a significant influence in the future. Local character should guide how to manage a changing urban environment so that any changes are sympathetic to the valued characteristics.

Place:

Place is the layout, division and built form of built environments – its patterns, landscape, density, development, land use and mix, these aspects set the groundwork for places to flourish. Places are multi-layered and diverse environments within the broader context of society. Individual places can be described or understood by people in different ways and at different scales. This is because they are made up of many interrelated layers and elements which are generally understood through the physical form and activity occurring in the location. Places have a clear and strong identity and character.

Embedded in these definitions are a number of core concepts. These are summarised by the Victorian Government's Understanding Neighbourhood Character Planning Practice Note (2018) as follows:

- Character is a combination of the public and private realms
- Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether great or small
- It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes local character
- The key to understanding character is being able to describe how the features of an area come together to give that area its own particular character
- All areas have a character in the same way that all people have a personality. In some areas the character may be more obvious, more unusual, or more attractive, but no area can be described as having no character

It is important to understand what character is not. While related, character is not heritage or amenity. Again, the NSW and Victorian Governments provides clear guidance on this:

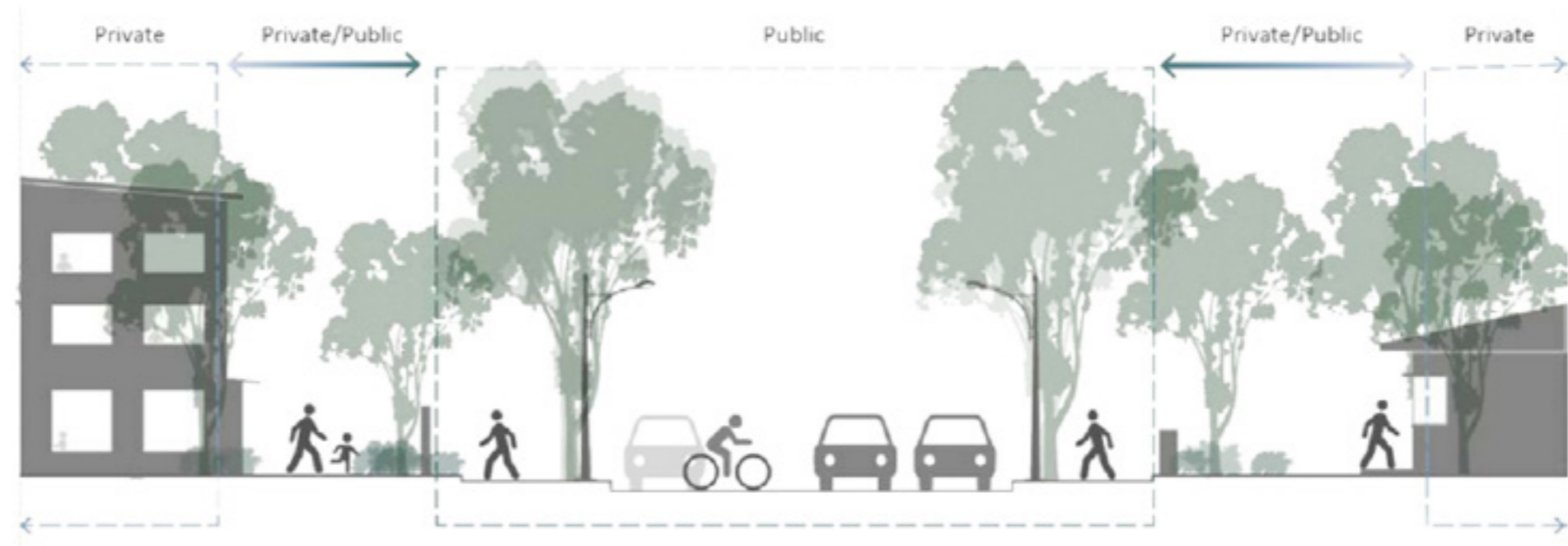


Figure 15. The public and private domains - Source: adopted from Local Character and Place Guideline (NSW Government)

Character and Heritage

- Heritage is distinct from local character, although there are often common elements between a conservation area and a place with a valued or distinctive local character. In this guideline, references to local character are not areas to be preserved; it is not an alternative form of heritage listing where an area does not change or evolve. Heritage and the preservation of places or specific items is dealt with under the NSW planning system as heritage conservation areas or heritage items (NSW Government)
- While all areas have a history or a heritage, not all areas are historically significant. Heritage significance is determined by recognised criteria set by Commonwealth, State and local agencies, with reference to the Burra Charter. Cultural heritage is largely embodied in the fabric and setting of a building and place. It is important to manage and retain this fabric and setting to retain the cultural significance of a place. Heritage significance can't be improved, but the fabric of a place can be improved, restored or reinterpreted (Victorian Government)
- In essence, heritage is considered against a separate, well established and formal set of principles derived from the Burra Charter while character is subject to a different set of considerations.

Character and Amenity

Amenity is a more functional aspect, while character can be broader:

- Amenity is about the pleasantness and good functioning of an area. Local character is about its sense of place and community meaning. Regardless of the character of an area there are standards of residential amenity that apply to all residential development. These basic amenity standards include overlooking, overshadowing and solar access. Sometimes, these amenity standards can have an effect on local character, but as a general principle, local character and amenity should be treated separately (Victorian Government).

Measuring Character

While matters such as amenity can be readily measures, for example the proportion of sunlight reaching the surface of a park or someone's balcony, character can often be more difficult to measure. In many respects, character is a subjective matter. As the NSW Government notes, character can include intangible aspects of experience and emotional response. This poses challenges for the planning system, which is largely focussed on how the physical, spatial dimension can contribute to broader conceptual matters such the environment, economy and society. It is perhaps ill-advised to seek to quantify matters such as 'experience and emotional response' in the planning systems, and better to address this in other ways such as through Council programs.

On this basis, in order to be meaningful for strategic and statutory planning purposes under the Act, as part of this Study we have sought to distil the key ingredients of character and place.

Identifying Boundaries

The NSW Government advises that 'the physical boundaries of a character area could be natural features, open space, thoroughfares, infrastructure, change in use (commercial to residential) or special features. There may be a change in character where one area can be characterised differently from an adjacent area'.

Matters to Measure

As part of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, we measured a number of matters that we consider to be key indicators of place based on current theory and practice. These are:

- Geology
- Vegetation
- Open space
- Historical features
- Architectural styles
- Building height and form
- Gardens and landscaping

Character and place in Greater Sydney

While many Councils for a number of years have identified and sought to manage the character of certain parts of their LGAs through measures better tailored to their character, to date there has not been an overall Study that have looked at broad character typologies in Greater Sydney. Conversely, Melbourne has taken steps in this direction, arriving at number of common typologies. These include Garden Suburban, which covers most of conventional suburban areas, and Bush Suburban, which covers area with a high degree of tree canopy coverage. This lack of reference to Sydney specific typologies poses a challenge for this Study, in particular in terms of identifying whether areas are special, in the sense of rarity, compared to the rest of the city.

Additional local character analysis

To fulfil this scope, we initially reconsidered the measures used to inform the character typologies proposed by the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper. We found that:

- Generally the criteria is consistent with the Local Character and Place Guideline and other relevant guidance material, and as such can be considered appropriate
- There is benefit in also considering a small number of additional measures as suggested by the Local Character and Place Guideline, mainly related to the public domain, in order to develop finer grain Local character Areas.
- There is need to undertake further fine grain verification by visiting and documenting every street in the Study Area

Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper criteria	Revised Assessment criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geology• Vegetation• Open space• Historical features• Architectural styles• Building height and form• Gardens and landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Built Form<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Era of buildings- Existing building quality- Primary materials- Roof form- Roof material- Scale of existing development- Dominant residential form- Dominant residential typology• Setbacks and Siting<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Front setbacks- Side setbacks- Consistency of setbacks- Orientation- Frontage- Dominance of parking structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fencing<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Front fence height- Front fence type• Geology• Topography• Vegetation<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gardens and landscaping• Street Layout and Public Realm<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Road network- Footpaths- Vegetation- Verges- Crossovers• Views• Business Areas including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Built Form- Public Realm- Context and Siting- Landscaping and Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threats and Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threats and Risks• Positives and Opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sensitivity Rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sensitivity Rating• Significance Rating	



Figure 16. The concept of streetscape - Source: adopted from Local Character and Place Guideline (NSW Government)

Georges River Values

Georges River has been recognised for a diverse range of environmental, economic and social values which all contribute to the character of the area. The following values have been adapted from The Community Strategic Plan 2028, the Guidelines for Local Character and the Biodiversity Study (concurrent Study) and as a result, reflect the sentiments of the Georges River Community. Specifically, the three key value types (Environmental, Social and Economic) reflect the local character wheel that is outlined within the Guidelines for Local Character and Place. The Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 (LSPS2040) also provides guidance particular to the value placed on the Georges River waterway, including views and vistas; which are reflected within the overarching values. Table 3 below outlines the core community values that have been identified, as well as the key threats that could impact them.

Table 3 – Matrix of assessed values and attributes

Values & Key Attributes		
Environmental Values (Natural & Built)		Threats
EN1	The river’s role in the larger water management context including flooding, stormwater run-off and drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased levels of impermeable surfaces as part of new development
EN2	The contribution of green spaces, remnant vegetation, forest cover and riparian vegetation to the character of an area. Particularly where canopy coverage is dominant and built form does not extend beyond the canopy line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of urban canopy coverageLoss of existing vegetation in the public and private realmLoss of any part of the existing identified ‘Green Grid’ and habitat corridorsNew development that is built to exceed the existing canopy line.
EN3	Threatened ecological communities present (Swamp oak floodplain forest, swamp sclerophyll forest on coastal floodplains).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of existing remnant vegetation identified in public reserves, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Swamp Oak Floodplain ForestSwamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains
EN4	Established vegetation along the banks of the river	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Large scale built form adjacent to the banks of Georges River that does not consider established vegetation as part of the design response.
EN5	Intact low scale built form that contributes to established streetscape rhythm and responds to the unique and varied topography of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Development of incongruous, large scale built formInterruption of prevailing streetscape rhythmLoss of identified viewsDevelopments relying excessively on construction techniques that detract from an areas unique topographical setting, i.e. cut and fill.
Economic Values		
EC1	Employment opportunities, access to retail and services that are close to residents, improving the overall quality of life within a neighbourhood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Future development in business areas that reduces the overall amount of employment, retail or service based land uses (only relevant to business areas)
Social Values		
S1	Open spaces and public plazas accessible to the public, providing enhanced levels of residential amenity for all members of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Replacement of existing landscaped public spaces within business areas.
S2	Visually permeable built form interfaces that contribute to higher levels of passive surveillance, enhancing feelings of safety for residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New development that includes significant blank walls or facades, removing existing eyes from the street.
S3	Diversity in housing typologies that provide for different personal needs, accessibility requirements and household structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prevalence of singular dwelling typology within an area. This could include increased levels of apartments that don’t cater for family groups, or areas single detached dwellings that don’t cater to lower income groups.



Local Character Assessment

Desktop Analysis

The desktop analysis included all residential land within the Study area including:

- R2 Low Density Residential
- R3 Medium Density Residential
- R4 High Density Residential
- B1 Neighbourhood Centre
- B2 Local Centre

The basis for the analysis was the Character Areas identified as part of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper. A further detailed analysis produced initial character area boundaries requiring a street by street site survey.

Site Survey

A site survey was undertaken in early November 2020 and September 2021.

The methodology for the site survey includes:

- Preliminary character area precinct boundaries, identified in the desktop analysis.
- A street-by-street survey to gain an overview image of George's River residential areas, within the Study area.
- An assessment of areas based on the general attributes of private and public realms: built form and layout of the different areas; overall streetscape qualities; vegetation and landscape quality and the architectural style of development.
- Photos for each area and character type.
- Identification of pressure areas (areas experiencing pressure for infill development) and change areas (areas that are experiencing considerable change due to infill development or renewal), where new development has impacted on surrounding local character.
- Identification of the characteristics and local character impacts of incongruous infill development.
- Identification of more specific character precincts within each character type.

Benchmarking

A sample of measurable details of the survey including front and side setbacks were recorded for each character type.

This provided a firm basis for the assessment and recording of key attributes for each Local character Area.

Sensitivity Rating

Each Character Area has been assigned a level of sensitivity according to the matrix outlined in Table 4. The sensitivity of the area considers the total number of values that are found to be present within a character area. A higher number of values present within an area will affect their ability to accommodate increased levels of change. Character areas with a greater number of identified values are considered to be more sensitive. Conversely, character areas with fewer identified values are considered to be less sensitive, and therefore more likely able to accommodate increased change. Further, each value has a set of corresponding threats that are outlined in table 3. These threats help to align each character area with the values, allowing them to be assigned based on the presence of each threat respective to an identified value.

This is a professional judgement based on analysis of the built, environmental and other physical characteristics of the area, and the types of change or development that could generally be expected to occur. Sensitivity is rated as very high to low. For example, areas of existing intense development will be less sensitive to large scale contemporary development. The scale for local character area sensitivity ratings is outlined at Table 4.

Sensitivity Rating Scale		
Values Present	Sensitivity Rating	
1-2	Low	●○●○●○
3-5	Medium	●●●○●○
6-7	High	●●●●●○
8-9	Very High	●●●●●●

Table 4 – Sensitivity of Local character Areas

Significance Rating

In order to determine a level of aesthetic significance for each aesthetic component, and ultimately each character area, the following ‘rating considerations’ (as derived from the Planisphere PIM’s significance assessment methodology) are applied:

- Aesthetic Significance
 - How representative or illustrative is the character area (and its attributes)? Is it ‘the best’ of its type? Is it exemplary within the local, regional or state context?
- Associative Significance
 - Is the character area (and its attributes) instantly recognisable? Is it symbolic for its visual qualities? Has it been represented in art, photography, literature or local policy? Is it iconic within the local, regional or state context?
- Rarity Significance
 - How uncommon, rare or endangered is the character area (and its attributes)? Is it scarce within the local, regional or state context?

Levels of significance are attributed to each landscape component, and an overall significance level in relation to aesthetic value is determined. The significance levels are:

Moderate = Neighbourhood Significance*

High = Regional Significance**

Exceptional = State Significance (or higher)

The final determination of significance level for aesthetic value is not a matter of adding up the number of ‘moderate’ or ‘high’ ratings. Rather, if a character area rates ‘high’ for example in one or more of the character area components, that level is the overall significance rating attributed to the aesthetic values of that character area. (Just as the usual standard for listing a place on a heritage register, for instance, is that a place meets one or more criteria.)

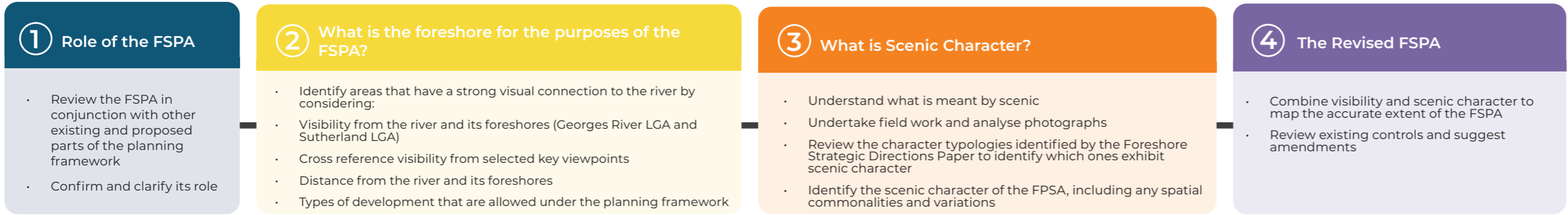
*Note: Neighbourhood Significance refers to the areas within the Georges River LGA.

**Note: Regional Significance refers to the Greater Sydney region.

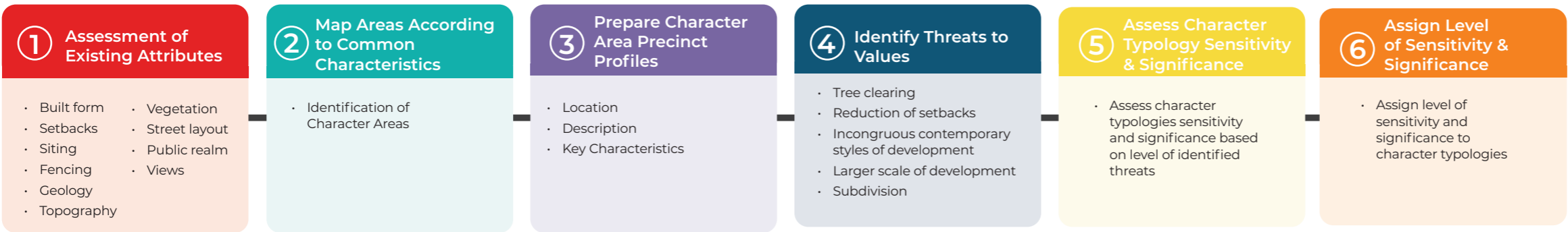
Applied Methodology

Drawing from this body of knowledge, we have developed the methodology shown in Figure 17 for this Study.

Part 1: The FSPA



Part 2: Local Character



Part 3: Planning Policy

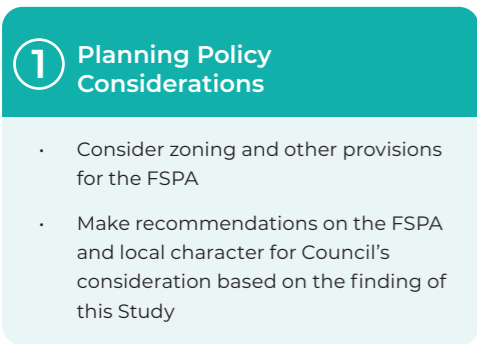


Figure 17. Applied methodology



Georges River Foreshore Study

PART B
**THE FORESHORE
SCENIC
PROTECTION AREA**

The Foreshore Scenic Protection Area

Role of the FSPA

The existing role of the FSPA under the HLEP2012 is to protect the values of the Georges River foreshore. As has been shown by the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, these values are many and diverse. Overall, they comprise scenic character, environmental, recreational and cultural values.

Under the existing FSPA the emphasis is on protecting scenic character values. However, there is no clear or detailed outline of what constitutes scenic character.

Under the GRLEP2021, the proposed role of the FSPA is the same – to protect the values of the foreshore. However, there is an additional emphasis on protecting environmental values, primarily related to vegetation.

Planning matters are complex. This is certainly the case with the foreshore. As has been noted, its values are many and diverse. To manage this the NSW planning framework, which includes the GRLEP2021, is intended to work as a suite of distinct but interrelated parts. Each part is to have its own clear role, and together there is to be no conflict or unnecessary duplication between parts. The benefit of this is two-fold – clarity of policy intent, and ease of application in a DA setting.

On this basis, the current role of the FSPA under the HLEP2012 with an emphasis on scenic character values is considered appropriate. Providing additional emphasis on environmental values is considered to complicate matters, and runs the risk of implementation challenges. However, environmental values are nonetheless critical. On this basis, it is also recommended that Council adopt a new biodiversity overlay in the form of an Additional Local Provision comprising a map and text.

Given the absence of a clear and detailed outline of what constitutes scenic character, it is further recommended that this be articulated, drawing where relevant from the earlier Foreshore Scenic Directions Paper and this Georges River Foreshore Scenic Character Study, and included in the new Georges River DCP.

Mapped extent: the role of visibility

As has been noted, the first part of determining what is the correct extent of the FSPA is mapping the visibility of land from the Georges River, including its Georges River LGA and Sutherland LGA foreshores.

As part of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper, this was undertaken using GIS and based on landform (refer Figure 18).

As part of this Study, this map was reviewed. While still working in GIS, this time LiDAR data was used that enabled both a greater level of comprehensiveness by including buildings, structures and vegetation as well as landform, and a greater level of accuracy (to within 0.5m).

The revised map is shown in Figure 19.

When comparing the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper and this map, both are similar, which increases the level of confidence in its accuracy.

It is important to note that:

- The level of the positions used to review the map was 1.65m above the surface, as this corresponds well with average human eye height
- This data was captured at a point in time, and as such due to changes such as seasonality of vegetation and new development data captured at a different point in time may produce differing results
- While considered accurate, the map is nonetheless an approximate, as mapping of visibility from every point on the surface water and foreshores is not feasible. This is acceptable under the GLVIA criteria for proportionality and reasonableness.

Overall, given the complexity of this matter and the feasible capability of existing technology, this map is considered an accurate representation of what is visible from the river and as such be reasonably considered the “foreshore” for the purposes of the FSPA.

While land outside of this area may have value, it cannot be regarded as the foreshore and development in this area is unlikely to compromise the values of the Georges River.

Similarly, it is well known that all things being equal, visibility decreases with distance. While is no consistent and determinative rule on this, it can be considered that while likely visible, due to principal development standards controlling for use and scale, development in smaller areas of land located removed from the river (e.g., greater than 500m) is unlikely to have a significant impact on the scenic character values of the foreshore.

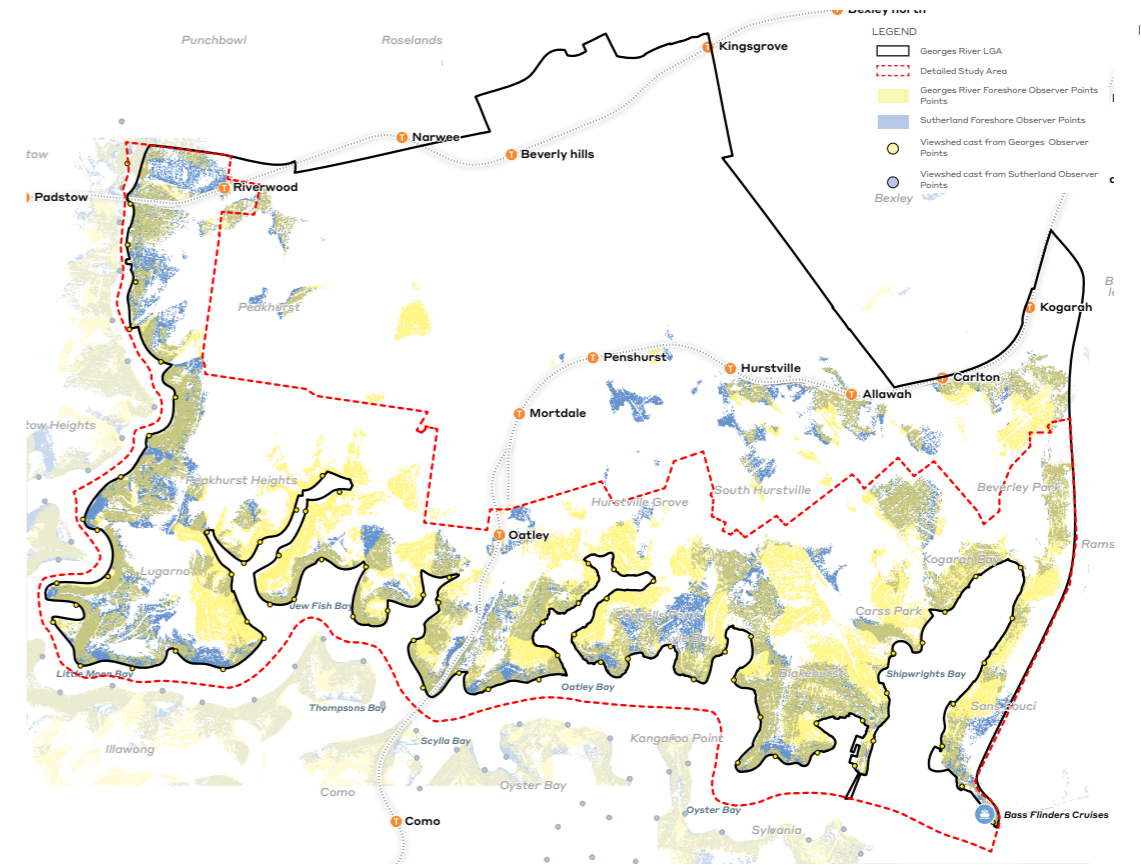


Figure 18. Foreshore Strategic Directions Visibility Map

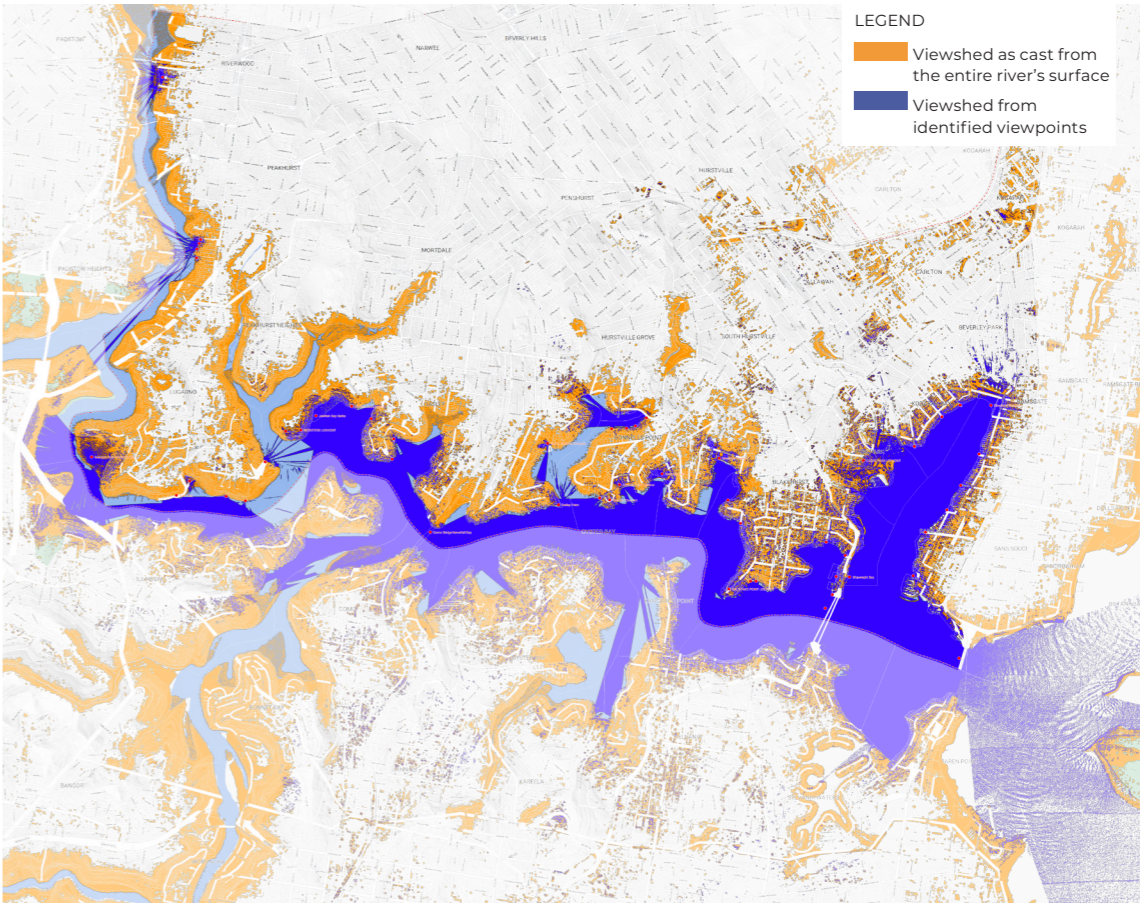


Figure 19. Revised Visibility Map

Views informing the mapped extent of the FSPA

To gain an even greater understanding of its nature, mapping of visibility from certain viewpoints on the Georges River foreshore was also undertaken. These viewpoints have been selected for their role as key public reserves located along the foreshore, and are:

- 1. Hill Peak Lookout, Oatley Park, Oatley
- 2. Websters Lookout, Oatley Park, Oatley
- 3. Jew Fish Bay Baths, Oatley Park, Oatley
- 4. Jew Fish Bay, Oatley Park, Oatley
- 5. Como Bridge / Neverfail Bay, Oatley
- 6. Oatley Point, Oatley
- 7. Oatley Bath, Oatley Pleasure Grounds, Oatley
- 8. Boat Ramp, Moore Reserve, Hurstville Grove
- 9. Connells Point Reserve, Connells Point
- 10. Merriman Reserve, Kyle Bay
- 11. Merriman Reserve, Blakehurst
- 12. Shipwrights Bay, Blakehurst
- 13. Carss Park Baths, Carss Park
- 14. Claydon Reserve, Sans Souci.

Figure 20 shows the extent of views obtained from these viewpoints. Colour coding corresponds with the number of viewpoints from which the area is visible.

Consistent with mapping from the river and foreshores more generally, this shows that visibility is largely limited to land adjoining and close to the water, in particular the escarpment. Visibility is greatest of the foreshores of certain bays, including Kogarah Bay, Shipwrights Bay, Kyle Bay, Connells Bay, Jew fish Bay and Sandy Bay and certain peninsulas and headlands, including Tom Ugly's Point, Bald Face Point, the Como Bridge and Lime Kiln Point.

This provides further support for the proposed revisions to the extent of the FSPA.

Mapped extent: the role of scenic character

The second and final part of determining what is the correct extent of the FSPA is identifying and mapping scenic character.

Scenic character comprises elements in a particular combination that makes an area look distinct and attractive. Scenic character is related to, but different from, local character. Whereas local character is broad, being drawn from a range of attributes, scenic character is more focussed on visible aspects. Furthermore, while every area has a local character, it may not be scenic. For example, a coherent industrial area can also be a local character area, but is not necessarily of scenic character. This distinction is not always well understood, and can result in confusion. It is the role of planning policy to provide clarity on this.

However, and as has been noted, the scenic character of the foreshore is currently not well articulated.

To address this, as part of the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper and this Study, a range of parameters were considered to better understand scenic character. This included matters such as landform, and involved analysis of both maps and photographs.

This determined that common elements contributing to scenic character are water, the land and water interface, land rising upwards from the land and water interface and the sky. These can be considered “contributory elements”.

Within this overall pattern, scenic character is different in the eastern and western parts of the foreshore as generally delineated by Tom Ugly's Bridge.

West of Tom Ugly's Bridge

The western part of the foreshore comprises an undulating landform, a complex coastline of headlands, peninsulas and bays, extensive tree canopy including at the land and water interface and visual dominance of natural (including curated) elements over human elements. In general, this can be considered a naturalistic foreshore. A naturalistic foreshore is considered to closely correlate with scenic character, and overall is more vulnerable to the risks posed by the nature of many types of new development.

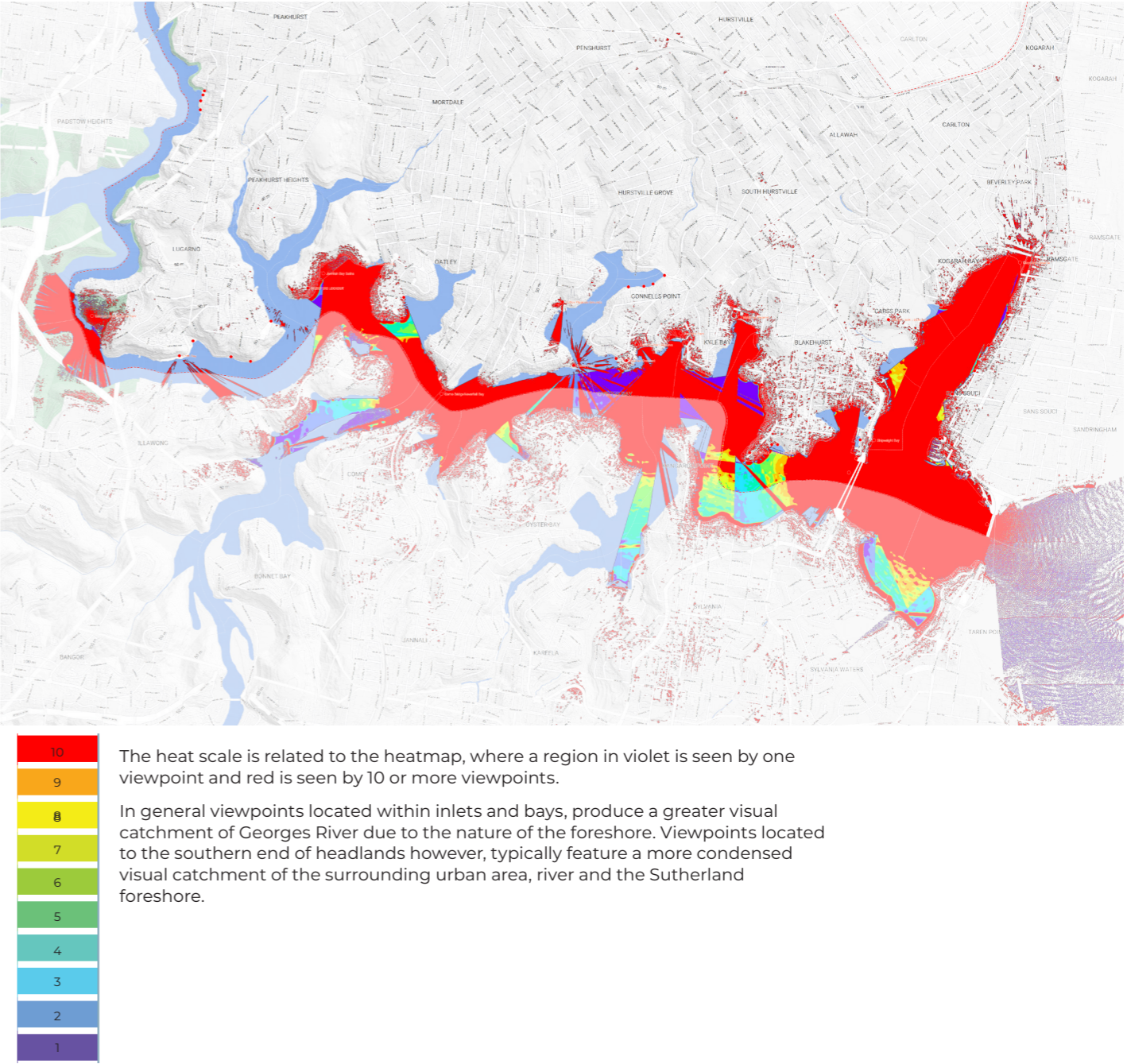


Figure 20. Identified viewpoints Viewshed Heatmap

Of particular note is the escarpment. The escarpment is the steep, narrow area of land that separates the river from its broader hinterland which exhibits a more gently sloping, plateau type landform. From the foreshore, this area often dominates the landscape and views, and as such makes a particularly significant contribution to scenic character. This can be seen in Figure 21.

East of Tom Ugly's Bridge

The eastern part of the foreshore comprises a more level landform, a simpler, largely modified coastline, substantially less tree canopy overall and in particular at the land and water interface, built structures including jetties, pontoons, revetment walls, swimming pools and other structures between the land and water interface and built form, and a more dense, larger scale and newer built form.

Overall, this can be considered an urban foreshore.

While of value, an urban foreshore is nonetheless not considered to closely correlate with scenic character, and perhaps of more note is less vulnerable to the risks posed by the nature of many types of new development.

In technical terms, it is considered to have a higher capacity to accommodate change. This can be seen in Figure 22.

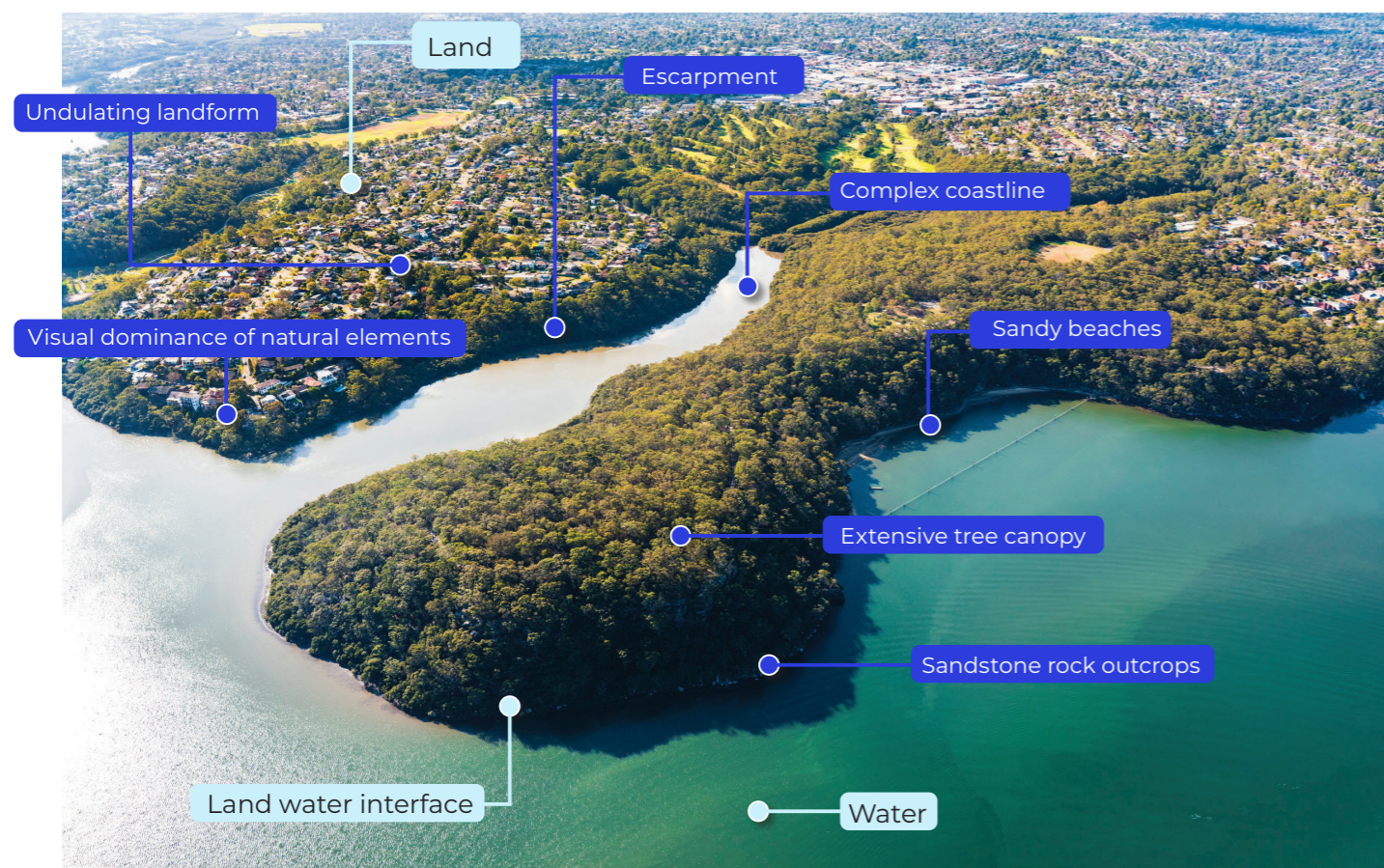


Figure 21. West of Tom Ugly's Bridge



Figure 22. East of Tom Ugly's Bridge

Complexity and variance

It is important to note that despite this overall pattern, how scenic character manifests on the ground is complex, and includes a level of variance. Of particular note is the large, open and green space of Carss Park within the broader urban foreshore character east of Tom Ugly' Bridge. Within the naturalistic foreshore in Lugarno and Oatley, there are pockets where much of the escarpment is occupied by buildings, and pockets where buildings are only located on its uppermost parts. In some places the skyline of the Hurstville CBD is visible in the far background.

This complexity means that the FSPA is not well suited to the one size fits all policy approach. Unlike zoning or height where a coarse, consistent and easily measurable blanket can be draped over an area including prohibitions, this will not work for scenic character. Rather, it requires an ability to consider things on merit and individual circumstances, including the ability of exercise informed, guided discretion where justified on environmental planning grounds.

On this basis and drawing from this Study, it is recommended that the FSPA continue to be an “Additional Local Provision” containing objectives and matters for consideration. To assist in implementation, further detail on what constitutes scenic character in the FSPA be must be provided in the new Georges River Development Control Plan 2021, and that a reference to this be included in the GRLEP2021.

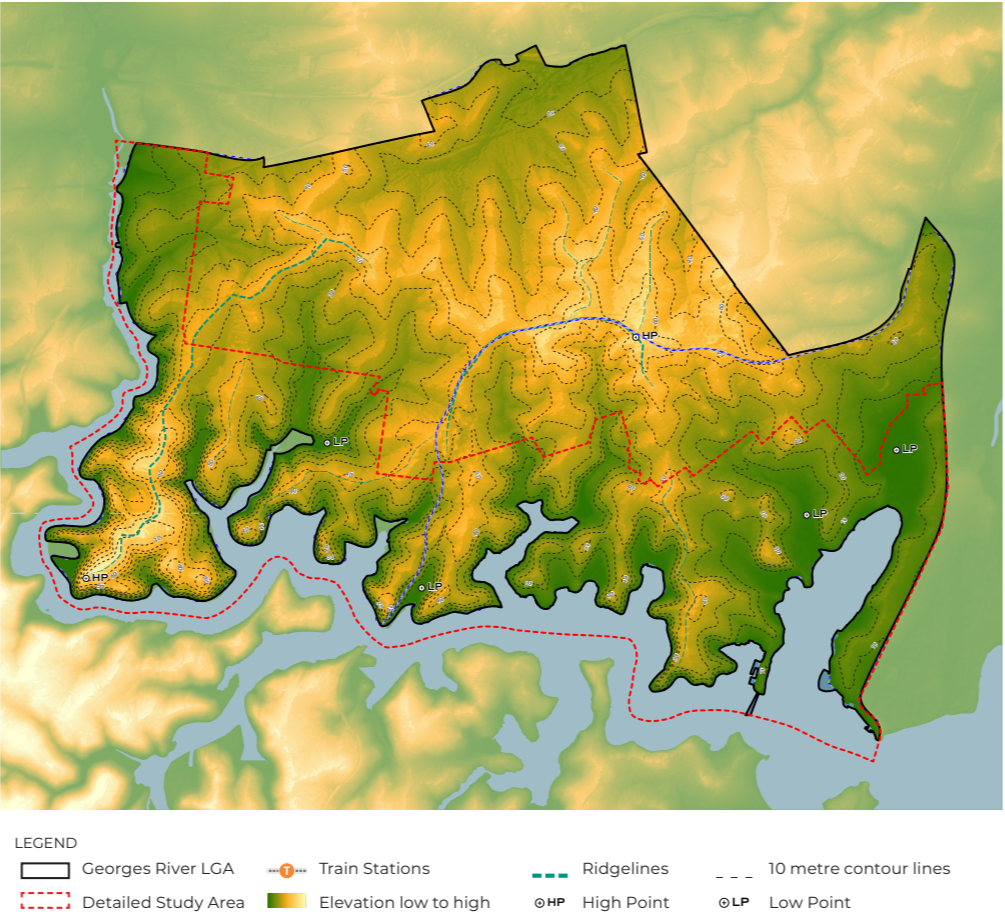


Figure 23.Landform

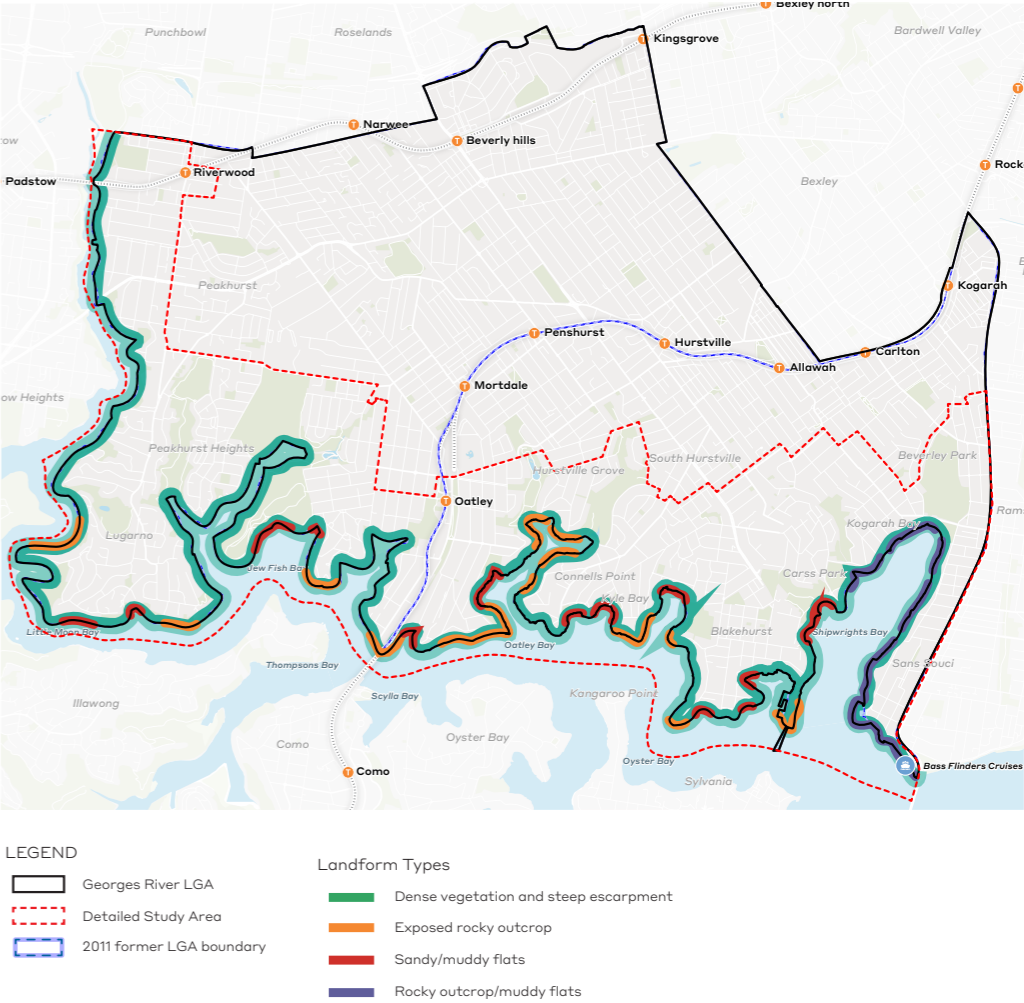


Figure 24.Land Form Types

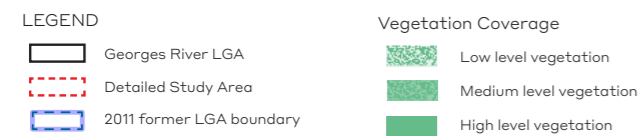
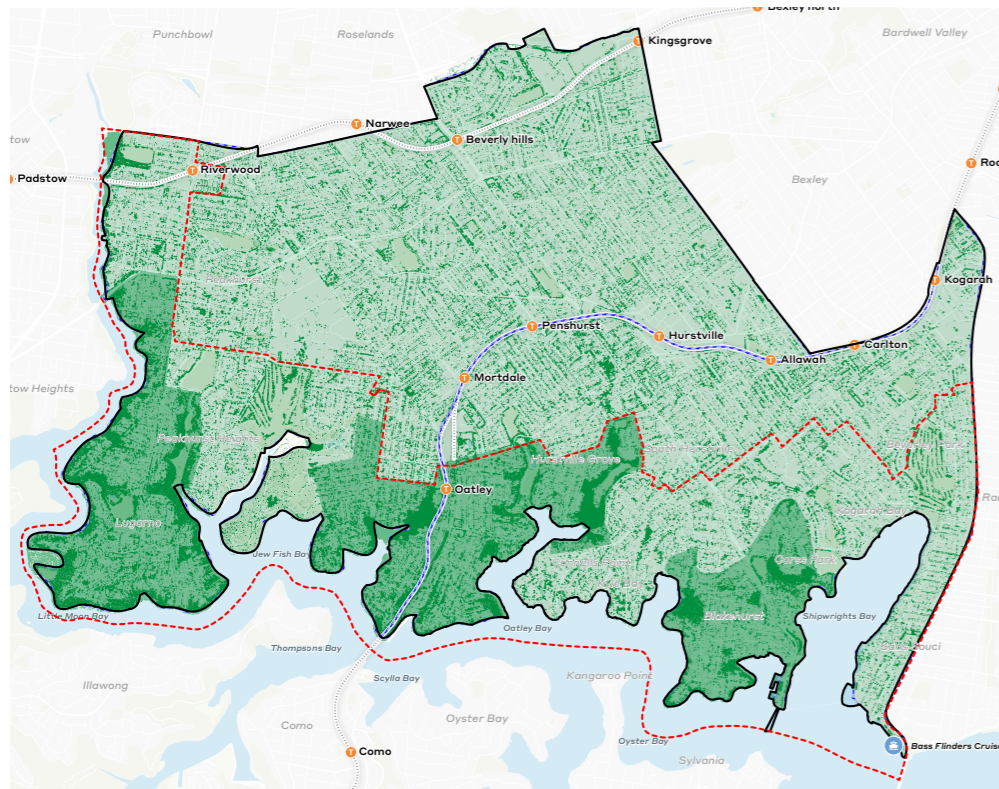


Figure 25. Urban Canopy Coverage

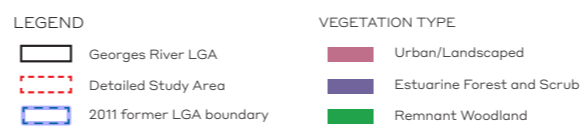
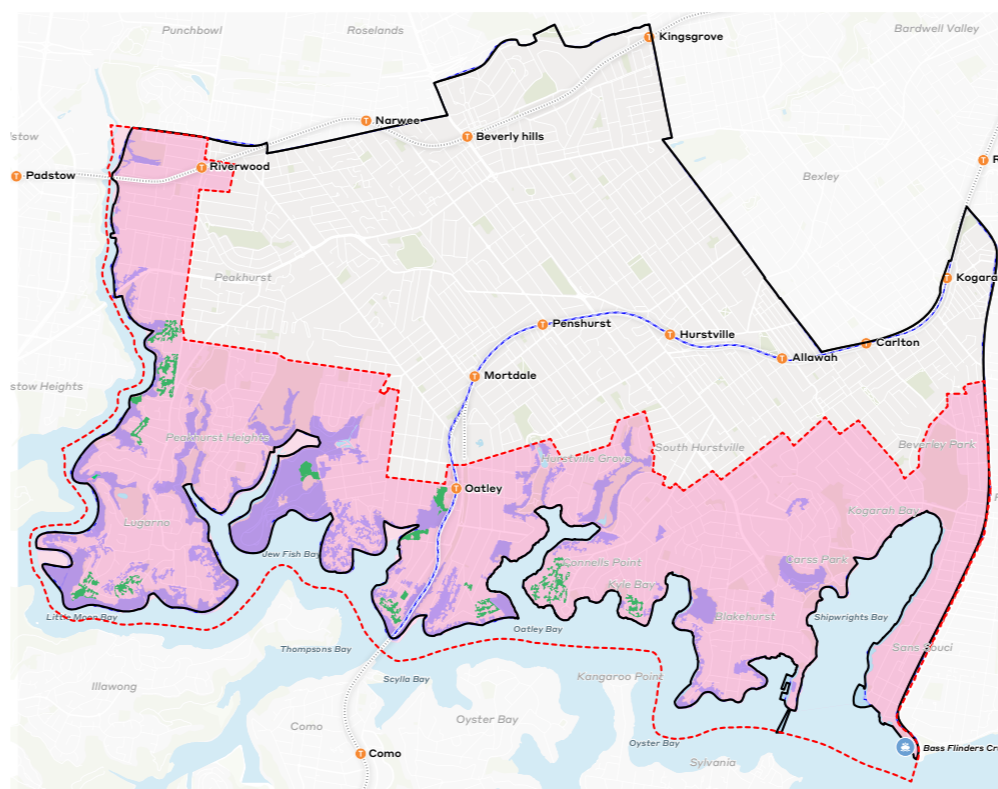


Figure 26. Vegetation Type

Finer grain mapping of scenic character: this Study

Undertaking a further, finer grain analysis as part of this Study, we found that this area comprises 15 local character areas that are detailed in full at Part C of this report.

Comparing these maps side by side shows clear similarities.

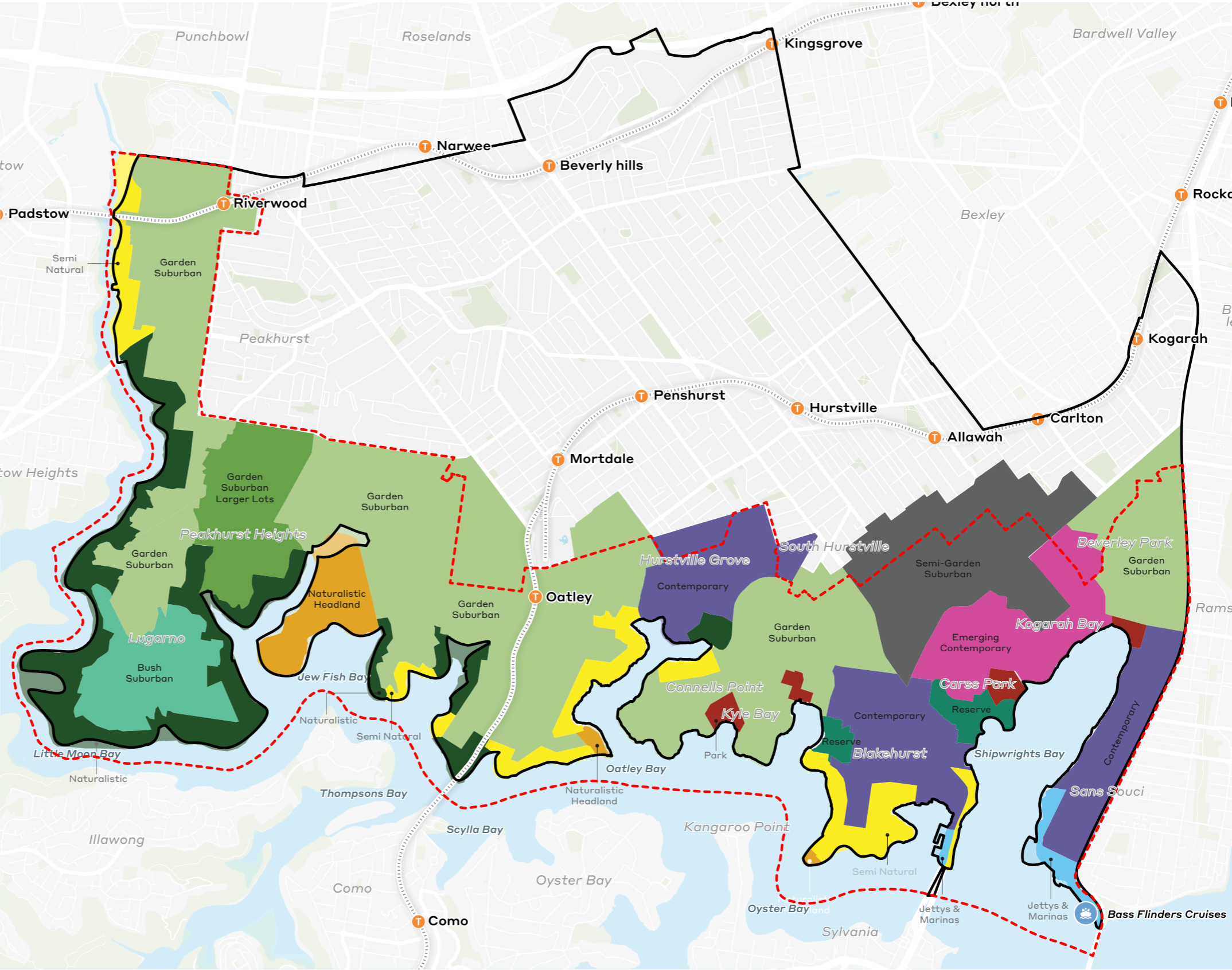


Figure 27. Local character Typologies proposed by the Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper

Typical Semi-Natural Foreshore Interfaces East of Tom Ugly’s Bridge



Typical Naturalistic Foreshore Interfaces East of Tom Ugly's Bridge



An aerial photograph showing a wide river flowing through a lush, green landscape. The river is surrounded by dense forests and some residential areas. In the foreground, a large, rounded peninsula covered in thick green trees juts out into the water. To the right, a smaller body of water is visible, separated from the main river by a narrow strip of land. A long, thin structure, possibly a bridge or a dam, extends across the water in this area. The overall scene is a mix of natural beauty and human development.

Georges River Strategic Directions Paper

PART C

LOCAL CHARACTER

Local Character

The Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper identified a number of local character typologies (refer Figure). In response to the scope of this Study, further, more comprehensive and detailed assessment was undertaken to review these typologies. As a result, this Study suggests that there is primary local character types and individual character precincts.

The five primary Local character types are:

- Garden Suburban
- Bush Suburban
- Garden Court
- Emerging Contemporary
- River Edge

Descriptions of each primary Local character types are outlined opposite.

Some Local character types contain distinct differences between specific areas of Georges River. As a result, some primary Local character Types have been further split into individual Character Precincts. The Local character types that have been broken down into individual precincts are:

- Garden Suburban
 - Traditional
 - Naturalistic
 - Medium Density
- River Edge
 - Naturalistic
 - Semi Naturalistic
 - Contemporary

In addition, all Business Zoned land within the Study area has been evaluated against a built-for-purpose assessment criteria in order to identify the unique character of these areas. Key differences across business zone character areas include built form, architectural style and eras, setbacks and landscaping. The following business zone character areas have been identified within Georges River:

- High Street
- High Street Mix
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Neighbourhood Convenience

Detailed descriptions of each precinct are outlined throughout this section.

Garden Suburban



The Garden Suburban Character Type typically comprises spacious residential areas with consistently sited dwellings in a garden setting and formal street pattern; generally modified grid and avenue style streets. Most garden suburban areas are situated within a gridded or adapted grid street network. Roads generally consist of concrete kerbs, footpaths and grassed nature strips with moderate to low levels of public realm landscaping. Some houses have low walls fronting formal, trimmed gardens that are open to the street, and houses are generally not built to property boundaries. The atmosphere of the character area is one of space and trees, though the separation of private and public land is clearly defined.

Bush Suburban



The Bush Suburban Character Type typically comprises medium to highly vegetated residential areas with dwellings sited in a bush-like setting. Street networks are informal; generally modified grid and curvilinear in style. Dwellings are set within medium to heavily vegetated lots, complemented by an increased amount of vegetation in the public realm that at times blends with the vegetation of the private gardens. Buildings are detached, with generous front setbacks and are often obscured from view at street level due to the density of the private and public realm vegetation. Developments in Bush Suburban areas are a mixture of post-war, modern and contemporary architecture.

Garden Court



The Garden Court Character area typically comprises spacious residential areas with sometimes informally sited dwellings in a garden setting and curvilinear street layout (including courts/cul-de-sacs), in a mix of flat and undulating topography. The term Garden Court refers to the combination of a Garden Suburban style of development superimposed on a pattern of curvilinear streets with courts. The curvilinear street pattern results in the creation of informal street spaces which are often complemented by informal garden planting.

Emerging Contemporary



The character of this area is defined by a growing presence of contemporary dwellings, situated within the existing fine grain street pattern. The flat to sloping topography affords views to river from some streets, with dwellings built to maximise views when they are located close to the foreshore. Dwellings are clearly visible from the street and situated on modest sized lots, with low level to well established gardens and low front fencing. Streets are irregularly planted with native trees that soften the emerging contemporary built form styles.

River Edge



This precinct is defined by its long, narrow lots, that predominantly border the waterfront. Across Georges river, the character type varies in terms of vegetation coverage and architectural styles. Dwellings are generally built up to four storeys high in order to maximise river views from the tops of steep cliffs and ridgelines. Intermittent views to and across the river and surrounding landscape are afforded from the streets, and dwellings can generally be seen from the river situated along cliff tops and ridgelines.

High Street



High Street areas comprises of medium to low scale buildings that are reflective of traditional early Twentieth Century High Street development patterns. This includes fine grain, narrow development with low hipped or flat roofs, and detailed facades. Buildings front the property boundary with at grade car parking located along the street. Built form is uniformly consistent with the use of materials that predominantly include brick, as well as the occasional example of painted concrete. Built form fronting High Street areas are generally two storeys in height, with some buildings appearing taller still due to the extended facades and detailing at upper levels. Footpaths are narrow and sheltered by awnings attached to the first floor of most buildings. Due to the dominance of built form and narrow setbacks, these areas feature no public realm or vegetation planting.

High Street Mix



High Street Mix areas share many similarities with the High Street character area including fine grain streetscapes, narrow setbacks and consistent built form with detailed facades. The key difference within High Street Mix areas is the emerging contemporary apartment and commercial development that is beginning to replace older, more traditional High Street style development. Buildings front the property boundary with at grade car parking located along the street. Built form is less consistent in these areas, with the use of glass and steel in contemporary developments contrasting with the traditional brick and concrete developments. Built form fronting High Street Mix areas consist of older buildings up to two storeys in height, with new development occurring at three storeys and above. Footpaths are narrow and sheltered by awnings attached to the first floor of most buildings. Awnings are less common in contemporary developments. Due to the dominance of built form and narrow setbacks, these areas feature no public realm or vegetation planting.

Neighbourhood Centre



Neighbourhood Centre areas typically comprises of a mix of modern and occasional contemporary low scale buildings with formal landscaping and public realm improvements. These areas are defined by street strip shopping on one side of the road, with developments built to boundary allowing for on street parking. Built form appears generally consistent with flat roofs and retail facades, while use of materials can be mixed, including brick and painted concrete. Building heights generally range between one and two storeys. Footpaths are wide, allowing for public furniture and a mix of informal and formal plantings and native canopy trees.

Neighbourhood Convenience



Neighbourhood Convenience areas are typically comprised of low-scale buildings that are built to boundary with dedicated street parking located at the front of developments. Buildings are generally set back from the road to accommodate 90 degree parking spaces and pedestrian footpaths. Built form is generally consistent, featuring flat roofs, a mix of brick and painted concrete, with awnings over footpaths. Building heights within these areas are predominantly single storey. The era of development in these areas is predominantly modern, with simple facades that accommodate small retailers and commercial services. These areas feature little to no public realm or vegetation planting.

Open Space Naturalistic



Open Space: Naturalistic areas consist predominantly of highly vegetated, passive open spaces with limited to no facilities present. Vegetation within theses areas generally includes high levels of ground cover vegetation including bushes and grass, as well as a significant number of canopy trees that contribute to the overall character of Georges River. These areas are also often located along ridgelines within close proximity to, or abutting Georges River.

Open Space Semi Naturalistic



Open Space: Semi Naturalistic areas consist predominantly of well vegetated, passive and active open spaces that generally include community facilities such as sports grounds and boating ramps. Vegetation within theses areas generally includes medium to high levels of vegetation generally consisting of canopy trees as vast grassy fields. These areas are often landlocked, but can also be located along an interface with Georges River.

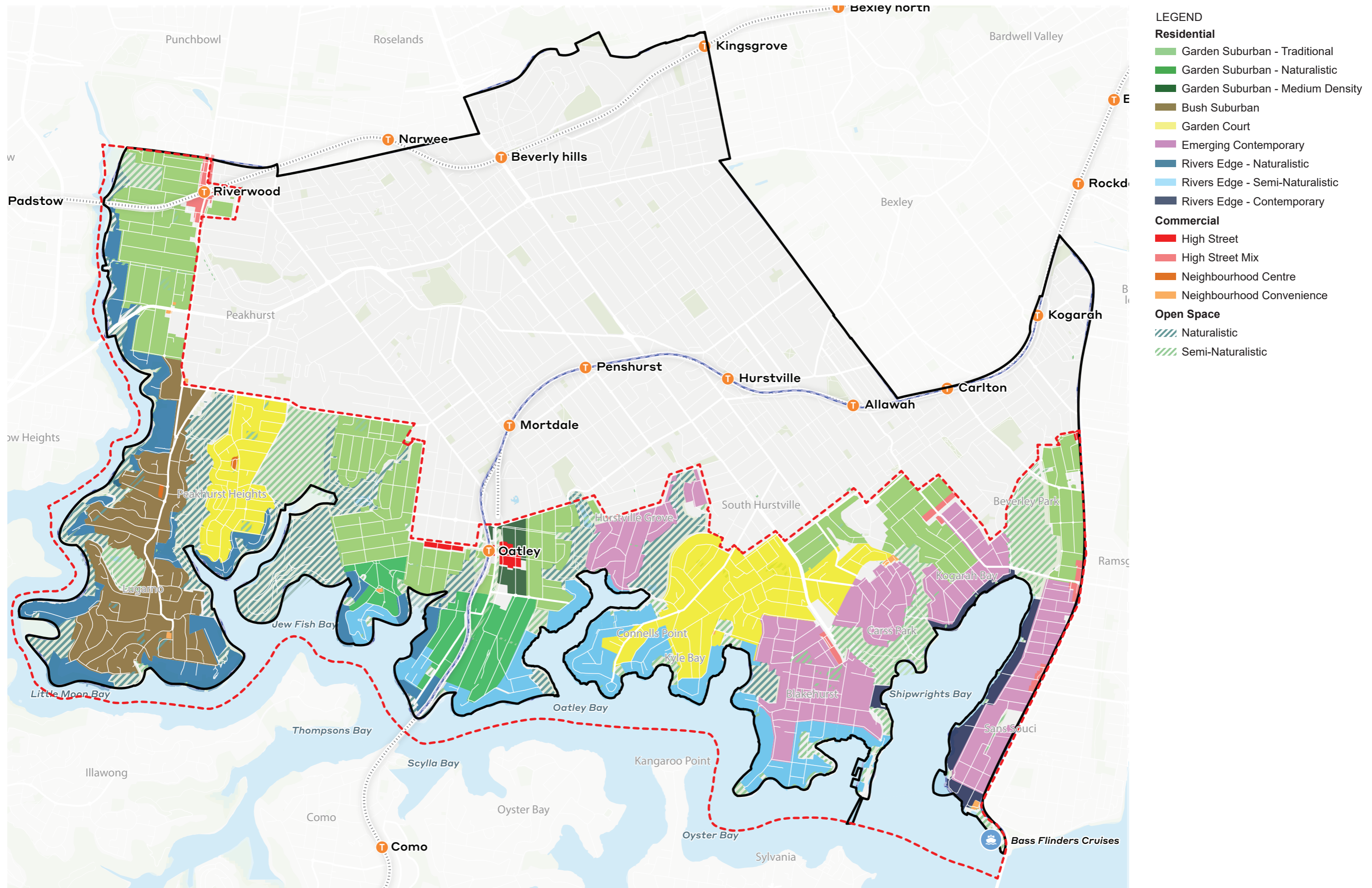


Figure 28. Local Character Typologies

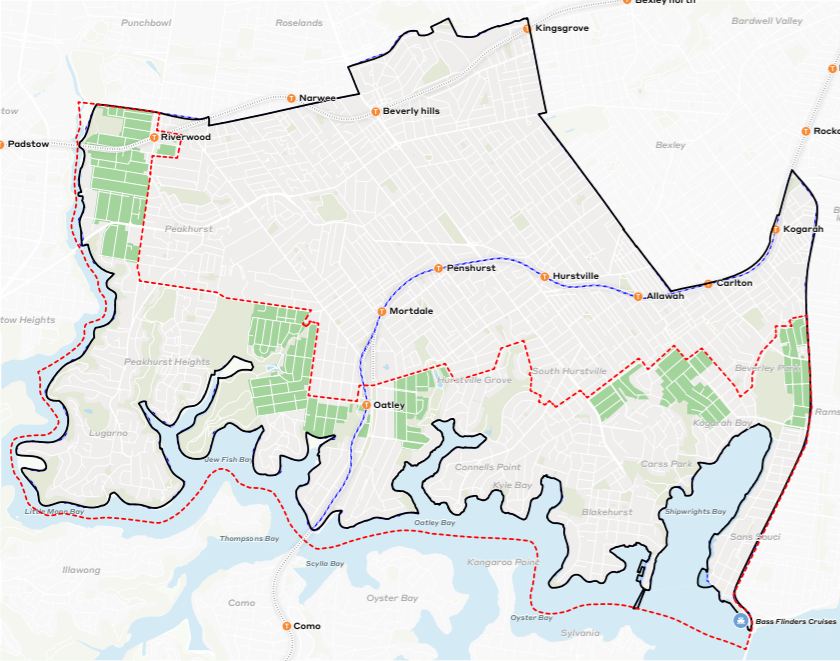
How to Read the Local Character Precinct Profiles

The following precinct profiles outline an overall description of the local character areas, which includes information relating to attributes, opportunities, threats, sensitivity and significance. The table below provides definitions to assist with understanding the key components of the local character precinct profiles.

Local Character Precinct Profile Key Components	
Description	Describes in general terms the key character attributes that distinguish the local character area as exemplary of its type, within its setting.
Character Attributes	Full details of all individual elements that contribute to the overall local character of an area. Character attributes can include descriptions (i.e. dwelling styles and materials, level of vegetation coverage, extent of views) and measurables (e.g. building heights, setbacks).
Positives and Opportunities	Outlines the attributes that make a significant, positive contribution to the character of a local area. In some cases, opportunities to enhance or protect these attributes are also identified.
Threats and Risks	Identifies likely threats to the preferred existing character of an area.
Sensitivity Rating	The sensitivity of a local character area considers the total number of values that are found to be present within a character area. These values are developed on existing local character guidelines including the Community Strategic Plan 2028. A higher number of values present within an area will affect their ability to accommodate increased levels of change. Sensitivity ratings can be low, medium high and very high.
Significance Rating	<div>The overall significance of a local character area is determined based on the following components:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aesthetic Significance<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How representative or illustrative is the character area (and its attributes)? Is it 'the best' of its type? Is it exemplary within the neighbourhood, regional or state context?• Associative Significance<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is the character area (and its attributes) instantly recognisable? Is it symbolic for its visual qualities? Has it been represented in art, photography, literature or local policy? Is it iconic within the local, regional or state context?• Rarity Significance<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How uncommon, rare or endangered is the character area (and its attributes)? Is it scarce within the local, regional or state context?</div> <div>Levels of significance are attributed to each landscape component, and an overall significance level in relation to aesthetic value is determined. The significance levels are:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderate = Neighbourhood Significance• High = Regional Significance• Exceptional = State Significance (or higher)</div>



GARDEN SUBURBAN: Traditional



DESCRIPTION

The character of this area is attributed to an older, fine grain street pattern generally featuring paved footpaths on one side of the road and kerb and channel drainage throughout. The predominantly flat topography affords views of treetops within the streetscape and above existing dwellings.

Dwellings are clearly visible from the street and situated on modest sized lots, with low level to well established gardens and low front fencing. Streets are irregularly planted with native trees that contribute to the garden setting of the precinct. Front and side setbacks are predominantly consistent and establish a uniform streetscape.

Consisting of a mix of brick, weatherboard and concrete materials, the single and double storey dwellings within this area lends itself to a traditional Garden Suburban Character.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversity in architectural era and style among dwellings within the character area. Opportunity for new dwellings to respond to a diversity of materials and built form elements through appropriate design.
- Moderate to generous front and side setbacks which contribute to an overall sense of spaciousness within the garden setting. Retaining this is an integral part of preserving the character of the area.
- Presence of canopy trees within both the public and private realms which contribute to the wider urban canopy coverage of Georges River, with an opportunity to further increase planting as part of new development.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Mix of post-war, modern and contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick, weatherboard and concrete
- Mix of hipped, gabled and flat roof forms
- Predominantly single and double storey
- Predominantly detached, single dwellings



Setbacks and Siting

- 3-6m front setbacks
- 1m one side, 3-4m other side setback
- Dwellings oriented towards the street
- Parking structures predominantly equal with dwelling
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with single width driveways. Occasional additional hardscaping for vehicle storage.



Fencing

- Mix of no fences and 0.5-1m fences
- Mix of transparent and solid material



Vegetation

- Low level to established gardens, with canopy trees



Geology

- Vegetated



Topography

- Flat to sloping



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly gridded street network
- Footpaths present on one side of the road
- Low to medium levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous sized, grassed street verges, appearing as an extension of a dwellings front setback on side of road without footpath.



Views to and from Area

- Occasional views from streets and dwellings located in areas of higher topography.
- Generally not visible from the river, occasional dwellings may be visible when built in areas of higher topography.

THREATS AND RISKS

- Reduction of existing front and side setbacks that allow for traditional suburban gardens and planting
- Loss of any existing trees that contribute to the wider urban canopy from the private realm, typically found in backyards within this character area.
- Loss of any existing canopy coverage within the public realm, including grassed street verges, through additional vehicle crossovers.
- Reduction of existing setbacks and corresponding loss of spaciousness.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Garden Suburban: Traditional Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN2 and EN5. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Garden Suburban: Traditional Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Low.

A low sensitivity rating confirms that the Garden Suburban: Traditional Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a substantial level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

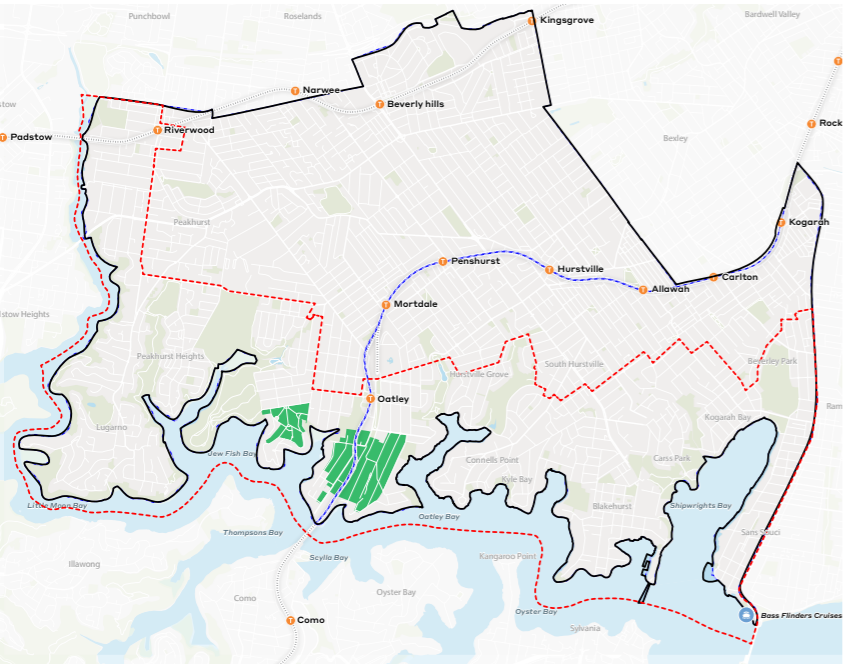


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Garden Suburban: Traditional is Moderate.

Therefore, the Garden Suburban: Naturalistic Character Area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area is illustrative of most other traditional residential areas within Greater Sydney. It is unique within it's neighbourhood context, but is similar in aesthetic value to other residential areas across the region and state.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The character area represents a traditional suburban lifestyle that is typical of many residential developments across Greater Sydney, resonating with a large number of people. As this kind of association not unique to Georges River, the significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	Traditional residential areas such as Garden Suburban: Traditional are common throughout Sydney and across other townships in the state of NSW. As such, this character type is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

GARDEN SUBURBAN: Naturalistic



DESCRIPTION

The character of this area is attributed to an older, fine grain street pattern generally featuring paved footpaths on one side of the road and kerb and channel drainage throughout. Predominantly sloping topography affords views of treetops within the streetscape and above existing dwellings, as well as intermittent views across George’s River.

Dwellings are generally visible from the street and situated on modest sized lots, with well established gardens. Streets are irregularly planted with native trees and other vegetation that contribute to the increased level of vegetation coverage throughout the precinct. Front and side setbacks are predominantly consistent and establish a uniform streetscape.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversity in architectural era and style among dwellings within the character area. Opportunity for new dwellings to respond to a diversity of materials and built form elements through appropriate design.
- Moderate to generous front and side setbacks which allow for higher levels of vegetation planting, effectively blending the public realm with the private. Retaining this attribute is an integral part of preserving the character of the area.
- Significant presence of canopy trees within both the public and private realms, contributing substantially to the wider urban canopy coverage of Georges River. Retention of this attribute will also be integral to the preservation of the character area.
- Informal streetscapes with increased levels of public realm vegetation, contributing significantly to the naturalistic qualities of the area.
- Sloping topography that affords intermittent views to Georges River and beyond, as well as the many reserves and open spaces that interface with this character area.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Mix of post-war, modern and contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick, weatherboard and concrete
- Mix of hipped, gabled and flat roof forms
- Predominantly single and double storey
- Predominantly detached, single dwellings



Fencing

- Mix of no fences and 0.5-1m fences
- Mix of transparent and solid material



Geology

- Vegetated



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly gridded street network
- Footpaths either not present, or on one side of the road
- Medium to high levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous, grassed street verges, appearing as an extension of a dwellings front setback.



Setbacks and Siting

- 3-6m front setbacks
- 1m one side, 3-4m other side setback
- Dwellings oriented towards the street
- Parking structures predominantly equal with dwelling
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with single width driveways.



Vegetation

- Medium to high level, established and formal gardens with canopy trees



Topography

- Predominantly sloping, towards the foreshore



Views to and from Area

- Intermittent views to the river and reserves across dwellings from areas of higher topography.
- Views to highly vegetated land and green spaces from many streets.
- Areas at higher elevations, and locations closer to the foreshore are partly visible from the river

THREATS AND RISKS

- Reduction of existing front and side setbacks that currently afford space for increased levels of vegetation planting in front yards
- Loss of existing canopy trees from front and back yards that are contributing significantly to the overall urban canopy coverage of Georges River
- Subdivision of larger residential lots, resulting in increased built form densities and potential loss of vegetation in both the public and private realm
- Large scale built form that impacts on existing identified key views towards the river and surrounding reserves from public spaces.
- Built form that does not respond appropriately to the sloping topography of the character area, potentially resulting in inappropriate cut and fill construction techniques
- Formalisation of streets and paths in areas of high public realm vegetation coverage which are more frequently occurring within this character area.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Garden Suburban: Naturalistic Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN1, EN2, EN3, and EN5. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Garden Suburban Naturalistic Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Medium.

A medium sensitivity rating confirms that the Garden Suburban: Naturalistic Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a moderate level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

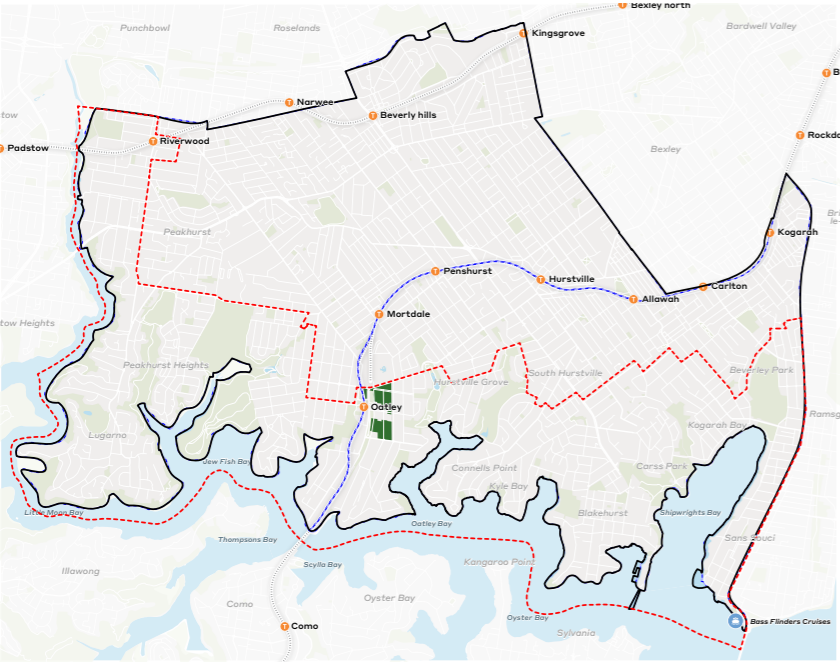


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Garden Suburban: Naturalistic is High.

Therefore, the Garden Suburban: Naturalistic Character Area is identified as having a regional level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area is generally illustrative of most other residential areas with increased vegetation levels within Greater Sydney. It is exemplary within it's neighbourhood context, but is similar in aesthetic value to other residential areas with increased vegetation levels across the region and state.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The presence of remnant vegetation has been identified as a highly valued quality of Georges River in both local policy and by the community. Existing vegetation within this area enhances its associative significance value.	High
Rarity	Residential areas with increased levels of vegetation are common throughout Sydney and across townships in the state of NSW. As such, this character type is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

GARDEN SUBURBAN: Medium Density



DESCRIPTION

This area is defined predominantly by increased building heights and older, post war and modern building styles. Apartment complexes of up to three stories front the streets, with low to medium levels of vegetation providing a visual break between the public realm and the dominant built form. The area is situated within a gridded street pattern that generally features paved footpaths on both sides of the road, with kerb and channel drainage throughout. The topography of this area is predominantly flat.

Dwellings are clearly visible from the street and situated on modest sized lots, with well low level to well established gardens. Front and side setbacks are generally consistent and establish a uniform streetscape.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Consistent pattern of medium density built form, resulting in a uniform and identifiable street pattern.
- Generous front setbacks that allow for vegetation planting and reduce the visual dominance of the existing medium density built form.
- Formal streetscape with pedestrian pathways on both sides of the road, enhancing the overall walkability of the area.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Mix of post-war and modern dwellings
- Predominantly brick
- Predominantly hipped, tiled roof forms
- Predominantly three storey
- Predominantly apartment developments



Setbacks and Siting

- 3-6m front setbacks
- 1m one side, 3-4m other side setback
- Dwellings oriented towards the street
- Parking structures either equal with dwelling or behind
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with single width driveways. Occasional additional hardscaping for vehicle storage, and double width driveways.



Fencing

- Mix of no fences and 0.5-1m fences
- Predominantly solid materials



Vegetation

- Mix of low level and established gardens, with canopy trees



Geology

- Vegetated



Topography

- Flat



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly gridded street network
- Footpaths present on both sides of the road
- Low to medium levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Mix of no street verge with footpath built to the road, or intermittent narrow grassed verge.



Views to and from Area

- Views across streetscapes and to adjacent dwellings
- Not visible from the river

THREATS AND RISKS

- Reduction of existing front setbacks and subsequent loss of the prevailing consistent built form and street rhythm created by the existing medium density flats.
- Reduction of existing vegetation within the public realm, potentially resulting from modern development at larger scales, with additional street crossovers and hard impermeable surfaces.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Garden Suburban: Medium Density Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EC1 and S3. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Garden Suburban Medium Density Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Low.

A low sensitivity rating confirms that the Garden Suburban: Naturalistic Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a substantial level of change, although this is unlikely due to the area being already highly developed.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

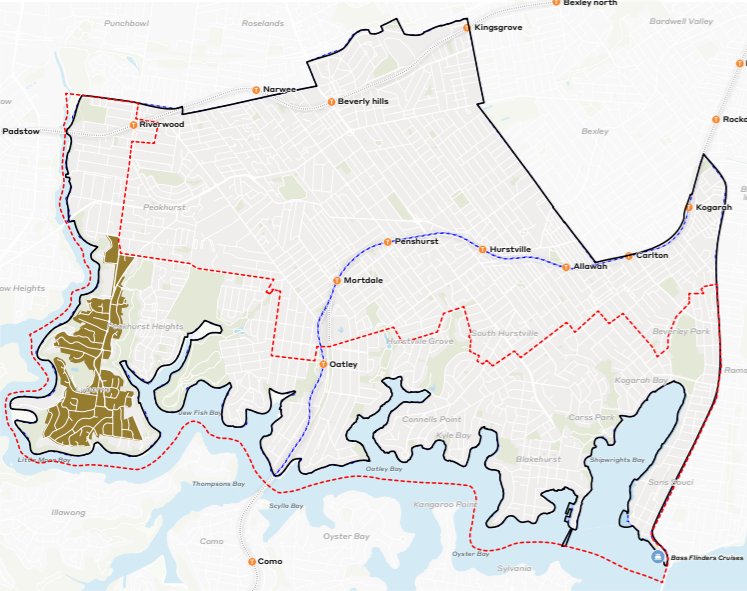


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Garden Suburban: Medium Density is Moderate.

Therefore, the Garden Suburban: Naturalistic Character Area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area is illustrative of many other medium density, inner city residential locations across Greater Sydney. It is unique within it's neighbourhood context, but is similar in aesthetic value to other medium density residential areas across the region and state.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The character area represents a typical medium density lifestyle that can be found in inner city locations across Greater Sydney. However, its consistent built form and material use makes it an instantly recognisable location within it's neighbourhood context.	Moderate
Rarity	This style of medium density development is common across Greater Sydney. As such, this character type is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

BUSH SUBURBAN



DESCRIPTION

The streets of this precinct have a largely informal character due to the high levels of vegetation present in nature strips, and occasional absence of public realm infrastructure. Dwellings are sited within lots that are also heavily vegetated with native, established gardens that appear visually unified with the vegetation in the public realm. High levels of urban exotic/natives are present in both the public and private realm within this area.

The architectural style of dwellings in these areas are a mix of post-war, modern and contemporary architectural styles. Dwellings are a mix of detached, single and double storey dwellings developments.

Significant setbacks from the street contribute to the unique and spacious character of the area, affording ample space for the retention and planting of native vegetation.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversity in architectural era and style among dwellings within the character area. Opportunity for new dwellings to respond to a diversity of materials and built form elements through appropriate design.
- Substantial front and generous side setbacks that allow for very high levels of vegetation planting, effectively blending the public realm with the private. Retaining this attribute is an integral part of preserving the character of the area.
- Significant presence of canopy trees within both the public and private realms, contributing substantially to the wider urban canopy coverage of Georges River. Retention of this attribute will also be integral to the preservation of the character area.
- Examples of threatened vegetation communities within some parts of the character area, including urban exotic/natives within the public realm.
- Informal, often densely vegetated streetscapes play a key role in establishing the bush-like qualities of the area.
- Highly undulating topography that affords intermittent views to Georges River and beyond, as well as the many reserves and open spaces that interface with this character area.
- Larger residential lots that can accommodate substantial vegetation planting as well as retention of existing vegetation.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Mix of post-war, modern and contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick, weatherboard and concrete
- Mix of hipped, gabled and flat roof forms
- Predominantly single and double storey
- Predominantly single, detached dwellings



Setbacks and Siting

- 9m+ front setbacks
- 1m one side, 3-4m other side setback
- Dwellings oriented either towards the street or at an angle
- Parking structures equal with dwelling
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with a mix of single and double width driveways.



Fencing

- Mix of no fences and 0.5-1m fences
- Predominantly solid materials



Vegetation

- Established gardens with canopy trees
- High levels of urban exotic/natives in the public and private realm.



Geology

- Vegetated



Topography

- Predominantly undulating, with a series of depressions and ridges that are not consistently visible



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly curvilinear and court street network
- Footpaths generally not present
- Low to medium levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous, grassed street verges, appearing as an extension of a dwellings front setback.



Views to and from Area

- Intermittent views to river and surrounding landscape from areas of higher topography, and areas located closer to the foreshore.
- Areas at higher elevations can be seen in part from the river.



THREATS AND RISKS

- Reduction of existing, substantial front and side setbacks that currently afford space for high levels of vegetation planting within the private realm.
- Loss of existing canopy trees from front and back yards that are contributing significantly to the overall urban canopy coverage of Georges River
- Loss of public realm vegetation, including the identified examples of threatened urban exotic/natives.
- Subdivision of existing large residential lots, resulting in increased built form densities and potential loss of vegetation in both the public and private realm.
- Large scale built form that impacts on existing identified key views towards the river and surrounding reserves from public spaces.
- Built form that does not respond appropriately to the highly undulating topography of the character area, potentially resulting in inappropriate cut and fill construction techniques
- Formalisation of streets and paths in areas of high public realm vegetation coverage which are more frequently occurring within this character area.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Bush Suburban Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN1, EN2, EN3, and EN5. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Bush Suburban Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Medium.

A medium sensitivity rating confirms that the Bush Suburban Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a moderate level of change, provided that provisions are in place to protect the high levels of vegetation.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

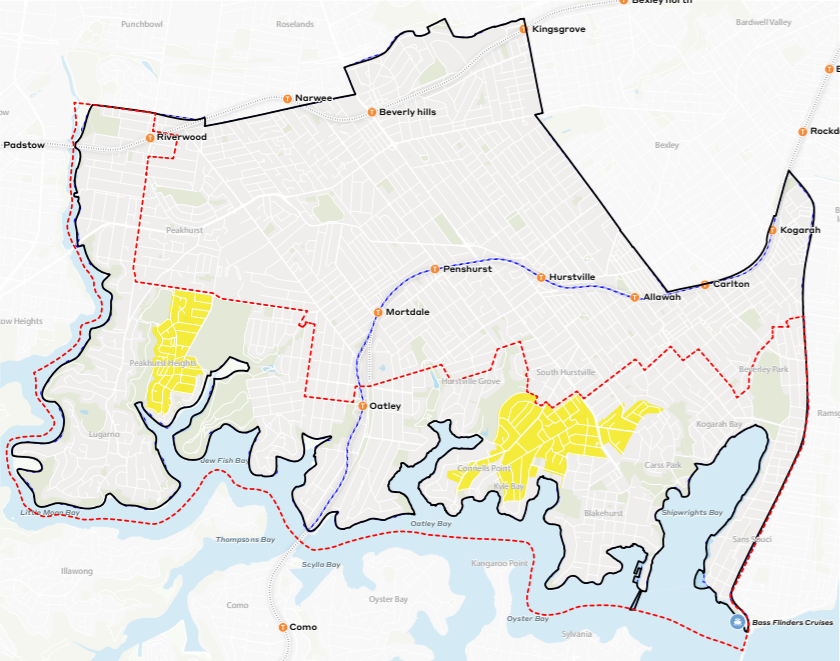


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Bush Suburban is High.

Therefore, the Bush Suburban Character Area is identified as having a regional level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area is generally illustrative of most other residential areas that feature increased vegetation levels within a bush-like setting. It is exemplary within it's neighbourhood context, but is similar in aesthetic value to other similar residential areas across the region and state.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The presence of remnant vegetation has been identified as a highly valued quality of Georges River in both local policy and by the community. Existing vegetation within this area enhances its associative significance value.	High
Rarity	Residential areas with increased levels of vegetation in a bush setting are uncommon, but do exist in certain locations throughout Sydney and across townships in the state of NSW. As such, this character type is considered to be of regional significance.	High

GARDEN COURT



DESCRIPTION

Predominantly court and curvilinear street network, the streets of this precinct have an open garden character, due to the wide lawns and space around dwellings, emphasised by no or low fences that contribute to a sense of openness.

Low levels of vegetation in the public and private realm, along with canopy trees create an open garden setting that further strengthens the qualities of this area.

The predominantly simple building forms, with hipped or gabled roofs, and mixed use of materials contribute to a sense of varying streetscapes. The buildings do not dominate the streetscape, despite the scale of some structures, due to the existing vegetation and generosity of existing setbacks.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversity in architectural era and style among dwellings within the character area. Opportunity for new dwellings to respond to a diversity of materials and built form elements through appropriate design.
- Moderate to generous front and side setbacks which contribute to an overall sense of spaciousness within the garden setting. Retaining this is an integral part of preserving the character of the area.
- Presence of canopy trees within both the public and private realms which contribute to the wider urban canopy coverage of Georges River, with an opportunity to further increase planting as part of new development.
- Areas of gently sloping topography that affords intermittent views to Georges River, in areas located close to the waterfront.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Mix of post-war, modern and contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick, weatherboard and concrete
- Mix of hipped, gabled and flat roof forms
- Predominantly single and double storey
- Predominantly detached, single dwellings



Setbacks and Siting

- Mix of 2-6m and 7-9m front setbacks
- 1m one side, 3-4m other side setback
- Dwellings oriented towards the street, or at an angle
- Parking structures predominantly equal with dwelling
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with single width driveways. Occasional additional hardscaping for vehicle storage.



Fencing

- Mix of no fences and 0.5-1m fences
- Mix of transparent and solid material



Vegetation

- Low level to established gardens, with canopy trees



Geology

- Vegetated



Topography

- Flat to sloping



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly court and curvilinear street network
- Footpaths present on one side of the road
- Low to medium levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous sized, grassed street verges, appearing as an extension of a dwellings front setback on side of road without footpath.



Views to and from Area

- Areas at higher levels of elevation generally have views of surrounding bush landscape, with occasional views to the river.
- Views to the river from areas located closer to the foreshore.
- Areas at higher elevations can be generally seen from the river, but doesn't contribute to the scenic character.

THREATS AND RISKS

- Reduction of existing front and side setbacks that allow for traditional suburban gardens and planting.
- Loss of any existing trees that contribute to the wider urban canopy from the private realm, typically found in backyards within this character area.
- Loss of any existing canopy coverage within the public realm, including grassed street verges, through additional vehicle crossovers.
- Reduction of existing setbacks and corresponding loss of spaciousness.
- Built form that does not respond appropriately to the sometimes gently sloping topography of the character area, potentially resulting in inappropriate cut and fill construction techniques where steeper inclines are more prevalent.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Garden Court Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN2 and EN5. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Garden Court Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Low.

A low sensitivity rating confirms that the Garden Court Typology has the capacity to accommodate a substantial level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

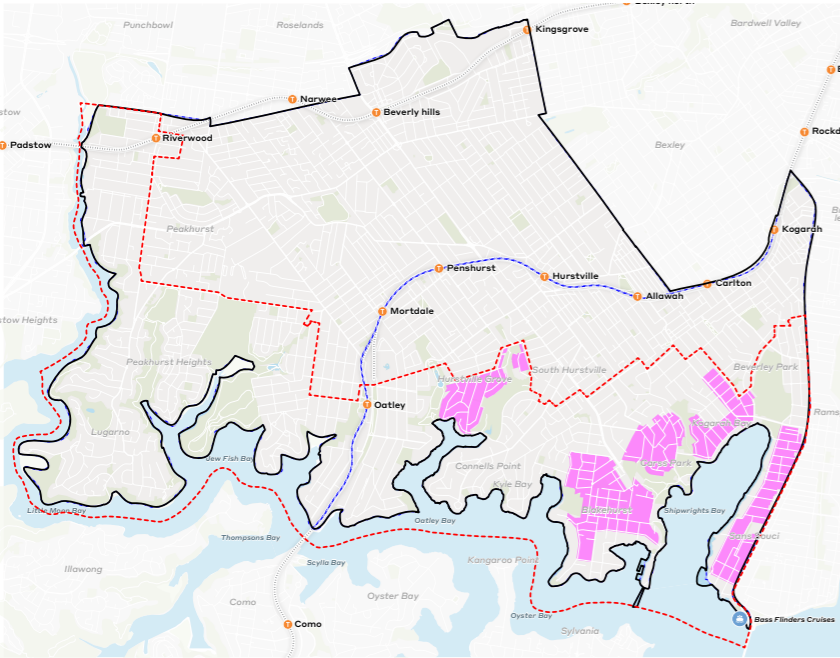


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Garden Court is Moderate.

Therefore, the Garden Court Character Area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area is illustrative of most other traditional residential areas within Greater Sydney. It is unique within it's neighbourhood context, but is similar in aesthetic value to other residential areas across the region and state.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The character area represents a traditional suburban lifestyle that is typical of many residential developments across Greater Sydney, resonating with a large number of people. As this kind of association not unique to Georges River, the significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	Traditional residential areas such as Garden Court are common throughout Sydney and across other townships in the state of NSW. As such, this character type is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

EMERGING CONTEMPORARY



DESCRIPTION

The character of this area is defined by a growing presence of contemporary dwellings, situated within the existing fine grain street pattern. Streets of this area generally featuring paved footpaths on one side of the road and kerb and channel drainage throughout. The flat to sloping topography affords views to river from some streets. Dwellings are built to maximise views when they are located close to the foreshore

Dwellings are clearly visible from the street and situated on modest sized lots, with low level to well established gardens and low front fencing. Streets are irregularly planted with native trees that soften the emerging contemporary built form styles. Front and side setbacks are predominantly consistent and establish a uniform streetscape.

Contemporary dwellings primarily consist of concrete, glass, steel and other similar materials. The remainder of dwellings are a mix of brick, weatherboard and concrete materials. Single and double storey dwellings are most common within this area.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Emerging contemporary architectural styles and materials that are generally of a high quality.
- Areas of gently sloping topography that affords intermittent views to Georges River, in areas located close to the waterfront.
- Formal, established gardens within the public realm.
- Generally consistent building orientation and siting, creating a sense of uniformity within streetscapes of the area.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES

**Built Form**

- Mix of post-war, modern with an increasing level of contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick and concrete
- Mix of hipped, and gabled roof forms
- Predominantly single and double storey
- Predominantly detached, single dwellings

**Fencing**

- Varying fence styles ranging from 0 to 1.5m in height
- Mix of transparent and solid material

**Geology**

- Vegetated

**Street Layout & Public Realm**

- Predominantly gridded street network, occasional curvilinear streets and courts
- Footpaths present on one side of the road
- Low to medium levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous sized, grassed street verges, appearing as an extension of a dwellings front setback on side of road without footpath.

**Setbacks and Siting**

- 3-6m front setbacks
- 1m one side, 3-4m other side setback
- Dwellings oriented towards the street
- Parking structures predominantly equal with dwelling
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with mix of single and double width driveways. Occasional additional hardscaping for vehicle storage.

**Vegetation**

- Low level to established gardens, with canopy trees

**Topography**

- Flat to sloping

**Views to and from Area**

- Intermittent views to river from some streets, particularly where streets terminate at the rivers edge.
- Dwellings built to maximise views where they are built close to the foreshore
- Generally visible in part from the river

THREATS AND RISKS

- Loss of any existing trees that contribute to the wider urban canopy from the private realm, typically found in backyards within this character area.
- Built form that does not respond appropriately to the sometimes gently sloping topography of the character area, potentially resulting in inappropriate cut and fill construction techniques where steeper inclines are more prevalent.
- Contemporary architectural styles that do not appropriately respond to the remaining post-war dwellings within the area.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Emerging Contemporary Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN2 and EN5. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Emerging Contemporary Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Low.

A low sensitivity rating confirms that the Emerging Contemporary Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a substantial level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

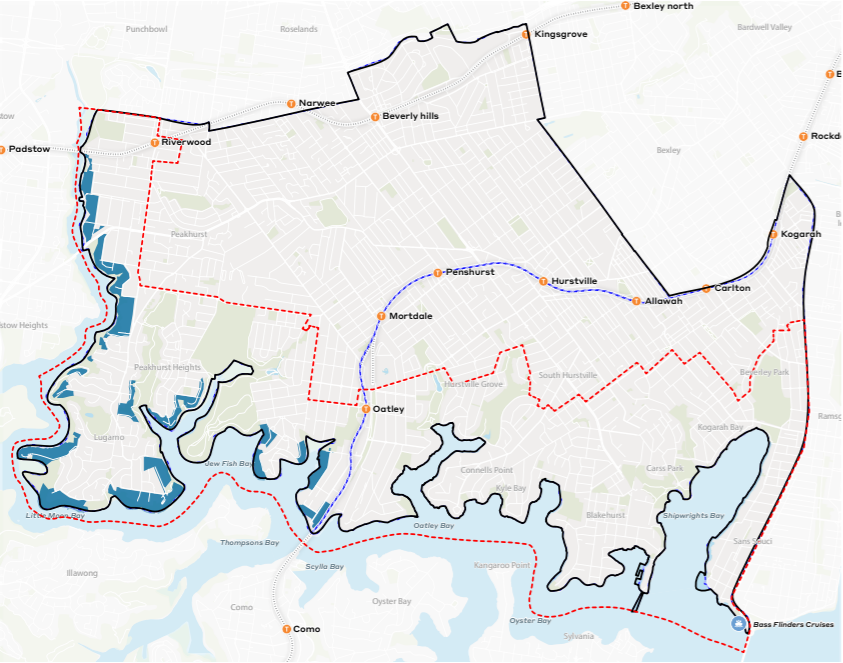


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Emerging Contemporary is Moderate.

Therefore, the Emerging Contemporary Character Area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	In part, the character area is illustrative of most other traditional residential areas within Greater Sydney, albeit with an increasingly modern and contemporary aesthetic quality. It is unique within it's neighbourhood context, but is similar in aesthetic value to other emerging residential areas across the region and state.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The character area represents a traditional suburban lifestyle that is typical of many residential developments across Greater Sydney, resonating with a large number of people. As this kind of association not unique to Georges River, the significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	Traditional residential areas such as Emerging Contemporary are common throughout Sydney. As such, this character type is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

RIVERS EDGE: Naturalistic



DESCRIPTION

This precinct is defined by its long, narrow lots, informal public realm and dense vegetation. The architectural style of dwellings in this precinct is generally modern, with an occasional contemporary development to be found throughout. Dwellings are built up to four storeys high in order to maximise river views from the tops of steep cliffs and ridgelines. Intermittent views to and across the river and surrounding landscape are afforded from the street. Views of dwellings from the river situated amongst dense vegetation and rocky cliffs.

Medium to high levels of vegetation is present within both the public and private realm. Irregular street tree planting as well as a general lack of footpaths contribute to an informal character.

Dwellings are often built to take advantage of the landscape too, sited on steep hills, with some dwellings sinking below the street with their roof lines at eye level.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Significant presence of canopy trees within the private realm, contributing substantially to the wider urban canopy coverage of Georges River. Retention of this attribute will also be integral to the preservation of the character area.
- Long, narrow battleaxe blocks that are present along the interface between residential land and the rivers edge, allowing for greater retention of remnant vegetation and increased planting.
- Steep, vegetated slopes from ridgelines down to the rivers edge, which afford glimpses of dwellings situated amongst dense vegetation when viewed from the river.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Predominantly modern and contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick and concrete
- Mix of hipped, gabled and flat roof forms
- Mix of two, three and four storey development
- Predominantly detached, single dwellings



Setbacks and Siting

- 1-3m front setbacks where street address is a garage structure built to boundary. 7-9m in other traditional lots.
- Battleaxe allotment at rear with a front-and-back subdivision pattern.
- 1m side setbacks
- Dwellings oriented towards the street, with many dwellings also having frontages to the river
- Parking structures vary depending on dwelling's siting on a lot. Mix of equal, forward and behind
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with mix of single and double width driveways. Occasional additional hardscaping for vehicle storage.



Fencing

- Varying fence styles ranging from 0 to 1.5m in height
- Mix of transparent and solid material



Vegetation

- Established gardens, with canopy trees



Geology

- Predominantly exposed rock and cliff edges



Topography

- Steep, particularly at river edges



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly curvilinear street network with occasional courts
- Footpaths generally not present
- High levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous sized, grassed street verges, appearing as an extension of a dwellings front setback.



Views to and from Area

- Intermittent views to river and surrounding landscape from streets at higher elevations. Views to river from most dwellings.
- Views of dwellings from the river situated amongst dense vegetation and rocky cliffs

THREATS AND RISKS

- Loss of existing canopy trees from front and back yards that are contributing significantly to the overall urban canopy coverage of Georges River.
- Loss of public realm vegetation.
- Subdivision of existing long and narrow battleaxe blocks fronting the rivers edge, resulting in increased built form densities and potential loss of vegetation in the private realm.
- Large scale built form that impacts on existing identified key views towards the river and surrounding reserves from public spaces.
- Intrusive contemporary development that impacts on existing identified key views and view lines of the character area when viewed from the river.
- Built form that does not respond appropriately to the steep topography of the character area, potentially resulting in inappropriate cut and fill construction techniques.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Rivers Edge Naturalistic Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4 and EN5. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Rivers Edge Naturalistic Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Medium.

A medium sensitivity rating confirms that the Rivers Edge Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a moderate level of change, provided that provisions are in place to protect the high levels of vegetation and respond to the topography of the area.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

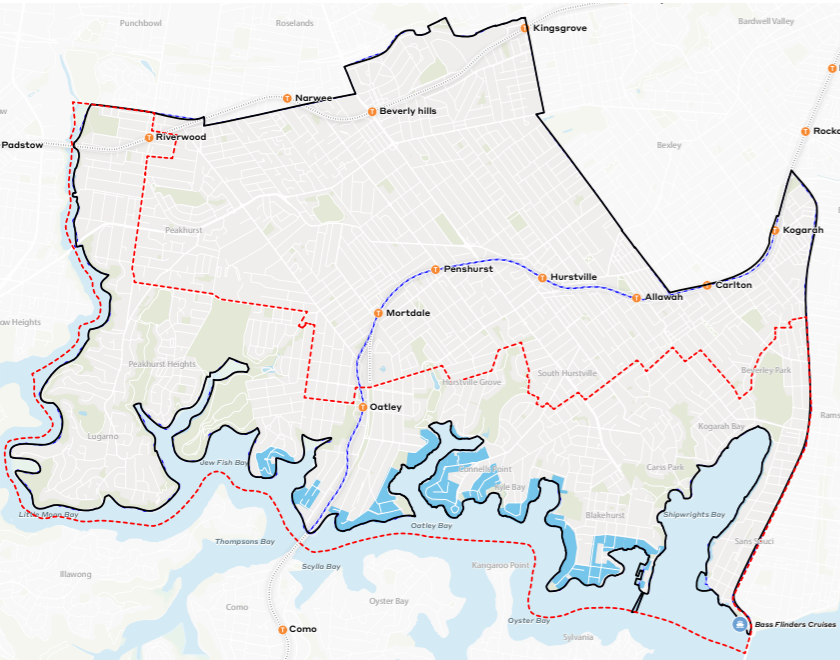


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Rivers Edge Naturalistic is High.

Therefore, the Rivers Edge Naturalistic Character Area is identified as having a regional level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area is significant due to the relationship between built form, vegetation and the topography that descends sharply towards the rivers edge. It is exemplary within it's neighbourhood context, and also is unique to Greater Sydney, with only a few other examples of similar aesthetic value present along river catchments. Therefore the area is considered to be of regional aesthetic significance.	High
Associative Significance	The presence of remnant vegetation has been identified as a highly valued quality of Georges River in both local policy and by the community. Existing vegetation within this area enhances its associative significance value.	High
Rarity	Residential areas along river edges are relatively uncommon, but do exist in certain locations throughout Sydney. As such, this character type is considered to be of regional significance.	High

RIVERS EDGE: Semi-Naturalistic



DESCRIPTION

This precinct is defined by its long, narrow lots and moderate levels of public and private realm vegetation coverage. The architectural style of dwellings in this precinct is a mix of both modern and contemporary development. Dwellings are built up to four storeys high in order to maximise river views from the tops of steep cliffs and ridgelines. Intermittent views to and across the river and surrounding landscape are afforded from the street. Dwellings are more prominent when viewed from the river, due to lower levels of vegetation and an increased prevalence of rocky outcrops.

Moderate levels of vegetation are present within both the public and private realm. Formalised footpaths and lower levels of irregular street tree planting contribute to a greater sense of formality in this area.

Dwellings are built to take advantage of the landscape, sited on steep hills, with some dwellings sinking below the street with their roof lines at eye level.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversity of modern and contemporary built form architectural styles across the character area. Opportunity for new dwellings to respond to a diversity of materials and built form elements through appropriate design.
- Significant presence of canopy trees within the private realm, contributing substantially to the wider urban canopy coverage of Georges River. Retention of this attribute will also be integral to the preservation of the character area.
- Long, narrow battleaxe blocks that are present along the interface between residential land and the rivers edge, allowing for greater retention of remnant vegetation and increased planting.
- Steep, vegetated slopes from ridgelines down to the rivers edge, which afford glimpses of dwellings situated amongst the existing vegetation and exposed rocky cliffs when viewed from the river.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Predominantly modern and contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick and concrete
- Mix of hipped, gabled and flat roof forms
- Mix of two, three and four storey development
- Predominantly detached, single dwellings



Setbacks and Siting

- 1-3m front setbacks where street address is a garage structure built to boundary. 7-9m in other traditional lots.
- Battleaxe allotment at rear with a front-and-back subdivision pattern.
- 1m side setbacks
- Dwellings oriented towards the street, with many dwellings also having frontages to the river
- Parking structures vary depending on dwelling's siting on a lot. Mix of equal, forward and behind
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with mix of single and double width driveways. Occasional additional hardscaping for vehicle storage.



Fencing

- Varying fence styles ranging from 0 to 1.5m in height
- Mix of transparent and solid material



Vegetation

- Established and formal gardens, with canopy trees



Geology

- Predominantly exposed rock and cliff edges



Topography

- Sloping to steep, particularly at river edges



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly curvilinear street network with occasional courts
- Footpaths generally not present
- Low to medium levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous sized, grassed street verges, appearing as an extension of a dwellings front setback.



Views to and from Area

- Intermittent views to river and surrounding landscape from streets at higher elevations. Views to river from most dwellings.
- Views of dwellings from the river are more dominant due to lower levels of vegetation

THREATS AND RISKS

- Loss of existing canopy trees from front and back yards that are contributing significantly to the overall urban canopy coverage of Georges River.
- Loss of public realm vegetation.
- Subdivision of existing long and narrow battleaxe blocks fronting the rivers edge, resulting in increased built form densities and potential loss of vegetation in the private realm.
- Large scale built form that impacts on existing identified key views towards the river and surrounding reserves from public spaces.
- Intrusive contemporary development that impacts on existing identified key views and view lines of the character area when viewed from the river.
- Built form that does not respond appropriately to the steep topography of the character area, potentially resulting in inappropriate cut and fill construction techniques.

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Rivers Edge Semi Naturalistic Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4 and EN5. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Rivers Edge Semi Naturalistic Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Medium.

A medium sensitivity rating confirms that the Rivers Edge Semi Naturalistic Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a moderate level of change, provided that provisions are in place to protect existing vegetation and respond to the topography of the area.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

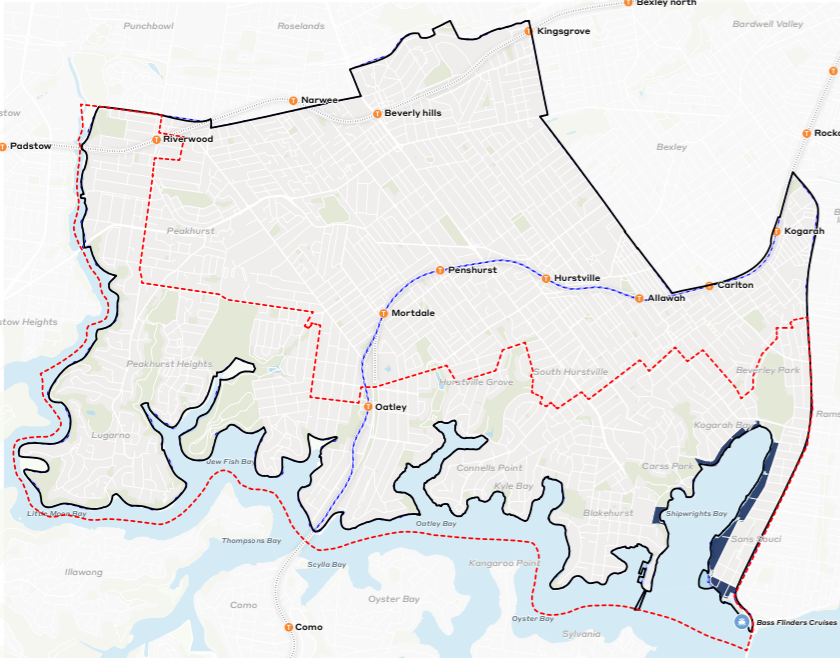


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Rivers Edge Semi-Naturalistic is High.

Therefore, the Rivers Edge Semi-Naturalistic Character Area is identified as having a regional level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area is significant due to the relationship between built form and the topography that descends sharply towards the rivers edge. It is exemplary within it's neighbourhood context, and also is unique to Greater Sydney, with only a few other examples of similar aesthetic value present along river catchments. Therefore the area is considered to be of regional aesthetic significance.	High
Associative Significance	The presence of remnant vegetation has been identified as a highly valued quality of Georges River in both local policy and by the community. Existing vegetation within this area enhances its associative significance value.	High
Rarity	Residential areas along river edges are relatively uncommon, but do exist in certain locations throughout Sydney. As such, this character type is considered to be of regional significance.	High

RIVERS EDGE: Contemporary



DESCRIPTION

This precinct is defined by a finer grain streetscape featuring lots that predominantly front the water. The area generally contains lower levels of public and private realm vegetation and the architectural style of dwellings in this precinct is predominantly contemporary. Dwellings are built up to four storeys high in order to maximise river views from their close position to the waterfront. Intermittent views to and across the river and surrounding landscape are afforded from the street. Dwellings are dominant when viewed from the river, due to low levels of vegetation and dwellings that are set primarily against the waterfront.

Lower levels of vegetation are present within both the public and private realm. Formalised footpaths and gardens contribute to a significant sense of formality in this area.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Prevalence of contemporary architectural styles and materials that are generally of a high quality.
- Formal, established gardens within the public realm.
- Generally consistent building orientation and siting, creating a sense of uniformity within streetscapes of the area.
- Clear views to Georges River from properties and streets located close to the waterfront.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Predominantly contemporary dwellings
- Mix of brick, concrete and glass
- Mix of hipped and flat roof forms
- Mix of two, three and four storey development
- Predominantly detached, single dwellings



Setbacks and Siting

- 1-3m front setbacks where street address is a garage structure built to boundary. 7-9m in other traditional lots.
- 1m side setbacks
- Dwellings oriented towards the street, with many dwellings also having frontages to the river
- Parking structures vary depending on dwelling's siting on a lot. Mix of equal, forward and behind
- Generally permeable front setbacks, with mix of single and double width driveways. Occasional additional hardscaping for vehicle storage.



Fencing

- Varying fence styles ranging from 0 to 1.5m in height
- Mix of transparent and solid material



Vegetation

- Low level, formal gardens, with canopy trees



Geology

- Occasional exposed rock



Topography

- Flat



Street Layout & Public Realm

- Predominantly curvilinear street network with occasional courts
- Footpaths generally on one side
- Low to medium levels of public landscaping
- Irregular street tree planting
- Generous sized, grassed street verges.



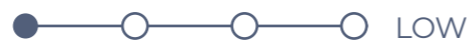
Views to and from Area

- Intermittent views to river down streets that terminate at the foreshore. Most dwellings feature clear views to the river.
- Views of dwellings from the river are prominent due to lower levels of vegetation

THREATS AND RISKS

- Loss of any existing trees that contribute to the wider urban canopy from the private realm, typically found in backyards within this character area.
- Intrusive contemporary development that impacts on existing identified key views and view lines of the character area when viewed from the river

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Rivers Edge Contemporary Character Typology is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN1 and EN2. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Rivers Edge Contemporary Character Typology.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Low.

A low sensitivity rating confirms that the Rivers Edge Contemporary Character Typology has the capacity to accommodate a substantial level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

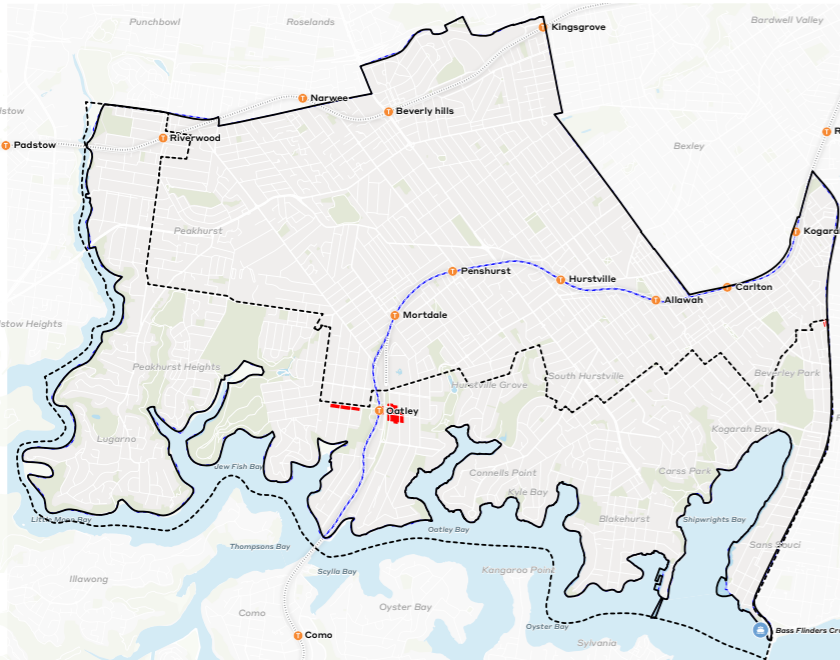


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Rivers Edge Contemporary is Moderate.

Therefore, the Rivers Edge Contemporary Character Area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The character area features highly prominent built form that extends to the rivers edge, set on mostly flat topography. It is exemplary within it's neighbourhood context, but is similar to other waterfront developments across Greater Sydney. Therefore the area is considered to be of neighbourhood aesthetic significance.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The character area represents a typical waterfront lifestyle that is present within many of Greater Sydney's suburbs. As this kind of association not unique to Georges River, the significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	Residential areas along river edges are relatively uncommon, but do exist in certain locations throughout Sydney. As such, this character type is considered to be of neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

HIGH STREET



DESCRIPTION

High Street areas comprises of medium to low scale buildings that are reflective of traditional early Twentieth Century High Street development patterns. This includes fine grain, narrow development with low hipped or flat roofs, and detailed facades. Buildings front the property boundary with at grade car parking located along the street. Built form is uniformly consistent with the use of materials that predominantly include brick, as well as the occasional example of painted concrete. Built form fronting High Street areas are generally two storeys in height, with some buildings appearing taller still due to the extended facades and detailing at upper levels. Footpaths are narrow and sheltered by awnings attached to the first floor of most buildings. Due to the dominance of built form and narrow setbacks, these areas feature no public realm or vegetation planting.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Prevalence of older style buildings with distinctive facades, contributing to a solid and uniform streetscape.
- Fine grain street interfaces, with shop fronts and clear glass to promote a sense of activity and transparency.
- Awnings that afford weather protection for pedestrians and on-street dining.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Predominantly brick and concrete materials
- Mix of inter-war, post-war and modern development
- No front or side setbacks
- Predominantly 2 storey building heights



Context and Setting

- Flat topography
- Sealed roads with kerb and channel drainage
- No provision of public space
- Views to vegetation and residential dwellings at end of commercial strip
- Interfaces predominantly with residential land



Public Realm

- Footpath present on both sides of the road
- Lighting generally attached to power lines or street light poles
- No verge, footpath on road.



Landscaping and Parking

- No formal landscaping
- No front fencing
- No permeable surfacing
- On-street car parking

THREATS AND RISKS

- Loss of older or heritage buildings within the streetscape
- Large scale, contemporary built form at greater heights with lack of upper level setbacks
- Use of contemporary building materials and design that do not reflect surrounding established built form
- Large obtrusive or illuminated promotional signage
- Consolidation of existing narrow lots

SENSITIVITY RATING



The High Street business area is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN5, EC1 and S2 . The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the High Street business area.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Medium.

A medium sensitivity rating confirms that the High Street business area has the capacity to accommodate a moderate level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

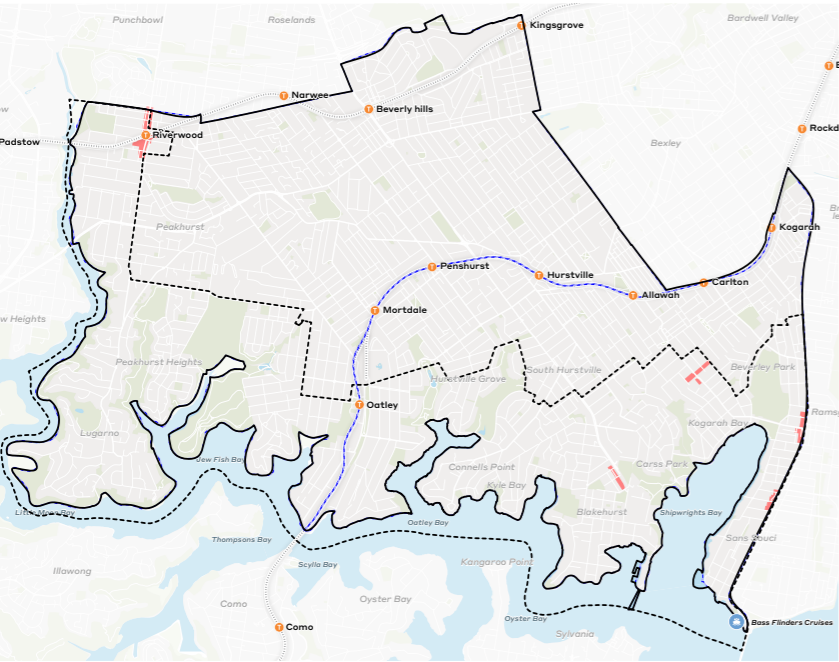


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for High Street areas is Moderate.

Therefore, the High Street business area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The uniform, heritage streetscapes of the High Street area are of aesthetic significance at the neighbourhood level, where they are an exemplary example of its type. However, High Street areas are common across Greater Sydney, and therefore of neighbourhood significance to Georges River.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The High Street area represents an historical style of commercial development that is typical of many areas across Greater Sydney. While of great significance to Georges River, the associative significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	Traditional High Street areas are common throughout Sydney and across other townships in the state of NSW. As such, this area is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

HIGH STREET MIX



DESCRIPTION

High Street Mix areas share many similarities with the High Street character area including fine grain streetscapes, narrow setbacks and consistent built form with detailed facades. The key difference within High Street Mix areas is the emerging contemporary apartment and commercial development that is beginning to replace older, more traditional High Street style development. Buildings front the property boundary with at grade car parking located along the street. Built form is less consistent in these areas, with the use of glass and steel in contemporary developments contrasting with the traditional brick and concrete developments. Built form fronting High Street Mix areas consist of older buildings up to two storeys in height, with new development occurring at three storeys and above. Footpaths are narrow and sheltered by awnings attached to the first floor of most buildings. Awnings are less common in contemporary developments. Due to the dominance of built form and narrow setbacks, these areas feature no public realm or vegetation planting.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- High levels of remaining older style buildings with distinctive facades, set amongst emerging contemporary development.
- Mix of wide and fine grain street interfaces, with shop fronts and clear glass to promote a sense of activity and transparency.
- Awnings that afford weather protection for pedestrians and on-street dining, also present in contemporary development.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Mix of brick, concrete, glass and steel materials
- Mix of inter-war, post-war, modern and emerging contemporary development
- No front or side setbacks
- Predominantly 2 storey building heights, contemporary development above 3 storeys



Public Realm

- Footpath present on both sides of the road
- Lighting generally attached to power lines or street light poles
- No verge, footpath on road.



Context and Setting

- Flat topography
- Sealed roads with kerb and channel drainage
- No provision of public space
- Views to vegetation and residential dwellings at end of commercial strip
- Interfaces predominantly with residential land



Landscaping and Parking

- No formal landscaping
- No front fencing
- No permeable surfacing
- On-street car parking

THREATS AND RISKS

- Further loss of older or heritage buildings within the streetscape
- Large scale, contemporary built form at greater heights with lack of upper level setbacks
- Apartment development with blank/inactive interfaces at street level
- Consolidation of remaining narrow lots
- Obtrusive signage and/or illuminated promotional signage as part of larger retail centre development

SENSITIVITY RATING



The High Street Mix business area is associated with a number of identified character values, including EC1 and S2 . The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the High Street Mix business area.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Low.

A low sensitivity rating confirms that the High Street Mix business area has the capacity to accommodate a substantial level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

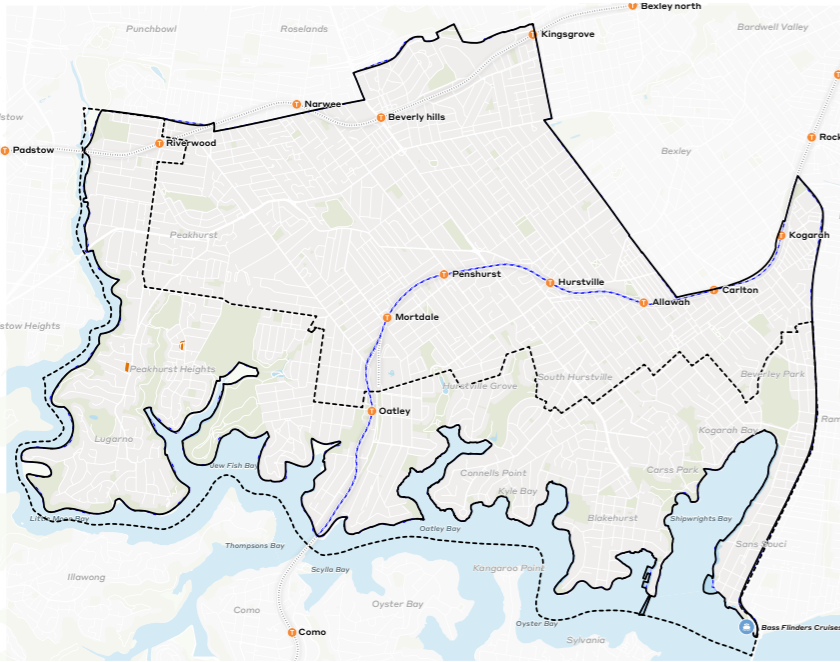


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for High Street Mix is Moderate.

Therefore, the High Street Mix business area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The heritage streetscapes mixed with emerging contemporary styles of the High Street Mix area are of aesthetic significance at the neighbourhood level, where they are an exemplary example of its type. However, High Street Mix areas are particularly common across fast-growing areas Greater Sydney, and therefore only of neighbourhood significance to Georges River.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The High Street Mix area represents a mix of commercial development that provides important services for many residents areas across Greater Sydney. Therefore, the associative significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	High Street Mix areas are common throughout Sydney and across other townships in the state of NSW. As such, this area is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE



DESCRIPTION

Neighbourhood Centre areas typically comprises of a mix of modern and occasional contemporary low scale buildings with formal landscaping and public realm improvements. These areas are defined by one sided street strip shopping with developments built to boundary allowing for on street parking. Built form appears generally consistent with flat roofs and retail facades, while use of materials can be mixed, including brick and painted concrete. Building heights generally range between one and two storeys. Footpaths are wide, allowing for public furniture and a mix of informal and formal plantings and native canopy trees.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Fine grain street interfaces, with shop fronts and clear glass to promote a sense of activity and transparency.
- Low to medium levels of vegetation and landscaping within the landscaped public spaces located in front of retail/commercial development.
- Awnings that afford weather protection for pedestrians and on-street dining, also present in contemporary development.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Predominantly brick and concrete materials
- Predominantly modern development
- No side setbacks, front setbacks between 3-6m accommodating landscaping and public space
- Mix of 1 and 2 storey building heights



Public Realm

- Footpath present on one side of the road
- Lighting generally attached to street light poles
- Generous verges, accommodating landscaping and public space.



Context and Setting

- Flat topography
- Sealed roads with kerb and channel drainage
- Views to vegetation and residential dwellings
- Interfaces predominantly with residential land



Landscaping and Parking

- Formal landscaping including canopy trees and other vegetation in front setback of development
- No front fencing
- Permeable surfacing including grassed areas and soil for vegetation planting
- On-street car parking

THREATS AND RISKS

- Large scale, contemporary built form at greater heights with lack of upper level setbacks
- Large obtrusive or illuminated promotional signage
- Consolidation of existing narrow lots
- Loss of canopy trees and other vegetation within the public realm
- Development overshadowing existing landscaped public spaces

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Neighbourhood Centre business area is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN2, EC1, S1 and S2 . The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Neighbourhood Centre business area.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Medium.

A moderate sensitivity rating confirms that the Neighbourhood Centre business area has the capacity to accommodate a moderate level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

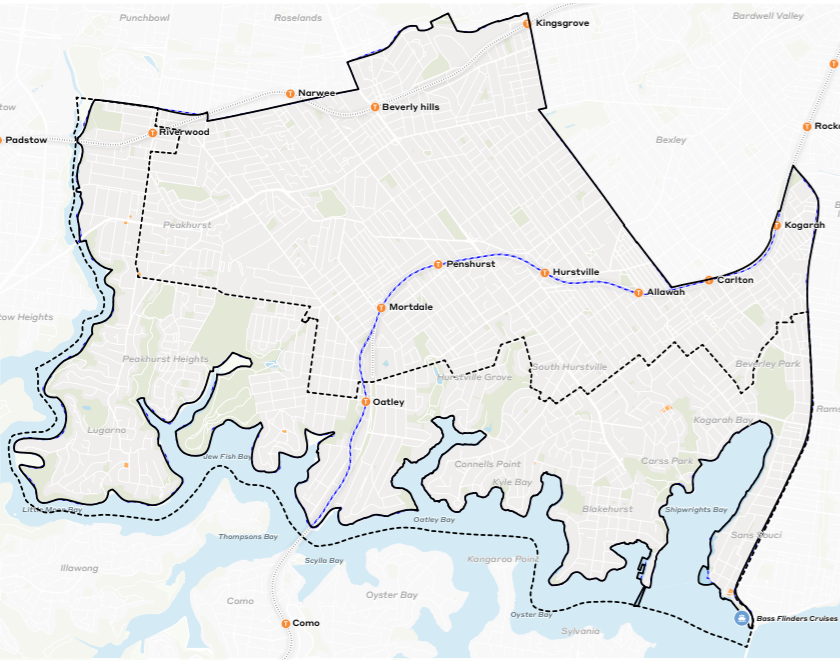


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Neighbourhood Centre areas is Moderate.

Therefore, the Neighbourhood Centre business area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The Neighbourhood Centre business area generally reflects a modern style of commercial development that is unique within the context of George’s River, but found in most other suburbs across Greater Sydney.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The Neighbourhood Centre area provides important services for many residents within Georges River. As such, the associative significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	Neighbourhood Centre areas are common throughout Sydney and across other townships in the state of NSW. As such, this area is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONVENIENCE



DESCRIPTION

Neighbourhood Convenience areas are typically comprised of low-scale buildings that are built to boundary with dedicated street parking located at the front of developments. Buildings are generally set back from the road to accommodate 90 degree parking spaces and pedestrian footpaths. Built form is generally consistent, featuring flat roofs, a mix of brick and painted concrete, with awnings over footpaths. Building heights within these areas are predominantly single storey. The era of development in these areas is predominantly modern, with simple facades that accommodate small retailers and commercial services. These areas feature little to no public realm or vegetation planting.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Fine grain street interfaces, with shop fronts and clear glass to promote a sense of activity and transparency.
- Awnings that afford weather protection for pedestrians and on-street dining.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Built Form

- Predominantly brick and concrete materials
- Predominantly modern development
- No side setbacks, front setbacks between 1-3m accommodating car parking spaces
- Mix of 1 and 2 storey building heights



Context and Setting

- Flat to sloping topography
- Sealed roads with kerb and channel drainage
- Views to vegetation and residential dwellings
- Interfaces predominantly with residential land and open spaces



Public Realm

- Footpath present on one side of the road
- Lighting generally attached to power lines or street light poles
- No verge, footpath on road.



Landscaping and Parking

- No formal landscaping
- No front fencing
- No permeable surfaces
- On-street car parking

THREATS AND RISKS

- Large scale, contemporary built form at greater heights with lack of upper level setbacks
- Large obtrusive or illuminated promotional signage
- Consolidation of existing narrow lots

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Neighbourhood Convenience business area is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN5 and EC1 . The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Neighbourhood Convenience business area.

Therefore, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Low.

A Low sensitivity rating confirms that the Neighbourhood Convenience business area has the capacity to accommodate a substantial level of change.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

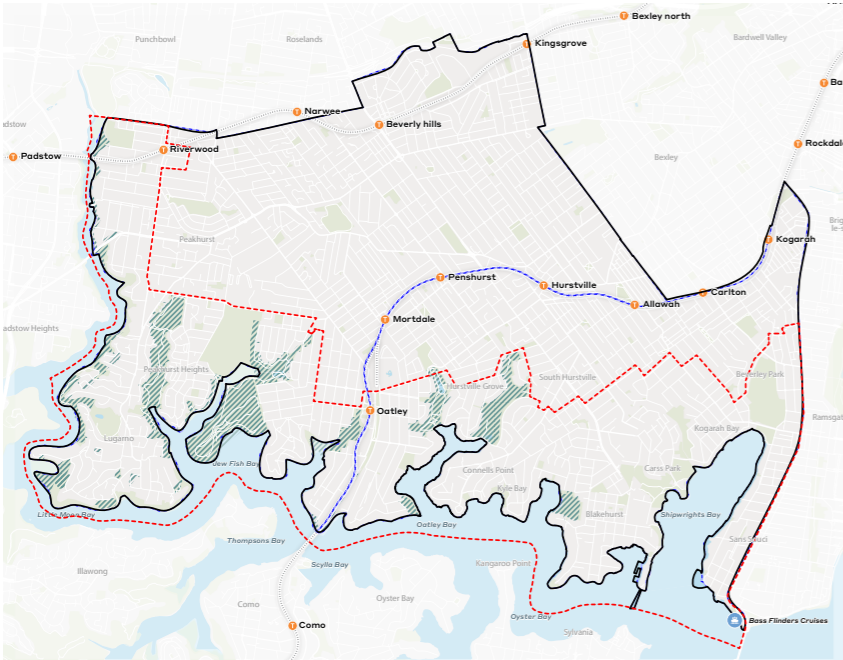


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Neighbourhood Convenience areas is Moderate.

Therefore, the Neighbourhood Convenience business area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The Neighbourhood Convenience business area generally reflects a modern style of commercial development and is unique within the context of George's River, but found can also be found in most other suburbs across Greater Sydney.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The Neighbourhood Convenience area provides important services for many residents within Georges River. As such, the associative significance is considered to be at a neighbourhood level.	Moderate
Rarity	Neighbourhood Convenience areas are common throughout Sydney and across other townships in the state of NSW. As such, this area is considered to be of moderate neighbourhood significance.	Moderate

OPEN SPACE: NATURALISTIC



DESCRIPTION

Open Space: Naturalistic areas consist predominantly of highly vegetated, passive open spaces with limited to no facilities present. Vegetation within these areas generally includes high levels of ground cover vegetation including bushes and grass, as well as a significant number of canopy trees that contribute to the overall character of Georges River. Vegetation includes examples of Coastal Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Swamp Sclerophyll Forest in central and western areas. These areas are also often located along ridgelines within close proximity to, or abutting Georges River.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Significant levels of vegetation that contribute to the wider Georges River canopy coverage.
- Examples of threatened vegetation communities within some parts of the character area, including Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest.
- Interfaces with the Georges River and provides a buffer between the river and urban development.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Use

- Predominantly passive open spaces, occasional pathways and chairs. Generally no facilities.



Vegetation

- High level vegetation including significant ground cover and canopy trees.
- Examples of Coastal Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Swamp Sclerophyll Forest in central and western areas.



Topography

- Steep to sloping where located along ridgelines.



Views

- Intermittent views to river and surrounding landscape, including dwellings located in areas of higher topography.

THREATS AND RISKS

- Loss of high levels of vegetation within the public realm
- Loss of the identified examples of threatened Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Plains, Coastal Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest and Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest
- Large scale development that would block existing views from the open space area
- Poor management of public realm landscaping

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Open Space Naturalistic area is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN1, EN2, EN3, EN4 and S1. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Open Space Naturalistic area.

Based on the methodology outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be Medium. However, as the identified values table on page 31 includes values such as built form and employment opportunities that are not inherent to the nature of open spaces, our professional judgement is that the area should be considered to be of **Very High** sensitivity.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING

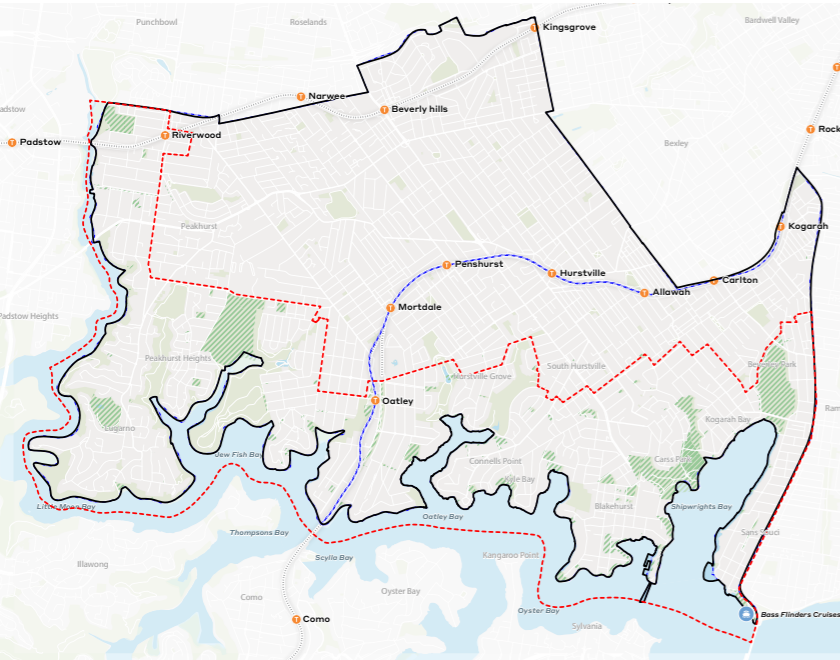


Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Open Space Naturalistic areas is High.

Therefore, the Open Space Naturalistic area is identified as having a regional level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The Open Space Naturalistic area generally reflects a densely vegetated open space setting of high environmental significance. Additionally, the area is not only unique within the context of George's River, but is also relatively unique across all suburbs of Greater Sydney.	High.
Associative Significance	The Open Space Naturalistic Area is highly valued by residents of Georges River and is clearly identified as being integral to the character of Georges River within local policy. As such, the associative significance is considered to be at a regional level.	High
Rarity	Open Space Naturalistic areas are considered to be relatively uncommon across both Greater Sydney and the State of New South Wales. As such, this area is considered to be of high regional significance.	High

OPEN SPACE: SEMI NATURALISTIC



DESCRIPTION

Open Space: Semi Naturalistic areas consist predominantly of well vegetated, passive and active open spaces that generally include community facilities such as sports grounds and boating ramps. Vegetation within theses areas generally includes medium to high levels of vegetation generally consisting of canopy trees as vast grassy fields. Vegetation includes examples of Coastal Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Swamp Sclerophyll Forest in central and western areas These areas are often landlocked, but can also be located along an interface with Georges River.

POSITIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Significant levels of vegetation that contribute to the wider Georges River canopy coverage.
- Examples of threatened vegetation communities within some parts of the character area, including Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Floodplains, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest.
- Provides extra amenity to residents and visitors through the provision of community facilities.

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES



Use

- Mix of active and passive open spaces, including outdoor furniture, gym equipment and sporting facilities among other things.



Topography

- Flat to occasionally sloping topography where the open space abuts the foreshore.



Vegetation

- Medium to high level vegetation including ground cover and canopy trees.
- Examples of Coastal Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest, Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest and Swamp Sclerophyll Forest in central and western areas.



Views

- Intermittent views to river in locations abutting the foreshore

THREATS AND RISKS

- Loss of vegetation within the public realm
- Loss of the identified examples of threatened Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on Coastal Plains, Coastal Enriched Sandstone Dry Forest and Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest
- Large scale development that would block existing views from the open space area
- Poor management of public realm landscaping

SENSITIVITY RATING



The Open Space Semi Naturalistic area is associated with a number of identified character values, including EN1, EN2, EN4 and S1. The threats associated with each value are consistent with the threats that have been identified as being specific to the Open Space Semi Naturalistic area.

Based on the methodology outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be medium. However, as the identified values table on page 31 includes values such as built form and employment opportunities that are not inherent to the nature of open spaces, our professional judgement is that the area should be considered to be of **High** sensitivity.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING



Based on the significance assessment outlined in the table opposite, the overall significance rating for Open Space Semi Naturalistic areas is Moderate.

Therefore, the Open Space Semi Naturalistic area is identified as having a neighbourhood level of significance.

Aesthetic Value	Assessment of Significance	Level of Significance
Aesthetic Significance	The Open Space Semi Naturalistic area generally reflects a well vegetated open space setting of moderate environmental significance. The area is unique within the context of George's River, but is relatively common across suburbs of Greater Sydney.	Moderate
Associative Significance	The Open Space Semi Naturalistic Area is highly valued by residents of Georges River but is not necessarily recognised by residents across other areas of Greater Sydney or New South Wales. As such, the associative significance is considered to be at a local.	Moderate
Rarity	Open Space Semi Naturalistic areas are considered to be relatively common across both Greater Sydney and the State of New South Wales. As such, this area is considered to be of moderate local significance.	Moderate

Character Threats and Risks

In order to determine appropriate implementation methods, the key character issues applicable to the Study areas need to be considered.

The common characteristics and attributes of the character areas that are considered as having a High or Very High sensitivity rating are high levels of tree coverage, steep or undulating terrain with distinctive ridgelines, all with minimal visible built form. These areas generally have an interface with the Georges River and are predominantly located to the west of the Study area.

Character areas to the east of Tom Ugly’s Bridge are largely assessed as having a lower sensitivity rating. This is due to the flatter topography, existing level of contemporary development, lower vegetation coverage, dominant built form character and an existing edge condition consisting of jetties and marina infrastructure.

The most common threats to the areas considered of high landscape and local character value, are discussed below.

Contemporary Infill

Infill buildings have played a major part in the level of change experienced throughout the Study area. Infill has occurred primarily in the form of:

- Replacement houses
- Subdivision of sites
- Infill buildings/dwellings towards the rear of existing ones

Loss of Vegetation and Landscaping

Vegetation and landscaping are central elements for determining an area's character.

This relates to existing vegetation, including:

- The public and private realm
- The landscaping of individual gardens
- The cumulative effect of landscaping across an entire area

Across the Study area, vegetation is predominantly informally planted native trees and shrubs, canopy trees and low lying bush. There is also remnant native vegetation within public reserves.

A key threat to local character is the loss of vegetation in private gardens and the public realm, and its replacement with larger scale development or non-permeable hardscaping such as paving. In addition, existing landscape character is undermined by new development that does not provide adequate garden space for the planting of new vegetation, replanting of native species or canopy trees, which require deep soil and space for roots to grow.

Loss of Vegetation and Landscaping

Subdivision of lots has been prevalent in residential areas across Georges River. Subdivision of lots is typically in conjunction with vegetation removal and ‘moonscaping’, to maximise the development yield of sites for medium density dwellings. Subdivision of larger lots throughout the Study area has a direct impact on local character due to:

- Reduced building separation and setbacks
- Tree clearing to allow for larger scale development
- Limited retention of significant trees
- Limited provision of space for deep soil planting and canopy trees

Siting and Scale

In terms of character, it is considered important for new developments to differ in detailed design elements, while respecting the form, siting, scale and vegetation coverage of existing dwellings in a streetscape or character area. The scale and siting of dwellings on their lot has a significant influence on the character of a streetscape. In areas with consistent local character, dwellings will generally follow a typical pattern to the rest of the streetscape and will conform to similar building envelopes. New developments with substantially reduced front and side setbacks interrupt the established pattern of streets and increases the built form enclosure of the street.

Fencing

The treatment of front and side boundaries varies throughout the Study area, with many areas predominantly having no front fencing or fences that either allow views to the front garden or dwelling, vegetation as a border treatment or open frontages. All of these boundary characteristics result in an open or vegetation-dominated atmosphere where fences are a less prominent feature.

Colours and Materials

Consistency of colours and materials is a vital part of the character of some areas of Georges River. Colour palettes of some contemporary designs cause the built form to stand out from their surroundings, rather than blending in with them.

Materials used across the Study area are varied, ranging from brick and concrete/render combinations to occasional examples of timber/ weatherboard.



Figure 29. Residential Development in Georges River



Figure 30. Residential Development in Georges River

Significance and Sensitivity

The table below outlines a summary of the Sensitivity and Significance ratings for all Residential, Business and Open Space character areas as detailed throughout this section.

Character Area	Sensitivity Rating	Significance Rating	Visible from Georges River?	Scenic Character Attributes
Garden Suburban Naturalistic	Medium	High	Yes, in part	Medium-high
Garden Suburban Traditional	Low	Moderate	Generally not visible	Low
Garden Suburban Medium Density	Low	Moderate	Generally not visible	Low
Bush Suburban	Medium	High	Yes, in part	Medium-high
Garden Court	Low	Moderate	Yes, in part	Low-medium
Emerging Contemporary	Low	Moderate	Yes, in part	Low-medium
Rivers Edge Naturalistic	Medium	High	Yes	High
Rivers Edge Semi Naturalistic	Medium	High	Yes	Medium-high
Rivers Edge Contemporary	Low	Moderate	Yes	Low
High Street	Medium	Moderate	Generally not visible	Low
High Street Mix	Low	Moderate	Generally not visible	Low
Neighbourhood Centre	Medium	Moderate	Generally not visible	Low
Neighbourhood Convenience	Low	Moderate	Generally not visible	Low
Open Space Naturalistic	Very High	High	Yes, in part	High
Open Space Semi Naturalistic	High	Moderate	Yes, in part	Low-medium

This shows that based on technical factors, the following typologies and precincts warrant consideration of greater protection in local planning policy based on scenic character:

- River Edge Naturalistic (sensitivity and significance)
- River Edge Semi Naturalistic (sensitivity and significance)
- Public Open Space Naturalistic (sensitivity and significance)
- Public Open Space Semi Naturalistic (sensitivity).

It shows that the following warrant consideration of greater protection in local planning policy based on local character:

- Garden Suburban Naturalistic (sensitivity and significance)
- Bush Suburban (sensitivity and significance)
- Rivers Edge – Contemporary (significance – rarity).

It shows that while of value, the following are unlikely to warrant consideration of greater protection in local planning policy on the basis of scenic character or local character, unless based on non-technical matters such as community preference:

- Garden Suburban Traditional
- Garden Suburban Medium Density
- Garden Court
- Emerging Contemporary
- Contemporary
- High Street
- High Street Mix
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Neighbourhood Convenience.

Local character controls will be applicable to each area in the DCP.

An aerial photograph showing a wide river flowing through a lush, green landscape. The river is surrounded by dense forests and some residential areas. The water is a deep green color, and the surrounding land is covered in thick vegetation. The sky is not visible, but the overall scene is bright and clear.

Georges River Strategic Directions Paper

PART D

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED LOCAL PLANNING POLICY RESPONSE

Toward an Integrated Local Planning Policy Response

Introduction

This section of the Study synthesises the findings of Part 1 – the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area and Part 2 – Local Character into local planning policy recommendations for Council’s consideration.

The Foreshore Scenic Protection Area

Continued appropriateness

The Foreshore Strategic Directions Paper and this Study have shown that parts of the Study Area have scenic character derived from characteristics such as a visual dominance of natural elements over built elements. When assessed against criteria such as representativeness and rarity, it is considered that these areas are of regional significance. Both studies have also shown that this scenic character is subject to threats such as tree clearing and larger scale development. On this basis, it is considered local planning provisions in addition to principal development standards are warranted.

Consistent with this, it is recommended that Council maintain the FSPA. It is further recommended that it be retained as an Additional Local Provision within the GRLEP2021 containing a map and supporting text that is to be taken into account by Council when assessing DAs.

Due to the complexity and variability of scenic character, it is appropriate that the text be performance based as opposed to prescriptive. The current nature of the provisions, which comprise a set of considerations as opposed to prohibitions and numerical controls, is consistent with this intent.

The relationship of the FSPA to more restrictive parts of the LEP where it functions as a trigger, including minimum lot size for subdivision and the assessment process for lower impact development, is discussed later in this part.

Role

As has been noted, the role of the FSPA is to protect the scenic character of the Georges River, including its foreshore.

Overall, the existing FSPA sub-clauses in the GRLEP2021 is sound as they address key scenic character attributes. Given this, and the preference to where possible avoid further substantial changes, it is suggested that a possible clause in the GRLEP2021 may resemble that in the break out box. Council is concurrently considering additional stronger protections for Biodiversity in the LEP, as a separate piece of work.

6.7 Foreshore scenic protection area

(1) The objectives of this clause are:

- (a) to protect, maintain and improve the scenic character of the Georges River foreshore,
- (b) to protect, maintain and improve significant views to and from the Georges River,
- (c) to reinforce and improve the dominance of landscape over built form, hard surfaces and cut and fill,
- (d) to enhance existing environmental, social and character values of the foreshore.

(2) This clause applies to land identified as “Foreshore scenic protection area” on the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area Map.

(3) Before determining a development application for development on land to which this clause applies, the consent authority is satisfied that the development facilitates the following:

- (a) protection of the natural environment, including topography, rock formations, canopy vegetation or other significant vegetation,
- (b) avoidance of clearing steep slopes and facilitation of the stability of the land,
- (c) minimising the height and bulk by stepping the development to accommodate the fall in the land,
- (d) minimising impact on the views and visual environment, including views to and from the Georges River, foreshore reserves, residential areas and public places
- (e) compatibility with desired future local character, including the interrelationship between elements in the public and private domains such as buildings, open space and vegetation.

Extent

This Study has shown that the proposed extent under the GRLEP2021 do not align with the two determinative factors of visibility and scenic character.

As has been discussed in this Study, visibility is considered to comprise two aspects:

- It is visible from the river and / or its foreshores; and
- due to factors such as distance and zoning, there is a threat of inappropriate development being highly visible from the river and / or its foreshores.

Scenic character is considered to be land that has a naturalistic character, in particular through a dominance of visual dominance of natural elements over built elements.

On this basis, it is recommended that the FSPA cover the area shown in Figure 31.

This extent is:

- reduced in size within the former Hurstville LGA compared to the existing extent of the FSPA under the GRLEP2021, removing areas further away from the river on the basis of visibility
- Amended in size within the former Kogarah LGA compared to the proposed extent of the FSPA under the GRLEP2021, removing areas around Kogarah Bay that do not exhibit scenic character, and including those that do (e.g. some open spaces).

As has been noted, parts of areas that are proposed to be excluded will be included in the GRDCP2021 as areas of unique character.

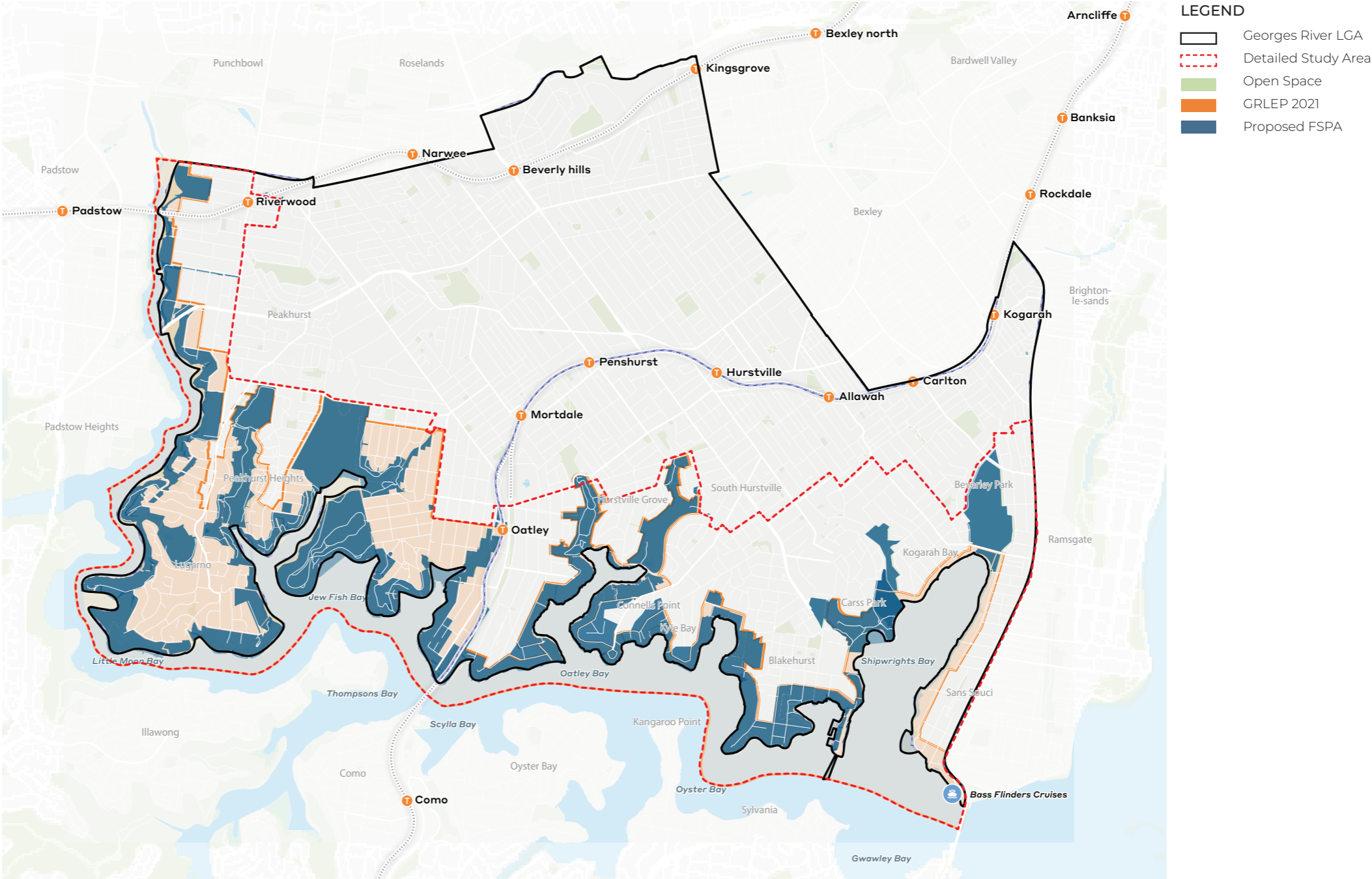


Figure 31. Proposed FSPA

It is recommended that provisions for local character areas be included in the Georges River DCP2021. In addition to the proposed inclusion of character areas within the revised FSPA boundary, this Study also recommends that character based provisions are included in the Georges River DCP2021 for:

- Recommended amendment to the GRDCP2021 to further support local character include:

- Inclusion in the DCP of specific local character statements and design provisions will support the proposed amendments to the FSPA boundary by ensuring that the character of local areas that are proposed to be outside the FSPA is still considered in the design and assessment of development applications.

Legend

- Garden Suburban - Naturalistic
- Bush Suburban
- Rivers Edge - Naturalistic
- Rivers Edge - Semi Naturalistic
- Rivers Edge - Contemporary

Open Spaces

- Naturalistic
- Semi Naturalistic

80

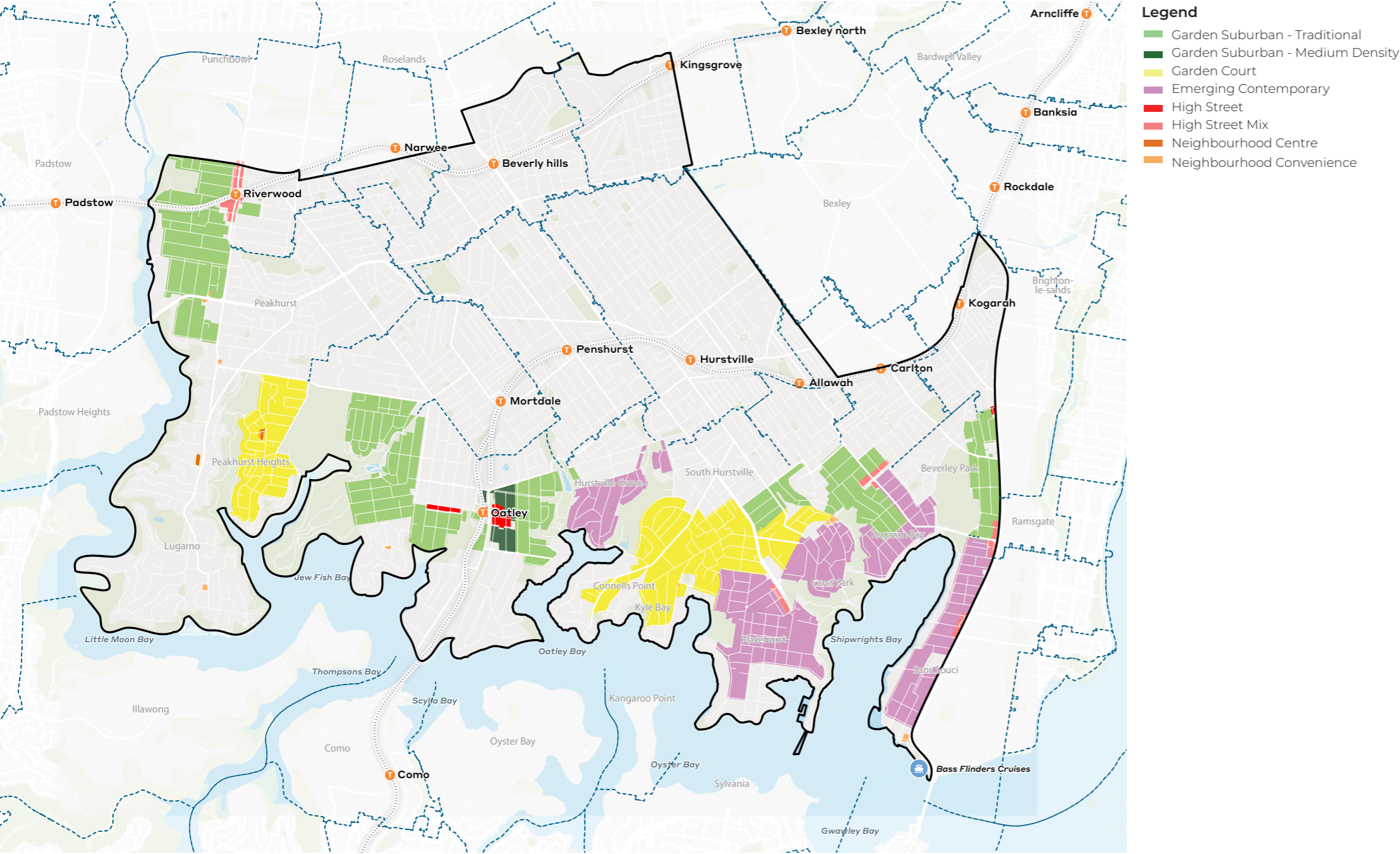


Figure 33. Part 5 Residential Locality Statements, revised Local Character Areas

Addressing biodiversity

Detailed provisions for vegetation are suggested to be removed, provided that Council adopt a new biodiversity overlay. It is noted that reference to trees and vegetation in their contribution to scenic character will be retained in the FSPA clause.

Alignment of terminology

Slight adjustment to terminology, including amending “scenic amenity” to “scenic character” and “neighbourhood character” to “local character” are suggested to better align the wording of the clause to the findings of this Study.

Further guidance in the GRDCP

To support the proposed GRLEP2021 provisions, it is recommended that additional guidance be included in the new GRDCP2021.

It is also recommended that Council consider including in the GRDCP a requirement that DAs submitted for proposals in the FSPA include a visual impact assessment, which in relation to impact on views obtained from the private domain addresses *Tenacity Consulting v Waringah* [2004] NSWLEC 140 and in relation to impacts on view obtained from the public domain addresses a recognised standard commonly used in Australia such as the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3). This requirement should be included in the DA checklist.

Zoning

While more recently expanding to encompass a broader range of matters, the focus of zoning has traditionally been on land use. On this basis, changing the zone of land can have a significant impact on a person’s ability to use their land. The majority of privately owned land in the FSPA is included in the R2 Low Density Residential zone (the R2 zone). Most publicly owned land, including parks and reserves, is included in the RE1 Public Recreation zone (the RE1 zone). Smaller areas are included in other zones, including the R3 Medium Density Residential (the R3 zone) and E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves (the E1 zone). The GRLEP2021 proposed to retain this overall pattern.

Consideration was given to this as well as other potential alternative zones available under the Standard Instrument, most notably the E4 Environmental Living zone (the E4 zone). Subject to other provisions, it is suggested that the current zoning pattern is the most appropriate to achieve a balance between protecting the scenic character of the FSPA and enabling reasonable, appropriate development to occur. In particular, the proposed objectives of the R2 zone require development ‘to promote a high standard of urban design and built form within a landscaped setting that enhances the local character of the suburb and achieves a high level of residential amenity. This is considered to clearly and succinctly articulate a key outcome sought for the FSPA.

The R2 zone is a closed zone. This means that unless a use is listed as being permissible, it is prohibited. It limits permissible development to low density uses such as dwelling house and dual occupancies and other uses that provide for the day to day needs of residents such as centre-based child care facilities. It also allows for jetties. These uses are broadly compatible with the scenic character of the FSPA.

By comparison, while the objectives of the E4 zone are aligned with the protection of scenic character, it is considered to unreasonably restrict land use permissibility. The only permissible residential use in dwelling houses. Due to it also being a closed zone, dual occupancies and jetties are prohibited.

The existing recreation and environmental zones are appropriate, having objectives and allowing uses that are broadly compatible with the scenic character of the FSPA. While an alternative zone is more appropriate for certain areas of land included in the R4 zone adjoining the river, it is acknowledged that this land is already largely developed or in an advanced stage of development, and can be considered to both represent a small cluster of land. On this basis, its zoning is acceptable.

Other provisions

It is noted that the under the GRLEP2021 Council has proposed additional restrictions on subdivision for dual occupancies and requirements for greater landscaped area and design excellence within the FSPA. This is considered appropriate for the recommended revised and smaller FSPA.

While this Study recommends that minimum subdivision lot size controls do not change to reflect changes in the boundary of the FSPA, there may be locality specific justifications for amending minimum lot size controls in certain parts of the study area. Council has indicated that any consideration of changes to minimum lot size controls in areas that are proposed to no longer be within the FSPA will be informed by consultation and community feedback during exhibition of proposed LEP amendments arising from this Study.

However, as the FSPA boundary is proposed to change, the provisions of Clause 4.1B that relate to minimum lot sizes for dual occupancies in the FSPA also need to be amended. It is recommended to amend the minimum lot size for dual occupancies in those areas that are proposed to be removed from the FSPA, to retain a minimum lot size of 1000sqm (for land where the minimum subdivision lot size under clause 4.1 is 700sqm).

Caution is urged in applying design excellence to smaller scale, lower impact and compliant uses in the FSPA. In turn it is recommended that Clause 6.10 be amended to consider visual amenity and visual impacts when viewed from the foreshore and waterway of the Georges River.

Other provisions

As discussed in Chapter 1 “Introduction”, the FSPA also “triggers” a number of variations to standard development controls in other parts of the GRLEP2021.

These provisions have been reviewed for appropriateness to the proposed FSPA and the character locality provisions recommended for inclusion in GRDCP2021.

Appropriateness for the proposed FSPA

Overall, it is considered that these provisions achieve an appropriate balance between enabling reasonable development and protecting the scenic character of the FSPA.

While requiring design excellence can at times add complexity to the development application process, in this instance it is considered appropriate due to:

- The nature of development occurring in the FSPA and foreshore parts of the Study Area more generally
- The sensitivity of the FSPA to this development
- The overall intent of the provisions that seek a considered response to context.

It is recommended that Council also consider adding specific reference to the objectives of the FSPA in the list of matters required to be addressed.

Proposed local character provisions

Overall, it is considered that these provisions also achieve an appropriate balance between enabling reasonable development and protecting key characteristics of the areas of unique character.

Large, spacious lots are characteristic of the Bush Suburban precinct. On this basis it is recommended that existing requirements for larger lot sizes be retained.

In the Garden Suburban Naturalistic precinct, it is recommended that larger lot sizes are retained in order to preserve the high levels of vegetation planting that is a defining feature of the local character area.

While dual occupancies are not characteristic of the FSPA, they are not considered fundamentally incompatible with its character. Allowing their development but restricting their prevalence through larger lot size in accordance with existing provisions is therefore appropriate. On this basis, it is suggested that Council consider retaining the proposed provisions for the Bush Suburban and Garden Suburban Naturalistic area.

Exclusion from the FSPA will result in the design excellence no longer being a relevant matter for development assessment in the area. While caution is typically expressed in the application of design excellence to all but the highest impact uses, in this instance the nature of the proposed clause only requires consideration of additional matters and does not involve design competitions and other onerous processes as seen in some other LGAs. The matters themselves are mainly focussed on context responsive design.

Review of urban canopy has shown that the area is generally subject to a higher amount of trees and other large vegetation than other parts of the LGA. On this basis, a 5% larger landscaped areas is appropriate.

The Low Rise Housing Diversity Code

Consideration of excluding the Low Rise Housing Diversity Code (the LRHDC) to the FSPA requires additional assessment under the Department’s local character guidance including matters such as housing need and supply. As such, it is outside the scope of this project.

It is noted that the Department states that “exemptions from the LRHDC should not be based on local character alone”.

Based on technical matters, it is suggested that there is sufficient merit in seeking an exemption from the LRHDC for the proposed FSPA. The characteristics and significance of the FSPA has already been addressed in this Study. In particular, the FSPA is considered of importance for matters of scenic character, which while related, is ultimately separate to local character. Reasons for this include:

- being of a standard nature, the provisions are in general not sufficiently responsive to the nature of the FSPA
- the FSPA is not identified in the LSPS as a preferred location for future housing growth, is included mainly in the R2 Low density residential zone which limits incremental growth and does not include large, unconstrained sites that are suitable for renewal despite these factors. On this basis, it is unlikely to make a significant contribution to future dwelling supply or diversity.

This does not mean that development will not be allowed in the FSPA. It simply means that the complying development pathway is not available, and DAs must instead be made to Council as is the case for many other uses in the LGA and that this DA will be assessed against the FSPA provisions.

While noting there are certainly grounds for support, on balance and based on the information derived for this study it is not considered that there is not sufficient weight to justify an exemption from the LRHDC for the proposed local character areas, subject to the introduction of a biodiversity overlay to protect trees and vegetation. However, as noted, this matter is subject to subsequent, separate Council review.