

## Urban Design



# Urban Design Report

5 December 2007





## Introduction

The Pacific Pines estate site is located to the south of Lennox Head Village. The site shares boundaries with existing residential developments and the Ballina Nature reserve to the west. The site has frontage to North Creek Road, Montwood Drive, Fox Valley Way, Stoneyhurst Drive and Hutley Drive, part of which has been dedicated by Council but not yet constructed.

Parts of the site enjoy views to the northern end of Seven Mile Beach and Alstonville Plateau.



*Aerial perspective of existing site*

## Design Objectives

The following broad objectives of the Pacific Pines site are as follows:

- A focal point of the valley;
- Incorporation of an innovative, high quality Retirement Community;
- Integration with existing surrounds;
- Optimise routes for walking, cycling and buses
- Ensuring the environmental features are protected and enhanced;
- Street and drainage network to better fit with natural slopes and valley lines;
- Provision of community and other facilities; and
- Preparation of housing design principles that will create a special coastal Lennox Head character for the development.

## Issues & Opportunities

### Topography and Slope Constraints

The undulating slope of the site is a significant physical constraint. Incorporation of house design codes to respond to the steep slopes will be essential to creating an attractive and sustainable neighbourhood.

### Site Drainage and Flooding

The Pacific Pines land is constrained by stormwater flows, drainage and some flooding issues.



*View from pond to Norfolk Pines*

### Parks and Green Links

The site accommodates a range of indigenous and remnant vegetation. This provides a significant opportunity for new development to preserve and

complement the rural and natural characteristics of the locality through retention, rehabilitation and management of sensitive corridors, open space networks and landscaping. Whilst the green links will provide habitat for native animal species, the inclusion of adequate park areas will offer families attractive opportunities for recreation and contribute to a sense of place.



*View through figs to pond*

## Coastal Building Design & Character

Significant opportunity exists to provide high quality built form outcomes which reflect, preserve and enhance the unique coastal character of Lennox Head.



*Townhouses at Angels Beach*



*House at Pacific Pines*

## Retirement & Downsizing

There is an immediate opportunity to provide a dedicated aged care / retirement living option, which supports local demand for senior living options and ageing in place.

There is also the opportunity for development of a range of community facilities, including Community Hall and childcare facilities in addition to the well publicised issue of the sporting and recreational facilities.



Dwelling Types and Diversity

Large separate houses dominate the Lennox Head landscape, however research shows smaller dwellings are becoming increasingly popular and the preference for 2-storey living is declining. There is a need to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to better cater for the changing demographic and dwelling demands.

There is also a need to provide a diverse range of housing types and styles including smaller more affordable products, including villa and courtyard homes.

Overall Master Plan

The key elements of the Pacific Pines Concept Plan include a Neighbourhood Centre next to Hutley Drive and an integrated Retirement Community east of the pond. The Pacific Pines community will be connected to surrounding areas by five streets: Hutley Drive north, Hutley Drive south, Montwood Drive, Stoneyhurst Drive and the future connection to Henderson Farm, which may connect through to Ross Lane. The residential street network is highly interconnected, and most streets run down-slope to the Centre, ensuring easy walking access.

The **Neighbourhood Centre** is designed as a Main Street, and will have shopping, small businesses, medical centre, leisure, community and retirement facilities clustering around the pond. The Centre is within walking distance of most future residents. (The dashed line shows areas within a five minute walk of the Centre). Many residents will enjoy views down their streets to the Centre and pond, as well as distant views to the west past Henderson Farm and the North Creek Wetlands.

The **sportsfields** (currently under construction) will be completed and enhanced. Existing natural **habitats** are protected, and a new brook flows through the Retirement Community, linking the existing lines of remnant native bush in the east, and a natural spring, to the pond. Two lovely copses of fig trees are protected in their own **parks**, generally framed by slow-speed streets, and overlooked by houses.

The **Retirement Community** is on relatively flat ground at the base of the amphitheatre, and contains highly walkable slow-speed streets, which integrate with the rest of the development. The Retirement Community facilities, apartments and an Assisted Living Centre directly front the boardwalk around the pond.

Most of the site is to be **residential**. The yellow-coloured street blocks have detached houses on lots of around 600-800sqm. The central residential precinct, (orange areas north of the centre) feature smaller, centrally-located homes, for people who choose to do less gardening, and prefer to live close to this quiet attractive Centre.

Natural features within this amphitheatre define the different **residential precincts**. The northwest residential precinct over Hutley Drive abuts some littoral forest, and has the Sports Facilities to the south.

Residents on the northern “Stoneyhurst” ridge enjoy sunny sea views to the north, and distant south-westward views across the Centre and the Wetlands. Residents on the steeper eastern slope have larger lots, and enjoy distant westward views, and can take a 10-minute walk down the creek parkway and into the Centre.

Residents on the southern slope will enjoy a sunny view, and can easily walk across the creek parkway, through or past the Retirement Community, to the Centre and sportsfields.

The Green Network

The design includes a network of parks and major avenue streets that traverse the site and connect into adjoining wetlands.

Parks & Open Space

The Pond Park provides the central park for the whole community. The pond edges are landscaped to create a variety of spaces, from formal, terraced plazas to boardwalks to picnic areas to planted parkland, along with walking and cycle paths. The other parks highlight the impressive fig trees, or other remnant vegetation and the valley line, which is to be a feature brook.

Walking & cycling network

The interconnected street network forms the main walking and cycling network. In addition, there are walkways through the parks and open space, and several pedestrian links through to Lennox Meadows and to the existing housing to the south-east.

Drainage & water management

The natural drainage lines are celebrated, and designed to incorporate features to both detain water after rain, as well as to contribute to its cleansing before it enters the pond. The pond is designed as the primary water treatment feature. In addition, several streets will be detailed with grassed parking areas in the traditional North Coast manner, to contribute to water quality enhancement.

Retention of significant vegetation

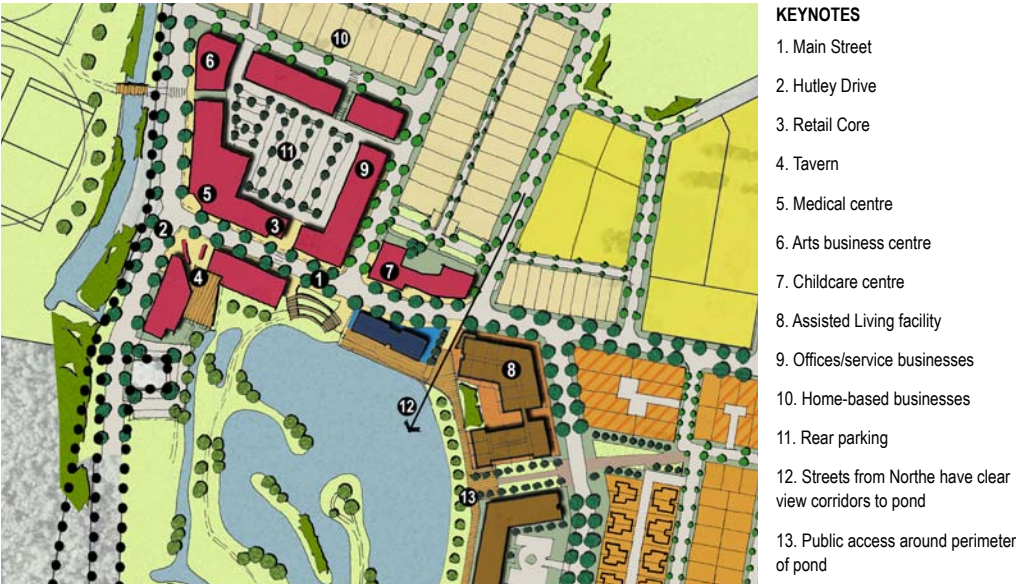
All identified areas of significant remnant native vegetation are retained, and provided with adequate buffers for their protection.

Sportsfields

The sportsfields are to be improved in several ways. The layout is modified to ensure the tennis courts can also become netball courts. The pavilion is enlarged to provide adequate equipment storage and is located to overlook the main fields from an upstairs level. The main cricket field will be fitted with a turf wicket to enable senior competition. Additional parking will be provided along the northern edge street to cater for busy events.

The Neighbourhood Centre

The small mixed use Neighbourhood Centre will serve the broader North Creek Valley community, not just the Pacific Pines development. The Centre is small, and will complement the existing Lennox Head Neighbourhood Centre, by providing a place where the local valley community can easily walk or drive, to get daily needs and local services.



The Neighbourhood Centre

The Centre fronts Hutley Drive and the pond. Most of the shops and small commercial businesses front onto Main Street, while the Tavern and Community Hall front both Main Street and the pond. There is parking on Main Street and Hutley Drive, but most parking is in a shaded parking area tucked behind the shops.

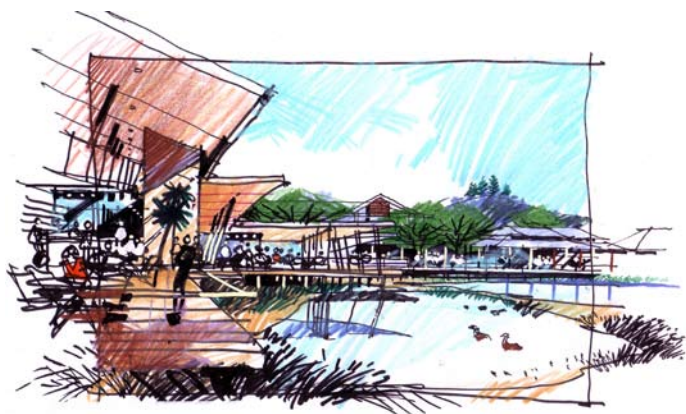
The pond frontage near Main Street is designed as the main gathering place for the community. The waterfront area features decks and plazas, a terraced amphitheatre, shady boardwalks, seats, paths and informal parkland.

Many of the buildings will be two storeys, with residential or visitor accommodation upstairs, with balconies overlooking the Pond Park and sportsfields. An Arts Business Enterprise Centre is proposed for the Hutley Drive frontage. Some of the buildings on the side streets will be live-work units, suited to home-based businesses.

At the end of Main Street, the three-storey Assisted Living building will terminate the view. Residents in the Assisted Living facility will be able to look out onto the daily activities of the community, including the Childcare Centre, and take short walks to the centre.

Looking from Hutley Drive, the pond is framed by the two Tavern buildings with their shady decks and fountain. The family-friendly Tavern has screened outdoor bars and dining areas, a restaurant, coffee shop, and function rooms.





*Tavern view to lakeside looking northeastwards*

In the retail core, around eight shops and a small 450sqm supermarket (totalling around 1,200sqm of retail) front Main Street. As population and demand grows, the rear parking area is designed to accommodate an expansion of the supermarket up to 1,700sqm, and several additional shops, to take the total retail to 2,500sqm.

Street trees shade the footpaths and are planted in the parallel parking lanes to visually narrow the streets and slow the traffic. All footpaths in the Centre are wide enough for outdoor dining and other events. All buildings have verandahs to make walking more comfortable.



*Main Street view looking eastwards*

The Community Hall features a large room with a stage, a commercial kitchen, meeting rooms and public toilets. It opens out onto a waterfront deck.



*Community Hall view looking eastwards on pond side deck*

## Retirement Community

A Retirement Community enjoys the centre-stage in the Pacific Pines 'amphitheatre'. The Retirement Community integrates closely with the adjoining Neighbourhood Centre, the pond and brook, and the adjoining dwellings ascending the amphitheatre slopes.

The southerly extension of Main Street runs through the Retirement Community, with two bus stops serving it, one between the Assisted Living Centre and the Community Hall, and the other at the creek crossing. The surrounding residential street network connects through the Retirement Community's pedestrian-friendly slow-speed private streets.

The main entrance to the Retirement Community enjoys a place of honour as the eastern terminus of the Main Street vista. An outdoor arcade links this entrance to the Community Hall, as seen in the view below from the Childcare Centre across Main Street.

Communal facilities are located in the Assisted Living Centre, and include dining rooms, a private Tavern, health centre with lap pool and spa, and numerous courtyards and decks. Upper level rooms, accessed by lifts, will enjoy views across the pond and more distant ridges in all directions.



*View to Assisted Living from Childcare Centre looking towards pond*

Private balconies or verandahs for the 54 units in the three-storey Assisted Living Centre and the two-storey 54-unit apartment building overlook the pond with its public boardwalk.



*Boardwalk view looking southwards along edge of the pond*



### KEY NOTES

1. Assisted Living Facilities (3 storeys)
2. Retirement apartments (3 storey with lift access)
3. Courtyard & duplex Retirement Community (single & double storey) with yard
4. Bus Route

*A Retirement Community is centrally located overlooking the pond*

Most of the Retirement Community comprises a variety of courtyard and duplex dwellings. From the east, a natural spring flows from preserved native bushland in a gurgling brook parkway through the Retirement Community, overlooked by mostly single-storey courtyard and duplex dwellings along park-edge streets.





Looking over Brook to bridge and Retirement Community, view out to hills and Norfolk Island Pines

Terrace cottages with front verandahs and small gardens on narrow lots front the Main Street through the Community. They will have especially welcoming street frontages, as their garages are located on rear lanes.

There will be a wide range of retirement dwelling choices, from cosy cottages with verandahs and tiny gardens, spacious duplexes overlooking the brook parkway, to upper-level apartments with airy balconies and distant views, all enjoying their communal facilities and the Neighbourhood Centre, a five-minute stroll away.

## Street Connectivity

The master plan has a high level of connectivity both within and to the surrounding community.

### Hutley Drive and Main Street

Both Hutley Drive and Main Street are proposed as traditional two-lane streets with on-street parallel parking. Shade trees would be planted in the parking lanes to visually narrow the street and provide shade for pedestrians and parked cars. Slow points and kerb extensions at intersections will reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and slow the speed of turning traffic.



View from Hutley Drive at Neighbourhood Centre looking southwards, showing street trees, footpaths and slow-speed traffic lanes

## Residential Streets

Most of the residential streets will be narrower than typically found in Lennox Head. This is to better fit streets to the hillsides and to help slow traffic. It also contributes to sustainability by reducing the amount of paved area. Most streets will have generous footpaths and shade trees.

### 'Green' Residential Streets

Key streets will be designed as traditional north coast avenues with large trees in wide grassed parking areas. These will include the Stoneyhurst Drive extension along the northern ridge. This will allow an impressive avenue of Norfolk Island Pines to be established as a prominent ridgeline feature, complementing the existing pine skyline at North Creek Road and Henderson Farm.



Stoneyhurst Drive looking eastwards along the ridgeline, with Norfolk Island Pines planted in grassed parking areas

## Building Design

The master plan discourages building houses that are conventional suburban brick and tile designs on insensitively flattened sites stepping down slopes. Building designs have the following objectives.

1. To optimise community interaction and amenity by means of:

- Reducing dominance of garages in the streetscape;
- Ensuring active frontages with windows and doors overlooking streets (applies both to residential and commercial buildings); and
- Low front fences along key residential streets to support choice of interaction between residents in their dwellings and verandahs and pedestrians on the footpaths.

2. To build sensitively on slopes, so the development harmonises with the land form, by using small stepped cut and fill excavation, and/or pole construction on steeper slopes.



Typical streetscape on sloping land, with houses stepping lightly down the slope

3. To incorporate environmentally sustainable building design features that respond to the North Coast climate, including:

- Cross ventilation and passive solar layout;
- Rain water tanks and porous paving;
- Deep eaves and shaded windows; and
- Shady verandahs and decks for outdoor living.

4. To create a distinctive character that refers to building traditions of the Far North Coast, by means of:

- Retaining walls integrated into buildings, rather than visibly expressed on wider flat lots;
- Metal pitched roofs in non-reflective harmonising colours;
- Delicate wood-framed verandahs and decks with shady pergolas or trellises overhead for outdoor living;
- Houses with more complex, smaller-scale forms, rather than big bland boxes; and
- Structures sitting lightly on the land.

5. To provide choice and to respond to the diverse housing demands and cater for smaller households, older people and affordable housing. There will be a wide range of housing types including:

- Conventional residential lots;
- Larger lots on steeper slopes;
- Smaller cottage lots;
- Duplexes;
- Terrace housing;
- Live-work dwellings;
- Apartments over businesses;
- Retirement cottages;
- Retirement apartments; and
- Assisted Living.