



Pittwater's Most Scenic Streets Register

April 2012

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Introduction

Pittwater's Most Scenic Streets Register has been developed to document the qualities of the most scenic local streets and to assist Council Officers and residents to protect and enhance the identified qualities.

The production of the Register was requested by the Council. "The purpose of the Register is to allow Council to more effectively manage the preservation of the natural and cultural features of Pittwater's public roads by defining what attributes are to be preserved and how the Council and community are able to achieve this . . . Environmental features include significant scenic views from the road (water or land) over private or public land, significant trees / bushland / landscaping on roads and significant topographical features. Cultural examples include significant buildings / structures on roads, significant streetscape overall appearance, heritage listed items and Aboriginal sites" (Council Report 15 October, 2010).

In order to develop a list of streets for the Register, promotional material was developed including guidelines that would allow the community to nominate the most suitable streets for the Register.

The streets in the Register contain a certain 'feel' that stems from their unique characteristics. Water views and locally native vegetation are the most frequently cited features. The type of qualities that have been identified include how streets wind around the hillsides to reveal a series of views, particularly of the rugged coastline and beaches, the retention of locally native trees, vegetation communities and wildlife corridors, cultural plantings, stone walls, heritage paving and fencing styles. The relationship between the street and public facilities were also highlighted including parks, buildings and wharves.

Having identified the qualities that have given the streets their unique character, the next step is to ensure future developments enhance the identified qualities and to encourage their repetition along the length of the street.

We ask residents to respect the qualities as identified for streets in the Register. Some of the qualities have evolved gradually over time due to similar choices by neighbouring residents. When people inadvertently make changes that are at odds with the character of the streetscape it can cause stress to neighbouring residents who have been nurturing the qualities for a long time.

Views will only be considered from the street for the benefit of the broader community. Where a street contains significant views, we ask that hedging be kept to about one metre tall to allow the community to enjoy the views from the street. We have implemented a Tree Replenishment Program to promote canopy trees. Council will provide advice and street trees to interested residents.

To ensure future developments enhance the qualities of Pittwater's most scenic streets, we request residents contact Council for the appropriate approvals before planning to carry out any new work on the nature strip. Guidelines are available in the 'Road Reserve & Streetscape Management Guidelines, 2012'.

Note: Any new works on road reserves must have prior approval by the local authority under the *Roads Act, 1993*.

Avalon Beach

Clareville



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Street Name **Bangalley Way
(also known as
Telford Road)**

Suburb **Avalon Beach North**

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species

Common Theme Heritage paving



Description and Criteria

This road has a background of Casuarinas and road paving designed and made by a Scottish engineer by the name of Telford. The paving was laid down in the late 1920s.



Street Name Chisholm Avenue
Suburb Avalon Beach

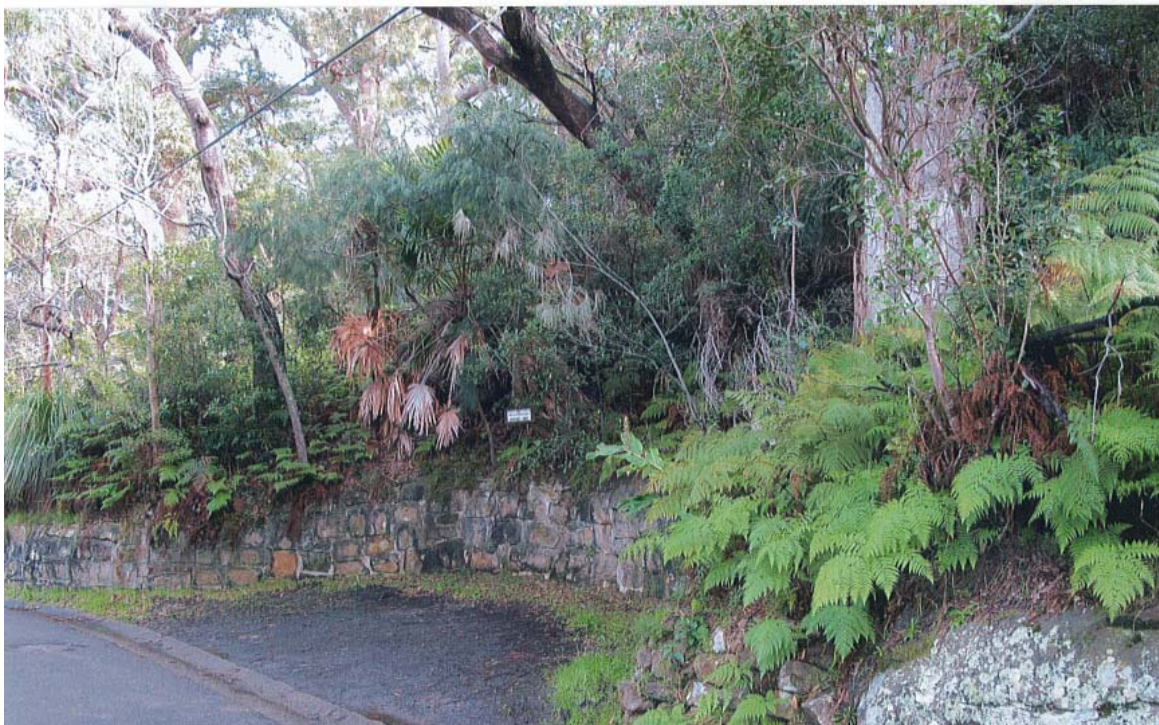
Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Common Theme Dry stone wall



Description and Criteria

A street where the houses nestle between the vegetation. A dry stone wall is of interest and native vegetation predominates.





Chisholm Avenue, Avalon Beach

Street Name Hilltop Road
Suburb Avalon Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Common Themes Dominate tree canopy
Patterns of light and shade



Description and Criteria

Trees and vegetation are visually dominant. A delightful tree canopy produces patterns of light and shade. This street would derive much benefit from additional indigenous plantings wherever possible to improve its effectiveness as a wildlife corridor.



Street Name Hudson Parade
Suburb Clareville

Categories

Views Panoramic views and filtered vistas of Pittwater Estuary
Vegetation Locally native species



Description and Criteria

For its entire length of approximately two kilometres, Hudson Parade provides pedestrians and motorists with magnificent views of Pittwater Estuary and filtered vistas through the Spotted Gum canopy. The views and vistas cover the full extent of the Estuary and Broken Bay - north to Lion Island (from Taylors Point) west to the Western Foreshore (from Clareville) and south to Scotland Island and Bayview (from Refuge Cove); and

This location contains the oldest, tallest and most dense Spotted Gum Forest in the Pittwater area. These beautiful, visually dominant and locally indigenous trees are endangered. They line the west facing hillside down to the water's edge and cover most properties, road reserves and council reserves. They form a high canopy above Hudson Parade for its entire length.

Other aspects of note include:

- Hudson Parade provides the only route for pedestrians, vehicles and public transport from Avalon to Clareville Beach. As such it is used heavily used by locals, residents and tourists.
- From Hudson Parade there is also easy access to the foreshore from public reserves, including Paradise Beach Reserve, Old Wharf Reserve, Clareville Beach Reserve, Kaih Reserve and Refuge Cove Reserve as well as Taylor's Point Wharf and numerous paths and stairways.
- Bird life abounds in the area, indeed a Whistling Kite family has for the past three years taken residence in one of the tallest Spotted Gums adjacent to Hudson Parade.
- Roadside gardens are generally well kept and contain a mixture of locally native plants and colourful tropical plants. Bushcare groups help to maintain Old Wharf Reserve, Clareville Beach Reserve and Hudson Parade road reserve.
- Whilst land on the western side of Hudson Parade usually falls away quite steeply providing spectacular views, there are areas of the road where tall street hedging does (or may, if not pruned) block views.
- Sunsets to the west can be absolutely stunning.



Clareville to the northwest



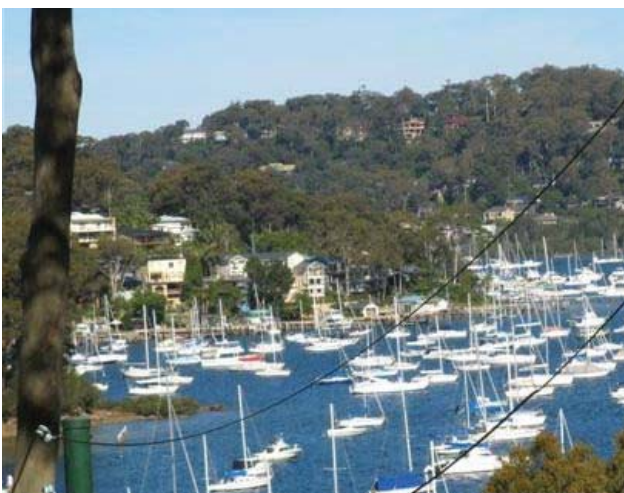
Clareville to the south



Clareville to the southwest



Clareville to the west



Refuge Cove to the south



Refuge Cove to the west



Taylor's Point to the north



Taylor's Point to the northwest



Taylor's Point to the west



Tall Spotted Gum

Street Name Palmgrove Road
Suburb Avalon Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species

Common Themes Heritage guttering



Description and Criteria

This is a street where the houses truly nestle between the trees. Native vegetation predominates.

At the Plateau Road end of the street between the Burley Griffin Lodge and Palmgrove Park is an area where little children could believe the bunyips live. In the evening light in this area is magical.

Also of significance is the substantial length of heritage kerb and guttering, (opposite The Knoll) which is the best remaining example of Czechoslovakian workmanship dating back to the 1930s. Please refer to the Avalon Beach Historical Society for more information. It is important that this be preserved when any future roadworks take place.

Palmgrove Road forms part of a wildlife corridor, connecting Palmgrove Park with Angophora Reserve.





Junction with Coolawin Road





Between Palmgrove Park and Burley Griffin Lodge





Heritage kerb and gutter

Street Name Riverview Road
Suburb Avalon Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Common Theme Water vistas



Description and Criteria

Riverview Road is graced with verdant vegetation along the length of the street, stunning Eucalypts and water vistas between houses.



Street Name Riviera Avenue
Suburb Avalon Beach

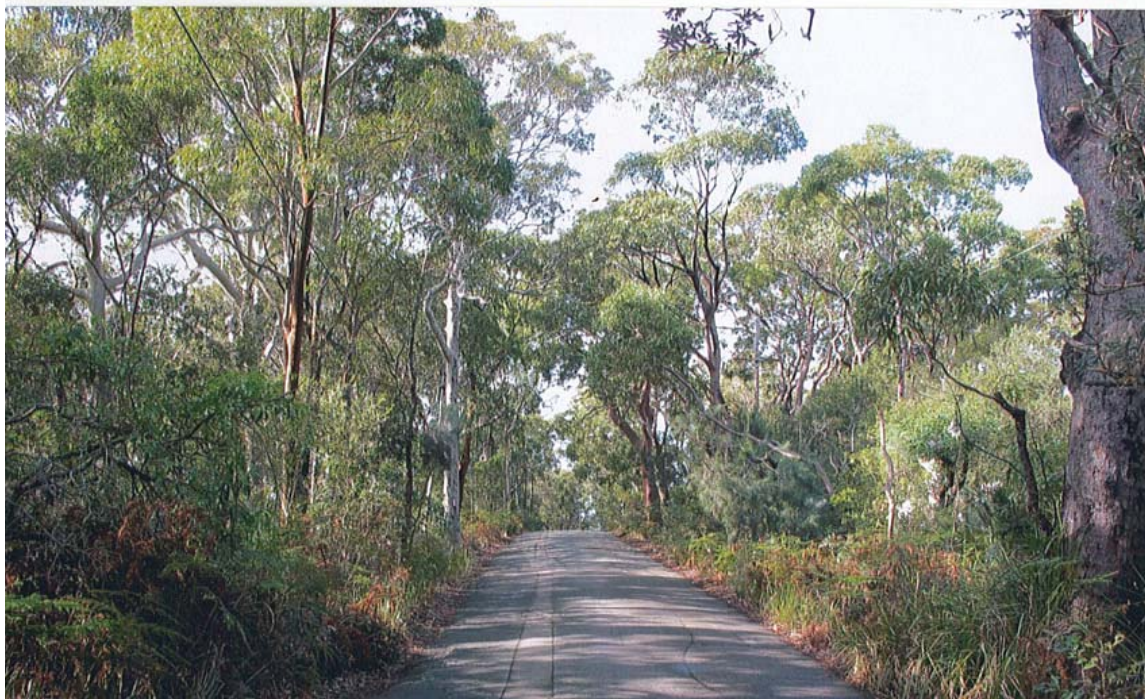
Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Common Theme Wildlife corridor



Description and Criteria

Trees and vegetation are usually visually dominant at Riviera Avenue. This street would derive much benefit from additional indigenous plantings wherever possible to improve its effectiveness as a wildlife corridor. Water vistas are available between houses.



Street Name **Ruskin Rowe**
Suburb **Avalon Beach**

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Common Themes Majestic trees, informal, no kerb and gutters, deep setbacks
Heritage Conservation Area (PLEP)



Description and Criteria

Ruskin Rowe is an example of a street that demonstrates a number of common themes. The nature strip is informal being wide and without kerb and gutters and the property setbacks are deep. The public domain and the private domain relate well to each other and the street has a unique 'feel'.



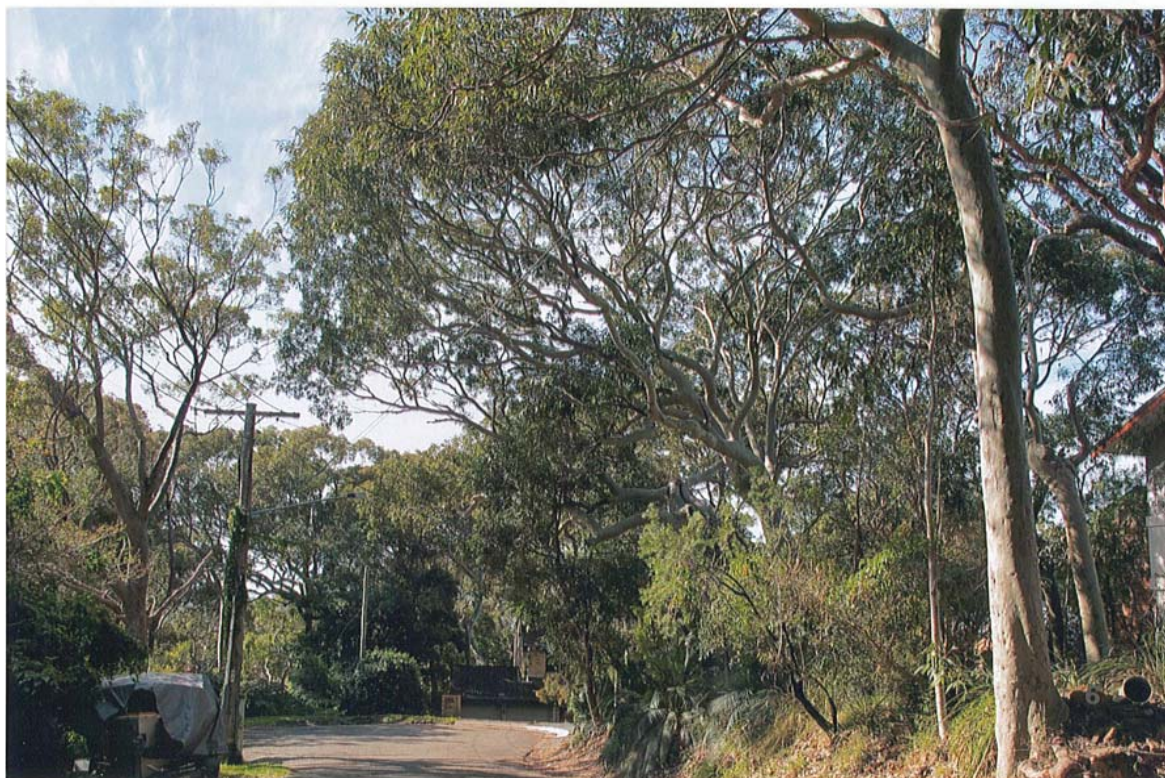
Street Name **The Knoll**
Suburb **Avalon Beach**

Category
Vegetation Locally native species



Description and Criteria

This road is softened by indigenous vegetation, including Eucalypts and Macrozamia's worthy of conservation.



Street Name **The Outlook**
Suburb **Avalon Beach**

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Filtered views of Pittwater Estuary

Common Themes The Outlook winds around the hillside
revealing majestic trees at each bend
Trees provide shade and textures



Description and Criteria

The Outlook at Avalon has a unique character that arises from the continuity of its forest setting.



Street Name Trappers Way
Suburb Avalon Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species

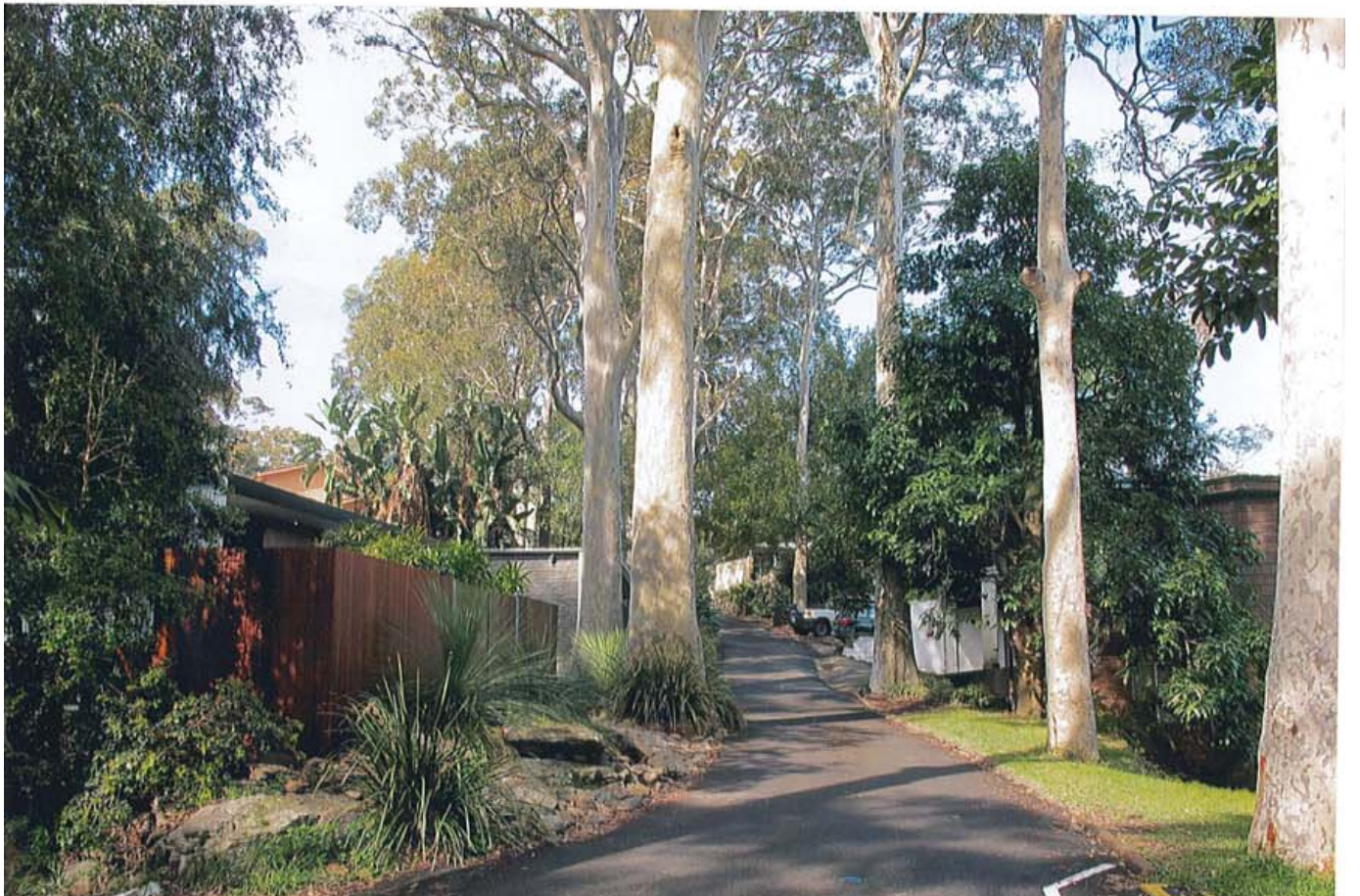
Common Theme Eucalypt lined street



Description and Criteria

It is most unusual and intriguing to have a tree in the middle of the roadway. The straight trunks of the Eucalypts are stunning and the rocks with their plantings of Lomandras and Xanthorrhoeas add interest.





Street Name Urara Road
Suburb Avalon Beach

Categories

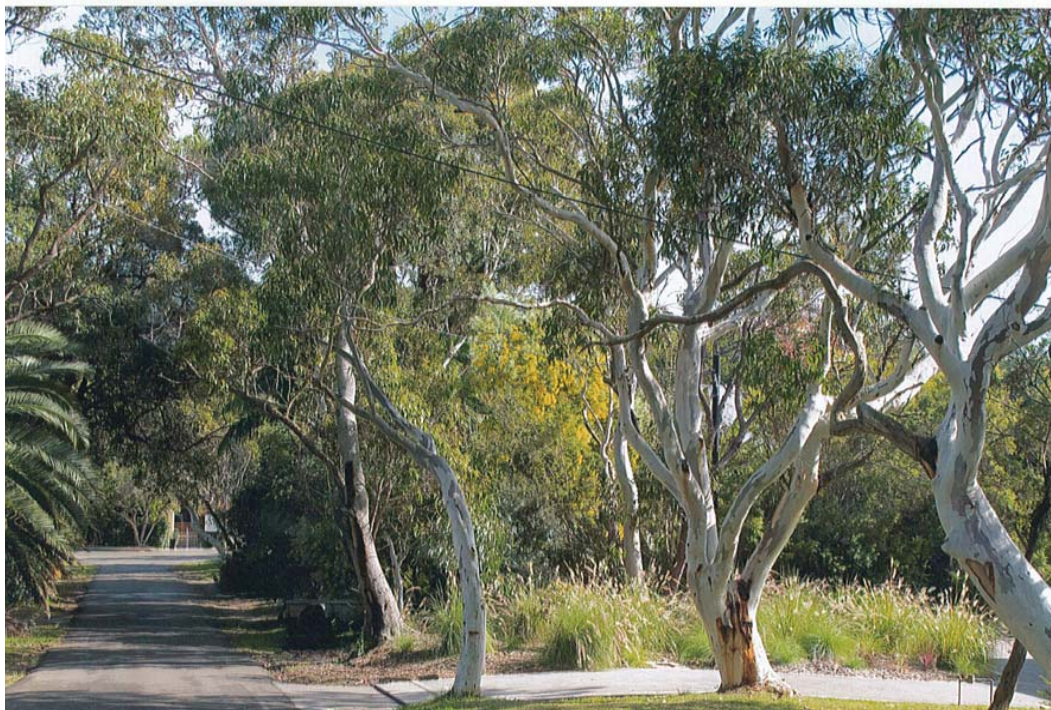
Vegetation Locally native species
Common Themes Retains the ambiance of a traditional Australian beachside location



Description and Criteria

This street is a gem, and almost perfect, fringed by native vegetation.

It is an excellent example of a street in the earliest days of European settlement in the Pittwater area when Avalon Beach was composed of small holiday homes in a bushland setting.



Bilgola



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Street Name **Bilgola Avenue and Allen Avenue**
Suburb **Bilgola Beach**

Categories

Vegetation Cultural plantings
Common Themes Environmental, visual and social amenity
 Secluded ambience
 Unique characteristics / sense of place
 Iconic 'Bilgola Beach'



Description and Criteria

“Trees provide environmental, visual and social amenity to the community and are a living reminder of our history”.

“Great streets are markedly superior in character or quality. They are symbols of a community and of its history. They leave strong, long, continuing positive impressions”. (Jacobs A. B).

How well these two quotes relate to the circumstances which have resulted in the quality of the iconic streets of Bilgola Avenue and Allen Avenue at Bilgola Beach.

The qualities showcasing the built environment and the natural environment in Bilgola Beach’s case; giving these streets their iconic status, are:

- vegetation - avenues of Canary Island Date Palms and Norfolk Island Pines; and
- common themes - remnant stonework of dry stone creek walls, fence and gate supports, stone cairns with very faded Bilgola House nearly visible, see photos 1 and 2) and the lack of formal road verges on both streets.

Jacobs, A. B. *Great Streets*, 2001 edn. MIT Press, Massachusetts, USA.

For additional information refer to Attachment - History of Bilgola Avenue and Allen Avenue.



Fence and gate supports

Street Name **The Circle**
Suburb **Bilgola Plateau**

Category
Vegetation Locally native species

Description and Criteria

The Circle is lined with magnificent Eucalypt and Angophora trees.



Outstanding feature - *Angophora costata*

Street Name **The Serpentine**
Suburb **Bilgola Beach**

Categories

Views Visual and scenic amenity with coastal views
 Preference for low growing heathland

Common Theme No road verges



Description and Criteria

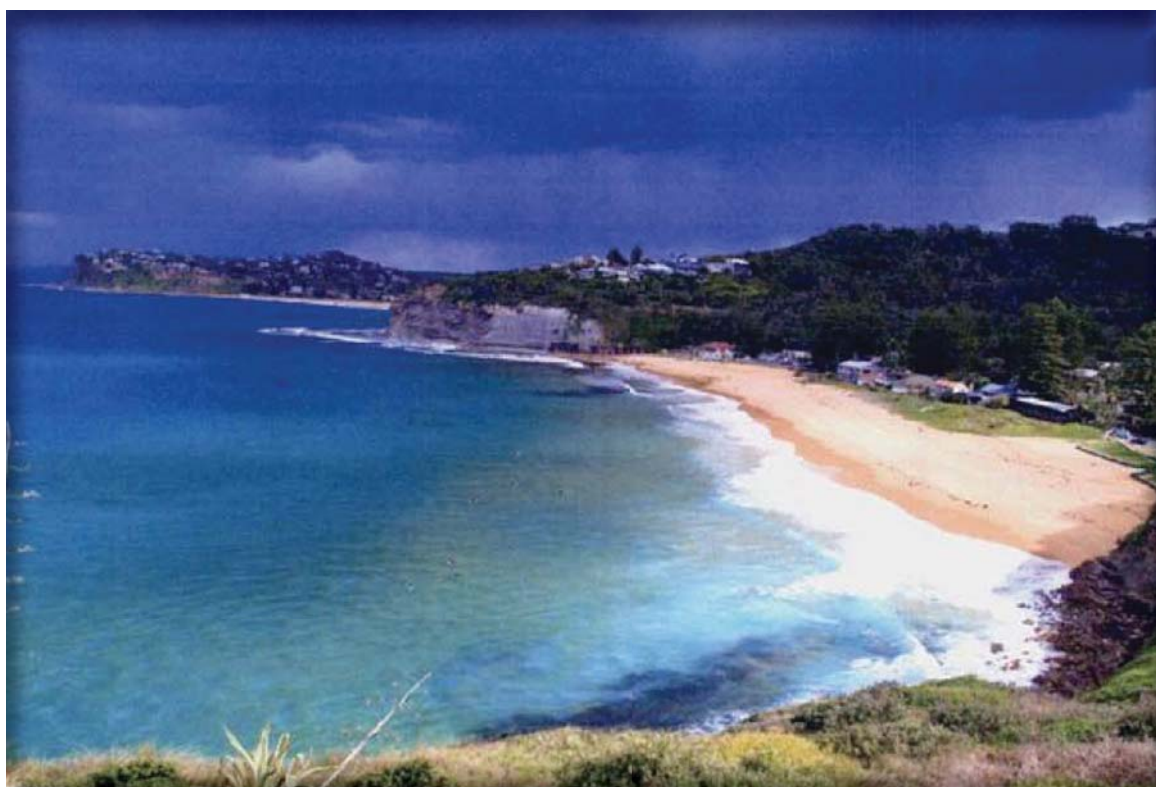
The Serpentine; at Bilgola Beach, has beautiful coastal views from almost everywhere along its entirety and forms part of the Bicentennial Coastal Walkway. It showcases the coastline to day-trippers, holiday makers and residents, offering panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, Avalon Beach and Bilgola Beach as well as the wider coastline.

In contrast to the remnant subtropical vegetation of Bilgola Valley, most of the length of The Serpentine on the northern and southern headlands is characterised by low coastal heathland and cultural plantings of Norfolk Island Pines. These are of a similar age to those planted in the valley during the 1920s and 1930s.

Other cultural plantings include three Californian Redwoods (*Sequoia sp.*) near the access road to The Serpentine from the Marist Brother's retreat. The seedlings were brought back from America in 1966 by Fred Thom, the grandson of Sir Henry Parkes.

Bilgola North Headland is popular for watching migrating whales and stargazing with regular viewings by various astronomy groups.

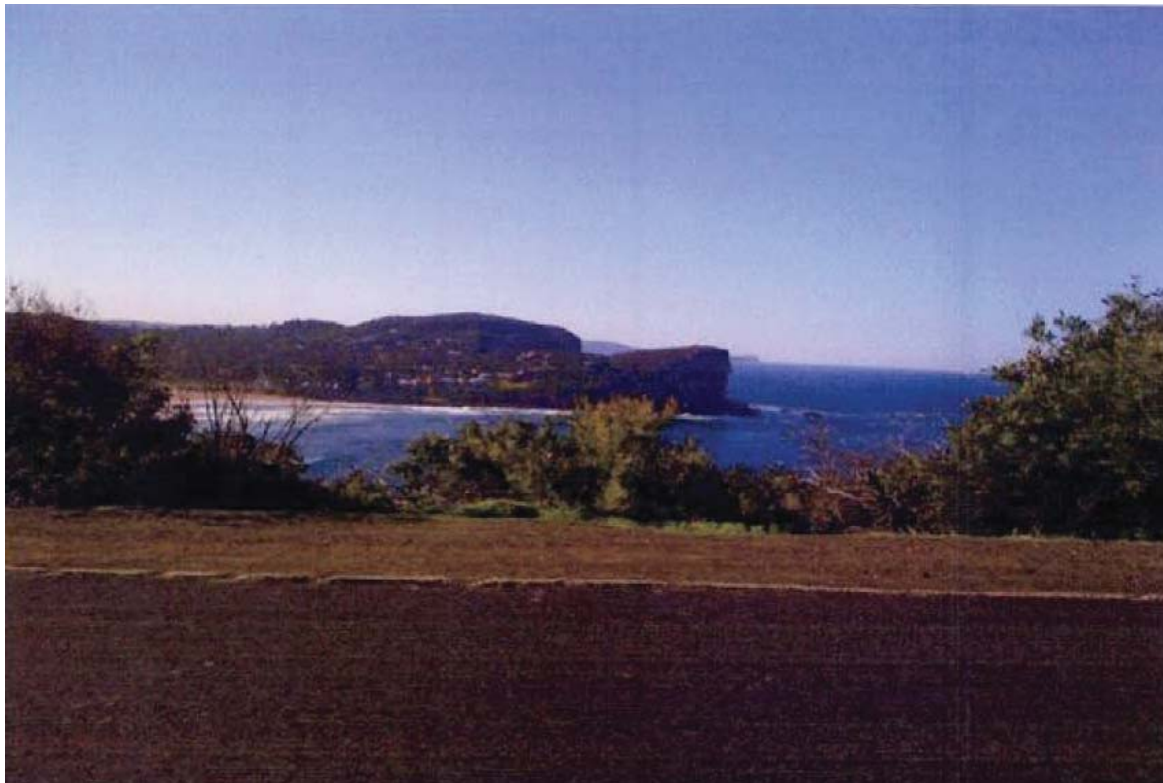
The common theme of no formal road verges helps the casual feel of the road, in such a dramatic natural setting, it feels a little more special.



Looking south from the northern headland. Panoramic views over Bilgola Beach and Newport Beach with Manly and North Head in the distance.



Looking south from The Serpentine



Looking north over Avalon Beach

Church Point

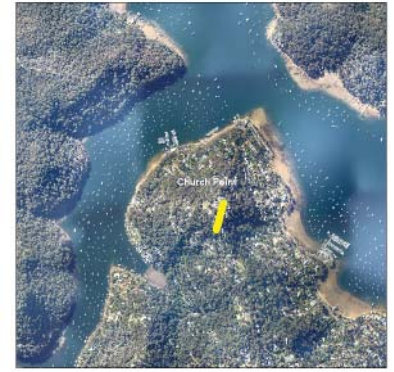
Bayview

Street Name Captain Hunter Road
Suburb Bayview

Categories

Views Glimpses of Pittwater Estuary from high vantage points

Common Themes Magnificent homes in bushland settings



Description and Criteria

Magnificent homes overlooking Pittwater add character to Captain Hunter Road. The views are difficult to photograph when walking and driving along this street but glimpses of Pittwater are visible from the high vantage points.

This area also has retained bushland aspects with lovely Eucalypt trees, rocks and bush plants.

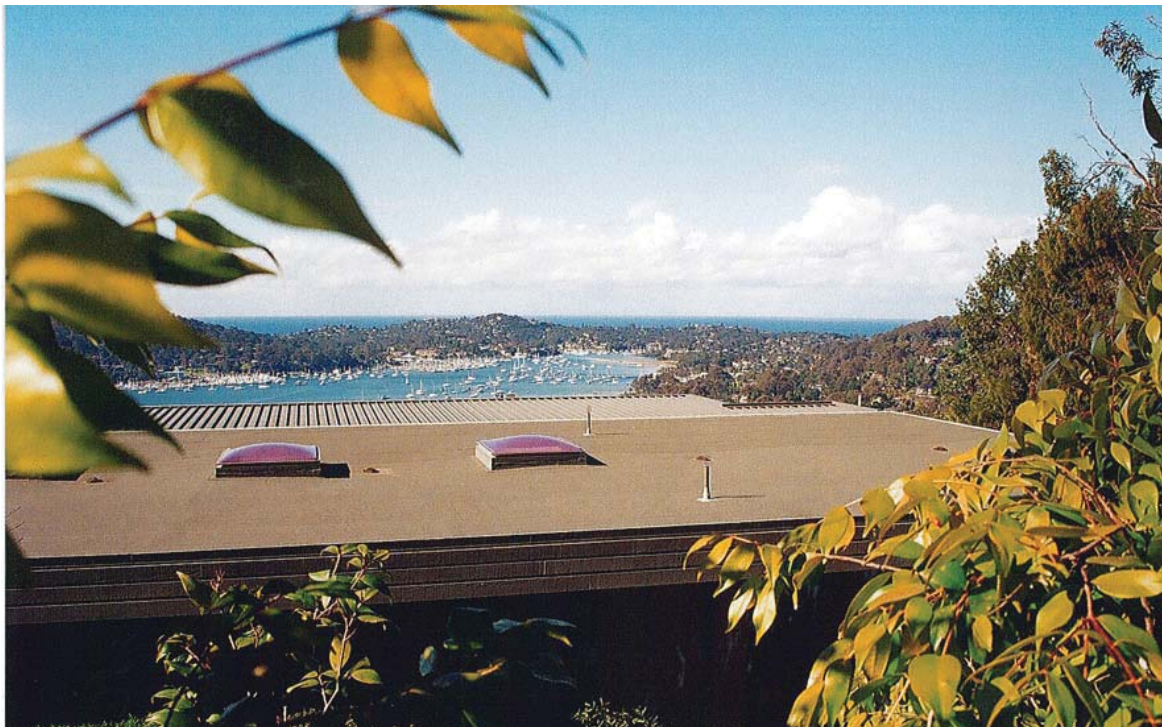
Captain Hunter Road provides an impressive location for walking and driving for locals and visitors.



Rock ledge (streetscape)



Glimpse of Pittwater Estuary from the street



Pittwater Estuary view



Waterfall (rather dark due to the time of day and restrictions for filming)



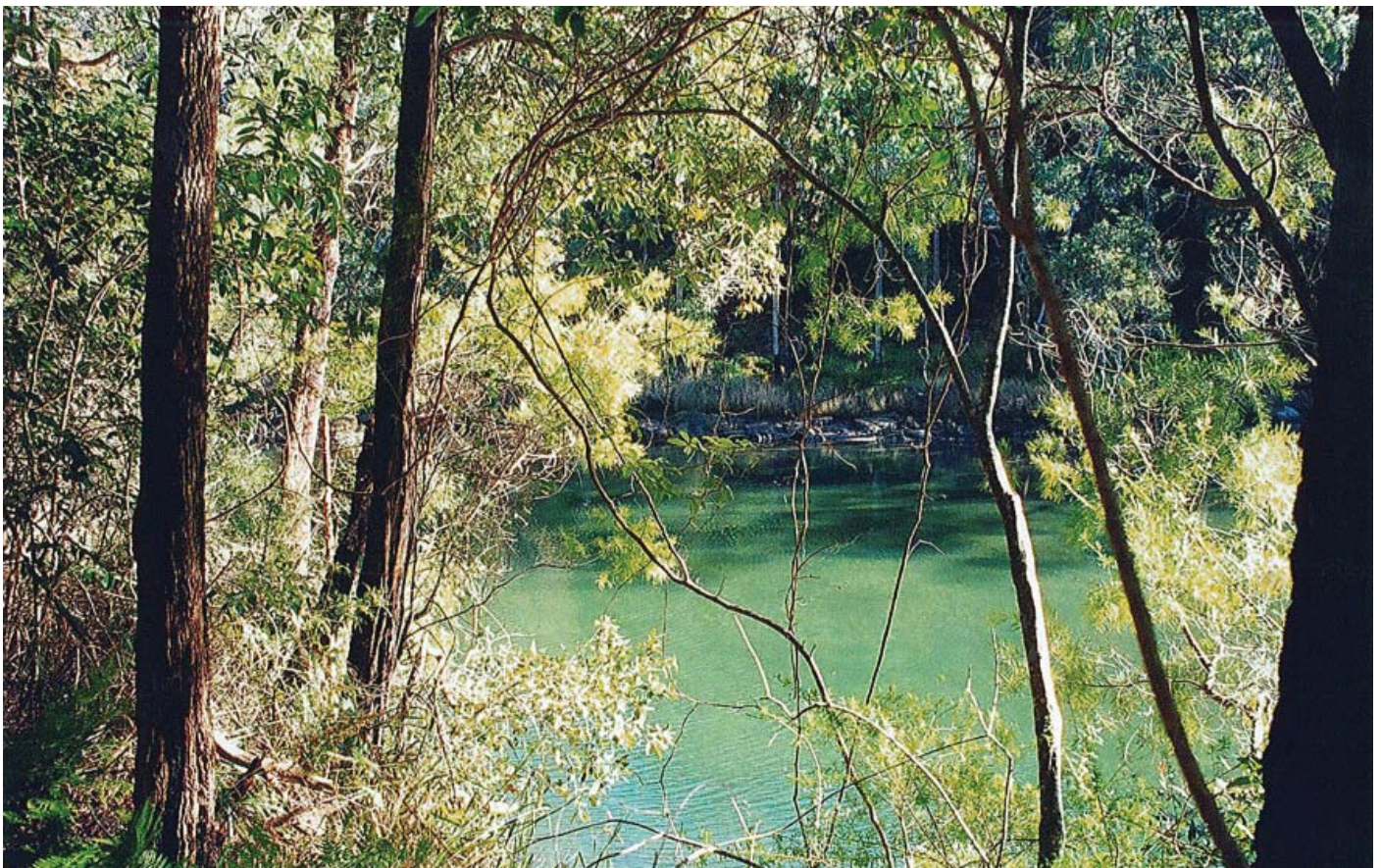
Waterfall



McCarrs Creek Road



Eucalypts and Banksia



McCarrs Creek

Street Name **McCarrs Creek Road and Pittwater Road**
Suburb **Church Point and Bayview**



Categories

Vegetation Locally native species - forest and rainforest species
Views Water and natural environment
Common Themes Scenic drive along the southern shore of Pittwater Estuary and McCarrs Creek
 National Park in the background
 Light and tracery from tree canopies
 Various places of interest

Description and Criteria

A drive along Pittwater Road and McCarrs Creek Road follows the shore of Pittwater Estuary with an ever changing kaleidoscope of water, parks, mangroves, sand flats, off-shore houses, marinas, wharves, boats of all shapes and sizes and types - including workboats and the Church Point ferry.

There are several small restaurants to entice casual visitors to stop and enjoy the beauty of the area (if they are able to find somewhere to park). Heritage listings of interest on McCarrs Creek Road include the mini market store and post office, Church Point Wharf, the graveyard and site of the former Methodist Church, "Homesdale" (house), "Rostrevor" (house), Rostrevor Reserve and the Governor Phillip Obelisk. Most of these places can be seen from the road and are worthy of inspection.

There are seven public reserves on McCarrs Creek Road, being Thomas Stevens Reserve, Church Point Historic Cemetery, Rostrevor Reserve, Bothams Beach, Brown's Bay Wharf, Browns Bay Rainforest Reserve and McCarrs Creek Reserve.

Brown's Bay Rainforest Reserve is currently being cleared of noxious weeds by the Brown's Bay Bush Care Group. It has the potential to be one of the very special examples of rainforest visible from a scenic road. And then the gem, McCarrs Creek Reserve. It was the site of dredging by Warringah Council in the 1960s where young people used to bath naked in the mud and string themselves out along McCarrs Creek Road for all to see. It is a bit tamer now. However the bush care group have done a marvellous job cleaning up the Reserve and it is always a pleasure to see the large groups of people enjoying this delightful spot every fine weekend. It is also often used as a film location. There are BBQs, open grassy areas and a number of bush tracks through the Reserve and down to the water's edge. The jetty is in constant use by boat owners and fishermen.

Past McCarrs Creek Reserve, McCarrs Creek Road enters Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park passing the beautiful Crystal Falls, the Lower Gledhill Falls, on to West Head, Akuna Bay, Illawong Bay, Cottage Point and Terrey Hills. A shorter route winds its way past the Upper Gledhill Falls, across McCarrs Creek and on to Terrey Hills through a forest of trees. Although this part of the drive is no longer in Pittwater, it is still a very fitting finish to a drive through a very special part of Sydney's Northern Beaches region.

Without doubt, Pittwater Road and McCarrs Creek Road well deserve inclusion on the Pittwater Register of Scenic Streets. Incidentally, when my husband and I first purchased our home in McCarrs Creek Road in 1968, there was a building regulation (long since abandoned) that declared McCarrs Creek Road as a scenic road. House and garage roofs were not to be more than three feet above the road alignment, so that people walking or driving along would have a view of the waterway and the boats.



View from McCarrs Creek Road, Church Point of boats of all shapes and sizes and types

McCarrs Creek Road - nomination 2

The dappled light of an afternoon, through the trees, just before you get to McCarrs Creek Reserve is beautiful. There's a view to the creek, which always feels like "at last I'm home".

Street Name Pittwater Road
Suburb Church Point and Bayview

Categories

Vegetation Mangroves
Views Pittwater Estuary
Common Themes Boats, marinas and BYRA
(Bayview Yacht Racing Association)

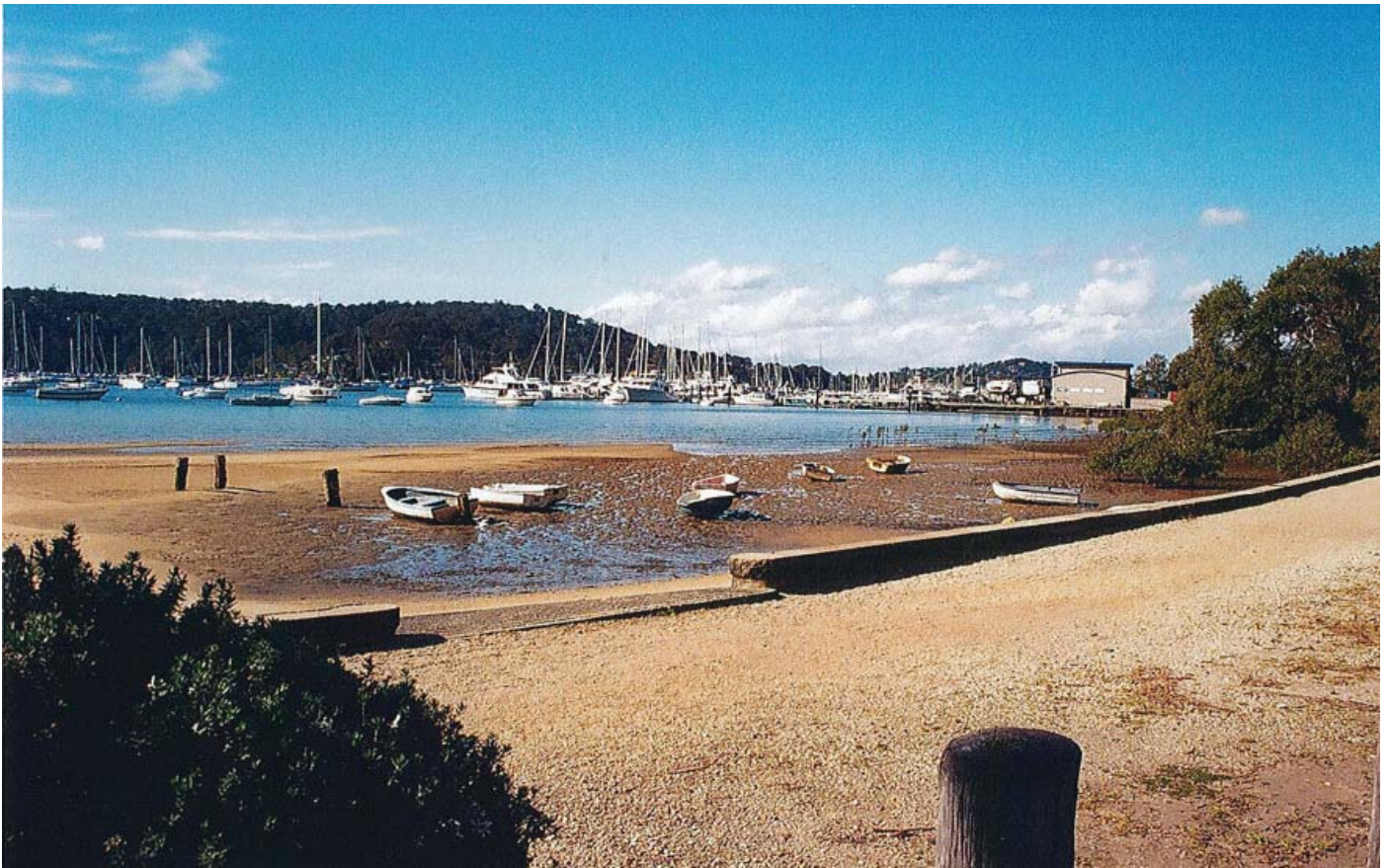


Description and Criteria

From Pittwater Road it is possible to enjoy significant views of Mangroves which are prolific along the edge of Pittwater Estuary.

From the roadway and from the scenic walkway residents can experience the beauty of Pittwater Estuary first hand. The waterway is spectacular during calm weather and during storms. Yachts, cruisers, runabouts and dinghies add to the charm.

The common theme for this section of Pittwater Road is of boats, marinas and BYRA (Bayview Yacht Racing Association).



Pittwater Estuary looking toward the Quays Marina



Boats on Pittwater Estuary - view from the scenic walkway



View of Pittwater Estuary with BYRA clubhouse in the distance



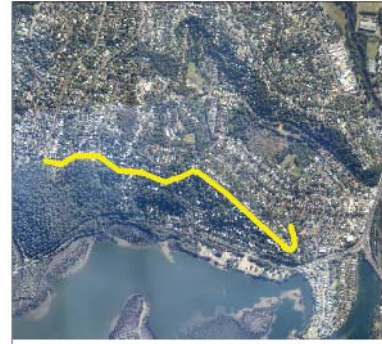
Mangroves along the walkway

Elanora Heights

Street Name **Woorarra Avenue**
Suburb **Elanora Heights**

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species - Eucalyptus species
Views Pacific Ocean and Narrabeen Lagoon



Description and Criteria

Views of the Pacific Ocean and Narrabeen Lagoon can be obtained from most of Woorarra Avenue. The most striking views are found at the top of the big hill near 80 Woorarra Avenue and at Woorarra Park.

However the features that make Woorarra Avenue a scenic street and one of the most outstanding streets in Pittwater is the trees and their canopies. Their beauty can be seen in the photograph below. The trees have been like this since the early 1960s.



The view from Woorarra Park looking south over Narrabeen Lagoon



An example of a visually significant street with informal plantings is Woorarra Avenue. Local indigenous trees dominate the street. Species include *Eucalyptus piniculata*, *E. piperita* and *Angophora costata*.

Mona Vale



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Street Name **Elimatta Road**
Suburb **Mona Vale**

Categories

Vegetation Beautiful old endemic trees
Views Pacific Ocean



Description and Criteria

Elimatta Road is one of the older streets of this suburb. It was originally named Seaview Road. This long, winding road runs parallel with Pittwater Road in a north-south direction rising steeply to the north-west where it culminates in a dead-end with vistas over Warriewood Escarpment.

Much of the real estate advertising in the 1970s and 1980s described Elimatta Road as Mona Vale's premier tree lined street!

Elimatta Road still has many beautiful old endemic trees along its length, including *Eucalyptus punctata* and *E. capitellata*, *Angophora costata* and *A. hispida*, *Turpentine*, *Banksia* and *Iron box*.

Even though we are situated close to the town centre we enjoy a myriad of wildlife that is attracted to the beautiful trees that line the road. Views of the ocean can be enjoyed by passing pedestrians, motorists as well as home owners, framed by the surrounding trees.

In the last ten years a number of our beautiful street trees have been removed by the Council. It would be very nice if the Council could replant the trees that have been cut down.





Newport



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Street Name **Bungan Head Road**
Suburb **Newport**

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species - Heathland
Views Pacific Ocean
Common theme Part of the Bicentennial Coastal Walkway



Description and Criteria

Vegetation

Bungan Head Road adjoins part of Bungan Beach Reserve which contains Coastal Headland Clay Heath, Coastal Headland Cliff-line Scrub and Coastal Headland Swamp Oak. A regionally significant species in the area is *Allocasuarina verticillata*. In Pittwater, this small tree only occurs in the coastal areas around Newport.

The southern section of the road adjoins Betty Morrison Reserve which contains remnant Coastal Escarpment Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Headland Littoral Thicket vegetation.

Views

Bungan Head Road provides extensive ocean views both to the north and south of the coastline as far as Bouddi National Park to the north and Long Reef to the south.

Close views are available of Bungan Beach, Newport Beach and Little Reef to the east and Pittwater Estuary to the west.

Common themes

Bungan Head Road forms part of the Bicentennial Coastal Walkway with a lookout at Bungan Head.

Heritage listed Bungan Castle, built in 1919, dominates the headland.

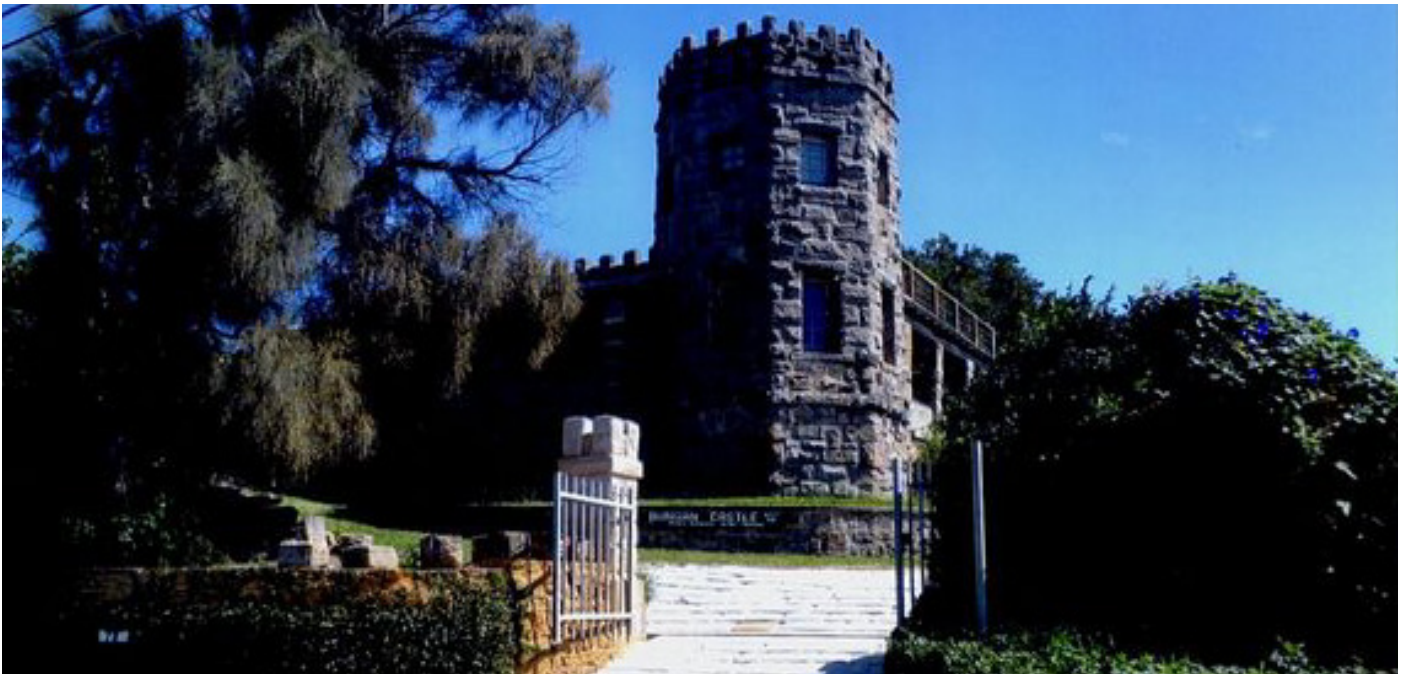
Bungan Head Road provides environmental, visual and social amenity.



Coastal views to the south.



Coastal views to the north.



Bungan Castle.



Rock platform off Bungan Head.



View of Pittwater Estuary with Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park in the background.

Street Name Queens Parade
Suburb Newport

Categories

Vegetation Large trees dominated by locally native species
Views Panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and Pittwater Estuary
Common Themes Historic and cultural associations



Description and Criteria

Queens Parade contains attributes that may be considered across all three categories, vegetation, views and common themes.

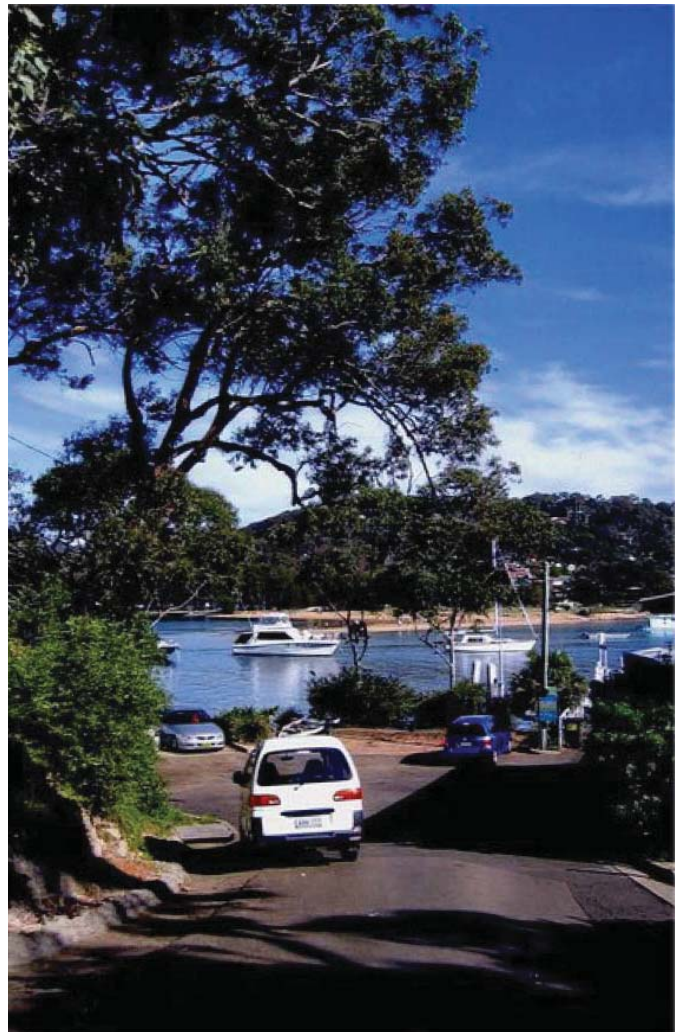
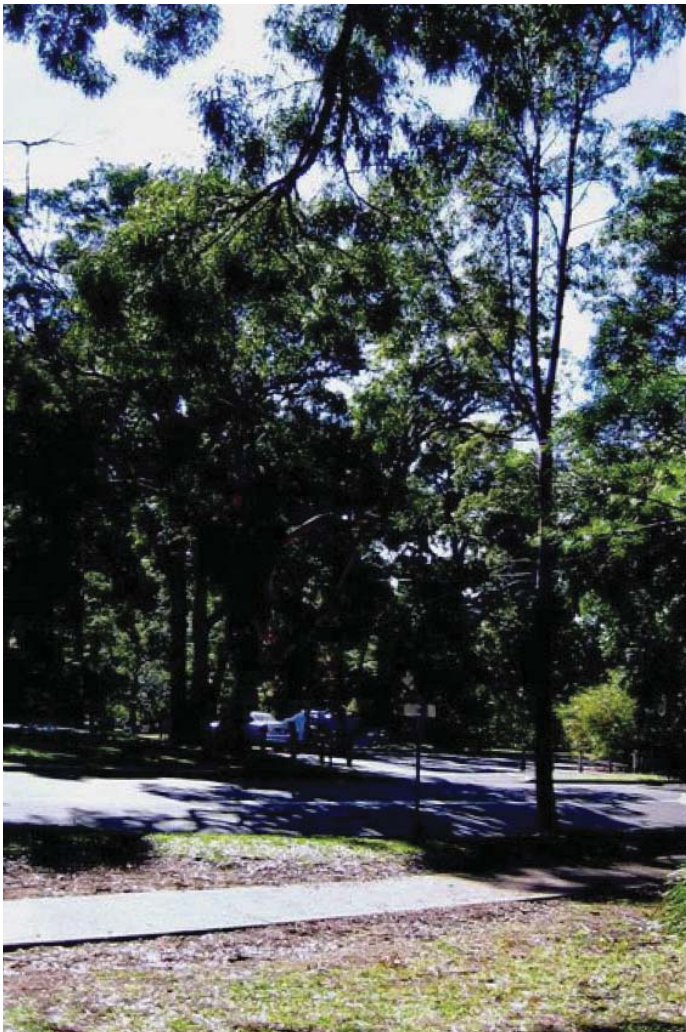
The vegetation consists of a wide avenue of large trees dominated by locally indigenous species. Adjoining properties blend into the Avenue as does Trafalgar Park which contains a number of significant trees. Panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean are available from the eastern end and of Pittwater Estuary and the wharf from the western end. The views are easily accessible to the public.

Queens Parade contains a number of common themes. It provides a link between the original port (village) and Newport Beach, and it contains landmarks, being the Newport Hotel and Newport Primary School.

In 1888 Queens Parade was listed in the first formal plans for Newport being the equivalent of 44 metres wide and intended to be the main street of a village that grew around the port (Guy Jennings).

Queens Parade is historically significant for all of Pittwater.

Guy Jennings, *The Newport Story 1788-1988*, 1987.





Palm Beach

Whale Beach

Street Name Barrenjoey Road
Suburb Palm Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally indigenous species
Views Pittwater Estuary
Common Themes Topographical features - road climbs hills and winds around bends to reveal views. Village shops, parklands and ferry wharf



Description and Criteria

Barrenjoey Road enters Palm Beach at Careel Bay and immediately presents all the thematic streetscape features of Palm Beach. First there is revealed a magnificent view over Pittwater. Then the road climbs a hill and winds through several bends covered with native vegetation including towering Spotted gums, Sydney gums and Angophora with further and different glimpses of Pittwater through these trees. Then down off the hillside past a tiny but exclusive shopping centre, a ferry wharf, then winds up another hill to reveal at the crest a spectacular view of the mouth of the Hawkesbury River, Lion Island and Barrenjoey Headland.







Street Name Beach Road and Ocean Road
Suburb Palm Beach



Categories

Vegetation Cultural plantings
Views Palm Beach Golf Course,
Governor Phillip Park, 'Palm Beach'
Common Themes Iconic 'Palm Beach' and its context
Ocean Road Conservation Area (PLEP)

Description and Criteria

At the end of Barrenjoey Road, Beach Road starts and after 200 meters morphs into Ocean Road. On the northern side is a beautiful view over the Palm Beach Golf links and Governor Phillip Park with its stands of Norfolk Island Pines.

As one enters Ocean Road the whole of Palm Beach comes into view framed by "The Hill" in the background. Ocean Road runs immediately adjacent to the beach, so close that combinations of high tides and sou'easterly gales push the surf across the road. Towards the southern end the road is bordered by glorious 80 year old Norfolk Pines and magnificent beachside villas.



Beach Road - Governor Phillip Park



Ocean Road



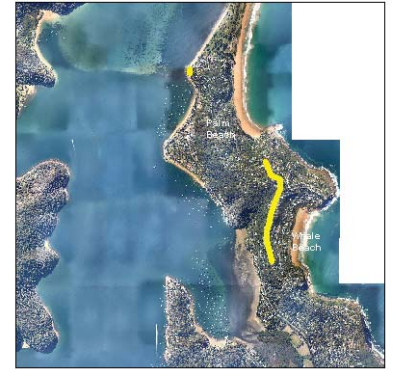
Ocean Road

Street Name Bynya Road
Suburb Palm Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Views Pacific Ocean to the east and
Pittwater Estuary to the west

Common Theme Runs along the highest contour providing
views to the east and west



Description and Criteria

Bynya Road runs north along the top of the escarpment between Surf Road and Pacific Road for about 1.2 kilometres. Many of the properties on this road have excellent views of either Pittwater or the Ocean. The vegetation is mainly native and varied with an enormous cross section of architecture.

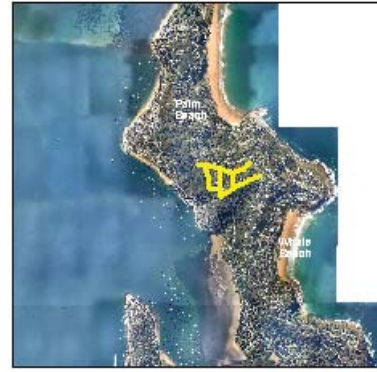


Street Name Cynthia Road, Boanbong Road, Ebor Road, Ralston Road and McKay Road

Suburb Palm Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Views Pittwater Estuary
Common Themes Serene ambience
Tracery and patterns of tree branches
Wildflowers and their perfumes

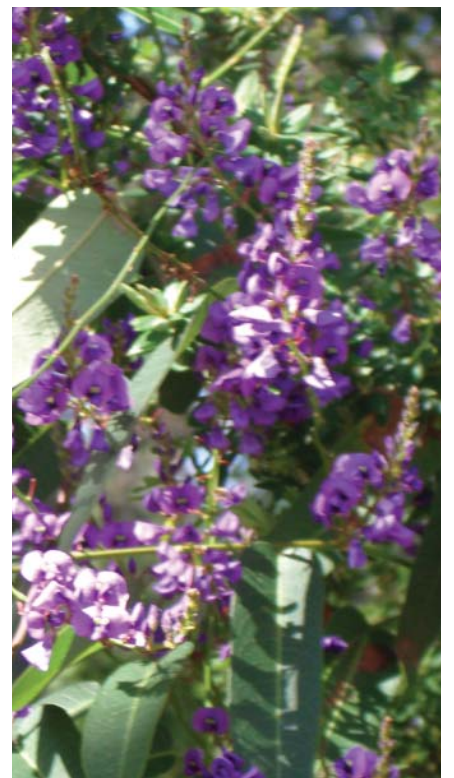
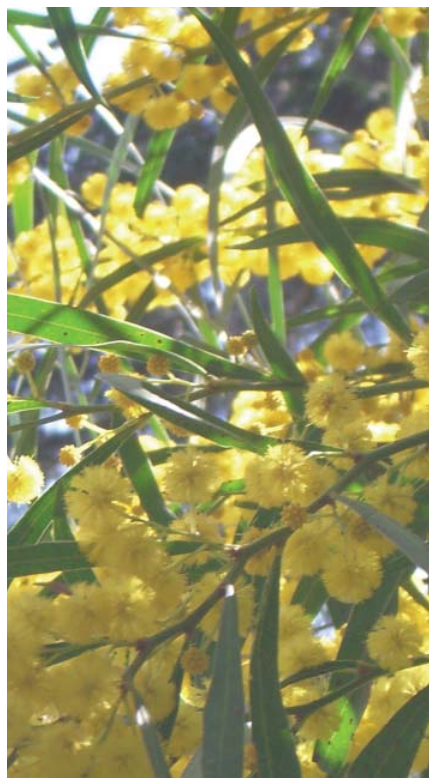


Description and Criteria

These could be called the secret streets of Palm Beach. They form the shapes of two overlapping “Ps” and lie on top of “the hill” to the south of the beach and away from all the main drags. Only the locals visit them.

Their vegetation is typical of Palm Beach with Angophera, Scribbly Gum, Mahogany and Spotted Gum being the big trees, under them Banksia and Casuarina and lower still the smaller natives, with many Grevillia and Calistemon in the gardens. The big trees form canopies over these roads and the whole atmosphere is of serenity and the quiet of the rainforest. But birds abound and every so often there is a glimpse of ocean or bay.





Street Name Florida Road
Suburb Palm Beach

Categories

Vegetation Cultural plantings - Cabbage Trees at Hordern Park

Views 'Palm Beach' and Pacific Ocean

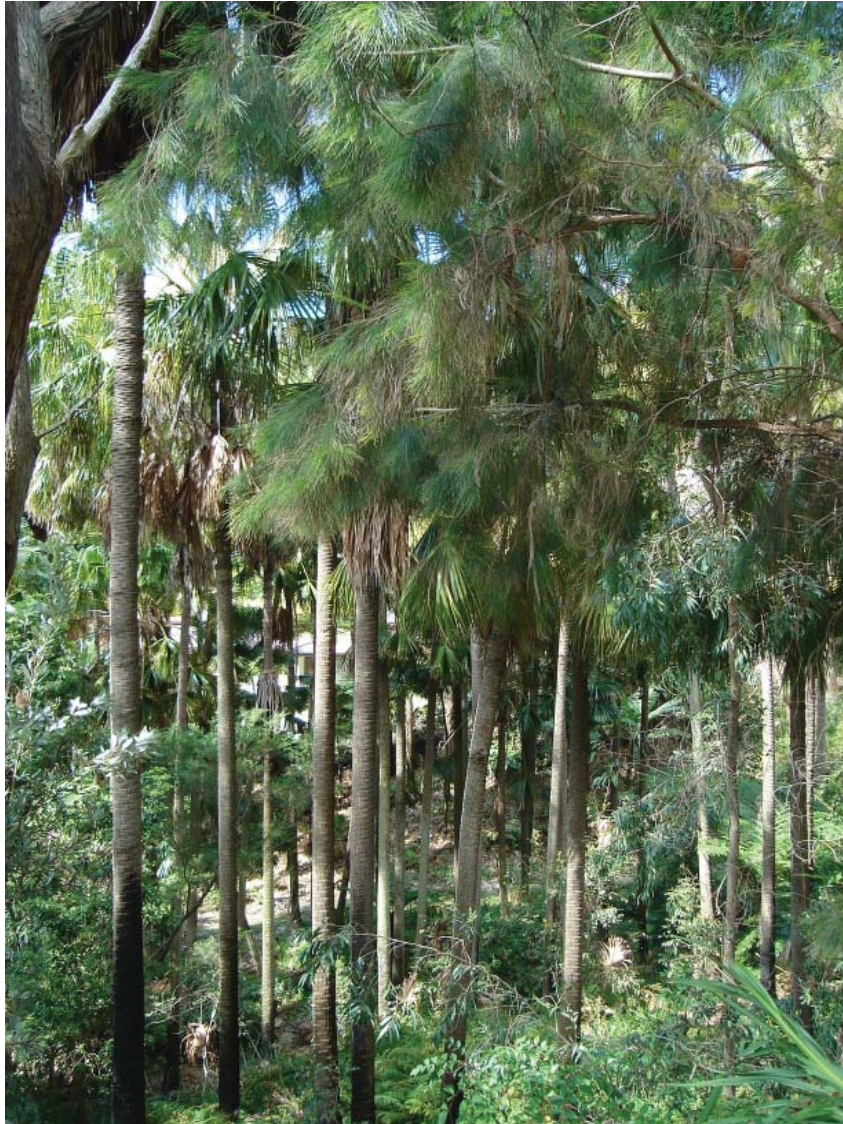
Common Theme Elevated location on north facing escarpment offering views from key locations
Heritage Conservation Area (PLEP)



Description and Criteria

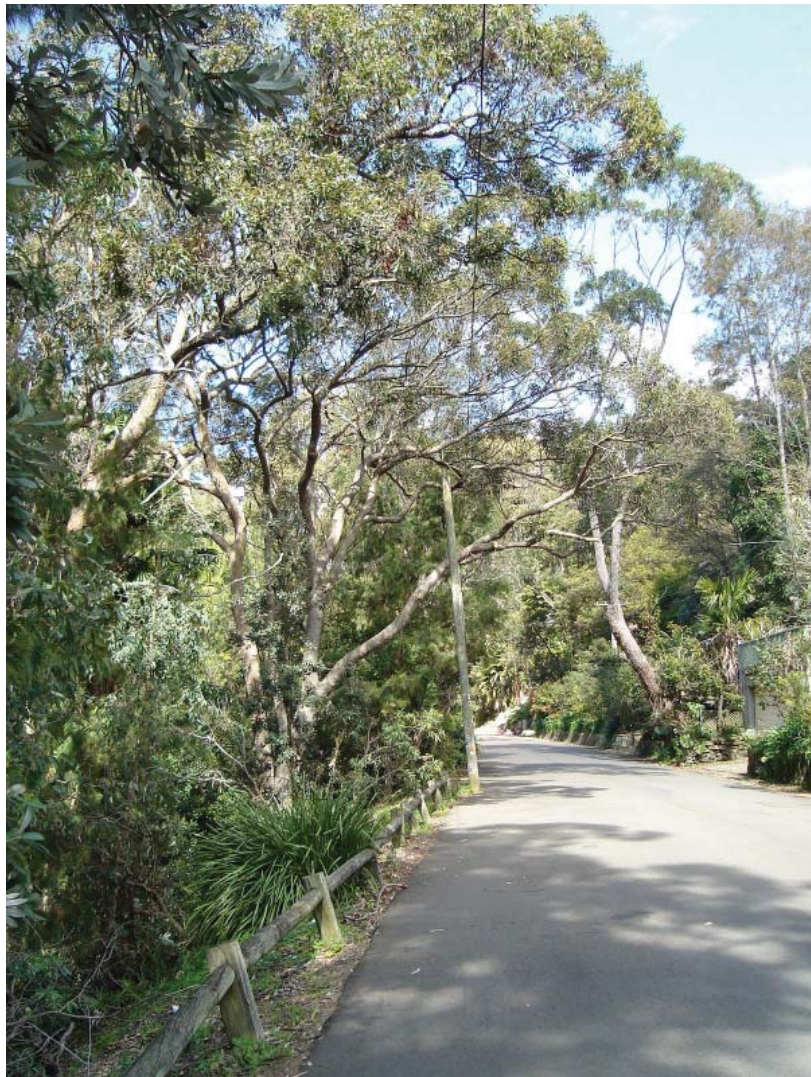
Florida Road starts high above the rock pool at Palm Beach where Whale Beach Road turns sharply west. The views are stunning to the north over Palm Beach. A very typical Palm Beach road on a north facing escarpment with a high side and a low side. Towards the western end lies Hordern Park with a wonderful display of the vegetation that gave the name “Cabbage Tree Boat Harbour” to this end of Palm Beach.





Hordern Park





Street Name Malo Road
Suburb Whale Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species and gardens
Views Pacific Ocean
Common Themes Secluded ambience
Visual and physical link to Whale Beach



Description and Criteria

Malo Road started as a 150 metre “barefoot dappled sandy track” from Whale Beach Road to Whale Beach. It is now bituminised but retains all the other ingredients of its ancestry, including a lovely little park to walk through before reaching the sand.



Street Name Mitchell Road
Suburb Palm Beach

Categories

Vegetation Gardens
Views Views over Palm Beach, Broken Bay and the distant coastline to the north
Common Theme Secluded ambience.
Bible Garden



Description and Criteria

Only some 120 metres long, this street contains a tiny gem, the Palm Beach Bible Garden. This road starts at the mid-point of Pacific Road and runs south-west to north-east. It presents a contrast of architectural styles, the houses on the south eastern side being built in the early mid twentieth century, those on the north-eastern side late in that century or early in the twenty-first century.

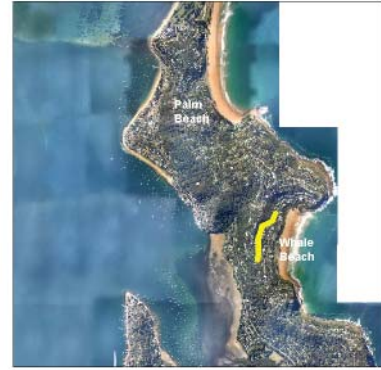
The Bible Garden is on the left near the end of the road. It was donated to the nation by its founder Gerald Hercules Robinson as a place where people could “contemplate the glories of God’s creation”. It fulfills that function superbly.



Street Name Morella Road
Suburb Whale Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native plants
Views 'Whale Beach', the rock pool,
and Careel Headland
Common Theme Architectural mix



Description and Criteria

Morella Road is a 500 metre long road running between Surf Road at the southern end to Whale Beach Road at the north, running parallel to Whale Beach Road. Morella Road has a grandstand view of Whale Beach and the rock pool with the rugged coastline of Careel Headland in the background. The vegetation is mostly native plants. There is quite a mixture of architecture.



Street Name **Norma Road**
Suburb **Palm Beach**

Categories

Views Whale Beach to the south and along the coastline to the Central Coast to the north

Common Theme Links the top of the plateau with the headland



Description and Criteria

Some 300 metres long this road runs from the top of the escarpment above the northern end of Whale Beach to the top of the cliff on Little Head, the northern headland of Whale Beach.

The top 50 metres evidences the common themes of Palm Beach streets, but then the vegetation becomes sparse and ocean views to the Central Coast appear. These splendid views continue to the lower end where a striking view to the south over Whale Beach and Bangally Headland opens up.



Street Name Pacific Road
Suburb Palm Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Views Panoramic beach, headland and coastal views
Common Themes Idyllic Palm Beach streetscape



Description and Criteria

Arguably Palm Beach’s most iconic street, it is some 2.5 km long running south-east to north-west. Each end is a little sparse of vegetation but makes up for that deficiency with glorious water views over Whale Beach, Palm Beach, northern Pittwater, Lion Island, Barrenjoey Headland, Ocean Beach and Ettalong, McMasters Beach and Killcare.

That part of the Bay to Breaker’s Walking Track that runs from the shopping centre on the Pittwater side to Pacific Road is justifiably signposted “Stairway to Heaven”. At the top of the hill at the western end is an entrance to McKay Reserve. For the next 400 metres the road is lined by splendid Angophora, Mahogany, Spotted Gum and Scribbly Gum. Flocks of Rainbow Lorikeets, Sulphur Crested Cockatoos, King Parrots, Corellas, Noisy Minors and Crested Pigeons are found here together with the occasional Brush Turkey. One gets repeated glimpses of glorious ocean, beach and headland views to the north, framed by native vegetation. Such views are repeated, yet each surprisingly different, all along the road.





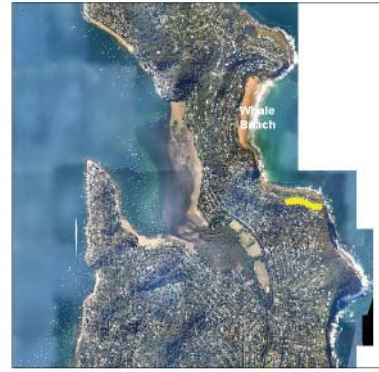




Street Name Rayner Road
Suburb Whale Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Views 'Whale Beach' and Pacific Ocean
Common Theme Prominent location on Careel Headland



Description and Criteria

Rayner Road is a 200 metres long, narrow, dead-end road with stunning views to the north over Whale Beach.



Street Name **Rockbath Road**
Suburb **Palm Beach**

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species
Views Coastal
Common Themes Secluded ambience
 Annie Wyatt Park



Description and Criteria

Running east off Pacific Road, this is a very secluded “no through road” about 200 metres long. Rockbath Road has access to little known Annie Wyatt Park which has wonderful views to the east and north-east right up the coast.

Annie Wyatt (1885-1961) was a conservationist who played a prominent role in creating and gazetting Balls Head Reserve, Waverton (1931), Dalrymple Hay Nature Reserve, Pymble (1934) and Annie Wyatt Reserve, Palm Beach (1938). Annie Wyatt proposed setting up the National Trust of Australia. She served on the Trust’s Council from its foundation on 5 November 1947 until her death in 1961.



Street Name Sunrise Road and
Northview Road
Suburb Palm Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally native species, gardens
Views Palm Beach and Broken Bay
Common Themes Narrow, tortuous and hilly roads with
mangificent views
Sunrise Hill Conservation Area (PLEP)



Description and Criteria

Sunrise Road is some 500 metres long, narrow, tortuous and hilly. At the start there are splendid views of the southern part of Palm Beach. These give way to glimpses of Lion Island and the mouth of the Hawkesbury river. The last 150 metres shows the common themes of Palm Beach streets: tall Eucalypts, native shrubs and further spectacular water views.

Northview Road is a short road at about 150 metres long. It runs off Sunrise Road and heads north to a dead-end and small park, which has stunning views of Barrenjoey Headland, Pittwater and the ocean side of the peninsula. The vegetation is fairly dense. Most of the houses have been in this road for years and they have magnificent views.



Street Name Surf Road
Suburb Palm Beach / Whale Beach

Categories

Vegetation Locally indigenous species and gardens
Views Pacific Ocean, Whale Beach
Common Theme Narrow, winding road revealing a series of changing views



Description and Criteria

Surf Road starts off from Barrenjoey Road as a typical Palm Beach road: narrow, a little tortuous, thick vegetation on both sides, driveways leading to hidden houses. Then suddenly over the top of the escarpment it metamorphoses into a typical Whale Beach road with the views over Whale Beach. Stunning change. But that is what the northern beaches peninsular is all about.



Street Name **The Strand**
Suburb **Whale Beach**

Categories

Vegetation Cultural plantings
Views 'Whale Beach,' headlands and
 Pacific Ocean
Common Themes Iconic 'Whale Beach'
 Secluded ambience



Description and Criteria

The Strand is a beachside road running immediately adjacent to the southern end of Whale Beach it is a permanently sandy road even though bituminised. Large Norfolk Island Pines line its beach border and the stunning view is iconic Whale Beach.



Street Name Whale Beach Road
Suburb Palm Beach / Whale Beach

Categories

Vegetation Heathland vegetation
Views 'Whale Beach', 'Palm Beach', headlands, Pacific Ocean
Common Theme Scenic drive revealing continuous coastal views



Description and Criteria

Whale Beach Road starts in North Avalon and winds up and down the coast for some six kilometres to morph into Florida Road high above the rock pool at Palm Beach. It epitomises the streetscapes of Whale Beach where the common theme is recurrent splendid views of the beach and its surf, its headlands with the surf breaking on the rocks at their base and the escarpment to the west.

After rounding Little Head the views switch to the north across to McMasters Beach and Killcare on the Central Coast with glimpses of waves pounding onto the rocks at the base of the cliff 40 metres below. Between the road and those rocks the cliff top shows the typical coastal heathland vegetation of the New South Wales coast.





Warriewood



PITTWATER COUNCIL

Street Name Narrabeen Park Parade
Suburb Warriewood

Category
Views

Warriewood Beach, Mona Vale Beach,
cliffs and coastline



Description and Criteria

The panoramic views from Narrabeen Park Parade are some of the best in the world. The views of the Pacific Ocean dominate the street from beginning to end. The views are of enormous benefit to the wider public.

As local residents who have watched passers-by for many years we notice that Narrabeen Park Parade is very popular with locals and travellers. People driving along Narrabeen Park Parade can be seen to crane their necks to see what the surf is like, or to take in the breath-taking views of the Pacific Ocean, Warriewood Beach, Mona Vale Beach, or the striking cliffs and ocean views that are such an outstanding feature along our beautiful coastline and so clearly visible from Narrabeen Park Parade.



Street Name Narrabeen Park Parade
Suburb Warriewood

Categories

Views Panoramic views of the beaches and coastline

Common Theme Links between the street, reserve and ocean



Description and Criteria

There are strong visual and physical connections between Narrabeen Park Parade, Turimetta Headland Reserve and the Pacific Ocean. The street and reserve provide social opportunities due to their connections with the ocean.

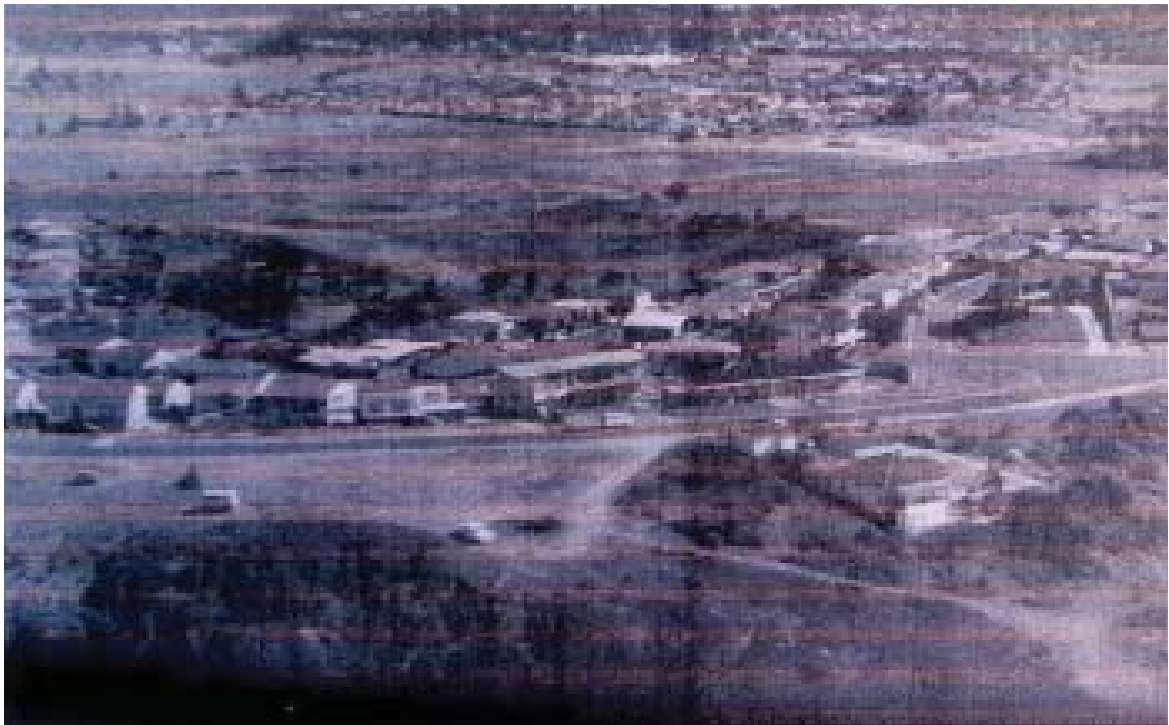
We have lived in the same house since 1976 and have seen much public appreciation for Narrabeen Park Parade and Turimetta Headland Reserve. Our reasons for nominating Narrabeen Park Parade are as follows:

- magnificent coastal views are available from the street and the reserve. From the street, we can see people in the reserve enjoying themselves, such as:
 - hang gliders launching and landing;
 - large family picnics, especially Pacific Islanders; and
 - wedding parties.
- tourists in buses and people from aged care facilities drive around the street looking out to the ocean rather than getting out of the bus.
- many backpackers walk or ride pushbikes past here and look out to the ocean; and
- many weekend drivers in motor vehicles bring visitors on a “Sunday drive” around our street to look at the ocean.

We love this street and nominate the section from Warriewood Beach up the hill and past Turimetta Beach to be on the Register and promoted so that our beautiful area can be seen by many more of the general public than at present.



Panoramic ocean views from Narrabeen Park Parade



Early aerial photo showing Narrabeen Park Parade with Turimetta Headland Reserve in the foreground. At this time the Reserve provided a large area of open space for people to use and enjoy.

Attachment

History of Bilgola Avenue
and Allen Avenue, Bilgola Beach



PITTWATER COUNCIL

“Trees provide environmental, visual and social amenity to the community-and are a living reminder of our history”

“Great streets are markedly superior in character or quality. They are symbols of a community and of its history-They leave strong, long, continuing positive impressions”

(Jacobs A.B. in information for Pittwater’s Most scenic Streets Register).

How well these two quotes relate the circumstances which have resulted in the quality, iconic streets of **Bilgola Avenue** and **Allen Avenue** at Bilgola Beach.

The qualities SHOWCASING the built environment and the natural environment in Bilgola Beach’s case, giving these streets their iconic status, are:-

*The VEGETATION of rows of single species street trees of Canary Island Palms and Norfolk Island palms.

*The COMMON THEMES of remnant stonework of dry stone creek walls, fence and gate supports, stone cairns with very faded Bilgola House nearly invisible (see photos 1 and 2) and the lack of formal road verges on both streets.



Photo 1

Fence and Gate Supports



Photo 2

“Bilgola House” Cains

Bilgola Beach valley, as such, was once known as Tullamulla (18 acres) and later as the smaller Bilgola Estate. Tallumulla was offered up for sale in 1888 as *“the most charming marine villa site in the Colony.... The palm groves and ferns on this property are a marvel of semi tropical growth”* (See advertisement 1).

The land sale (see advertisement 2) of 1922 referred to this area as the *“gem of the Northern beaches”*. It was at the time of this subdivision, after Oswald Watt’s death in 1921 and during the 10 years after this, that Hannah Maclurcan (who bought blocks 3-11) spent a fortune on exotic trees and shrubs (30,000 pounds) on and outside Bilgola Estate, that the present streetscape of Bilgola valley was planned and planted (See photograph 3). A few of these other exotic species remain dotted throughout the valley e.g. butia palms, and wine palms.

Formal plantings of the single species trees, Canary Island palms and Norfolk Island pine trees (common names) were planted in rows along the full stretch of both streets and are now 80-90 years old (See photos 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8). These were planted to beautify these streets.

Because of Bilgola Valley's geography, as a small bay head beach and history dominated by a single house/property owned by notable Australians i.e. William Bede Dalley (politician, 1880s), Oswald Watt 1911-1921 (first Australian with a pilots licence and war hero), Hannah Maclurcan 1920's & 1930's (entrepreneur and famous for her cook book) it enjoyed the reputation as a beach retreat and later a resort for the wealthy of the city of Sydney. This history and land use has coloured its development. Today, block sizes are large, the quality of housing is high and the street trees that were planted then as part of a plan to woo the well off city dwellers to own a small piece of paradise to escape to, are very tall. These trees now visually dominate and run the stretch of each street, the repetition of trunks and the heritage listed indigenous cabbage tree palms (mostly 300-400 years old) all add to the feel of a sub tropical haven of large summer houses which appeal to residents and holiday makers/day trippers to the beach, alike. Despite major attempts to overdevelop it, Bilgola still manages to remain *the Gem of the northern beaches!*

The lane (unnamed) to the beach car park on the southern end of the beach has a long **row of Norfolk Island pines running its full length along, what was the boundary of Bilgola House** and the beach camping area that developed to the south of this during the 1930s (See attachment - National Geographic photo Dec 1935). These were probably planted as wind breaks and as part of the Estate feel.

At the lowest elevation of the Serpentine, adjacent to the entrance to this car park and Bilgola Avenue is a ROW of Canary Island Palms (see photo 8), the same age as the Bilgola Ave palms, planted to be contiguous with the Bilgola Ave palms when The Serpentine operated as a more minor road. **This row too needs to be identified as part of the iconic valley streetscape of Bilgola Beach.**

All these mature, Grande street trees now, although non indigenous, remind the viewer (instil in the viewer a public memory) of what has gone on in this valley in the past. Sadly Bilgola House was demolished in 1989. These remind us of a time when Hannah Maclurcan, the then owner of the Wentworth Hotel, spent thousands of pounds on her cultural plantings, imported exotic trees and shrubs, for Bilgola Estate (when *Garden Magazine* 1926 members were invited to view her creation). Oswald Watt "loved his Bilgola", as a retreat for the soul (like the Marist fathers' retreat at the rear of the valley) where "Toby" Oswald Watt entertained such notables as Lionel Lindsay, Ure Smith and Dame Nellie Melba. (Bilgola the Story of a Politician, a Pilot and an Epicure -Tony Dawson and Anne Spencer for Manly Warringah Historical Society - August 2010.)

The dominance of the large block sizes and Pittwater Council protection of the native vegetation and thus the dominance of the natural rather than man made environment in Bilgola Valley, has helped the ecology of the area to remain largely in tact. Colonies of water dragons, native glow worms, bats, bandicoots, ring-tailed possums and abundant birdlife thrive. (See photo 10). The Streetscapes of Bilgola Avenue, Allen Avenue, the lane to the beach car park and the part of The Serpentine contiguous with the Bilgola Ave Canary Island Palms **SHOW CASE** Bilgola to visitors, breathe beauty into the lives of residents and thus exhibit very worthy qualities recognised and valued by the wider community. These are Iconic Streets in Pittwater and should be recognised as such - preserved and maintained.



Photo 3 - "Bilgola Estate" C1930s
Note: the white painted tree planter boxes lining the streets



Photo 4 – The Bilgola Estate today



Photo 5

Bilgola Avenue
(looking west)



Photo 6

Bilgola Avenue
(no formal footpaths)



Photo 7
Bilgola Avenue - (looking east to Bilgola Beach)



Photo 8 - Canary Island Palms

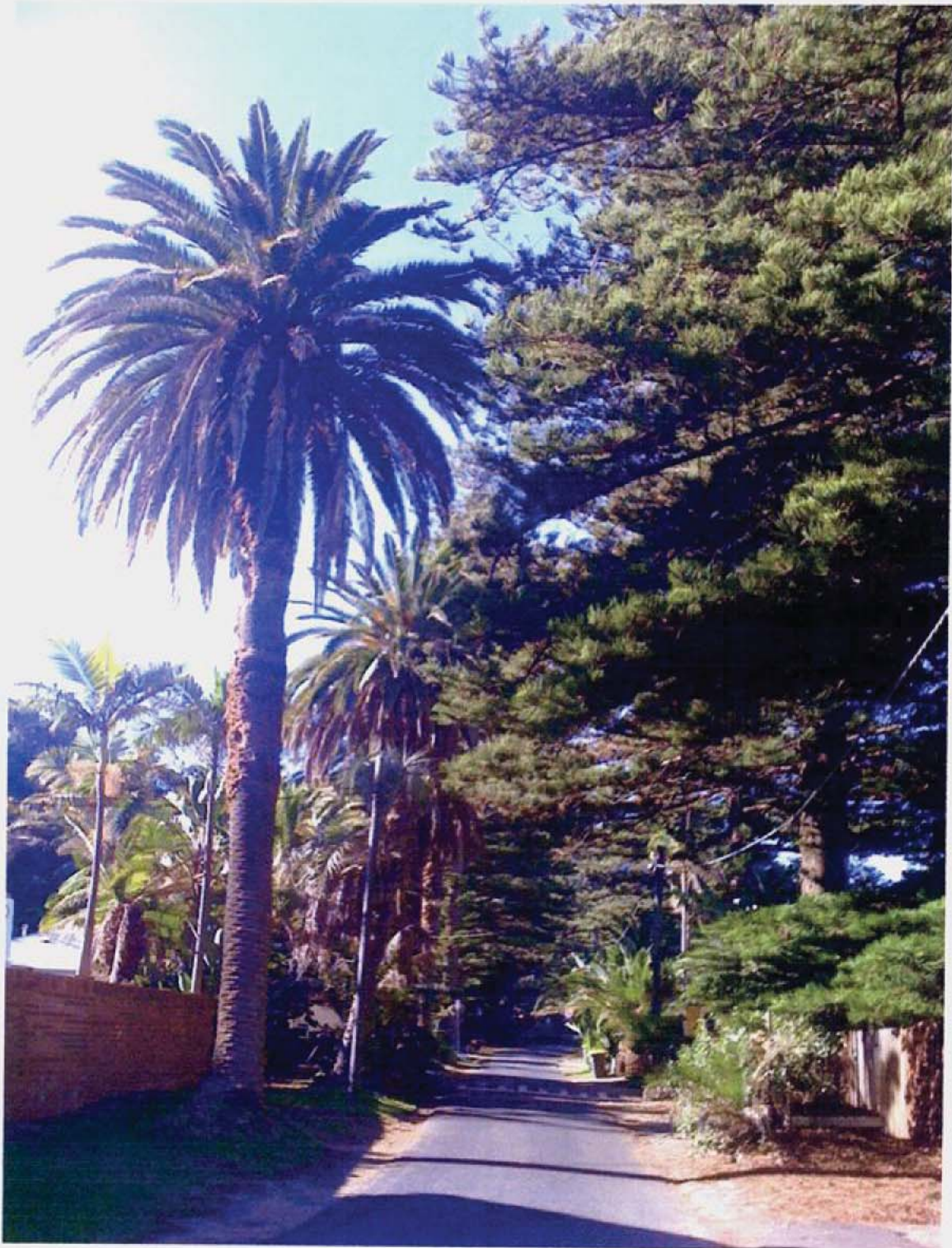


Photo 9

Allen Avenue

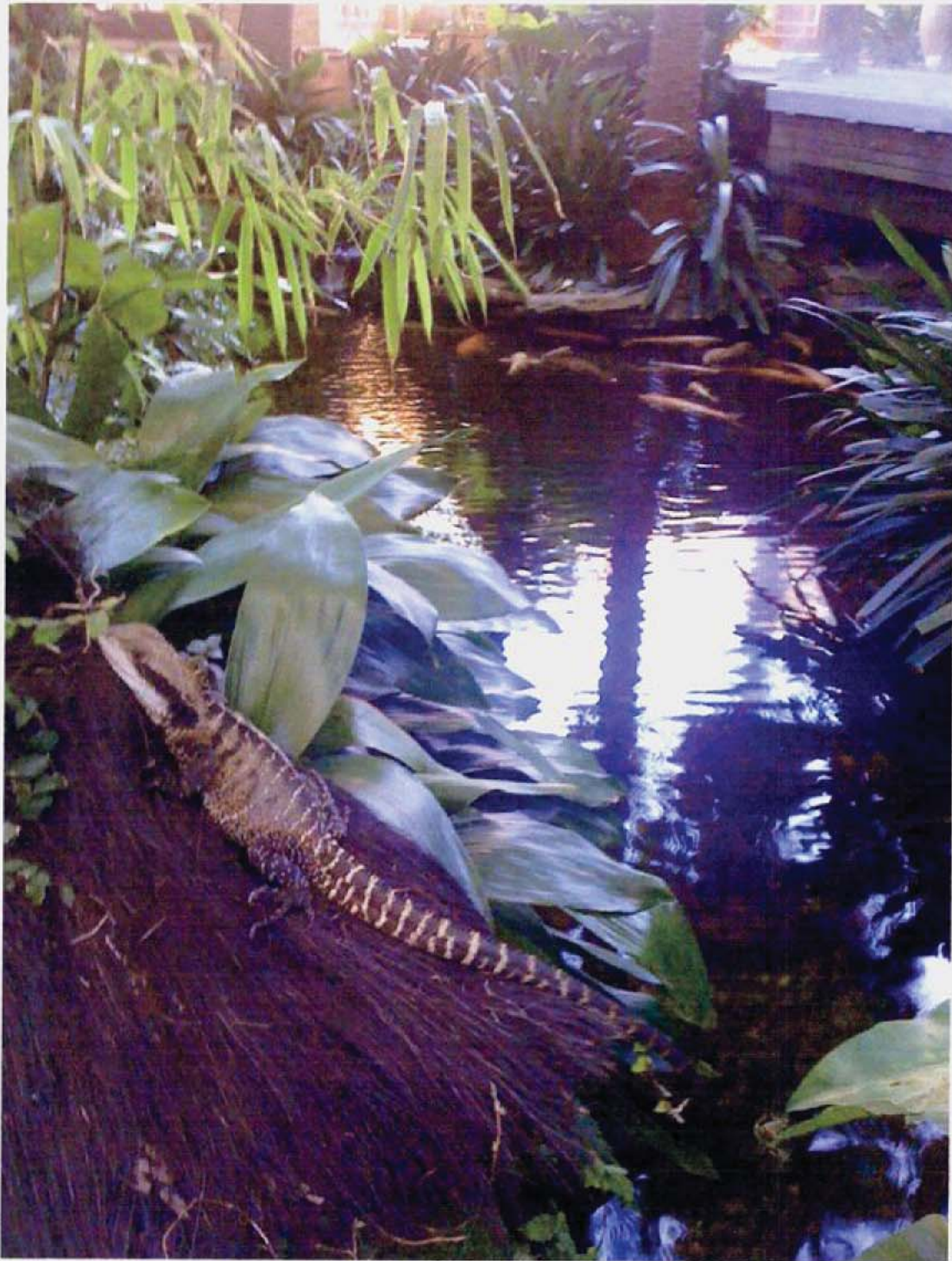


Photo 10

Water Dragon

PITTWATER.

TALLAMALLA.

The **MARINE VILLA** owned by the Right Honourable
W. B. DALLEY.

This **PROPERTY** has about **18 ACRES LAND**, and is divided
into two portions by the **MAIN PITTWATER ROAD.**

It is the **PICK OF SPOTS** along the northern coast, and has a
large frontage to **Bilgola Bay**, with the best fishing grounds the
most enthusiastic disciple of **Isaac Walton** could desire. There
are

TWO RESIDENCES,

one for the caretaker, and the other for the owner's use.

The **PALM GROVES** and **FERNS** on this property are a marvel
of semi-tropical growth. The **SOIL** is equal to any of the richest
Illawarra land.

MILLS and **PILE** have been instructed by the pro-
prietor to sell by auction, at the Rooms, 120, Pitt-street,
on **THURSDAY, 2nd February**, at half-past 11 o'clock,
TALLAMALLA,

the
MOST CHARMING MARINE VILLA SITE
IN THE COLONY.

PLANS and Particulars at the Rooms.

TITLE, FREEHOLD. TERMS AT SALE.

ADVERTISMENT 1

ADVERTISEMENT 2

BILGOLA ESTATE SUBDIVISION BILGOLA

For many years the Residence of the late Colonel Oswald Watt.
Gem of the Northern Ocean Beaches.

CLOSE TO NEWPORT BEACH.

For Auction Sale **ON THE GROUND** at 3:30 o'clock.

SATURDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY 1922

RAINE AND HORNE.
Auctioneers in conjunction, 70 Pitt St. Sydney.

MARSHALL AND DEMPSTER
112 Pitt St. Sydney.

Torrens Title

Terms
10% Deposit and the balance in 12 quarterly payments with interest at 7% added.

Covenant
All buildings erected on the Estate must be either of brick or stone or other material approved of by Vendor.
Only private dwelling houses may be erected on Lots 3 to 28 inclusive.
Shops or business premises may be erected on Lots 1 and 2.
In order to prevent obstruction of Ocean views, no building is to be erected within 20 feet of the Road.

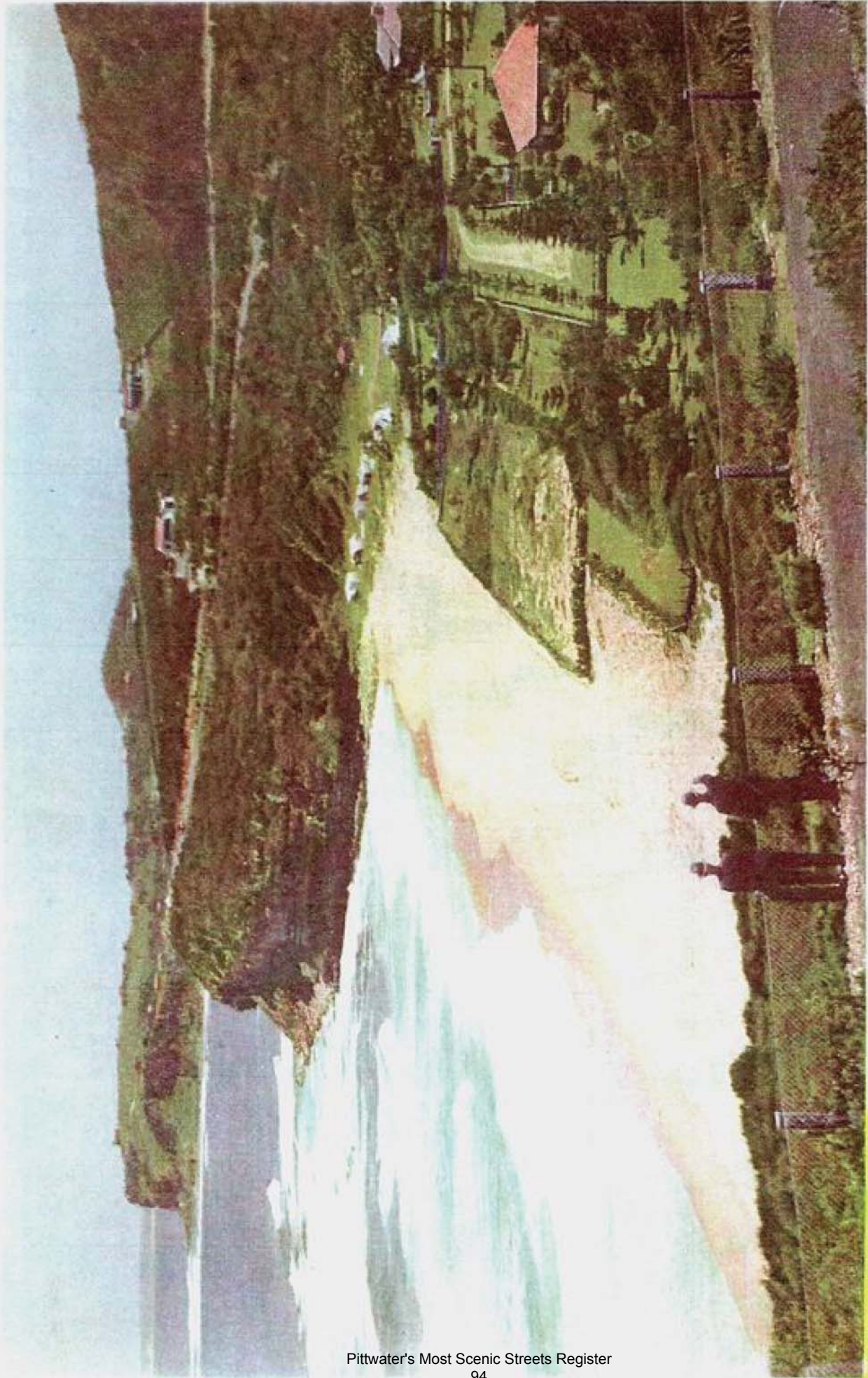
Solicitors
Allen, Allen & Hemsley,
18 Castlereagh St. Sydney.

Licensed Auctioneer
H. P. Mulligan,
61 Castlereagh St. Sydney.

All dimensions are subject to Official Plans.

15/1/22

Bilgola Estate, 1922.



Finlay Photograph by W. Robert Moore

© National Geographic Society

BOLD PROMONTORIES AND GOLDEN-SAND BEACHES FRILL THE COAST NORTH OF SYDNEY
In the 16 miles between Sydney harbor entrance and Barrenjoey Head, there are nearly as many of these sandy coves where thousands of Sydneysiders go to bathe and sun. A road, looping around the headlands and connecting the beaches, provides a popular drive.



BILGOLA BEACH, WARRINGAH SHIRE, N.S.W.

BILGOLA
THE STORY OF A POLITICIAN, A PILOT AND AN EPICURE

by Tony Dawson and Anne Spencer¹

'Entering the front gates, one passes a large grove of magnificent cabbage-tree palms bordering the drive to the cottage, which stands in a sun-bathed clearing amidst a paradise of leaf and bloom.. On one side of the cottage there are grassy lawns and on the other side there is the continuation of the palm grove, through which runs a small stream; and fully two-thirds of the property are covered with palm trees, burrawongs, watties, gums and other native trees, the ground being carpeted with maiden-hair and besprinkled with wild violets and other native flowers.'

This description of Bilgola was penned by John Sydney Richardson almost ninety years ago. Yet Bilgola continues to occupy a special place not only in the history of the Peninsula but of the nation, for three of the early owners, each a pioneer in his or her own field, made their indelible marks on Australian life and culture.

William Bede Dalley (1831-1888)

The story of Bilgola House begins with W B Dalley, the celebrated politician and lawyer, when he acquired the title to lots 22 and 23 of the southern division of the Reverend John Joseph Therry's Pittwater estate, having purchased them from the former owners, Michael Moran and John & Marion Stevenson, for a total of £585-5s-6d. The transfers of ownership officially took place in June and October 1886, though it is likely that the agreements had been reached months—perhaps a year or more—earlier and that Dalley had use of the land well before the formal exchanges were made.

Although lot 22 was mostly steep, lot 23, below it, ran gently down to the beach, and it was there that Dalley built a weatherboard cottage. 'Tallamalla', as the house was named, offered a retreat from the hurly burly of Macquarie Street and was Dalley's second house on the Peninsula, the far more opulent 'Marinella', better known as 'Dalley's Castle,' at Manly having been built some years earlier. But 'Tallamalla' occupied a particularly idyllic spot with a small creek, lined with palms and ferns, running along its southern boundary and with lawns stretching towards the beach.

Long before he took up the land at Bilgola, Dalley had become one of the colony's leading figures. The son of storekeeper John Dalley and Catherine Spillane, both former convicts, he was educated at St Mary's seminary and the Sydney College. After qualifying as a barrister in 1856 he was nominated by Henry Parkes for the seat of Sydney and took his place in the NSW parliament. In the 1858 election he moved to the seat of Cumberland Boroughs and afterwards served two years as solicitor-general before resigning in order to visit the UK and Europe. He returned to Sydney in 1861 but almost immediately he and Parkes went back to London as immigration commissioners, returning again to Sydney some eighteen months later.



Dalley was a flamboyant character and persuasive orator. In Court he used his charm to advantage, though even his famed advocacy was unable to prevent the conviction of bushranger Frank Gardiner in 1864 or save Henry O'Farrell from the gallows after the attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh at Clontarf in 1868. Later, however, he strongly supported the release of Gardiner from prison, a decision that contributed to the fall of the Parkes government in 1875. By that time, Dalley's relationship with Parkes, his former friend, was strained but he went on to serve as attorney general in the subsequent administrations of both Sir John Robertson and Parkes himself. The three men—Robertson, Parkes and Dalley—were later amusingly commemorated when their heads were carved on two ornate flower urns which took pride of place in the gardens at Bilgola.

Dalley retired from the Legislative Council in April 1880 after ten years of broken service. He cited family reasons for his decision as he and his wife Eleanor (nee Long) had six children from their eight-year marriage. However, in January 1881 Eleanor contracted typhoid fever and died at their home in Rose Bay. Dalley afterwards retreated from public life in order to devote himself to his children.

He was not, however, the kind of person to stay out of the political fray too long. In 1882 he purchased the land at Manly on which he built 'Marinella', and in 1883 he again took a seat in the Legislative Council, accepting re-appointment to his old position of attorney-general. Later that year he participated in the Intercolonial Convention, and in February 1885, as Acting Premier during Sir Alexander Stuart's illness, he stunned the nation by offering a NSW contingent to help Britain in the Sudan campaign, an offer which led to the first overseas expedition by an Australian military force.

¹ Treasurer of the Bilgola Preservation Society

In 1886, shortly after purchasing the land at Bilgola, Dalley was informed that Queen Victoria had consented to his swearing in as Australia's first privy councillor. However, as time wore on, his parliamentary duties and differences with other politicians, including Parkes, over questions such as German capital investment and Chinese immigration took a toll on his health, and in January 1888 Dalley put up both 'Tallamalla' and 'Marinella' for auction. The auctioneers, Mills & Pile, described 'Tallamalla' as occupying the 'pick of spots along the northern coast' and being the 'most charming marine villa site in the colony.' There were two residences, 'one for the caretaker, and the other for the owner's use'. There was also 'a large frontage to Bilgola Bay, with the best fishing grounds the most enthusiastic disciple of Isaac Walton² could desire', and although Dalley's tenure at Bilgola had been relatively short, the beach was known as Dalley's Beach for many years afterwards.



Dalley's weatherboard cottage 'Tallamalla'
(State Library of NSW)

Both properties were purchased by Melbourne merchants Malcolm Donald McEacham and John McIlwraith, and they were still in possession when, on 28 October 1888, William Bede Dalley died at his house on Darling Point. His funeral took place two days later and was attended by an immense number of people including the governor's representative, members of both Houses of Parliament, members of the Bar, public officials, representatives of municipal bodies, and many ordinary citizens. Following a two-hour-long requiem high mass at St Mary's Cathedral, the cortege, comprising around 150 vehicles, proceeded to Waverley Cemetery for the burial, while thousands of people lined the route to pay their last respects to one of the nation's best-loved men.

After Dalley's death, the new owners of 'Tallamalla' made little, if any, use of the house and within a year both it and 'Marinella' were again put up for auction. No buyer was found but in 1892, by an order of the bankruptcy court, 'Tallamalla' was sold. The purchaser was William John McGaw, the owner of Kooba Station, a large grazing property near Narrandera in the Riverina. He and his wife, Sarah Maria, who were great benefactors to the Presbyterian Church, also purchased 'Marinella', which was renamed 'The Towers' and, later, 'The Castle'. After her husband's death in 1894, Mrs McGaw continued to live there until she, too, died in 1922. Meanwhile, their application to bring the property at Bilgola under the provisions of the Real Property Act 1863 was approved, and on 15 December 1897 Mrs McGaw, by then widowed, was issued with the new Certificate of Title embracing the entire 18 acres.

Mrs McGaw held on to the land until May 1909 when she sold it to Henry Zeddon Jones of Manly. Three years later, on 3 May 1912, Jones sold the smaller portion, on which 'Tallamalla' stood, to Oswald Watt, the second prominent Australian with whom this essay is concerned.

Walter Oswald Watt (1878-1921)

Oswald Watt was born in Bournemouth during a family visit to England. His father, John Brown Watt, had come to Sydney in 1842 as a 16-year-old to join his uncle's mercantile and shipping firm. He soon proved his worth and by 1861 was a prominent businessman in his own right with a seat in the NSW Legislative Council where, for many years, he served alongside W B Dalley with whom he developed a close friendship. In 1862 he married Mary Jane Holden and over the next sixteen years they had six children of whom Oswald was the youngest. The Watts returned to Sydney in 1879 but Mary Jane died that same year leaving John Watt with the responsibility for the children's upbringing.

Oswald spent his early years at 'Eynesbury', their house in Edgecliff in Sydney's eastern suburbs, but in 1888 his father again decided to take the family to England in order to find a suitable school for Oswald and his elder brother Ernest. While there, John Watt was overcome by illness and although he survived until 1897 he was never able to return to Australia. Oswald, however, completed school and went on to Cambridge University, graduating in Natural Science in

² Isaac Walton's book *The Compleat Angler*, which first appeared in 1653, is reputed to be the third most published book in English literature after the Bible and the Complete Works of Shakespeare.

1899, two years after his father's death. Later that year he sailed back to Sydney where he accepted a commission as second lieutenant in the NSW Scottish Rifles and acted as aide-de-camp to two NSW governors, Sir Harry Rawson and Sir Frederick Darley. At the same time, he took a great interest in pastoral matters, purchasing Howlong station at Carrathool and having stakes in Llanillo, Goonal and Gunningrah stations in NSW, as well as two Queensland cattle-stations, Strathmore at Bowen and Glen Prairie at Rockhampton.

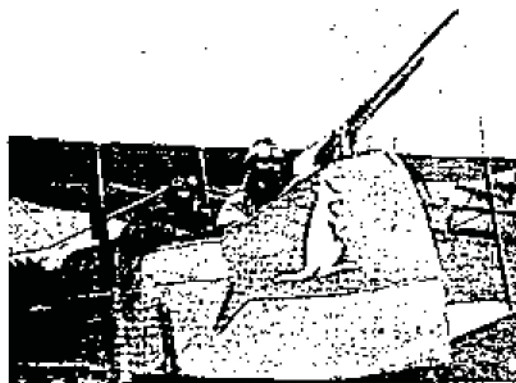
In 1902 Oswald married Muriel Maud Williams, daughter of the prominent Melbourne judge, Sir Hartley Williams. After their marriage the couple lived initially at Camden, then at Woollahra, and had one son, born in 1905. In 1909 during an extended visit to England, Oswald decided to return to Australia alone, ostensibly on business. When he arrived back in London in May 1910, he seemed to have changed, paying little attention to his wife. Watt excused himself by claiming illness but their relationship continued to deteriorate despite one or two attempts at reconciliation.

By then Oswald had become fascinated by flying, a pursuit very much in its infancy, and he decided to undergo training at Salisbury Plain. In 1911 he was awarded his Aviators Certificate by the Royal Aero Club and became the first Australian to become a fully qualified pilot. On his return to Sydney, unaccompanied by his wife, he began making visits to Bilgola, then owned by Henry Zeddon Jones. One of members of the party that accompanied him from time to time was Ivy Schilling, a dancer with the J. C. Williamson company and a popular 'beach beauty'. She had earlier been dubbed a heroine after saving the well-known surfer Tommy Walker when he supposedly got into difficulties in the water at South Steyne. The rescue could have been genuine but had the smell of a publicity stunt, celebrity culture being as alive then as it is today.

Watt must have enjoyed his weekends at Bilgola for on 3 May 1912 he purchased the land and seaside villa from Jones and spent as much time as he could there, entertaining friends and making improvements to the property. He had already indicated to Muriel that he had no interest in continuing their marriage so in 1913 she petitioned for divorce on the grounds of adultery, naming Ivy Schilling as co-respondent. The case was heard before Mr. Justice Gordon and neither Oswald nor Ivy contested the evidence. Accordingly, the decree nisi was granted in September 1913 and the divorce finalised in April 1914, with sole custody of their son awarded to Muriel.



Oswald Watt 1915
(photo by Walter Barnett)



Watt with his observer in MF44

Watt had not attended court during the divorce proceedings and by late 1913 he was already in France where he purchased a Bleriot XI monoplane which he afterwards flew in Egypt. He was in Paris when war broke out and he immediately offered both his plane and his services to France, joining the Aviation Militaire branch of the French Foreign Legion. He was posted to a squadron at Toul in eastern France where he flew a Maurice Farman biplane with a white kangaroo and the words 'Advance Australia' painted on its nose. His aerial exploits earned him the Legion d'honneur and the Croix de Guerre, the first of these being

awarded after he and his observer were forced to land midway between the French and German lines. They had come under heavy fire from the enemy's trenches but reached the French lines safely, bringing back valuable information.

Although Watt enjoyed the titular rank of 'captain', he was not a French citizen and his formal rank was that of a simple infantryman. This meant that he could not be given a command so in 1916 he transferred to the newly formed Australian Flying Corps where he was officially made captain and given command of 8 Flight, No. 1 Squadron, then stationed in Egypt. Soon afterwards he was promoted to major and took command of No. 2 Squadron which, after a period of training in England, was despatched to the Western Front where they distinguished themselves, thanks largely to Watt whose generosity and loyalty to his men inspired their feats. Later, Watt, now lieutenant-colonel, assumed command of four squadrons of the Australian Training Wing at Tetbury. Again, he inspired his crews with ideals of service and they, in turn, were proud to serve under such a distinguished leader.

Watt returned to Australia in 1919 and was unstinting in his efforts to help his former AFC colleagues. He maintained a

strong interest in aviation, becoming the foundation president of the NSW section of the Australian Aero Club, and was also busy as a partner in Gilchrist, Watts & Sanderson, the family company, and as a director of several other companies. However, he spent as much time as he could at Bilgola and was said to be at his happiest there, working in the garden, digging and planting, and entertaining his friends. His guests did the cooking and on many a weekend the quiet air of Bilgola would ring with laughter, though not drunken revelry as Watt did not allow alcohol at his parties.

Early on the morning of 21 May 1921 Oswald Watt went to the beach alone, taking his towel and wearing his swimming costume under his bathrobe. He is thought to have been gathering firewood before taking his morning dip. Some time later his caretaker, Sydney Jones, saw his body floating in the water and rushed to Newport for help. Some fishermen went round the headland by boat and recovered him. Mr Bulfin, a local resident, and Constable Grant from Mona Vale tried to resuscitate Watt but their efforts failed and Dr Richards afterwards pronounced him dead. On examination he was found to have a bruise on the back of the head and a cut on the forehead, as well as scratches on one cheek. It appeared that Watt had slipped and was rendered unconscious when his head struck the rocks, causing him to drown in comparatively shallow water. The news of his death was devastating to his friends. A. Consett Stephen wrote of his shock – it was 'as though some bright bird of gorgeous plumage, which I had been watching in full flight, had suddenly dropped stricken at my feet.'

Oswald Watt was sadly grieved by all who knew him and he was buried at St. Jude's churchyard in Randwick with full military honours. Only afterwards, when his will was opened, was it discovered that he had wanted to be cremated. His wishes were observed but because cremation was not yet legal in NSW the body was sent to South Australia and the ashes returned afterwards for reburial at St. Jude's, an unusual finale to an unorthodox life.

For probate purposes Watt's estate was valued at £176,845, and prior to his death he appointed the Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd as his executors and trustees. His will provided generously for his relatives, including his 15-year-old son, then at school in England, as well as many of his friends. A bequest of £500 was also made to the Australian Aero Club 'for the purchase of a gold medal, to be presented each year to the aviator who, in the opinion of the council, achieves the most brilliant feat in the air in the Commonwealth, or to the Australian-born aviator performing the most brilliant feat outside the Commonwealth.' The Oswald Watt Gold Medal for 1921, the first to be awarded, was presented retrospectively in 1927 to F. S. Briggs for a flight from Melbourne to Brisbane and one from Melbourne to Perth. Recipients since then have included aviation luminaries such as Charles Kingsford Smith, Bert Hinkler and, more recently, Dick Smith, the medal now being awarded under the auspices of the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs of Australia.

As to the property at Bilgola, it was soon sold to Harry James Bridgen, a public accountant who subdivided it into twenty eight lots that were offered for sale in February 1922. Among the buyers were Hannah MacLurcan and Robert Lee who, as tenants in common, purchased almost half the lots in the estate. They were later married, but it is in Hannah MacLurcan, the hotelier who achieved fame for her Australian equivalent to Isabella Beeton's 'Book of Household Management' (better known as 'Mrs Beeton's Cookbook'), that our interest lies.

Hannah MacLurcan (1860-1936)



Hannah MacLurcan 1898
(Townsville City Library)

On 17 October 1860, at Tambaroora near Hill End in NSW, Susan Phillips, wife of Jacob Aaron Phillips, gave birth to her fourth child, Hannah. By 1866 the family had moved to Queensland where Jacob Phillips took up the licence to a hotel in Townsville and, at an early age, Hannah began work in the kitchen. She later worked in the dining room, then in the hotel office, and learned the ropes so well that when she was about fifteen her father sent her to manage his Club Hotel at Toowoomba.

In 1880 Hannah married Robert Watson Wigham, an English-born banker, and had two daughters by him. However, the marriage did not last long, though there is some uncertainty as to whether Hannah was widowed or divorced. Whatever the case, she was still known as Wigham in 1887 when she married Donald Charles Boulton MacLurcan, a retired master mariner whom, over the next two years, she presented with another daughter and a son, Charles Dansie. The MacLurcans ran the Criterion Hotel and later the Queen's Hotel at Townsville, but although Donald was the licensee it was Hannah who managed the business. The breakthrough came in 1898 when Hannah, already a renowned cook, published her book *Mrs MacLurcan's Cookery Book: A Collection of Practical Recipes, Specially Suitable for Australia*. The book contained recipes for such delicacies as kangaroo tail soup, pawpaw pie, fried choko, roast wallaby, Galantine de Poulet à l'escarlate (boiled chicken in scarlet

jelly), as well as the more usual dishes, and immediately proved popular. The first edition sold out within weeks and the second, which appeared later the same year, had a letter of endorsement from Lady Lamington. There were a further eighteen editions, the last of which was published in 1930.

With her new-found stardom, money earned in the hotel business and from her book, and husband in tow, Hannah moved to Sydney where, in April 1903, she took over the management of the Wentworth Hotel on Church Hill (now Grosvenor Street), near Wynyard Square. Again, as a married woman, she could not hold the lease but it was her money, and money advanced under a bill of sale, that was used to purchase furniture and stock for the hotel. Paradoxically, when Donald Maclurcan died less than three months later, Hannah became eligible to hold the lease but it was not until 1905 that this was acknowledged through a friendly action in the NSW Equity Court.

Hannah Maclurcan transformed the Wentworth Hotel into one of the most fashionable establishments in Australia. She had the occasional brush with the law, as in 1914 when, after the hotel garden was used for a ragtime dance competition, she was charged with permitting dancing on the grounds of a licensed house. She was fined £1 with 6 shillings costs. A larger fine was imposed in 1926 when she was found guilty of selling liquor after hours - this time it was £3. Trivial actions of this kind did her no harm; if anything, they were probably good for business!

Hannah's staff at the Wentworth referred to her as 'Madame' and among her more famous guests were Dame Nellie Melba and the 'divine' Sarah Bernhardt. The hotel's magnificent ballroom was frequently used, and when, in 1920, a young visiting Englishman asked if he might join the dancers there, Hannah graciously obliged, for it was not every day that the Prince of Wales and future King Edward VIII asked such a favour. The prince afterwards returned the compliment by autographing a copy of the menu, a rare royal gesture.

It was not only Hannah, with her exclusive fashions, her Pekinese dogs and her cheap cigarettes in a long, elegant cigarette holder, that became a Sydney celebrity, but also her son, Charles, an amateur radio enthusiast who, in 1910, transmitted the first radio signals from the roof of the hotel. Although fire destroyed the Wentworth installation in 1912 Charles became a pioneer of radio with 2CM, his private station in Strathfield, and in 1924 his transmissions were the among the first to cross the Pacific and be heard in USA.



The Wentworth Hotel c.1930 (State Library of NSW)

The 1920s were the hey-day of the Wentworth and Hannah, conscious of her social responsibilities, often organised fundraising events for a variety of charitable causes. She also oversaw the regular production of the Wentworth Magazine with its significant literary content. However, she was then in her sixties and needed a place where she could relax and entertain her private guests. Bilgola fitted the bill perfectly, apart from the house. Hannah was used to luxury and the Spartan simplicity of Oswald Watt's weekender held little appeal for her. She therefore erected a new house there and furnished it fashionably, with curios and antiques acquired during her regular trips to the United States. She also spent a great deal of money on the gardens, and members of the Royal Australian Historical Society who visited there in 1926 were impressed with the beauty of the place.



Bilgola House c.1935



Hannah Maclurcan with family and dog c.1935

In 1931 Hannah married her partner, Robert Lee, at a ceremony held in Mordialloc, Victoria. The following year, back in Sydney, Lee, a wool broker who two years earlier had been placed under a sequestration order for bankruptcy, was hauled before the Central Summons Court on charges of having intended to defraud the Bank of NSW of over £37,000.

He was committed for trial but the evidence was weak and he was acquitted. This undoubtedly came as a relief not only to him but to Hannah who had just retired after transferring the licence for the Wentworth to James Alfred Duncan.

Bilgola, by then, had become Hannah's permanent home and she spent the rest of her days there in style and comfort, enjoying the company of her dogs, family and friends, amongst whom she could count Dr J J C Bradfield, the designer and engineer-in-charge of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, with whom she was photographed on or close to the day the bridge was officially opened. Shortly before her death Hannah was admitted to St Vincent's Private Hospital where she passed away on 27 September 1936. She was privately cremated at the Rookwood Crematorium the next day. Though there were few people present at her funeral, her enduring legacy to the nation was the confidence she had brought to Australian cuisine, something readily acknowledged today.

Hannah Maclurcan's Bilgola estate passed to her son, Charles, and was eventually sold. However, the house that offered such comfort to W B Dalley, Oswald Watt, Hannah Maclurcan and others is, sadly, no longer with us. It was demolished in 1987, together with all the outbuildings, despite having been listed under Warringah Council's draft provisions for the control of heritage buildings. The intention of the then owner was to erect townhouses on the site but community protest led to the rejection of this and subsequent plans. Today, five houses occupy the site and the present owners have been careful to preserve many of the heritage items – a grove of tall cabbage-tree palms, trees lining the avenue, the old entrance posts, dry stone walls bordering the creek, small bridge structures, lined garden beds, pedestals, wells, and even the flower urns on which the carved heads of Henry Parkes, John Robertson and William Dalley can still be discerned.

Below: Flower urn revealing one of the carved heads

Right: Stone bridge over Bilgola Creek



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Principal sources:

Land and Property Management Authority; National Library of Australia Newspaper Digitisation Project; Australian Dictionary of Biography; Registries of Births, Deaths & Marriages – NSW, QLD, VIC; State Library of NSW; State Records NSW; *Oswald Watt – a tribute to his memory by a few of his friends* (1921); Royal Federation of Australian Aero Clubs

For more detailed references please contact the authors.

