



WEST MELTON - WEST RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL URBAN DESIGN STATEMENT

11/ 12/ 2020 | Final

report by

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Introduction

This Design Statement has been prepared in support of a private plan change application to the Proposed Selwyn District Plan.

The purpose of the Application for rezoning to General Residential Zone ('GRZ') is to enable the residential development of land on the western edge of West Melton between SH73 and Halkett Road.

The Application includes a proposed Outline Development Plan to guide and ensure an integrated approach to residential development, including provision of appropriate road linkages to the existing urban area to the east and possible future urban areas to the south of the Site.

The ODP is based on an urban analysis of development and growth patterns in west Melton followed by an overall urban design concept that focuses on movement, connectivity, and residential amenity to achieve a cohesive future urban form for West Melton.

An indicative subdivision layout plan ('the design concept') has also been developed to enable us to confirm and test the proposed GRZ requirements, and the required development density of 12hh/ha.

Background

In preparing the ODP, the design concept, and this urban design statement, we consulted several statutory and non-statutory documents. Urban design related reference materials were also consulted, including, but not limited to:

- Our Space 2018-2048;
- Selwyn Rural Residential Strategy 2014;
- Operative Selwyn District Plan
- Proposed Selwyn District Plan; and
- New Zealand Urban Design Protocol 2005
- Selwyn District Fencing Guide
- Selwyn District Subdivision Guide and Medium Density Development Guide

SITE



Urban Context

West Melton Township

West Melton has over time developed from small rural enclave to a minor rural township with gradually expanding urban infrastructure such as shops, school, community facilities and commercial activities as well as expansion of the original domain and other green spaces

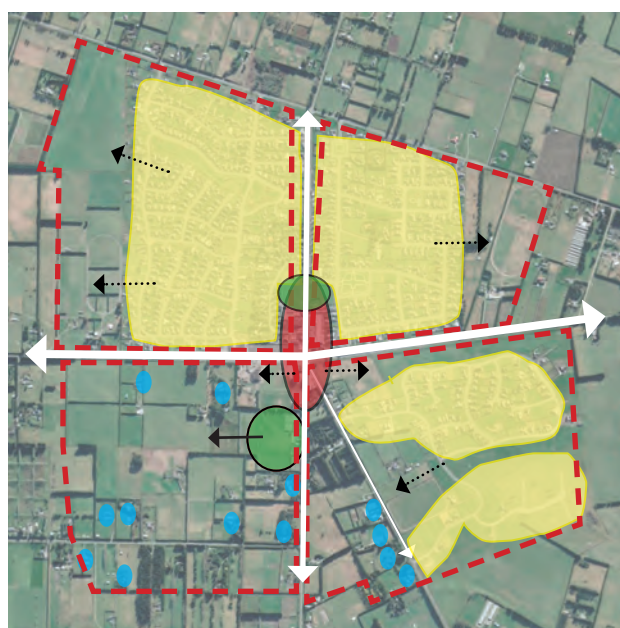
West Melton offers a variety of lifestyle options. It has in the past attracted a range of people from retired farmers to larger families looking for a quieter lifestyle on larger properties with larger outdoor areas and people working in the western parts of Christchurch wanting to live in a smaller rural community. This has resulted in a fairly varied population who have one key element in common – they all appreciate the distinctive character of the small township.

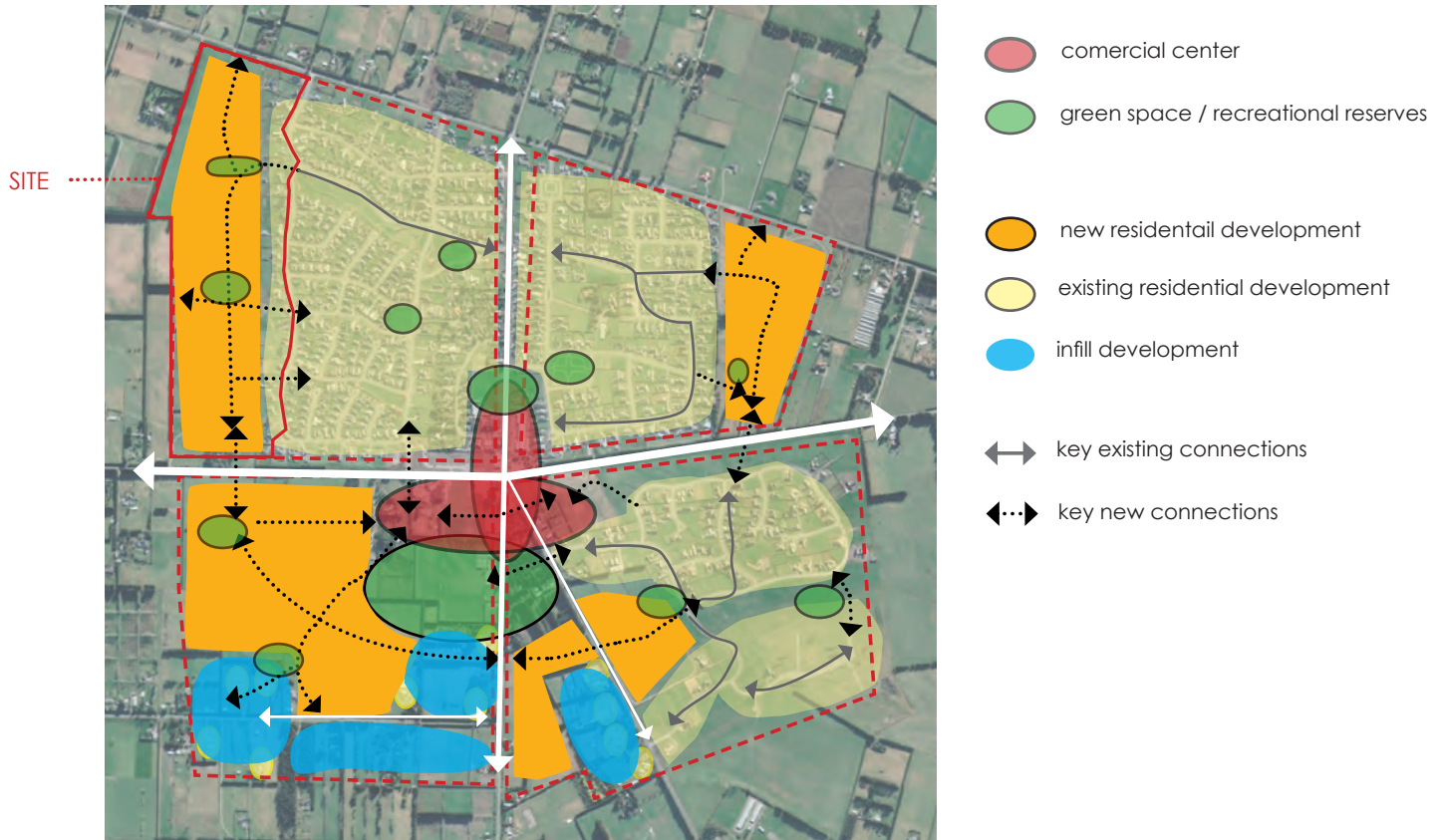


Urban Form

As a result of piecemeal development, the urban form of West Melton is currently still underdeveloped and lacking cohesion and connectivity. However, a strong structure of 4 clearly identifiable quadrants is emerging around a central commercial / community area. Each quadrant is still 'in development' with the northern quadrants most advanced, the south-eastern quadrant shows some residential development that has the ability to infill and naturally grow to its full size and a south-west quadrant that is lacking development.

- ←..... possible expansion
- comercial / community
- green space / recreational reserves
- existing residential development
- existing lifestyle blocks





Anticipated Growth Pattern

To complete the urban form all quadrants can be expected to develop further will provide residential infill and new residential development.

To support this cohesive urban form the current commercial and community facilities and green spaces will also gradually expand primarily into the south west quadrant around the existing domain and commercial hub.

North East quadrant

- West Melton East plan change - refer to appendix A

South East Quadrant

- residential infill and some commercial expansion in proximity to the centre

South West Quadrant

- primarily expansion of community and commercial areas in proximity to the centre
- extension of the domain and possibility for a second primary school and associated sports fields
- new residential development on rural farm land in particular on larger rural lots along SH 73 as they are in single ownership and will be easiest to develop
- residential infill development of existing lifestyle blocks

North West Quadrant

- new residential development on rural farm land with direct linkages to east and south
- selected residential infill development of existing large lots
- open space and recreation areas to support residential development

Site Description

The site is located at the periphery of the current extent of development in the North -Western Quadrant adjacent to the fairly recent Preston Downs subdivision between Halkett Road and State Highway/ SH73.

It is within walking distance (approximately 800m) of the local centre, primary school and domain.

The Site measures approx. 50 ha across several individual properties.

Typical of the area, the Site is flat with shelterbelts delineating individual properties, or functioning as internal windbreaks. Shelterbelts are of varying heights and densities. There is a single residential dwelling with a well-developed domestic curtilage and several associated farm buildings.

The neighbouring Preston Downs is a residential area with a mix of residential lots ranging from standard urban through to large lots along Shepherd Ave. The proposed site extends across to Shepherd Avenue to include these larger lots and enable a suitable level of intensification and connectivity across this eastern boundary.

To the north and west the adjacent land will remain rural in nature. To the south across SH73 residential development is anticipated in the future.



Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

- assist in the completion of an interconnected and cohesive urban form
- provide a gateway into West Melton Town along SH73
- maximise possibilities for integration with adjacent residential neighbourhood to the east (Preston Downs)
- provide for integration with anticipated future developments to the south
- provide access to the town centre, community services and recreation including alternative route via south west quadrant
- create pedestrian/cycle ways extending the existing network into and through the site
- provide a mix of residential/lot typologies to promote a mixed community and a variety of price points
- provide two central open spaces that contributes to amenity and identity
- provide gateways on Halkett Road and SH73 to contribute to a sense of address/identity and wayfinding

Constraints

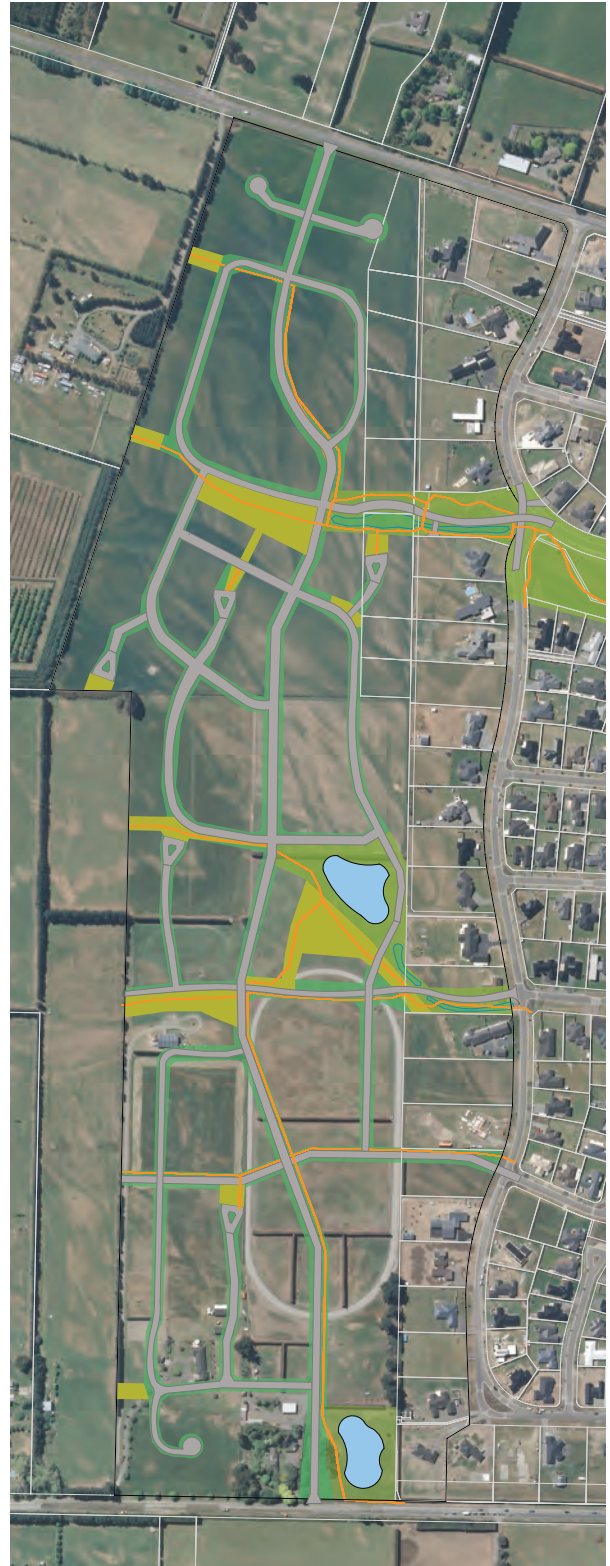
- limit road connections onto Halkett Road and SH73
- no individual driveway access to Halkett Road or SH73 - internal vehicle access required
- noise and visual buffer may be required to SH73 to protect residential amenity

Indicative Concept

Key Design Drivers

The following best practice urban design principles have been considered in the development of the Outline Development Plan:

- promote a cohesive urban form that is well connected and integrated
- provide strong linkages and a well-connected built form which accommodates all modes of transport and strongly facilitates pedestrian movement
- adopt blocks with a predominant north-south orientation in order to maximise solar gain for dwellings
- future proof development to allow for linkages/ expansion in the future
- provide a hierarchy of movement corridors to aid legibility
- provide gateway features on Halkett Road and SH73 to contribute to neighbourhood identity without creating a “gated community”
- provide a variety of residential lifestyle options, which offer a range of housing typologies and price points, including more affordable options
- provide dedicated open spaces which function as the heart of the new community and provide residents with access to daily recreation and social interaction
- enable future residents access to local services, facilities and recreation within easy walking/cycling distance
- protect residential amenity along SH73
- create opportunities for intensification of larger lots on Shepherd Ave. with direct road access



Design Concept

The design concept for the Site uses a similar approach as the Preston Downs layout with a dominant north-south road connection through the site from SH73 to Halkett Road and a variety of secondary road connections supporting the natural drainage pattern of the underlying terrain, creating an organic and fluid road network.

The site can be split into a north and south portion with a natural 'high point or line' splitting the catchment areas. This has resulted in two strategically located utility reserves in naturally occurring low points for stormwater collection and treatment. The southern area creates a high amenity entry to the site from SH73 whilst the more central area is grouped with a recreational reserve to create a large open space for the new community.

A second recreational space is proposed in the northern portion of the site in close proximity to the existing reserve on Shepherd Avenue creating a green link to this neighbourhood providing strong connectivity and extending the existing green network of West Melton into the site.

This main road layout combined with the green network creates the overarching structure for the development.

Movement and Connectivity

Hierarchy of Movement Corridors

The proposed arrangement of movement corridors ensure the proposed future development :

- integrates with and logically builds on the surrounding network
- anticipates future connections as required; and
- provides appropriate internal connectivity within the Site

Towards the south, a direct road connection to SH73 is proposed with the option to extend this link into the South -West quadrant of West Melton and connect to this potential future neighbourhood. This link will provide an alternative high amenity route to the centre, local domain and community facilities once the southern Quadrant is developed.

The road connections at the SH has been strategically placed to create a natural entry to the site framed by established specimen trees creating a gateway in to the site. The proposed road reserve at this southern end is deliberately wide to allow for a variety of intersection layouts, incl. a roundabout should this be required.

This intersection will also create a gateway into the township and work as a threshold controlling traffic flows and reducing speeds.

At the main entry into the site the utility reserve and the existing dwelling, with a well-established tree lined garden, create a natural large setback for proposed new dwellings away from SH73. Giving the entry a sense of openness and a visual and noise buffer.

On the remaining SH boundary, west of the intersection, a 12m buffer zone is proposed with strategic planting on larger lots to provide visual and sound protection from the SH functions.

As a result of this treatment the southern boundary of the site offers a gradual transition from rural to residential.

Along the eastern boundary 3 logical connections are proposed linking directly to Shepherd Avenue and the east-west roads in Preston Downs.



indicative roading layout and green spaces



- the northern connection links through the existing utility reserve and provides a high amenity environment
- the central connections will most likely also be a utility reserve to connect the central SW basin with the existing swales and drainage system in Preston Downs.
- the southern connection will most likely be a standard road connection

To achieve a high level of connectivity between the existing and new neighbourhood all 3 connections are important for pedestrian and cycle linkages, but from an urban design perspective it would be acceptable to only provide the northern and one other, either the central or southern, as full road connections.

Internal Road Network

Further connectivity within the Site, is provided through additional local roads (to be confirmed at detail subdivision stage) and pedestrian / cycle ways, providing linkage to all desirable destinations such as the neighbourhood parks and the large utility reserves.

These roads will provide safe on-street cycle ways and footpaths to complete the pedestrian and cycle friendly environment.

The concept design retains flexibility with regard to additional local roads and has the opportunity to either locate local roads around the perimeter of the reserves, have private lots directly adjoin reserves where suitable, or use shared access ways with extensive opportunity for landscaping to create a high amenity and passive surveillance over these public spaces.

Prioritizing Walking and Cycling

The distance to the town centre is approx. 800m from the south east corner of the site and 1.2km from the center of the site. This is well within as a 10 to 15 minute walking distance. Safe pedestrian and cycle connections to the town centre, the school, and the domain are easily accessible via the 3 eastern connections into the existing road network of Preston Downs leading directly to the central hub. An alternative future route can be developed through the southern quadrant with good pedestrian links across SH 1 at the southern entry to the site using the utility reserve as a high amenity pedestrian entry point to the site.

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All internal roads and non-vehicular links provide a safe environment and a high amenity to encourage the adoption of walking and cycling for the majority of trips both within the neighbourhood and further afield.

The benefits of high amenity cycle and walking infrastructure are well documented with regard to better physical and mental health, reducing emissions and energy use and general improved community social integration. The following best practice design principles have informed the pedestrian and cycling strategy for the proposal.

- Create direct routes along desire lines to key destinations, to existing and future adjacent neighbourhoods and use local 'shortcuts' for pedestrian and cycle movement where possible
- Create safe pedestrian and cycle routes in particular for school children and elderly with passive surveillance over public pathways from adjacent activities - 'eyes on the street'
- Avoid conflict between transport modes by catering for different users and creating slow traffic environments where cycle routes are sharing the road
- Create visually interesting streetscapes to encourage walking and cycling

Placemaking, Community and Neighbourhood Identity Around Green Spaces

Green Spaces

Two public open spaces are included in the concept in order to add amenity to the neighbourhood, provide relief from more compact residential clusters, and provide residents with the opportunity for recreation.

The northern recreational reserve has been placed in line with the existing reserve on Shepherd Ave. to create a green linear network for high amenity off road pedestrian and cycling connections. This reserve is central to the northern portion of the site and creates a break in the development and a natural space to congregate. The linear shape aids in the drainage of this northern part of the site. A smaller stormwater basin could be included and connect to the existing Preston Downs utility reserve if required.

The central reserve has been co-located with the utility reserve to create a large open space that can open up the denser built environment and enable views to the west and northwest / Southern Alps given a sense of orientation and identity of west Melton within the wider context of the Canterbury Plains.

Co-location will also provide a microclimate that is better suited to support high amenity landscaping and allow natural features and the underlying terrain and contours to be experienced.

The utility reserve in the south of the Site creates an open space contributing to an attractive entry into the development and a natural setback for dwellings.

It also has the opportunity to function as the 'green gateway' into the Site and offers a 'spatial break' and casual meeting place for the community.

Here the green spaces function as a local park for the neighbourhood and a break in the built environment to balance out the more built up environment of medium density parcels in close proximity. Walkways will be routed through these green spaces, providing access to the reserve for the neighbourhood. This promotes social interaction between a diverse range of residents and creates a hub for the local community.

Whilst the exact and final size of these green spaces/stormwater management areas will be determined at the time of subdivision, it is anticipated that the stormwater reserves will be between approximately 0.25ha. Their main purpose will be a utility reserve, however the ephemeral nature of these means that they are dry the majority of the year and can double up as temporary recreational space.

Both recreational spaces will be around 4000 -5000m² featuring a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities along with park-like landscaping and specimen trees to provide shade.

The location of the reserves is such that all residents within the ODP area are able to access open space within a 400m walking radius or less. To provide easy access and adequate passive surveillance, all reserves have a minimum of two road frontages.

Block Layout

The concept design opts for north-south orientated blocks where practical. The north-south orientation, exhibits best urban design practice by maximising solar access for dwellings and minimising the number of sections serviced via the north; where private outdoor space and property access would be in conflict. However, this principle must be balanced with other requirements and restrictions such as lot geometry, minimizing road intersections on collector roads, keeping blocks to an appropriate walkable size, and making efficient use of the available land itself. Where lots are serviced from the north or on corner sites, the lot size and lot geometry will be adapted to uphold both the privacy and road setback requirements.

Block perimeters are kept as small as practicable to aid permeability. This creates a higher amenity to the public and allows for acceptable distances to encourage pedestrian movement. To meet the Operative Plan and Proposed Plan standard the average perimeter length of a block does not exceed 800m, with 1000m being the maximum perimeter for a single block. Where blocks are adjacent to rural sites or share a boundary with existing residential lots on Shepherds Ave. they may not be able to achieve these requirements due to existing constraints.

Lifestyle Choice and Wellbeing

The Proposed Selwyn District Plan promotes diversity with respect to residential development, thereby improving choice, variety, and affordability.

A range of section sizes and housing typologies is required to provide future residents with choice and variety. It promotes a mixed community, reflective of the varied New Zealand population that has a varied demographic spread. This approach creates a stronger socio and economic diversity, along with a range of price points for future residents, including more affordable options.

General Residential Zone (Minimum 500m² / minimum average 650m²)

The key elements that organise the site are the roading pattern and the reserves. When combined with the retention of selected trees, some existing dwellings, and the underlying geometry of the Site, we have been able to form a natural structure for the placement of lots. The result is a layout with a diversity in lot sizes from 500m² to 800m²+. The lots vary in orientation and location and offer a wide range of options that will result in diverse architectural design responses throughout the development. In a new development of this size, it is important to provide opportunities for such variety, to encourage social, economic, and cultural diversity that is reflective of the wider community.

The proposed GRZ zone with a 12hh/ha density requirement provides appropriate bulk and location rules to achieve the desired residential amenity within the bulk of the site. However, there are two areas where relief from the density requirement of 12hh/ha is sought.

A - Southern boundary along SH73

A 12m planted buffer zone is proposed affecting individual lots bordering onto SH 73 to provide a visual and physical setback and noise protection from the road. To ensure appropriate space for dwellings is still available including outdoor areas and internally access, this lots will need to be of a larger size (min 800m² average 1000m²)

B - Eastern boundary area with Preston Down

The area west of Shepherd Ave. is currently characterized by large lots with reasonable large dwellings. To allow integration of these existing dwelling into a more intensified residential environment it is important to be able to carefully and strategically place larger lots into the area which will result in a higher amenity and better outlook but will impact on the ability to achieve the min. 12hh/ha across the site.

Instead of increasing the amount of medium density sites (small site MD) to make up for this potential shortfall in density, it is preferable, within the context of West Melton being a small township, to allow for relief and larger lots (min. 800m² / average of 1000m²)

Small Site (Medium Density) within GRZ

In order to achieve a density of 12 hh/ ha it is critical to carefully integrate pockets of increased densities within the standard residential area.

Medium density is a key housing typology to achieve to achieve this. It adds to the housing diversity and can be successfully integrated into the wider housing mix of a GRZ in the form of small site or comprehensive developments whilst still retaining an appropriate residential character for West Melton.

It is best urban design practice to locate "density around amenity" for the following reasons

- the public open space compensates for smaller sections and reduced recreation opportunity within the private environments;
- higher numbers of dwellings around public open space increases levels of active and passive surveillance;
- a more built up environment improves the spatial definition of the open space, better defining its edges;
- neighbourhood parks provide additional opportunity for on-street parking to support adjacent medium density housing.

These intensified pockets of MD should therefore be co-located with the open green spaces and in high amenity - low traffic residential streets. The open space provides those residents with additional opportunity for outlook; and quiet, low traffic residential streets can function as additional outdoor space if designed accordingly.

Whilst "density around amenity" is a key rationale for the location of increased density residential typologies, it is not the only suitable location. Varying densities and lot sizes also allow for a better use of the land resource. They aide in wayfinding, legibility of roading hierarchies, and add visual interest to the streetscape. Additional locations for medium density housing in smaller clusters can occur throughout a residential zone, in midblock locations around shared access roads, within quiet cul de sacs, or in areas where the geometry of the underlying land creates unique 'left over' pockets, and infill sites suitable for smaller lots.

The requirement to achieve a minimum net density of 12hh/ha in the GR Zone means it is necessary to include a generous proportion of medium density housing in several smaller clusters throughout the Site.

This way, the clusters can be naturally integrated into attractive local street amenity, and create low traffic volumes instead of creating an isolated sub-category of housing in one single location.

In general, medium density should not be located next to adjoining existing residential or rural parcels owned by others, or along major roads with higher traffic volumes where larger dwelling setbacks are desirable.

The ODP does not specifically highlight areas for small site or comprehensive residential developments as these are best identified through the subdivision design process when more accurate and detailed information is available to make better informed decision and assess the suitability of each location.

Street scene

All road-facing sites have enough width to allow for legible breaks between buildings and allow space for landscaping to front and side yards to often the visual impact of built environment including fences. This will contribute to the residential street character and the amenity within the public realm. In addition, the proposed road design itself, and the plan provisions in relation to roadside fencing, will create a welcoming residential streetscape.

Interfaces

Southern boundary SH73

As mentioned earlier, the utility reserve, the existing dwelling, and a 12m buffer zone with strategic planting create a natural large setback for from SH73 to provide visual and sound protection

All access to lots is internalised with a single point of entry off SH73. This boundary treatment will ensure that the functions of the highway are not impeded and the effects on residential activities are mitigated. In addition, the intersection on SH73 can be designed to become an attractive gateway into the township and a future connection to the South- West quadrant.

The proposed southern boundary treatment is in response to the current SH73 environment but can adjust to any changes to the road environment as a result of further development to the South West Quadrant or changes to the speed limits on the approach to West Melton if this is required.

Western Rural Edge

The land to the west currently presents a rural interface. Part of the boundary shows dense boundary vegetation in other parts open style rural fencing allows views across the boundary in both directions. New properties along this boundary should therefore respond accordingly with a mix of standard and larger residential environments with a focus on ensuring properties are deep enough to set new dwellings back from the rural boundary to allow space for strategic on site planting. This strategic use of landscaping will screen the more built-up environment and soften the views from the rural land into the site whilst still allowing views from the site to the west maximising the high amenity and rural outlook.

It also has to be taken into account that long term the adjacent land could be classified as an urban growth zone and be developed. For that reason, lot sizes along the western edge of the Site, albeit slightly larger than the average lot size, are still within the appropriate range for the underlying GRZ and 3 future possible connections have been provided.

Halkett Road

Similar to SH73 Halkett Road offers a single point of entry and all lots along this road will be accessed internally from the site. A continuous rural style open fencing is proposed to achieve a cohesive street appearance. In addition, the individual properties will provide landscaped boundary treatment to achieve privacy and shelter on private lots. Solid 1.8m internal boundary fencing will be set back from the road boundary by 5m and any road boundary demarcation within the setback will be either open style rural fencing or rural type boundary planting.

Eastern Edge Preston Downs

Three links are proposed along this eastern edge to provide connectivity between neighbourhoods. Each will avoid large gateways or signature entries to strengthen cohesion between the new and existing neighbourhood.

Slightly larger lots have been positioned within this eastern area (relief area) in order to:

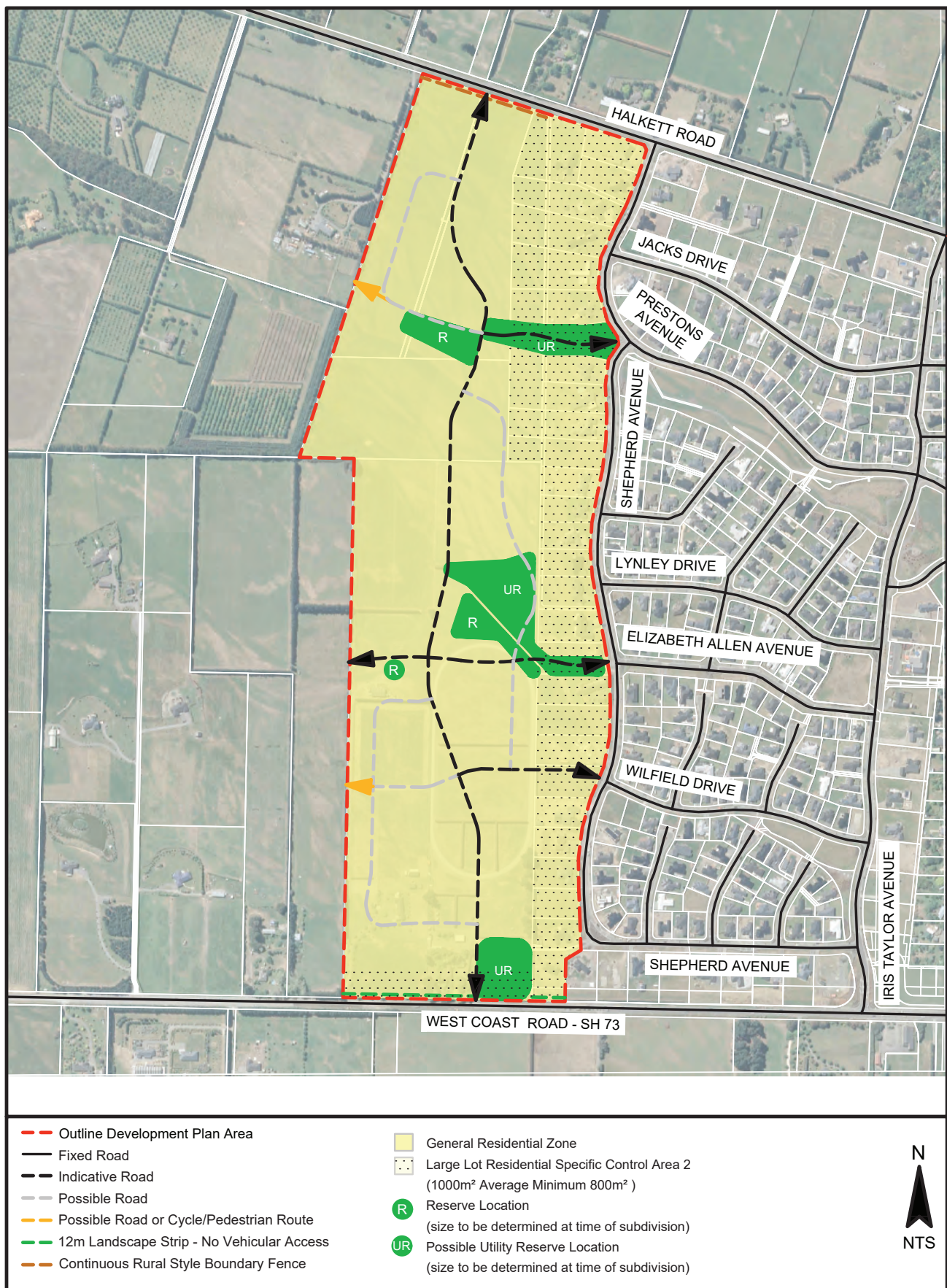
- allow for better integration of the existing dwellings
- to offer the possibility to retain some of the established garden areas.

Reserve Interface (internal and external)

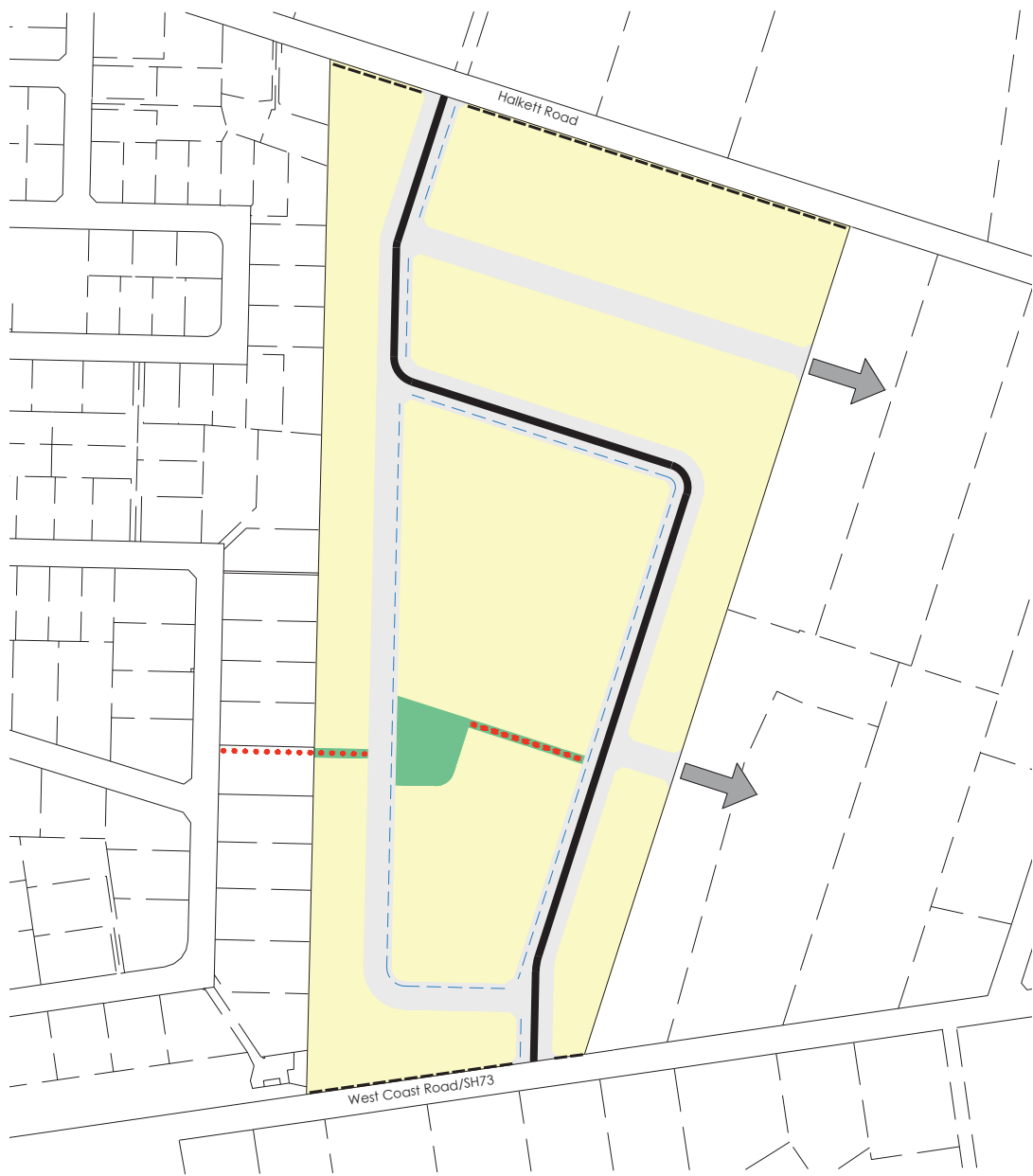
All interfaces with any reserve are to be of a high amenity suitable for public spaces. Passive surveillance is required over public pathways in the reserve; the District Plan rules require low fencing along reserve boundaries

Outline Development Plan









West Coast Road Rezoning - West Melton Development Area



APPENDIX A ODP - West Melton / East



LEGEND

-  Low Density
-  Reserves
-  Primary Road
-  Secondary Road
-  Possible Future Road Connection Shared
-  Pedestrian / Cycle Lane (off road) Shared
-  Pedestrian / Cycle Lane (on road)
-  No direct vehicle access

