

TABLE 1: ZONE COMPARISON TABLE			
Rule	Rural (inner plains) Zone	Living XA Deferred Zone	Comparative Comments
Minimum lot sizes	4 ha	Minimum of 10 lots/ha for any subdivision plan. Low density (A) Minimum 100m <sup>2</sup> net site area. Medium Density (B) Lot size to be contained within a range of 600m <sup>2</sup> -900m <sup>2</sup> . High Density (C) average lot sizes to be contained within a range of 400 – 600m <sup>2</sup> .	A higher density of development would be permitted by the plan change. The DP arrangement of density areas within the Site will help minimise potential visual effects for adjacent properties as medium density lots would be adjacent to existing residential properties.
Maximum building site coverage	35% or 500m <sup>2</sup> Whichever is the lesser	35%	No change
Maximum building height	8m	8m	No change
Minimum Dwelling setback	n/a	2m (internal) 4m (to road)	Lesser dwelling setbacks are part of the loss of open space associated with the proposed plan change. Boundary planting can 'soften' this built development and is commonly used through both rural and suburban landscapes truncating views between properties.

4.4 In summary the main differences between the zones that could give rise to landscape and visual effects relate to the change in land use from rural to urban reflected in rules for minimum lot sizes and building setback.

4.5 As shown in the Development Plan (DP) three different living densities have been provided for. This allows for

- Compatible lot density (medium) to be located near existing suburban areas;

- Lower density areas in vicinity of rural residential neighbours, although distinct from the rural residential lots and with screening provided by a mixed tree and shrub species boundary planting within the Application Site;
- Higher density through the central area of the Application Site, reducing the visual effect of this area for existing surrounding properties;

*Other features of the DP include:*

- Direct and convenient linkage with existing residential streets, overlooked by medium and high density residential areas. This provides opportunity for passive surveillance thereby increasing pedestrian safety;
- A balanced approach to address a desired spacious character on the village edge with consolidation and sustainable use of land area;
- Clear and legible arrangement of open space reserves (providing amenity at road ends near higher density areas), views are channelled towards these reserves by the street vista.

- 4.6 The DP addresses broad brush issues; successful implementation will involve the follow through of addressing landscape, visual and urban design aspects to more detailed levels of the development's design. It is anticipated that pedestrian and cycling access and also stormwater swales will be integrated with street layouts in future design development of the subdivision.
- 4.7 Urban design issues relevant to this assessment and recommendations include Application Site linkages with Prebbleton and a generally 'people focused' design approach. It is intended that the road extending from Cairnbrae Drive through to Blakes Road will provide for future bus access if required. The road linking Cairnbrae Drive to William Street will have narrower carriageways and be more pedestrian and cyclist focused; a convenient access route to adjacent areas of Prebbleton.

#### **Regional Policy Statement**

- 4.8 The Canterbury Regional Policy Statement (1998) contains a number of objectives and policies relating to amenity and landscape values, rural and natural character of the regions lakes, rivers [and streams] and their margins, and how proposed activities which would have significant adverse effects should be avoided. Adverse effects of inappropriate development include 'the threat to areas of significant indigenous biodiversity, rural character and landscape and also the erosion of the character and amenity of settlements and rural areas' (pg 3).
- 4.9 Under Chapter 12 – Settlement and the Built Environment, Objective 3 states that the rural character of land in the proximity of Christchurch, where that land has significant landscape or ecological values, including amenity values, be maintained. It is considered that the landscape within the vicinity the site

is not a significant landscape, due to its urban fringe location and current landscape character. The proposed development is considered sympathetic to its setting, as listed above, and also is in keeping with strategic planning for Prebbleton.

#### **Proposed Plan Change 1**

- 4.10 Proposed Plan Change 1 of Environment Canterbury's Regional Policy Statement anticipates residential growth requirements of the Greater Christchurch area through to 2041 and identifies strategic areas for urban development. Proposed Plan Change 1 focuses on sustainable land use for development including consolidated expansion of strategic urban settlements such as Prebbleton.
- 4.11 Residential development of the Application Site supports the Proposed Plan Change 1 direction for accommodating future growth and development. As shown on Proposed Plan Change 1, Map 1, the Application Site is a Greenfield area marked as SP1, appropriate to be developed addressing (in part) Prebbleton's future growth. The required minimum lot density of 10 lots per hectare is addressed as a factor of the proposed Living XA Deferred Zone.

### **5.0 ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS**

- 5.1 This section of the report considers the proposal's effects in terms of impact on landscape features, landscape character, as well as assessing the visual impact of the proposal. Discussion is also included below on connectivity between the proposal and its surrounds, effects on safety issues (CPTED) and activity provisions. These more urban design focused issues are addressed in response to the Council's Request for Further Information and may be appropriately resolved by plan rules, subdivision covenants and design.
- 5.2 The landscape and visual effects relating to this application involve the extent to which the landscape is able to accommodate the proposed plan change, the extent to which the plan change will integrate with the landscape and the specific effects such as those experienced by neighbouring properties and places such as roadways.

#### **Landscape Effects**

- 5.3 Landscape effects include effects on physical, aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how it is experienced.

- 5.4 The landscape effect of the proposed plan change and subsequent subdivision development will see a loss in open rural amenity associated with the current land use of the Application Site. However, within this urban fringe landscape, the proposal will extend existing patterns of suburban development and roading patterns.
- 5.5 Vegetation loss within the Application Site associated with the Proposed Plan Change would be minimal where some mature trees which are located near the existing residence may have to be removed due to safety or access requirements. There will be a more extensive structural effect to tree planting associated with the proposed development. This will comprise of streetscape planting, reserve planting and landscape buffer planting to the Site's boundary adjacent to rural residential neighbours.

#### **Visual Effects (Effects on Neighbouring Properties and Roads)**

- 5.6 Visual effects are an interrelated subset of landscape effects. Visual effects relate to changes that arise in composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape and peoples response to change, and to overall effects with respect to visual amenity.
- 5.7 The visual effects of the proposed development are limited to the extent of the Application Site that is visible from surrounding locations. The existing shelterbelts surrounding the Application Site are both an identifiable rural vegetation pattern and effective screening that subdivides the landscape into smaller visual units.
- 5.8 Existing views into the main field of the Application Site are evident from a small number of public spaces, i.e. from short sections along Blakes Road and at the current road terminuses of William Street as illustrated by **Site Context Photographs 1-3**.
- 5.9 The DP indicates an arrangement of different density residential areas which places higher density development centrally within the Application Site. This will effectively reduce the visual impact of this area from surrounding vantage points into the Application Site.
- 5.10 Immediate neighbours to the Application Site and their views into the Site are indicated in **Appendix 1: Housing Inventory**. Levels of effects listed below are as currently available through to Application Site in **Table 2: Level of Visual Effects from Neighbouring Dwellings**. Mitigation measures are addressed in Section 7 of the assessment.
- 5.11 The majority of adjacent houses receive very low or low levels of visual effect, due to screening provide by intervening garden vegetation and fences. No houses have been described as having a very high degree of visual effect given that those considered to receive a high level of visual effect are within an

existing suburban area and have comparative views to other directions as inherent to future development of the Application Site.

TABLE 2: Level of Visual Effects for Neighbouring Dwellings	
Number of Dwellings	Effects
12	Very Low
10	Low
2	Moderate
3	High
0	Very High

5.12 The rural outlook and amenity lost by adjoining residential neighbours and consequent views to future residential dwellings will be softened with proposed tree planting, i.e. with trees to be planted along lot boundaries to the perimeter of the Application Site. It is considered that planting screening is an appropriate mitigation measure, as it is repeatedly used along rural and suburban property boundaries as of right; truncating or partially screening views between properties. Vegetation screening in itself is not an 'urbanized' landscape feature.

5.13 As Blakes Road, in the vicinity of the Application Site, is semi rural in character the landscape buffer treatment would also be a good buffer treatment along this road boundary of the Application Site.

#### Effects on Amenity (Streetscape and Onsite Amenity)

5.14 Under section 7c of the Resource management Act (RMA) the *maintenance and enhancement of amenity values* is listed in relation to managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources.

5.15 The Application Site adjoins both well established and recently built suburban neighbourhood areas of Prebbleton. It is considered that a well planted development will in time provide continuity with more established neighbourhoods along William Street and Norris Street. Wider footpaths and grass verges, underground servicing are positive features of Cairnbrae Drive that can be repeated through the Application Site, notably along the immediate extension to Cairnbrae Drive.

5.16 Reserve provisions, pedestrian and amenity focused streetscape design are considered key issues for the proposed development's future concept and detailed design. These aspects will enable the Application Site's quality of development sympathetic to the character and scale of Prebbleton. Mitigation measures outlined in this assessment further define these approaches.

- 5.17 Amenity issues addressed within the mitigation measures of this assessment reinforce the objectives of proposed plan change standard bulk and location rules to achieve a high level of amenity on all lots. These include planting requirements and specific fence and building setbacks.

#### **Effects on Safety (CPTED)**

- 5.18 Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) involves both reducing opportunities for crime and improving a sense of safety. It is recommended that a landscape rule associated with the proposed plan change ban fences to property frontages, i.e. fences to not extend closer to the road frontage than the dwelling itself. This will have the combined benefit of improving safety (surveillance) of the streetscape, and also improving a sense of community within the new neighbourhood area.
- 5.19 The proposed roading hierarchy and arrangement of different development densities mean that the pedestrian priority road off William Street and Cairnbrae Drive will be well overlooked by high and medium density development. This will provide a good level of passive surveillance over the streetscape. With roads predominantly indicated to line reserve areas, rather than back of properties, the reserves will also be well overlooked, i.e. without high back fences providing concealment opportunity.

#### **Selwyn District Council – Draft Subdivision Urban Design Issues and Options Report**

- 5.20 It is considered that the proposal addresses issues raised in the draft subdivision urban design guidelines, including street connectivity, pedestrian and public transport provisions and separate parking access for high-density areas. Both urban design and CPTED have been a key focus in the set out of the Development Plan and further mitigation measures recommended in this assessment. There is opportunity for more detailed aspects such as paving design and seats to be considered at later detail stages of design.

#### **Effects on Activity**

- 5.21 The DP provides for convenient pedestrian and cycling linkages, as well as reserve areas, important as the Site is within walking distance of local shops, primary school, community pool and a nearby Anglican Church as indicated on **Figure 2: Landscape and Visual Appraisal Plan**. The existing William Street playground will be extended into the Application Site for the benefit of existing and proposed neighbourhood areas.

### Effects on Circulation (Connectivity)

- 5.22 Public access is not currently provided through the Application Site and both Cairnbrae and William Street terminate at the Site boundary. The DP provides for the extension and linking of these existing roads. There is opportunity for a clear and legible road hierarchy within the Site separating out a pedestrian (and cyclist) priority road from a wider road through the Site which will be suitable for future bus access if required.
- 5.23 It is considered that this pedestrian priority road provides a stronger alternative to a Norris Street linkage with the Application Site, due to intervening property in private ownership on Norris Street and the 'blank canvas' of the proposed street to establish wider footpaths and streetscape amenity treatment.

### Appropriateness of Site for Proposed Development

- 5.24 There is a pattern of more recent residential development occurring in Prebbleton. This involves both suburban and rural residential development surrounding the Site which collectively creates a lesser degree of sensitivity of the landscape setting to this proposal. As the Application Site is surrounded by different zone types the DP layout takes into consideration these different aspects of the landscape context. This is addressed with corresponding different residential densities within the Site to its different boundaries, landscape buffer treatment and proposed street connections/ extension. It is considered that this design approach broadly addresses Objective 2 of the Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Regional Policy Statement:

*"To achieve built environment within Greater Christchurch that: have a sense of special character and identity; retain heritage values; protect areas of special amenity; provide a range of densities and uses; and are healthy, environmentally sustainable, functionally efficient, and economically vibrant."*

- 5.25 Different densities compared with adjacent rural-residential properties and landscape buffer treatment along the Application Site's north-west boundary will ensure a clear distinction remains between the Site's larger size lots and neighbouring properties thus ensuring a clear urban edge on this boundary.
- 5.26 Town growth to the east and west of Prebbleton helps avoid ribbon development along Springs Road. It is considered that the Application Site's residential development would be in keeping with the desired compact form of future urban growth for Prebbleton and presents a logical boundary forming the SP1 zone identified in the Proposed Plan Change 1, Map 1.

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT AGAINST DISTRICT PLAN PROVISIONS

6.1 Selwyn District Plan Policy provisions relating to landscape and visual effects for the Application Site's development are listed with comments in **Appendix 2: Relevant Policy**. For subdivision development the District Plan places emphasis on:

- The distinction between rural and town areas;
- Retaining the amenity and character of both town and rural areas;
- Provision for public health (connectivity, amenity, reserve spaces) and safety (CPTED)
- Provision of a range of living environments.

As previously discussed in this assessment it is considered that the plan change request and subsequent subdivision (as indicated in the DP) is broadly in keeping with the district plan policy in terms of landscape and visual effects.

6.2 The Application Site's development will provide for public access through the Site and improve connectivity, linking existing suburban streets. There is opportunity to integrate stormwater swales with streetscape amenity and mixed transport provisions, i.e. streetscapes that are convenient and accessible for walking and cycling.

## 7.0 AVOIDING, REMEDYING AND MITIGATING EFFECTS

7.1 To ensure appropriate integration of the Application Site's proposed rezoning for residential development the following mitigation measures are recommended:

### Visual Effects and Boundary Treatment

- From rural views into the Site the combined use of vegetative screening and building setback (five metres from the north-western boundary and Blakes Road) will reduce the apparent density of development from these perspectives. It is considered that this five metre setback, providing further separation from neighbouring rural residential houses, aids in preventing these different zones visually merging;
- Existing planning provisions to reduce the future infill of lower density areas near the rural residential boundary will address the spacious character of this area of land to be in private ownership;
- The majority of existing shelterbelts that border the Application Site are located on neighbouring properties. Landscape buffer planting to the rural residential boundary of the Application Site will reinforce the screening provided by this existing planting. This buffer planting will comprise of a mix of deciduous tree species (to negate shading concerns) underplanted with evergreen shrub

species (to approximately 2.5 - 3m in height). It is considered that a planted boundary treatment is more sympathetic to this rural residential boundary than fencing. No solid fences shall be permitted along this boundary. This boundary planting will take up the first two metres of the five metre building setback to the rural residential boundary;

- Plant species will be selected from the list outlined in Appendix 19. Requiring that at least 65% of plant species are taken from this list provides some continuity of planting treatment, while allowing for other species to be chosen if also considered appropriate to local conditions or for personal preference. It is recommended however that Appendix 19 be modified to include only deciduous tree species and native understorey planting to achieve the above mitigation objectives of this assessment;
- Where residential lots adjoin reserve areas any fences shall be restricted to a maximum of 1.2m. This rule shall also apply to lot boundaries along the proposed pedestrian link to William Street.
- Mixed tree species buffer treatment, as per the rural residential boundary, shall be provided to the meadow mushrooms boundary (without setback requirements) of the Application Site for amenity value and to address any concerns of reverse sensitivity in terms of visual effects (noise effects are outside the scope of this assessment).

#### Connectivity & recreation

- For lots within the Application Site, no front fences shall be permitted closer to the road than the dwelling built onsite. This is to achieve improved safety (CPTED) by enabling a greater level of passive surveillances and to improve a sense of community with dwellings not shut off from the streetscape;
- CPTED is further addressed with roads typically to surround proposed reserves rather than privately owned lots. In this way public access and visibility into the reserves is ensured, rather than reserves potentially being surrounded and enclosed by tall back fences to properties;
- Integration of linear reserves (swales) with pedestrian and cycling networks shall be achieved through streets within the Application Site. This combined activity increases use of these networks improving visibility and hence safety through surveillance;
- The prioritising of roads for different uses will separate out a potential bus route from the most convenient street for pedestrian connectivity to the wider area of Prebbleton. The pedestrian/ cyclist priority street will be demarcated by wider footpaths, narrower carriageways and greater use of shrubs and ground cover plants as part of landscape amenity treatment to roadsides. This approach is to encourage this street's use as a quieter thoroughfare, not a main vehicle route.
- For the continuation of Cairnbrae Drive into the Application Site, it is recommended that road width, grass verge, footpath, street tree and lighting patterns are continued into the Application Site

(continuing along this road through to Blakes Road). Consideration shall be given to adequate space or parking provisions for public bus services.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The 18.85 hectare Application Site is located on Blakes Road on the northwest urban edge of Prebbleton. Recent subdivision has seen the expansion and changing landscape context of this satellite suburb, located 10 minutes drive southwest of Christchurch.
- 8.2 The Site is generally well contained, where it forms a relatively discrete parcel of land bordered by housing to the northeast and northwest. Due to the flat nature of the landscape and intervening vegetation and homes the visibility of the Site is restricted to only near distant views.
- 8.3 The landscape and visual effects of the proposed plan change for the Application Site will primarily be of increase in the density of buildings. This will involve the loss of the rural open space character of the Application Site.
- 8.4 Proposed plan Change 1 anticipates provides parameters for future growth of Prebbleton township, identifying the Application Site as an area for residential development. It is considered that the plan change request for the Application Site is in keeping with policy in terms of landscape and visual effects, and in addressing connectivity and amenity priorities, both of Proposed Plan Change 1 and also the District Plan. Residential development of the Application Site is considered to be sympathetic to the compact form of urban growth sort for Prebbleton.
- 8.5 It is considered that the landscape within the vicinity of the Site is not a significant landscape due to its settlement fringe location and current landscape character. With the above mitigation and enhancement measures the Application Site is considered appropriate for residential development.