

POCOCK DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

Section 32 - Landscape Assessment

PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE AT MEMORIAL AVENUE

01/08/2014

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1 Introduction, Definitions and Background

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to assess the effects on the landscape that will occur from a request to rezone 24.55 hectares of currently Rural 5 land to a proposed Industrial Park zone through the District Plan Review, in order to give effect to identification of the site as a Greenfield Business Area in the Land Use Recovery Plan.

1.2 Definitions of Landscape

The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects defines landscape as “the cumulative expression of natural and cultural features, patterns and processes in a geographical area, including human perceptions and associations.” For the purposes of this assessment, the New Zealand Landscape Institute’s definition of landscape will be used.

1.3 Scope of Assessment

The aim of this assessment is to determine the key landscape considerations and issues pertaining to the future development of the application site. This assessment is structured in the following order:

Describing the Existing Environment

- Understanding the wider context that is considered relevant to the application site.
- Understanding the context of the site and the surrounding land use including natural character, landscape and visual amenity.
- Assessing the landscape character of the application site.

Describe the Proposal

- Understand the proposed landscape concept change and how it relates to the wider context.
- Discuss the key principles of the landscape proposal and how they relate to the natural character, landscape and visual amenity of the site.

Identify Actual and Potential Effects

- Identify and evaluate the potential effects of the proposal and discuss the landscape approach.

Conclusion

- Conclude and summarise the key natural character, landscape and visual effects.

1.4 Background Information

The application site is located on the north-western outskirts of the City (see Figure 1 below). The location of the site and its current surrounding land use show that the site

currently forms the interface between the city edge and the Special Purpose Airport Zone (SPAZ). Despite the current rural zoning this site exhibits a different character from the surrounding zones because of its enclosed nature within a number of urban activities.

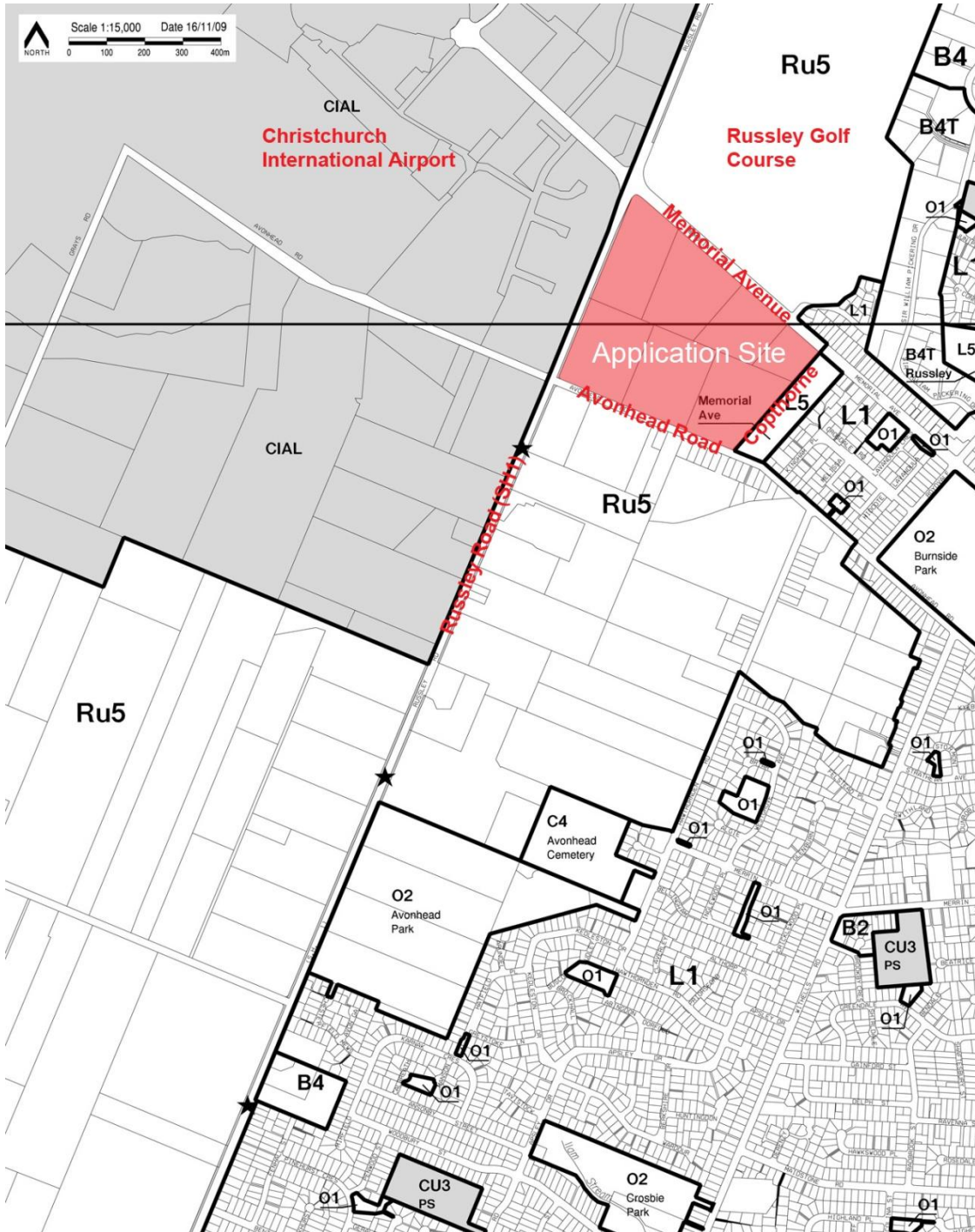


Figure 1: Showing location of application site and the key surrounding land use

2 Landscape and Site Context

2.1 Broader Landscape Context

To the West (Special Purpose Airport Zone)

The proximity of the Christchurch International Airport has a considerable impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the application site. The Special Purpose Airport Zone, which includes both large scale buildings and airport infrastructure, is located on the western boundary, lodging the application site between the built fabric of the western suburbs and the business environment of the airport. West of the site between the SPAZ and the site is a three lane State Highway that extends about halfway down the site's western boundary. Russley Road (SH1) creates a heavily trafficked edge to the west of the site that adds to the built up industrial, business western edge condition of the site. Image 1 shows a view of Russley Road looking south and image 2 shows some of the large scale buildings in SPAZ.



Image 1: Russley Road looking south



Image 2: Special Purpose Airport Zone

To the North (Memorial Avenue)

The area north of Memorial Avenue is the Russley Road Golf Course. At present the golf course has a large hedge running along the edge of Memorial Avenue (see image 3 and 4 below) and therefore views into the golf course are obstructed.



Image 3: Entrance to the Golf Course



Image 4: Hedge along Russley Road

The golf course is however still characterised as open green space and has a recreational landscape type; characterised by mown lawns, feature trees, shelter belts and rough grassland. Between the golf course landscape and the applicants site is Memorial Avenue. Memorial Avenue is a four lane road and is one of the main access routes into central Christchurch from both the airport and Russley Road (SH1). Memorial Avenue is considered one of the gateways into Christchurch and is historically significant as it commemorates those who took part in World War II. It has high visual amenity due to the central island of trees but the pedestrian edge conditions are poor because of minimal berm width and high traffic flows. The gateway role of Memorial Avenue has been recognised in the proposed changes to the Memorial Avenue/ Russley Road intersection upgrade, which includes a gateway art piece integrated into the highway flyover.

It is also important to note that a number of other sites in the surrounding area have been identified as Priority Areas – Business in the Land Use Recovery Plan.

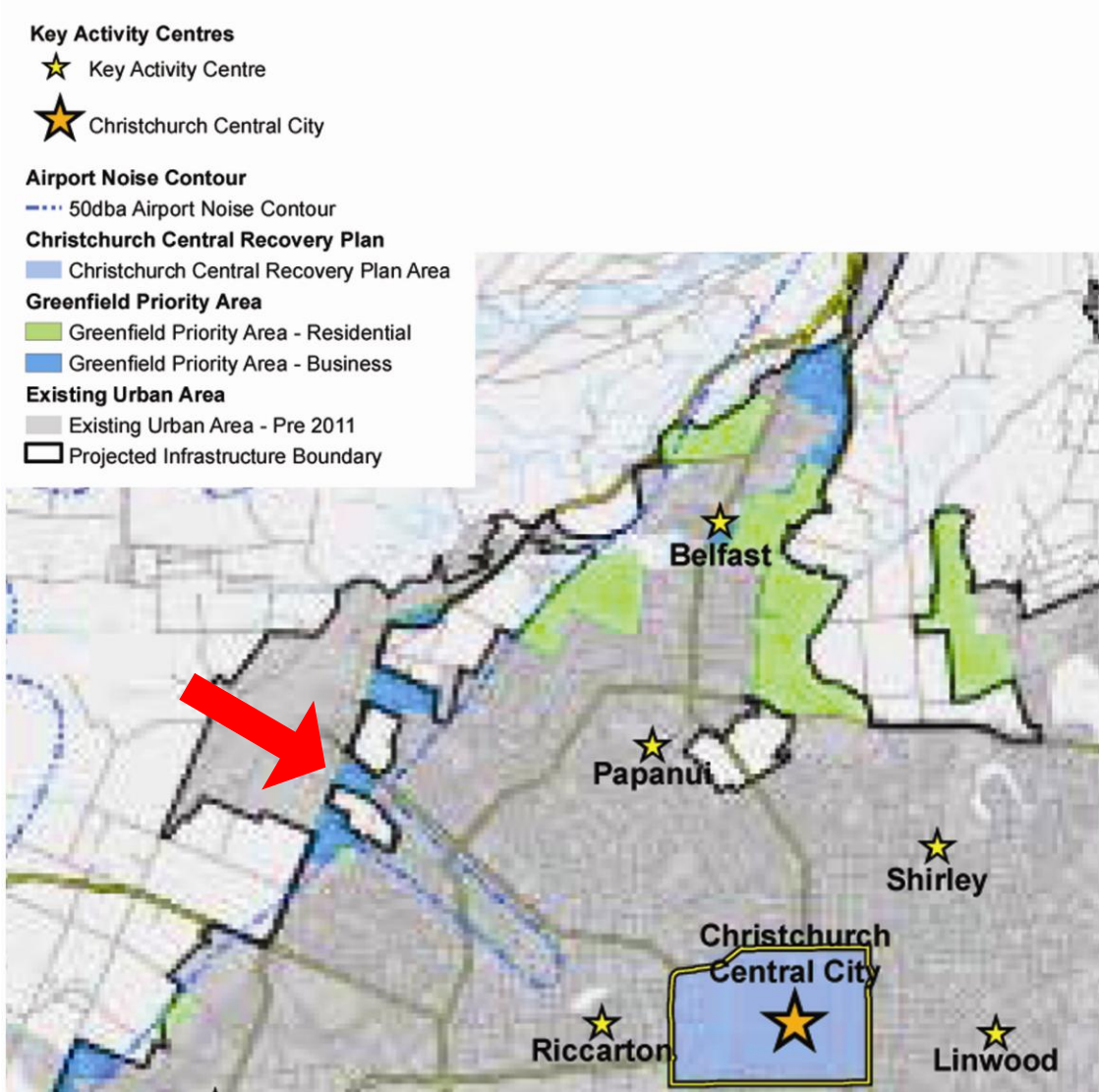


Figure 2: Land Use Recovery Plan (LURP) (Application site is marked by the red arrow)

To the East (The Commodore Hotel)

The eastern edge is buffered by Living Zone 5 (L5) with Living Zone 1(L1) located behind the L5. The Copthorne Hotel located in L5 is linear in shape and ranges from one to four stories in height. There are a number of trees planted along the boundary between the application site and the Hotel, which obscure the view from portions of the hotel into the application site, as well as views from the application site into the hotel, as shown in image 5. As you move south along the application boundary there are a large number of trees, hedges and fences reducing visibility into the application site from the residential portion of the eastern edge.



Image 5: The Copthorne Hotel

To the South (Avonhead Road)

The southern edge of the application site along Avonhead Road is a mixture of residential dwellings and rural lifestyle blocks. This area has very little agricultural activity with most of the rural lifestyle sections using land for grazing livestock, mainly horses. Approximately half of the road edge is comprised of large sections of tall front hedge screening, which obscures most of the views into the application site, as shown in image 6. In addition to this, the landscape character along this edge is more garden in nature than what is classified as a typical rural scene.



Image 6: Tall front hedge screening



Image 7: Residential edge

As you move in an easterly direction along Avonhead Road, the land use transitions to a smaller residential section around 800m². The landscapes are more typical of a residential landscape with front gardens of amenity plants, feature trees and lawns, as shown in image 7. This section of Avonhead Road is more representative of a Living Zone 1 landscape. The rural portion (moving towards the west) of the block section is for the most part compartmentalised, small scale and not visually accessible from Avonhead Road or the application site. However, the Avonhead residential edge is still landscaped and has a high visual amenity.

Proposed Road Infrastructure (Highway Upgrade)

A proposed dominant feature of the wider application site is the intersection upgrade of Memorial Avenue and Russley Road, from a roundabout to a flyover with associated ramps as shown in Figure 3. This will significantly alter both the visual and local amenity of the site.



Figure 3: Proposed overpass (SH1) and site boundary

The proposed upgrade will include a four lane highway along the entire length of the site with a 6 metre high flyover at the intersection of Memorial Avenue. The ramp will be buffered by a vegetated batter that will meet the on/off ramps on either side. The addition of a southbound on ramp along the western boundary has altered the exiting site boundary and edge conditions and will now include a vegetated batter adjacent to the batter that will reduce the views to the west and the mountains beyond, for a portion of the application site.

The proposed northern edge conditions will now include a footpath that goes under the flyover and connects to the airport. In addition to the footpath there will be a required landscape buffer along Russley Road. Owing to the significance of Memorial Avenue/ Russley Road intersection as an entrance into Christchurch, an iconic gateway feature has been proposed to be incorporated into the flyover, as shown by the artist impressions image 8.¹



Image 8: Proposed flyover and gateway art along Russley Road intersecting with Memorial Avenue¹

2.2 Landform

The site has a typical landform of the Canterbury plains and is therefore a relatively flat site with a gentle slope towards the north east. The site has a number of shallow undulations that are relatively apparent from within the site. The most notable is the terrace like remnant that runs across the north west corner of the site. The only other feature on the site is a disused water race, which runs across the site in a somewhat east/west direction.

2.3 Hydrology

The application site gently slopes to the north east with approximately 3 metres change in elevation from the intersection of Russley/Avonhead Roads to the site boundary along Memorial Avenue, adjacent to the L5 living zone (Cophorne Hotel). This gradual sloping of the land ties into the larger watershed and places the

¹ <http://chchtransport.wordpress.com/2011/11/24/is-this-the-new-flyover/>

application site in the upper catchment area of the Waimairi Stream, which is located near Burnside Park.

Overall the application site is well drained with predominantly Waimakariri deep fine sandy loam (Wa0c) soils and a small section of Selwyn deep sandy loam (SI0b) soils near the Memorial Avenue/ Russley Road intersection. These well drained soils mean that the site is free draining in a north easterly direction.

2.4 Vegetation

The application site is rural in character with a predominantly pastoral land type, used for grazing. The site includes four dwellings with associated gardens and trees. The landscape is made up of predominately exotic grass, shelterbelt trees and planting with a small percentage of land cover made up of amenity gardens and features trees around the existing dwellings. In addition to this, there is a mixture of London plane and birch trees lining the edge of Memorial Avenue within the application site. These trees seem to be performing poorly in this environment and have stunted growth forms. Most trees on the site are exotic with a large portion being rural utility trees of low value.

2.5 Land Use

The application site is currently within the Rural 5 Zone. This zone is broadly defined as areas of 'small holdings on good soils, with a relatively high number of dwellings and intensive farming activities'

In addition to this the City Plan also states;

"The zone's purpose is primarily the continuation of primary production while managing land use activities to avoid compromising airport operations and development.'²

Currently there is no primary production on the application site. The eastern portion of the application site has a few residential properties but predominantly the land is used for grazing horses. The western section has two dwellings, of which one is currently rented out to a construction company.

2.6 Landscape Character

It is evident that cultivation of the site has modified the landform. The current pastoral uses of the site have exposed some of the low mounding that delineates the paddocks in the southern half. It is therefore evident that this is a modified landscape and the linear alignment of the boundaries and shelterbelts verifies this.

With the exception of the minor undulations of the landform, there is no other indication of the likely pre European landscape including any waterways or native vegetation, making this a highly modified landscape. This is in keeping with the surrounding area of rural, residential and SPAZ's high level of landscape modification. There are key views from within the site which include views out to the Southern Alps and the Port Hills. The views to the Southern Alps will be reduced for a portion of the application site by the proposed embankments of the Memorial Avenue/ Russley Road intersection upgrade (flyover).

² CCP Vol. 3 Part 4 Zone Description and Purpose

Historical significance of Memorial Avenue

Originally Burnside Road (now Memorial Avenue) was a two lane country road that extended from Fendalton Road, through farm land to Harewood. This road was the entrance to Christchurch from the north and the route to the airport.

As early as 1945 the idea of a memorial to all airmen killed in the war was suggested but it wasn't until the 1950s that formal planning began.

In 1959 Burnside Road was upgraded to a four lane highway and renamed Memorial Avenue in tribute to those who died in World War II (1939-1945). The Avenue, as show in image 9 was approximately 4.3km long and extended from Clyde Road to the then Harewood Airport.



Image 9: Memorial Avenue, Christchurch [ca. 1959] ³

'On 12 August 1959, the Press reported Christchurch people would soon see "the fruition of a magnificent concept which has been under consideration and under construction for so long". Already the Avenue was a draw card for sightseers; with hundreds on Sunday afternoon outings. The Press opined that Memorial Avenue would become best known as the jet-age entrance drive from the Christchurch International Airport to the city proper.'³

³ <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/heritage/localhistory/fendalton/memorial.asp>



Figure 5: Memorial Avenue connection between the airport, application site and the CBD

A landscape plan was developed for the Avenue in the 1970's. Much of this landscape plan used exotic species to highlight its relevance as a memorial but in more recent years native vegetation has been introduced alongside the Burnside school frontage, as well as some tussocks and kowhai nearer to the airport.

The portion of Memorial Avenue directly adjacent to the application site has a median lined with Scarlett oaks in recognition of the memorial nature of the Avenue. However, the site itself is predominantly pastoral with no key features connected to the memorial feature of the adjacent Avenue. As previously mentioned this site is considered to be a portion of the gateway corridor experience for the city and could reflect a memorial function,

2.7 Visibility and Viewing Audiences

There are two main areas in which the application site can be viewed from, the public realm within the Russley Road, Avonhead Road and Memorial Avenue corridors and the private realm of the surrounding dwellings such as the residential edge to the east

(Cophthorne Hotel) and the south (Avonhead Road). The first vantage points from the road corridors have to consider both the view from a moving vehicle and the pedestrian. The second vantage points would be from private dwellings.

Memorial Avenue

The view from Memorial Avenue will predominantly be seen from a car moving at a speed of up to 60km/hr. However, the application site is part of the gateway to the city and will play a key role in forming the initial impression of Christchurch. Currently the view into the application site looks out over paddocks, a few residential houses and pockets of established trees as shown in image 10. A portion of the Memorial Avenue edge is currently lined with trees along the footpath creating some visual variation but for the most part the views are of an open landscape. The pedestrian experience is similar to the viewing experience from a car and there are no views from dwellings along the Memorial Avenue edge.



Image 10: Looking into the application site from Memorial Avenue

Russley Road

Russley Road (SH1) is an important bypass route for the city, thus the site will mainly be viewed from traffic moving at up to 80km/hr. The existing roundabout along Russley Road slows down traffic at the Memorial Avenue intersection. The existing view is of a dwelling and paddocks as shown image 11. There are no footpaths and the site is rarely viewed from this edge by pedestrians. A proposed flyover in this location will mean that much of the traffic will maintain their speed resulting in a shorter viewing time of the site. There are no dwellings along Russley Road and the existing industrial buildings along this edge have few viewing opportunities into the application site due to blank walls and screen planting. The SPAZ buildings located on the western side of Russley Road from which views into the site are will be limited once the proposed flyover and associated batters have been constructed.



Image 11: Looking at the application site from Russley Road

Avonhead Road

Avonhead Road is a local road connecting onto Russley Road. Thus the site will mainly be viewed from traffic moving at up to 50km/hr. Currently the view into the application site looks out over paddocks, a few residential houses and pockets of established trees and shelter belts as shown in image 12. There are only a few street trees along this portion of Avonhead Road. There is a footpath on one side of the road (south) which does not continue all the way to the Avonhead / Russley Road intersection. The pedestrian view into the site will be similar to that viewed from a vehicle but this edge from a pedestrian perspective is not heavily used due to the lack of continuous footpath and lack of destination heading to the West.

The view from Avonhead Road is predominantly from a residential/rural perspective. The closely spaced dwellings along the south eastern corner of Avonhead Road look directly out onto the site but much of the view is screened by existing vegetation. The views into the application site from the dwellings in the rural living section (south-western portion of Avonhead Road) are mainly screened off from existing hedging and planting on the rural living sites.



Image 12: Looking from Avonhead Road into the site

Southern edge residential buildings and Copthorne Hotel

This edge does not have a public road or street interface and hence cannot be viewed from a vehicle or pedestrians within a public realm. There are relatively few dwellings on the southern edge and in most cases the views into the application site are screened by existing vegetation. Any views into the application site from dwellings or the Hotel would be of paddocks, a few residential houses and pockets of established trees and shelterbelts. The Copthorne Hotel is the only substantial building that has some limited views of the application site from some accommodation rooms above the first floor.

Site Interior

The final views are from within the site looking west towards the Southern Alps and east towards the Port Hills. Both these ranges are visible from the site and provide a unique vantage point. However, the proposed flyover at the Memorial Avenue/ Russley Road intersection will significantly alter both the visual and local amenity of the site.

2.8 Visual Baseline Summary

Overall, there are no significant landscape features within the application site. Although it is bordered by at least two sides of urban activity the application site is visibly rural in character. As a landscape type, it is fairly typical and widespread around the periphery of the City. However, its proximity to the airport and Memorial Avenue makes this site part of the 'gateway' to City, putting it in a fairly unique position.

3 The Proposal

In this section the rationale for the proposed landscape concept for the MBP site is described. Figure 4 shows the land use and development that is proposed for the site. This outline development plan aims to deliver a general direction for the site and proposed development. Various changes will take place with the proposed Russley Road / Memorial Avenue intersection and the outline development plan has taken into account the likely impacts within the design.



Legend

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Site boundary | Proposed footpath |
| Proposed developable land | Area with no additional building |
| Proposed developable land Special Amenity Area | Proposed REPA extension |
| Proposed development setback | |
| Proposed road network | |

Figure 4: Land Use and Development.

3.1 Proposed Land Use

The application site is currently zoned Rural 5 with a request to rezone the site to an Industrial Park zone. The current rural land use is functioning at minimal capacity and there are no significant landscape features within the application site. Based on this information the request for rezoning will not have any detrimental effects on the site. However, the requested change will significantly alter the landscape character and views into the site as anticipated by identification of the site as a Priority Area – Business in the Land Use Recovery Plan (refer back to Figure 2).

3.2 Landscape Proposal

This section discusses the plan as a whole and outlines the principal landscape objectives for the proposal.

The principal landscape objectives for the proposal are:

- An environment that displays a high level of amenity through a combination of well-designed buildings that relate to a well-connected movement network and quality open spaces.
- An environment whose character enhances the proposed NZTA gateway design for the City.
- An environment that builds upon and enhances the Memorial function of Memorial Avenue.
- An environment that achieves sustainable management goals through open spaces that incorporate appropriate, low impact urban design principles such as an integrated stormwater system and safe pedestrian movement.
- A movement network that not only connects areas within the application site but allows for movement across the site connecting existing neighbourhoods and communities.
- A landscape approach that enhances the existing pedestrian movement connections along the application site edges connecting to but not limited to the airport and to the community.
- A landscape approach that creates high quality edge conditions for both the adjacent public and private realms.
- Expansive views are retained and enhanced from within the application site for example but not limited to the views of the Port Hills to the south east and the Southern Alps to the west.

Four key approaches to the outline development plan and associated landscape

- Landscape edge conditions that reflect the existing values of the area.
- Planting approach that integrates landscape and urban values
- Approach to open space and connectivity
- An integrated approach to sustainability

Landscape edge conditions that reflect the existing values of the area

- The outline development planning diagrams and proposed landscape approach are set up to enhance the wide, tree planted aesthetic of Memorial Avenue and to further enhance the role of Memorial Avenue as a gateway and memorial corridor. This approach includes a landscape setback to create a wider edge condition that allows for the creation of an urban linear park with wide footpaths, additional formal tree planting and the possibility of integrating interpretation and art to support the memorial function of this edge. The proposed layout will encourage buildings to have active facades facing Memorial Avenue with car parking hidden from public view.
- The outline development plan and proposed landscape approach are set up to enhance the gateway role and edge condition of the proposed Memorial Avenue/Russley Road intersection upgrade. The alignment of the internal street will encourage buildings to face the west and northwest presenting a positive front to the development versus the more typical approach of buildings turning their back on the highway and using screen planting to hide the buildings and site.
- The outline development planning diagrams and the proposed landscape approach are set up to create a planted landscape setback along Avonhead Road. The outline development plan proposes a footpath and cycleways that connect into the site and through the site from the Avonhead Road edge, creating a safe and comfortable movement network that links the residential areas north and south of the application site.

Planting approach that integrates landscape and urban values

- The approach to the proposed landscape setback is to create corridors and spaces that are cohesive, visually unique and interesting. They also provide safe spaces for people to move through, to meet other people, and to actively engage with the landscape, for example, viewing memorial and/or art installations. To achieve the above, the planting approach will build upon the site's unique setting while still meeting crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) guidelines, thus creating safe urban spaces to occupy.
- The selected planting species will be a mixture of exotic and native species that are suitable to local soils, climate and landscape conditions.
- Where possible plants will be selected for their ecological values and integrate into the urban environment. The ecological plant values that could be considered are habitat creation, food source, water filtration, ability and genetic seed bank.
- Trees species that shade, create wind shelter and add interest to the urban environment will be selected.

Approach to open space and conductivity

- The application site and the existing residential block to the south of the site lack clear and easy to use pedestrian links that currently connect the

communities to the east and west. This proposal is limited in the number of vehicle accesses it can have due to its spatial relation to Russley Road (SH1). However, it can provide much stronger pedestrian links between existing communities and to the amenities within the proposed site. The proposed street layout and components with the landscape setbacks have been created to encourage a permeable site creating easy, safe and interesting pedestrian movement corridors. A number of the key streets have been aligned to frame and direct views to the Port Hills to the south east and the Southern Alps to the west.

- The majority of the proposed main streets terminate with views of open space and green environments. These connections between the streets and the open space network are strengthened by the use of street trees to visually connect the open spaces.
- The proposed size and placement of green spaces has been selected to create functional, safe and comfortable open spaces. The size of the open spaces are typical of a neighbourhood park, creating a space big enough for both passive recreation and for kicking a ball around.
- The location of the internal open spaces will help to buffer these public spaces from the noise and distractions of both Russley Road and Memorial Avenue. The internal locations of the open spaces combined with streets trees and the placement of buildings will reduce the predominate wind from the east and should create a comfortable microclimate for the open space users.
- The proposed street edges on all sides of the open spaces will create not only good passive surveillance for the park but also create a high quality foreground for the building and a place for innovative businesses to meet.

An integrated approach to sustainability

- An appropriate planting plan will be developed to ensure that the long term success of that landscape and consideration will be given to maintenance costs.
- Implementing a low impact stormwater design, which will be integrated with amenity plantings and incorporated into the proposed open spaces.
- Creating a pedestrian and cyclist friendly development that provides health benefits to the user and encourages ecological health across the site.
- That the open space resources developed will benefit the existing communities.

4 Assessment against objectives and policies

The Operative Christchurch City Plan

4.1 Rural ⁴

The Christchurch City Plan (CCP) contains objectives which seek to retain rural land for rural uses, but also identifies that one of the purposes of rural land is to accommodate urban growth through Objective 13.1(a), which states:

(a) That the rural/and and soil resource be managed to:

- *Provide scope for the appropriate establishment or extension of urban activities; and...*

The proximity of the application site to the urban/rural boundary and its current Rural 5 zoning makes this objective applicable to the application site. The objective highlights the potential for the extension of urban development into a rural zone provided the change in landscape character and amenity is taken into consideration. This is confirmed through the Reasons for the Objective, which state:

While the emphasis will be on retention of rural character, there are circumstances where it is economically sound and environmentally acceptable for urban activities to establish on rural land, having regard to the relative significance of servicing costs, availability of services, soil qualities and local environmental constraints.

The appropriateness of urban development in the rural area is determined in part by the above factors, but in addition to other policies in this Plan which emphasise urban consolidation.

The policies relevant to the landscape that determine appropriateness of urban growth are found in Section 2: Natural Environment, Section 4: City Identity, and Section 6: Urban Growth. With regards to Section 13, there are no rural policies that would prevent rezoning in this case.

4.2 Natural environment ⁵

The first policy within this section that are relevant to the application site is:

The protection and enhancement of key elements and processes comprising the City's natural environment. ⁶

⁴ CCP Volume 2 Section 13

⁵ CCP Volume 2 Section 2

⁶ CCP Volume 2 Section 2 Objective 2.4

This policy aims to protect the City's natural environment and encourage the development of green spaces within the urban environment.

This Objective sets out to protect and/or enhance any significant landscape features within the City and deem urban expansion into these areas a potential threat to the natural environment. An example of this is the Port Hills, which are relatively unmodified rural plains and coast. These elements are also recognised as being subject to RMA s6 matters.

The application site is not identified in the City Plan as having any significant landscape feature and therefore does not require protection, this includes RMA s6 matters. As mentioned in section 2.6 Landscape Character, there are no significant landscape features within the application site and it is not significant to the City as a natural environment.

4.3 Urban growth ⁷

The main issues that will affect the landscape when discussing urban growth are the urban/rural boundary and the extent of rezoning. There are a number of policies within the City Plan that give guidance regarding this issue, these are discussed below.

Policy 6.3A.1⁸ concerns the urban / rural boundary and aims *'To ensure peripheral urban growth does not occur in a form detached from current urban boundaries, or which promotes a dispersed and un-coordinated pattern of development.'* Of relevance, the explanation and reasons elaborate where they state;

'Peripheral urban growth where appropriate, is favoured adjacent to the existing urban edge of the City, rather than creating isolated pockets of development, which subsequently provide a pretext for infilling of adjoining or intervening rural/and.'

The application site is currently connected to the City's urban boundary along the eastern edge- zoned Living 5 and sits adjacent the Special Purpose Airport Zone along the western edge. The effects that this proposal will have on the landscape will mean that the urban/rural boundary will be relocated. However, the land both north and south of the site are currently under review for rezoning. Therefore the proposed rezoning of the application site will not result in an isolated or detached urban environment, and so will achieve Policy 6.3A.1.

Policy 6.3A.5 seeks *'To avoid urbanisation of land which is of outstanding landscape quality, is ecologically significant, or which detracts from the margins of waterways or the coastline.'*

⁷ CCP Volume 2, Section 6

⁸ CCP Volume 2, Urban Growth : 6.3A and 6.3B Objectives Peripheral urban growth and Greenfield residential growth : 6.3A.1 Policy Urban boundary

As previously noted, none of the land within the application site has any significant landscape features and therefore Policy 6.3A.5 will not affect rezoning of the application site.

Policy 6.3A.10 and Policy 6.3A.12 are the two urban growth policies that discuss the location and character of boundary extension. The rezoning of the application site will mean that the urban / rural boundary will be extended which could potentially affect landscape outcomes. The above mentioned policies will be discussed in reverse order because implementing the former will ensure the latter is achieved.

Policy 6.3A.12 relates to the urban / rural interface, where it seeks clear landscape outcomes. The aims are:

'To reinforce the consolidation of the urban area by:

(a) improving the landscape quality of the rural- urban interface

(b) establishing a transition of low density housing, open space or esplanade reserves, adjacent to the urban boundary, particularly where no clear physical boundary to urban growth exists; and

(c) encouraging the planting of suitably located trees on the urban-rural interface, to create a high standard of amenity, and to better define and improve the quality of the urban edge of the City.

The application site is currently a narrow strip of rural land between two established urban zones. This plan change aims to consolidate the land east of the airport runways into an urban zone, forming a ' ... *clear physical boundary* ' as outlined in sub-clause (b). As a result this portion of the policy will be achieved.

Other parts of the policy require the interface to have high amenity through the provision of open space and landscaping, with consideration given to the boundary edges and the interface with adjacent land use. The landscape proposal has considered an appropriate design response to each of the three edges, taking into consideration the adjacent land use, vehicular use, existing pedestrian connections and relevance of the edge to both the user and the City. The design approach is now discussed in more depth below.

The proposed approach in the Outline Development Plan (ODP) for Memorial Avenue shows a 10 metre building setback that will include landscaping, a shared path and rows of trees on either side of the path, linking the site to the airport. This approach maintains a strong interface between the Memorial Avenue and the application site, whilst at the same time celebrating the relevance of Memorial Avenue.

Along Russley Road (SH1) the minimum building setback will be 10 metres incorporating landscaping and then a local road to ensure that the impact of the proposed flyover and highway upgrade will have a minimal impact on the application

site. For Avonhead Road the minimum building setback will be 15 metre with 7.5 metre of associated landscaping. As indicated these setbacks will include a number of trees, which will be no less than that stipulated by the City Plan for Business Zones (see Rule 6.4.5 Landscaped Areas). Therefore, Policy 6.3A.12 sub-clauses (a) and (c) will be achieved through the implementation of the proposed landscape setbacks.

Policy 6.3A.10 also concerns the boundaries of urban/rural interface and aims *'to prefer peripheral development which is contained, at least in part, by a well defined barrier to further outward extension for urban development.'* This policy aims to define where the natural (i.e. water body) or logical boundary (i.e. significant change in slope gradient), should occur. This approach is encouraged where in the explanation and reasons for this policy, it states that;

Aligning the boundary of areas for peripheral growth with a defined natural or physical feature seeks to avoid pressure for continued outward extension of these areas into the rural area. In addition, support is given to a compact urban form and such features can improve the quality of the rural- urban interface.

The urban/rural interface of the application site is clearly defined by the roads that bound the site. Furthermore potential expansion of the urban boundary beyond the application site is curtailed by SPAZ and the proposed highway upgrade of Russley Road (SH1). Therefore the current approach along Russley Road aims to improve the interface between the application site, Russley Road and SPAZ through naturalistic planting. This approach will ensure that both 6.3A.10 and 6.3A.12 will be addressed and that a robust interface with high amenity will be achieved.

4.4 City Identity⁹

In the City Identity section, the policies seeking to implement and achieve Objective 4.2 are the most relevant to landscape matters.

The relevant policies are:

Policy 4.2.2 sets out *'To recognise and promote the "Garden City" identity, heritage and character of Christchurch.'* In the explanation and reasons it is recognised that all of the City's natural resources contribute to the Garden City identity. It is stated that *'A key aspect of achieving this policy will be maintaining and extending environments and vegetation types which complement this image. '*

It then goes on to explain that;

'The benefits of promoting the "Garden City" image are not only visual. In places, the open spaces, gardens and planting create linkages. There is scope for further linkages through "greenways" (encircling the City, encompassing and extending existing amenity areas) and "green wedges" extending into the City. Not only do they provide

⁹ CCP Vol 2, Section 4

breathing space for residents, potential pedestrian and cycleways, and buffers to natural habitats, but pollutants are known to disperse over open spaces.'

A key component of the ODP is the connections through and across the site for all users. The proposal not only has a well connected internal movement network within the site but it also connects through the site, linking the neighbourhoods. In addition to this, two key open spaces have been designated within the site and landscape setbacks have been proposed along the three key edges.

A number of the recommendations in Policy 4.2.2 have been incorporated into the proposal these include:

'a generous city layout, tree lined streets and avenues, ' diversity of plants, species and colour, including native vegetation, ' and 'landscaped setbacks from buildings including flowers and lawn'.

The overall layout of the ODP encourages future buildings to address the existing public realm of Memorial Ave, Russley Road and Avonhead Road. All three edges that face the public realm have building setbacks that will be landscaped, with the aim to respond and enhance the character of the existing site. An emphasis has also been put on tree lined streets throughout the proposal and an avenue of trees will line Memorial Avenue, highlighting its significance as a gateway. The general planting approach is predominantly natives with a few ornamentals.

Overall the current proposal is in line with the above policy, through the consideration of site development, the landscape approach and connectivity. These considerations will ensure that a high level of amenity is provided and that the application site promotes the Garden City identity that this policy sets out.

Connected to the above, Policy 4.2.6 aims *'To enhance the landscape quality of the City and encourage sensitive landscape design and the retention of appropriate vegetation and new planting.'* This policy looks at the integration of the built form within the existing landscape and aims to ensure that new developments are site appropriate.

With regards to this policy the current proposal has considered the integration of the built form within the application site. This proposal will mean that the landscape character of the site will transition and the current landscape will be significantly altered. However, the landscape proposal has provided landscape setbacks, open spaces and a planting approach that addresses the integration of the built form into the site and therefore this policy will be achieved.

The District Plan Review – Replacement Plan

The Operative Christchurch City Plan is to be replaced with a Replacement Plan, prepared under earthquake recovery legislation. The Industrial Park zoning of the site, if successful, will ultimately sit within the Replacement Plan. Accordingly, an

assessment has also been undertaken against the anticipated objectives and policies to be included in the Industrial Chapter of the Replacement Plan through Phase 1 of the District Plan Review (as recommended by Council officers on 5 June 2014).

4.5 Objective 1 - Policy 3 – Range of industrial areas

This policy sets the basis for supporting the recovery and economic growth of the district's industry, in the existing and new greenfield industrial zones. Policy 3(c) in particular is relevant to the development of the MBP site.

'Recognise and provide for industrial zones with different functions that cater for a range of industrial activities depending on their needs and effects as follows:

...

(c) *Industrial Park Zone*

(i) *recognise and provide for industrial activities in the high technology sector and other industries in a high amenity environment dominated by open space and landscaping, and that generate higher volumes of traffic than other industries while having negligible effects in terms of noise, odour or the use and storage of hazardous substances.'*

As stated previously in this assessment the MBP site has been identified as a Greenfield Business Area in the Land Use Recovery Plan. The development proposal intends to rezone the site to an Industrial Park Zone, which fits Policy 3(c).

The setback, landscape amenity, open space and pedestrian and cycle connections associated with the proposal help create a high amenity environment, which encourages industrial activities in the high technology sector. Therefore the proposal is in keeping with the above Policy 3(c).

4.6 Objective 2: Amenity in industrial zones and the effects of industrial activities.

This objective and associated policies set out to manage the effects of industrial activities in terms of both physical and cultural elements:

‘...

(a) *Adverse effects of industrial activities and development on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated and the level of amenity anticipated in the adjoining zone is not adversely affected by industry.*

(b) *Industrial sites visible from the road have a higher level of visual amenity particularly the Industrial Park Zone on the corner of Memorial Avenue and Russley Road, Industrial General Zone (North Belfast) and Industrial Heavy Zone (South West Hornby) that are in highly prominent locations and act as gateways to the City.*

(c) *The cultural values of Ngāi Tahu/manawhenua are recognised, protected and enhanced through the use of indigenous species in landscaping and tree planting, a multivalued approach to stormwater management in greenfield areas, and the protection and enhancement of waahi tapi and waahi taonga including waipuna.'*

4.6.1 Policy 8: Improve visual amenity

'(a) Development shall enhance the visual amenity of industrial sites along street frontages through landscaping and tree planting, and the location of the office component of the industrial activity on the street frontage, while providing for passive surveillance of public space.

(b) To encourage the use of indigenous species, appropriate to the local environment, in landscaping and tree planting to recognise the cultural values of Ngāi Tahu/manawhenua.

(c) Maintain and enhance the amenity values of Memorial Avenue and its function as a war memorial and visitor gateway through well designed buildings, limited signage and significant setbacks and landscaping.

(d) Enhance the visual amenity at gateways to the city through well setbacks and landscaping in the Industrial Heavy Zone (South West Hornby) and also well designed buildings in the Industrial General Zone (North Belfast).'

4.6.2 Policy 9: Development in greenfield areas

'(a) To achieve environments in greenfield priority areas with larger setbacks and landscaping, reflecting their location at the interface with adjoining rural zones and in prominent locations, some of which act as gateways to the city.'

4.6.3 Policy 10: Managing effects on the environment

'(a) The effects of development and activities in industrial zones, including visual, noise, glare and other effects, are avoided, remedied or mitigated through the location of uses, landscaping, acoustic treatment, and screening.

(b) The scale and form of buildings reflects the surrounding built form of industrial areas while minimising visual effects on more sensitive zones.

(c) The use and storage of hazardous substances and quantity of wastewater discharged in areas over unconfined or semi-confined aquifers is restricted to minimise any risk of contamination.

(c) The cultural values of Ngāi Tahu/manawhenua are recognised through the protection of waahi tapi and waahi taonga, including waipuna, from the adverse effects of development.

(e) *Development is designed and laid out to promote a safe environment and reflects principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).'*

The proposal intends to employ different approaches for all four edges of the site in order to manage the potential effects of the development to the existing sensitive land uses around the site. There is also a general approach to the reduction and mitigation of the effects of the development across the site, as well as to protect and enhance the site's physical and cultural amenities.

These approaches will be explained in detail in Section 5 of this assessment.

5 Landscape and Visual Effects

The change from the existing pastoral landscape character of application site to an urban/industrial/business use will introduce a range of built forms (buildings, light poles, street furniture) and landscapes (opens spaces, streetscapes and amenity landscapes within the landscape setback areas). This will be a significant change to the current landscape character and associated views into the site. However, this land is within the urban boundary and is surrounded by residential and Industrial development and would not be an unexpected outcome. The change of landscape character does not necessary mean low visual amenity. The proposed landscape approach to the development will include landscape setbacks that include trees and amenity planting.

Most views into the site are from the surrounding roads and are mainly experienced from moving vehicles due to the lack of foot paths on Russley Road and Avonhead Road. Only a few residential properties on Avonhead Road and to the east of the application site have existing views into the application site and they are mainly partial views through existing vegetation.

5.1 Visual Amenity and Landscape Character Effects

Four different approaches are suggested by the outline development plan for the four edge conditions on the application site. The different master planning approaches to each edge condition relate to and recognise the different values and sensitivities that the four edges have both culturally and visually. These four frontages are:

- Memorial Avenue frontage
- Russley Road frontage
- Avonhead Road frontage
- Eastern edge/Copthorne Hotel Boundary

There is also a general approach to be applied to the Site Interior, to ensure the proposal responds positively to the landscape and visual amenity of the site and the

surrounding context. In particular around the proposed open spaces within the development.

Memorial Avenue Frontage

Current condition: This edge is currently a wire farm fence with a pastoral view beyond. There are no residential dwellings that view the site from this edge. There is significant cultural importance given the memorial role of Memorial Avenue as a remembrance landscape. This edge due to its adjacency to the Memorial Avenue /Russley Road intersection is often associated as part of the gateway experience heading into the city from the airport.

Proposed design approach and mitigation of visual impact: The overall design approach along this edge aims to enhance the gateway and memorial value of this edge with a landscape setback that includes a double row of trees, landscape amenity planting and stormwater mitigation if needed. The design also includes a shared bike and pedestrian path creating a stronger connection between the surrounding community and the airport employment zone. The tree species selected along this pathway will be comprised of large scale exotic trees to match the existing trees on Memorial Avenue.

Visual mitigation: In addition to the avenue of trees there will be a planted landscape strip along this edge that will be predominantly native species local to this region. This approach aims to reinforce the gateway function, whilst at the same time adding a diversity of planting layers that currently don't exist. This tree and amenity planting will soften this edge and visually break up the built form of proposed buildings along this northern edge.

Memorial role: There is possibility of establishing landscape and art features to celebrate the memorial role of the Avenue along this frontage. The proposed design approach allows these features to be actively engaged by pedestrians.



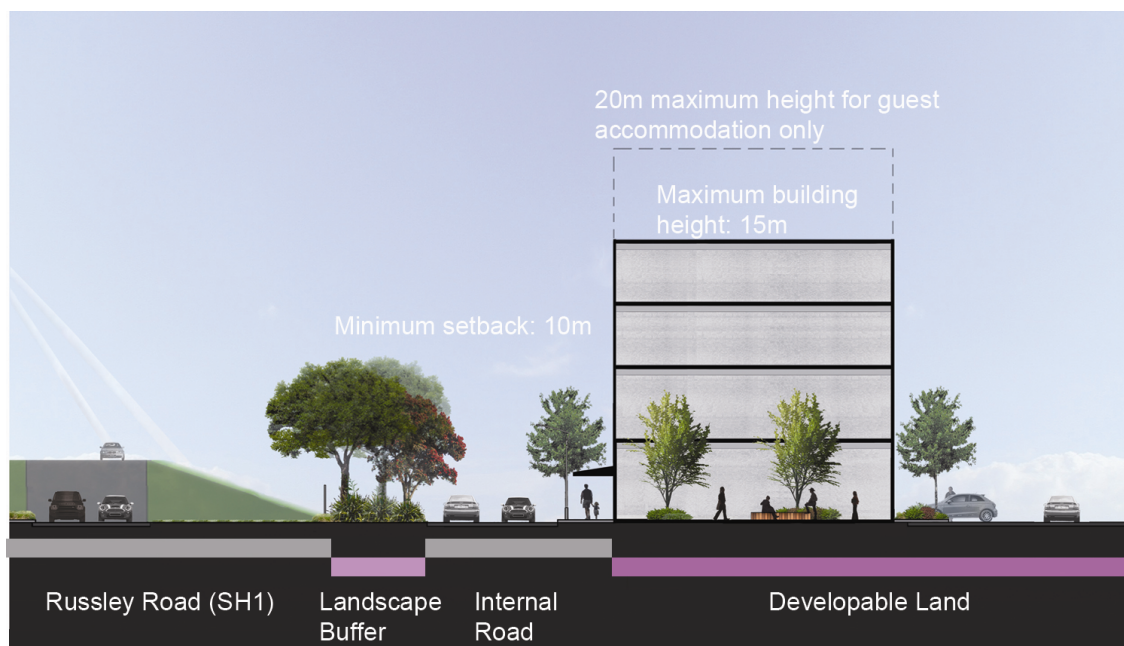
Section 1: Memorial Avenue Proposed Edge Condition

Russley Road Frontage

Current condition: This edge is currently a wire farm fence with a pastoral view beyond. There are no residential dwellings that have views into the site from this edge and due to the lack of foot paths or cycle ways it is unlikely to be viewed by pedestrians.

Proposed design approach and mitigation of visual impact: The overall design approach along this edge aims to enhance the gateway value of this edge with a setback that includes trees and landscape amenity planting. The tree species selected along this pathway will be comprised of native trees and amenity planting that will integrate into the highway planting, making the landscape read as one. This plant selection will require very little management due to their disease and drought tolerance abilities. The visual quality of this edge is important for the success of the site and acknowledgment of the gateway.

Visual mitigation: In addition to the trees, the amenity planting will be predominantly native species local to this region. The outline development plan also includes a local road within the landscape strip that will encourage building to have their active frontages facing west towards Russley Road (SH1) creating visual interest. The tree and amenity planting will soften and visually break up the built form of proposed buildings along this western edge.



Section 2: Russley Road Proposed Edge Condition

Avonhead Road Frontage

Current condition: This edge is mainly a wire farm fence with pastoral views beyond. There are residential dwellings that view the site from this edge. There is a footpath

that does not go the entire length of Avonhead Road that will allow some pedestrians to view the site.

Proposed design approach and mitigation of visual impact: The overall design approach along this edge aims to enhance the Avonhead Road edge condition with a setback that includes trees and landscape amenity planting. The design also proposes a pedestrian path adjacent to the site boundary (on the Avonhead Road side) to create a stronger connection between the surrounding community and the development. The tree and amenity planting would comprise of large scale exotic trees and native trees.

Visual mitigation: There will be a building setback of 15m with a minimum 7.5m planted landscape strip within. The current proposal has a mixture of exotic and native planting that fits the context of this edge particularly in response to the existing private landscape across Avonhead Road. This landscaped setback may also allow some of the existing trees to be retained and provide screening for the car park.



Section 3: Avonhead Road Proposed Edge Condition

Eastern edge/Copthorne Hotel Boundary

Current condition: This edge is currently a 1.8 metre fence in most parts with pastoral view beyond from the first floors of buildings. There are many mature trees along this edge that break up the view into the application site. There are few residential dwellings that view the site from this edge. There is no public street or associated footpaths that would allow pedestrians or vehicle users to view the site.

Proposed design approach and mitigation of visual impact: The overall design approach along this edge aims to buffer the adjacent L5 land use by setting back the buildings within the future development.

Visual mitigation: A 20 metre setback is required along this edge, as well as the recommended recession plane. This setback will maintain distances between the proposed buildings to the Commodore Hotel buildings and reduce the potential visual

effects of the development. There will also be proposed planting along this edge within the setback to work with the existing planting on the Hotel side to visually screen out the proposed development where appropriate.

Site Interior

Planting within setbacks will assist in integrating the buildings into the setting and provide a buffer to car parks. The planting palette will include a number of New Zealand natives such as, silver tussock, totara, kowhai, and cabbage trees.

In two key locations a park-like setting has been proposed where trees will line the park. This approach draws on inspiration from Latimer, Cranmer and Victoria Squares and aims to serve as a recreational space for the users.

The orientation and layout of interior roads has been taken into consideration. Every road ends with an open space view, including long expansive views to both the Southern Alps and Port Hills.

6 Conclusion

The proposal to develop the application site for a range of business purposes has a strong design rationale and the site is located in an appropriate landscape and urban context for such development. Ultimately the proposal will result in a significant change from a rural landscape which is characterised by open space and pastoral landscape character to a more urban and built environment. The landscape which the site sits within is not an identified as Outstanding Natural Landscape in Section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act. The site does not contain outstanding natural features.

The proposal fits within the current Christchurch City Plan framework as well as supports the Objectives and Policies proposed by the District Plan Review process, and/or the Land Use Recovery Plan.

There are different design approaches for all four edges of the site, in order to effectively manage the existing and future sensitivities that may arise as a result of the development. In many cases the proposal will strengthen the surrounding community by enhancing the landscape amenity and pedestrian/cycle connections.

Significant areas of open space and landscape amenity are proposed as well as a framework of tree-lined roads and planting to enhance existing cultural and historical values.

Significant visual effects are appropriately mitigated by strategic areas of tree and amenity planting, which, over time, will break up the forms of the built environment.