

# Amberley urban design assessment

## study purpose

The urban design assessment is a forward master plan for the township of Amberley to guide and enhance existing and future development, promote a variety of rural, community and visitor services and facilities, and suggest ways to give a special image within the township's significant North Canterbury setting.

There are three main elements to the study:

- to consider how to provide a **strong identifiable town centre** which functions well for people who live and work in the township, the wider Amberley community, and for tourists and other visitors. (The focus here is improve connections between public spaces and buildings, commercial premises and eastern and western parts of the township and on design measures to enhance a warm country village atmosphere using paving, planting street furniture, lighting and other measures)
- to provide concept designs to **enhance the main street**. (The focus here is on measures to reduce traffic conflicts/traffic calming and providing user friendly space to pedestrians and motorists alike)
- to provide options to improve the **main street's entry and exits**. (The focus here is to achieve a sense of arrival as well as denoting the township as a destination in its own right)

The Amberley urban design assessment draws on the work and analysis by the community, Ward Committee and Council over the last five years and our recent observations in addressing the features of Amberley, its business and tourism facilities and issues for future growth.

Once the various urban design options have been considered and preferences selected then the next stages of the project are the preparation of working drawings and 'work on the ground' for a streetworks upgrade and other associated longer term project planning.

# Amberley urban design assessment

## assessment process

**Urban design studies are essentially aimed at looking at the ways spaces and places fit within their wider setting and whether there are ways to improve functionality - 'how to make towns and cities more successful' \***  
**This involves understanding so far as possible:**

- community aspirations, business functions, environmental aspirations, visitor and tourism functions**
- a sense of history- how the township came to be vs. present day and future functions**
- how the township sits in its landscape and physical setting**
- how spaces are oriented and used - sunlight, shadow, shade, views, wind direction, shelter**
- cultural features and associations**
- surrounding landscapes, farmscapes, viticultural development**
- how pedestrians, truck traffic, other traffic and other motorists interact**
- other elements that may make a township or other urban place, distinctive, contrast and common elements in other nearby towns**
- are there issues for individual safety, visibility of spaces, intermittent usage etc (crime prevention through environmental design-CPTED)**

\*The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (MFE 2005) explains in more detail the key features of a study of this type and also comments that 'urban design is concerned not just with appearances and built form but with the environmental, economic, social and cultural consequences of design.... Increasingly we are recognising the economic importance of our towns and cities to the national economy. Quality urban design increases economic value with higher returns on investment, reduced management and maintenance costs, more productive workplaces and enhanced image and prestige. Quality urban design values and protects the cultural identity and heritage of our towns and provides for creativity....'

# Amberley urban design assessment

## assessment factors

In thinking about the present township and a future Amberley, it is useful to evaluate the various options and possibilities having regard to;

### □ **connectiveness**

do the proposals promote safe and effective management of vehicles and pedestrians, carparking  
help East/West connections, as well as North/South connections  
establish or reinforce view corridors, enhance landmarks, corner sites, entrances, open space, historical fabric

### □ **design performance**

do the proposals give good spatial response by creating a series of nodal points of buildings and activities within the town centre and interconnections beyond build on and address urban conservation - do they enhance the contextual value of Amberley's setting  
create comfortable and attractive pedestrian spaces, while also accommodating significant traffic flows and passing trade  
create appropriate possibilities for a variety of land uses and diversity of activities  
are the proposals functionally relevant and environmentally appropriate?  
enable definitive, welcoming and identifiable entrances  
enable future growth

### □ **streetscape**

provide for an urban environment that among other matters takes account of quite marked changes in seasonal climates.  
suggest ways to utilise Amberley's social setting, and to denote town/country/winery/landscape/beach /alpine associations, the township's development history and road, river and rail influences  
include attention to hard and soft paving elements, other roading and pavement detailing  
provide a background that engages and delights residents and visitors with visual cues as to the character of roads, streets and public spaces  
reinforce the street edge to give vitality and activity at the interface with the street?  
provide an environment that is safe and healthy (CPTED principles)

### □ **design themes**

do the proposals promote a sequence of building elements, views and allied space while passing along State Highway 1 and other connecting streets, beginning and end points  
reference specific landmarks that emphasise the image of the street  
utilise design and materials appropriate to the township and promote the requested warm country village theme  
enable distant view approach to landmarks, immediate impact, passing by.

# Amberley urban design assessment

## the various proposals incorporated to the design roughs



### **a town centre locale**

The possibilities for a town centre locale correlate with options for the roading hierarchy, and particularly for the collector/distributor network. This provides a potential framework for future development, and for variations in spatial arrangement, as well as a number of streetscape enhancements; refer the roading hierarchy drawings.

The drawings show a series of options for a central community heart to Amberley, utilising opportunities created by the location of the library, placing other community facilities nearby, and using a number of streetscape elements to enhance existing features and give more prominence to an 'Amberley image'.

Selected elements such as lighting, flags, markers, banners and signage would reinforce the identity and function of the town centre area. Certain of these features can be carried throughout, from the entrance and exit areas, and other key streets, thus conveying a sense of the township and community as a whole.

A more orderly arrangement of entrances to premises and facilities is suggested by developing parking and access at the rear. This would enhance the safety and traffic carrying capacity of the main road, separating local traffic more effectively from through, SH1 traffic.

Overall we are aiming for a development pattern in which

- buildings and premises have increased visibility to the street
- outdoor public spaces are possible , providing opportunities for artwork, fountains, bus stops, outdoor dining
- the pedestrian environment is made more attractive and also more prominent, the human scale of the streetscape is emphasised
- off street parking is generally placed at or behind a building line in a way that maintains the street edge and draws attention to individual

**premises and any nearby public spaces, also reducing the visual impact of parked car and expanses of tarmac**

- **parking access is separated from pedestrian access so far as possible extent and combined with nearby properties to create better roading efficiencies**
- **the need for numerous freestanding signs is reduced since these can be fixed to buildings or designed as part of the structure itself, giving a 'quieter' visual appearance.**

**There are opportunities to utilise these design principles elsewhere, as is shown throughout the drawing roughs.**

**In each of the town centre locale options a town square would provide outdoor space capable of both passive and active community use with buildings in a carefully considered spatial arrangement so that key facilities and buildings are clearly visible and integral to the whole.**

**The options also contemplate redevelopment opportunities potentially available upon relocation of the recycling depot, and development of the proposed Brackenfields shopping complex.**

**Option 1 is based on extending Markham St eastwards and the closure of Pound St.**

**Option 2 is based on the eastern extension of Douglas Rd connecting at the rear through to Pound St (Pound St access to SH1 is closed).**

**Option 3 is based on closing Douglas Rd, and using Markham St as the primary western entrance.**

**All options show a secondary north/south connection between Amberley Road and Courage Rd to the east of SH1, and envisage traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the Church St and Bank St areas. It is possible that other secondary connections could be facilitated in the longer term between Douglas and Markham Sts on the west side of SH1 in a 'traffic box' or other arrangement.**



**town centre locale - option 1 - Pound St stopped.**

A town square of approximately 1600m<sup>2</sup> is created on the northern side of the Memorial Library, opposite Douglas Rd by the relocation of the existing panel beater's facility.

Civic amenity is extended across a closed Pound St intersection with parking and vehicle access on a North/South alignment to the rear, linking to proposed new Brackenfields complex. This access continues to the north of Pound St with the creation of a new commercial service road over Council owned land (recycling depot) providing rear access opportunities in lieu of SH1 vehicular access.

The four way intersection at Markham St and SH1 would probably need to have traffic signal control at some time in the future.

A Community Hall is shown to the east of the N/S access, also possibly housing the Plunket rooms. The hall is approximately 1400m<sup>2</sup> over one level.

This option would enable a significant pedestrian focus to Markham St, and envisages new traffic calming measures on Church St/Bank St as Douglas Rd becomes the main arterial connection to the west.



**town centre locale - option 2 - Douglas Rd east extension**

As with Option 1, Douglas Rd becomes the main arterial road from the west. Some existing retail space is removed from the western end of Pound St. As also above, the four way intersection at Markham St and SH1 would probably need traffic signals at some time in the future.

This option enables a cluster of community buildings and outdoor spaces focusing on an extended Douglas St (becoming a shared local road), with a community hall and art gallery within the northern, extended eastern sector.

The town square would be approximately 1600m<sup>2</sup>, the community hall would be approximately 900m<sup>2</sup> on one level, the art gallery approximately 400m<sup>2</sup>.

As for option 1 this provides an extended town plaza with a northern aspect from the library, also giving an improved setting for this significant and recent building,

Altered access and parking layouts are shown with relocated Presbyterian church and Plunket Rooms. A new right turn to Douglas St (E) to join to the new N/S commercial service road and the proposed Brackenfields development is envisaged.



**town centre locale - option 3 - Markham St as primary western entrance, Douglas Rd closed**

**Option 3 proposes closing Douglas Rd (W) at the intersection with SH1 with the development of a town square area directly opposite, and Pound St remaining as is. There are no 4-way 'cross' intersections with this option.**

**On the western side of the main road, a small square with planting and markers would be extended to correspond to the planting line in front of Chamberlain Park, to complement the main town square opposite (approx. 1800m<sup>2</sup>) and to facilitate E/W pedestrian access.**

**The town square extends to the north of the library to Pound St, which remains open. Significantly Markham St is restored to an earlier importance as the primary E/W route, and in connections to the Domain, school and Lawcocks Rd. Traffic calming in Douglas Rd, Church St and other streets south of Markham is also envisaged. The new pedestrian crossing point would provide direct access to the square, further denoted by flags, markers and lighting.**

**In terms of the placement of community facilities, in this option the hall + associated facilities (1350m<sup>2</sup>) is directly adjacent the rear of the library and thus provides good potential interconnectedness between the two buildings.**

**The visitor centre could be located in the existing building on the northern side of Pound St, a reasonably prominent location easily accessed from SH1 in both north and south directions.**

**Areas on the eastern side of the square offer opportunities for the community hall and associated facilities.**

## Amberley urban design assessment



### Markham St

The Markham St locale offers special opportunities for independent specialist retail and service functions, showcasing for example regional food, wine and other Canterbury produce, art, local events etc, and potentially the use of outdoor areas both in the public and private realm, providing respite from the SH1 traffic environment.

Historic buildings are significant markers to the history of Amberley and the wider district, and together with informal connections north and south, offer opportunities for small lane development.

In the northern sector links could be established through to the HDC property; in the southern sector through to Douglas Rd and the town centre area. The area could form the focus of a heritage trail, linking to walking/biking trails in the western part of the township, including the Domain, school and lodge area and former railway station area.

This proposal shows a shared pedestrian and vehicular street with potential infill development, street trees and paving treatment.

Markham St could also be extended on the eastern side of SH1, to link with the new N/S rear commercial service road, or alternatively an E/W link could be created further to the north than that shown.

Note that in option 3 Markham St would be an arterial route linking to the west, thus requiring a different type of streetscape response than if, for example functioning as a local road only.



# Amberley urban design assessment

## other locale and design elements



### **northern and southern entrances**

In the **southern entrance area** proposals are shown to more strongly demarcate the entry alignment in the vicinity of the Welcome to Amberley sign, provide new signage and a gateway feature and to use additional plantings to give more prominence and visual definition as one enters the built up area. (Overall this provides an attractive appearance to the locale while at the same time retaining the buffer to houses on the slip road).

The proposals are designed to reduce the rural to urban speed threshold by physical and optical narrowing of the roadside to form 'pinch points' in accordance with NZTA guidelines.

Further to the south several options are shown to improve the appearance of the Greys Rd intersection and expand the view towards Mt Grey, the most significant of the landscape features of the Amberley locality. The proposals also address safety aspects for pedestrians crossing Sh1 in this vicinity.

Further into town views to ridgelines to the north and north/east are also important to 'sense of place' and this edge environment needs to be carefully managed, given possible future housing development and the desirability of retaining view corridors to the township's country rural setting. Building setbacks and frontage display usage are thus important considerations within key view corridor areas.

In the **northern entrance area** proposals similarly aim to reduce the rural to urban speed threshold and incorporate additional tree planting on the eastern berm area to SH 1, in a continuation of planting on the eastern side of the main road as one travels towards the Waipara junction

An option for the northern area is the significant greening and amenity upgrade of the area to the north of Turners Road, by creating a park and playground area, with off-street parking. Planting and mounded lawn areas along the road frontage would extend in the same manner as that outside the Council building. This park would also be connected to the wider open space network of the township.

A new right turn bay enables entry to Turners Rd from SH 1.

The roading network design allows for the possibility of closing the Osborne/SH1 intersection at some future time.

**A second option provides new gateway planting on the western side of SH1 just to the south of the curve in the railway and demarcates a new right turn bay near this point. Planting is incorporated on the western side of Carters Road aligned with the edge of the amenity planting outside the Council Offices. A new 2 way service road is provided for accessibility to properties to the north of Turners Road.**

**As for the southern entrances the proposals improve the demarcation of the urban area and provide a series of elements which clearly indicate that this is a built up area and an integral part of the township.**

**A sense of arrival and destination is provided both in the manner described and also by way of gateway features, using contoured hedging, new signage and markers in various combinations.**

**The options shown for the northern and southern entrances reference LTSA design guidelines for urban rural speed thresholds, in a combination of median markers, vertical elements, landscaping and roadside verge treatment and other measures. \***

**LTSA Guidelines for urban rural speed thresholds RTS 15 Feb 2002**

□  
**open spaces**

**A series of open spaces is potentially a key ‘unifying factor’ for the township; provision for additional open space was requested in the Concept Development Plan and included to this study brief.**

**The urban design proposals show options to**

- **enhance and enlarge the presence of Chamberlain Park to the main street, and within the wider township area**
- **create additional open space at the northern end of Amberley**
- **create other outdoor spaces capable of a variety of informal activities such as a new town square**
- **further reinforce Amberley’s ‘warm country village’ atmosphere**
- **extended grassed berm areas to convey a ‘front lawn’ imagery and as above, reinforce a country atmosphere**
- **create an open, grassed frontage and berm area at the junction of Grey’s Rd and SH1**
- **open spaces are placed in prominent positions so that people are aware of them throughout the day, and in their normal routines**
- **spaces offer spontaneous use for both active and passive leisure activity**
- **enhance streetscapes and open spaces to convey welcome and an “Amberley brand” using banners, lighting, markers, signage, outdoor seating, the way in which buildings and structures address the street.**

**The open spaces shown have a ‘leisure’ focus and are therefore different from the recreation facilities of the Domain area\*.**

**The spaces shown are where one can be outside, take a break from travel, enjoy nature and perhaps have a picnic. As is the case for existing spaces, they provide an opportunity to view public art and can be used for local events and promotions.**

**The spaces are distributed among the different locale of the main road and E/W roads, and have the potential to link to a wider open space network of bike ways, heritage trail, school and preschool access routes.**

\* ‘leisure is time and experience- based, whereas recreation is activity and space based. Leisure is usually aesthetically oriented, recreation is functionally oriented.

□  
**pedestrian links and crossings**

There are presently three formalised pedestrian crossing bays providing access to east and west across SH1.

The drawings show possibilities for relocation of the southern crossing point to link to the town square (option 3 town centre locale). This would assist access to the library and other community facilities from the western side and conversely access to nearby Chamberlain Park and other western localities from the east.

In the north western sector of the township there are opportunities to provide laneway development connecting Douglas Rd to Markham St and beyond, and to facilitate via traffic calming and other measures use of Church St, Bank St etc.

□  
**individual design elements**

The drawings show many opportunities to use design elements to

- promote an ‘Amberley’ identity
- complement the ‘village’ experience
- provide pleasant views for passing travellers
- assist connectivity among the various parts of the township and reference its regional setting
- define entry and /exit zones using formal entry features including hedges and markers to create visible landscape thresholds
- create a streetscape which both acknowledges Amberley’s rural setting, enhances the pedestrian experience and integrates the existing SH1 corridor with the community infrastructure network

**Opportunities include**

- banners to main street lighting to visually create an ‘edge’ enclosure to the Carters Rd streetscape. Banners could celebrate for instance spring, summer, autumn, winter seasons, and be used for promotional events in the township and nearby

- **pathways and notations (see Chamberlain Park frontage enhancements drawing) for the 'Hurunui Pathway' and associated narrative signage**
- **further art installations, water features, landscape enhancement of Dock Creek waterway, small bridges and culverts**
- **a heritage trail**
- **public spaces for themed or informal events**
- **'precinct based' development character for Markham St**
- **entry and precinct markers e.g. town square, Markham precinct**
- **unified planting and existing planted landscape management options**
- **focal points and purpose designed community spaces**
- **using feature trees and shrubs which draw inspiration from Amberley's established planting character.**

# Amberley urban design assessment

## traffic management



### traffic management objectives

- the major feature of traffic activity in Amberley is the dual use of Carters Rd as State Highway 1 for through movement and for access to local land use activities
- it is desirable to provide for the efficient and safe movement of all traffic by separating as far as possible State Highway users from other users
- consideration should be given to the ability of local residents, particularly children and the elderly, to move comfortably around their town and in particular to minimise the threat to them of State Highway traffic which includes a large proportion of trucks and heavy vehicles
- as well as private vehicular travel the needs of public transport, cyclists and pedestrians must be taken into account when planning transportation facilities.



### the collector distributor road

- the proposed collector distributor road is shown in yellow on the road hierarchy plans. Its purpose is to provide an efficient but calmer traffic environment for local trips around town
- this collector/distributor is shown as running north/south at a distance of 500m east from the main street. The alignment is shown on the plan as being geometrically continuous . It could equally be stepped at the cross roads, as long as the route could be learned
- it could be built in stages in conjunction with residential subdivision of the areas through which the route passes. The section from Amberley Beach Road to Pound St is the first priority.

□  
parking strategy

- **the proposed urban design will at some stage require an assessment of truck and car parking requirements both for private and public activities, particularly along the main street. This will require surveys**
- **because the main street has such a wide road reserve there are, and will be, opportunities for part of the parking demand to be met on the street**
- **the main State Highway carriageway is mostly offset to the east side of the road reserve. This means that off-street parking will be more critical for development on this side of the road and rear access may be necessary to achieve this.**

final doc