



# AMBERLEY TOWN CONCEPT

*a landscape character study*

**‘Amberley Town Concept  
– a landscape character study’**

was prepared for the  
Hurunui District Council  
and  
Amberley Ward Committee  
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May 15, 2007.



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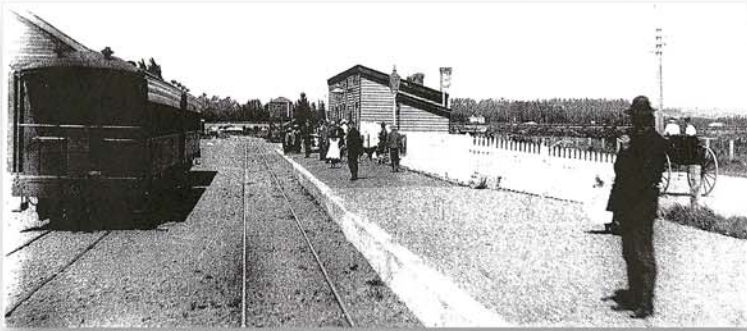
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## 1. DEVELOPMENT OF AMBERLEY

1870's In the beginning...

*Quarter-acre sections subdivided in 1864 by Pemberton from Sefton...*

*Amberley town grew after opening of the railway in 1876, pushing section prices up...*

*Businesses then moved to Amberley from Leithfield and Saltwater Creek...*

*Before the railway, Amberley was the quieter of these settlements, goods being shipped by sea from Saltwater Creek...*

*Carters, Douglas, Lawcocks and Amberley Beach Roads predate the railway...*

*Name 'Amberley' from Carter family's home farm in Oxfordshire*



1870's Black Map courtesy Christchurch Public Library

## 4 Amberley as it was



Amberley Cycling Club, race from Amberley to Waipara, October 1907



Sale Day in Amberley about 1912



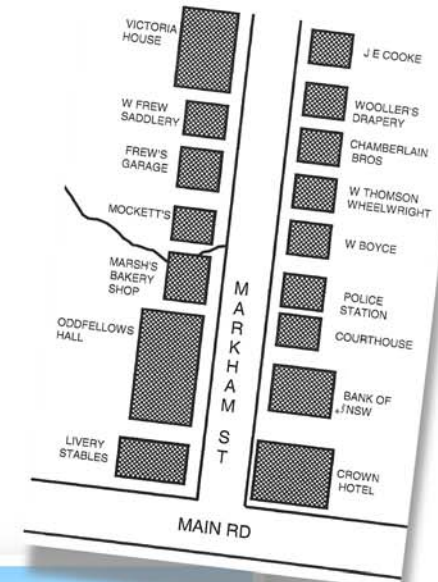
The Amberley Post Office soon after it was built in 1911, but before 1913 when the courthouse was removed to a position in Markham Street.

1890's Rural service town focused on railway: Primitive roading & horse-drawn transport favoured transport of farm produce by rail...

Main Street focused on railway, adjacent to Markham Street/ Douglas Road

Wide range of businesses providing local services  
Residential sections 1,000m<sup>2</sup> (1/4 acre, or 40 perches), streets 20m (1 chain) wide.

Population 1899 or thereabouts?



Markham Street, Early 1900's



1950's Rural service town re-orienting to road transport. Improved roading and vehicles by now overshadow rail transport...

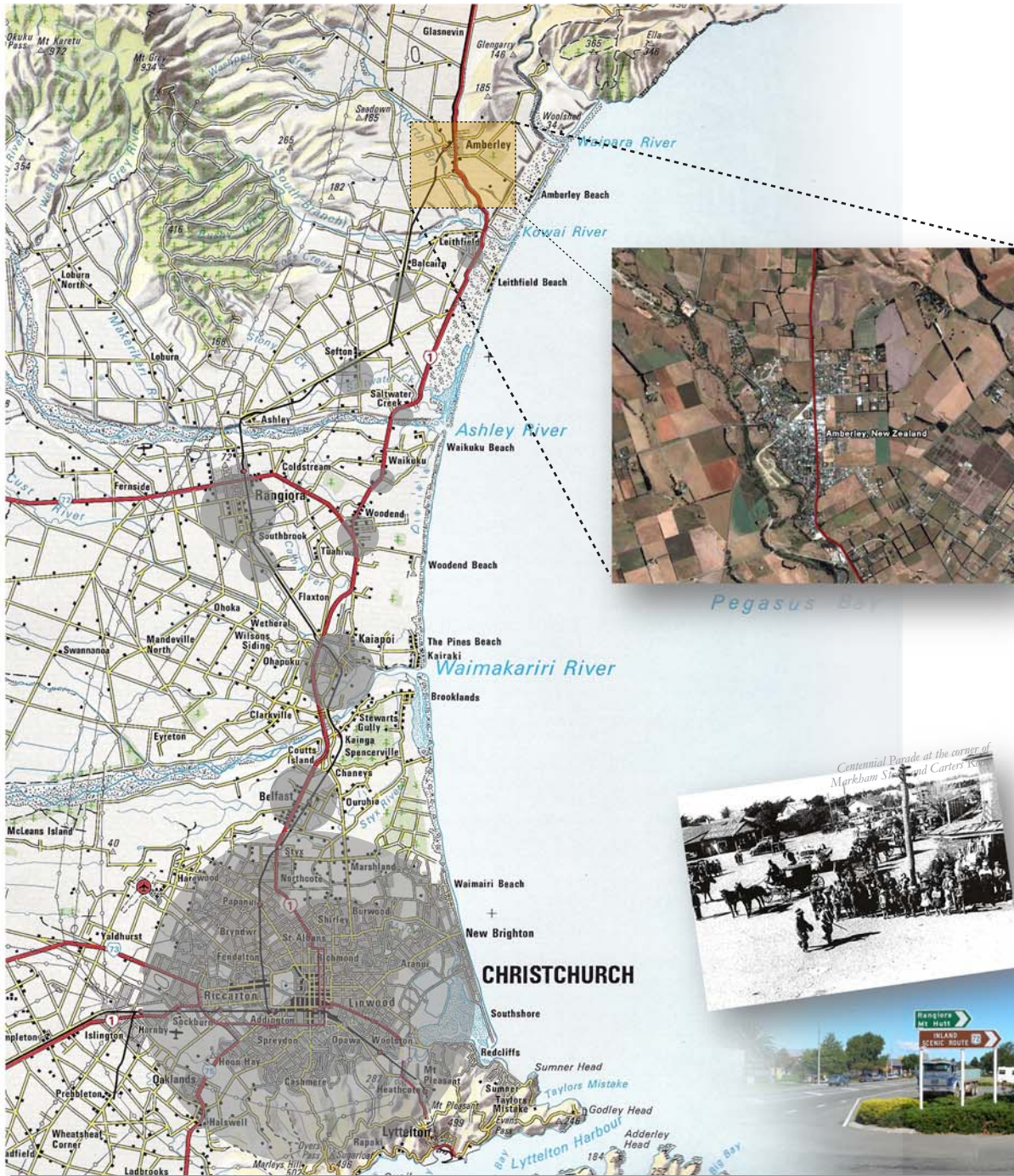
*Main Street focused on Carters Road (today's SH1)...*

*Range of services – car sales, banks, stores, saddler, saleyards, rural agents, rabbit board, county council...*

*Residential sections smaller, 700m<sup>2</sup> / (30 perches)...*

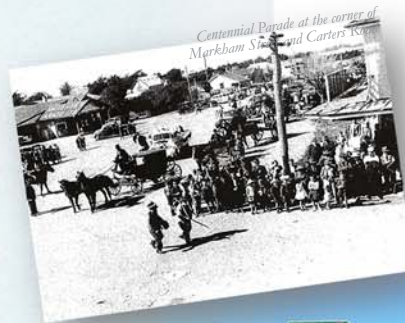
*Residential streets...*





**2000's Rural service town oriented to highway.  
SH1 fully dominant;**

*Mobility draws some services out of town (eg shops/banks in competition with ChCh or Rangiora...  
However also continues as rural service town, the first north of Christchurch largely free of urban pull...  
SH1 now the dominant northern link in South Island, railway largely a passing service...  
Main Street focus on Carters Road grows. Markham Street/ Douglas Road a remnant...  
Dormitory/ retirement housing expansion as well as local employment...  
Renewed residential growth/ Streets...  
Growth of surrounding rural residential population...  
'County Town' for Hurunui District (x x ha)...*



## 2. THE CHARACTER OF THE EXISTING TOWN

- A small but growing rural service town at the northern limit of the Christchurch commuter belt.
- Population 1,300 (2006 census), a 14% increase from 2001.
- A town of one- and two-storied buildings.

### Commercial Area

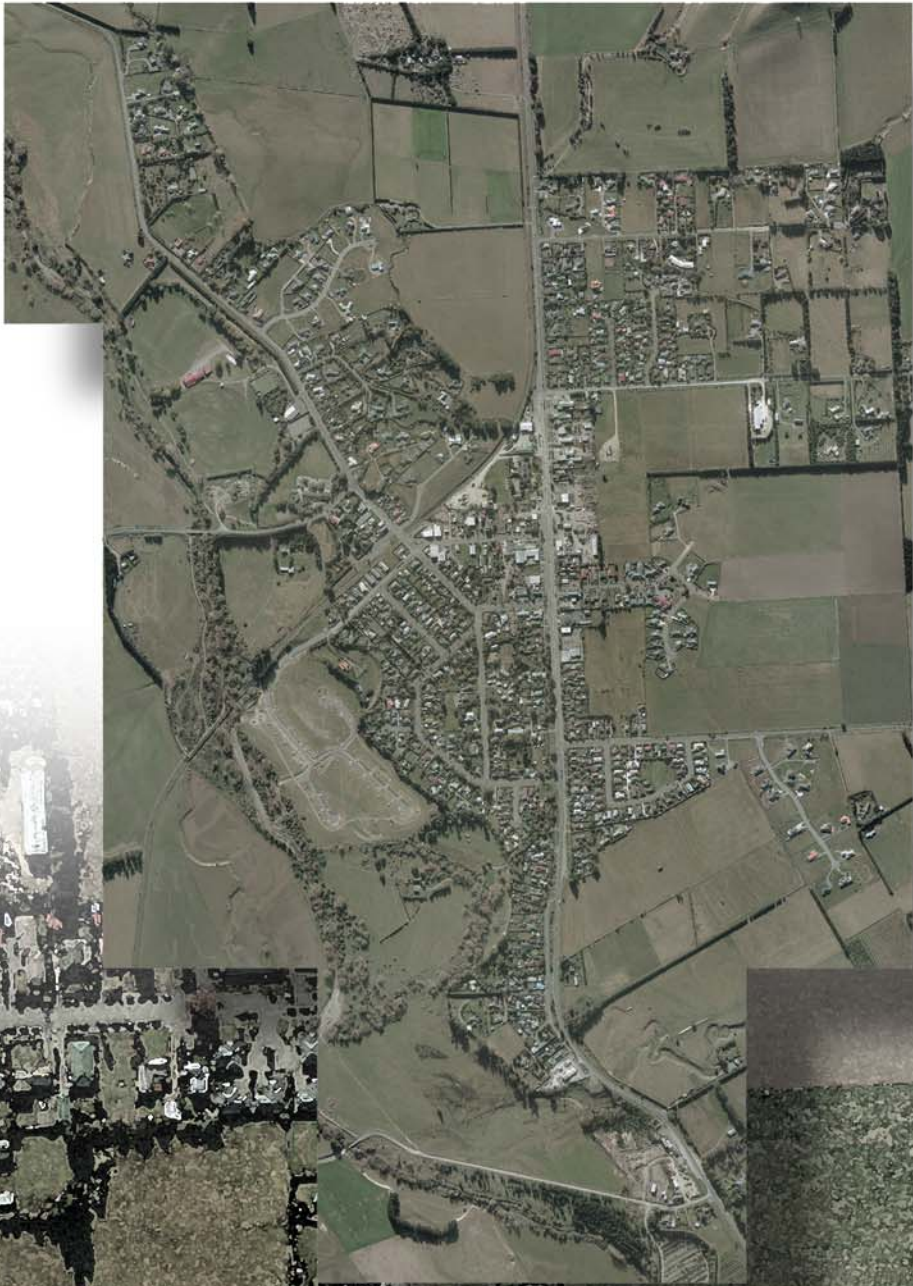
- Business focused in the main street (Carters Road), which also is State Highway 1.
- Commercial properties such as hotels and shops have been built up to the street frontage, and are 'urban' in character.
- Remnants of late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> Century commercial buildings remain near the railway in Markham Street and Douglas Road.
- Amberley possesses a prominent 'rural service' component to its commerce, and also a significant main road 'stop off' component.

### Residential Areas

- Housing areas are 'suburban' in character, that is, with a set back from the street and surrounded by yards and gardens on all sides.
- There thus is a distinction between the commercial character of the town centre (buildings up to the footpath) and suburban character of the residential areas (buildings in gardens). This is typical of towns and cities throughout New Zealand.







### Main Road

- Amberley's distinctive 'main road' character arises from the unusually wide street reserve and the number of passing motorists, truckers and tourists whose experience of the town is solely from this strip.
- The scale of noise and speed, the continuous numbers and large size of passing vehicles differs from the scale of the town generally.
- The trees between Bank Street and the Police Station have a huge positive impact on the travelers image of Amberley.
- The traffic impacts of State Highway 1 on Amberley are a fact of life. They will not go away or be diverted elsewhere. Planning for the future needs to capitalize on positive aspects of the traffic while minimizing the negatives.
- Therefore while in some respects dividing the town, this study will concentrate on two ideas regarding the main street:
  - a) making Amberley attractive for travelers, who therefore may be more disposed to stop or to return; and
  - b) improving the street and its margins as a commercial and social centre for residents.

### Trees and Small Town Atmosphere

- Despite recent growth, parts of Amberley continue to possess the attractive atmosphere of a small country town.
- A treed skyline is common, due to the low site coverage, small house sizes and frequency of garden trees.
- There is a spaciousness, a low impact from fencing, a predominance of grass, a frequency of trees, a simplicity of streets and street engineering (kerbing, footpaths, traffic arrangements, paved areas) and, beyond the main road, a free, unhurried atmosphere. The opposite to these attributes, where buildings and street engineering come to dominate the surroundings, is a characteristic of New Zealand's cities.
- The 'rural small town' atmosphere is a central part of the New Zealand identity, and a point of difference of Amberley from urban New Zealand. It thus should be a central concept in planning for the future development of Amberley.



## Natural Setting

- Natural attributes of the land under and around Amberley enliven the existing town and offer possibilities for structuring the future town and maintaining natural character as the town develops further.
- The Kowai River forms a natural barrier to town in west, whereas the flat 'plains' landscape offers no natural barriers eastwards.
- The Dock Creek system enlivens the west and south west of the town and has encouraged tree growth. Waterways, existing and proposed, offer a prime opportunity for structuring the future town layout.
- Summer shade, winter sun-traps and wind shelter are essential for keeping Amberley a comfortable town. Areas for the necessary trees should be systematically planned into the expanding town.
- Mountain and hill views link Amberley to its district and should be systematically planned into the expanding town.
- Productivity of the surrounding rural Plains is the key 'reason for being' of Amberley, reflected in the rural and latterly wine servicing industries in Amberley;
- Such natural features have enriched the town character to date and should be consciously planned into the future town

## Railway

- Although in continuous decline over the recent decades, planning for the future of Amberley should not 'build out' options for future rail access, in the event that the road/rail balance may again change in the future. This refers to possibilities for both goods and passenger transport.

## General

- This study identifies positive and negative aspects in the current character of Amberley, and indicates forms of development which would improve town atmosphere in the future.
- A 'small town' atmosphere is suggested, which is of course a function of size. The premise is that Amberley's expansion will be incremental not wholesale, and that there is a possibility of continuing a degree of small town character through systematic application of chosen policies.
- The premise also is that the Council, by establishing conditions and 'outline plans', can create the framework within which private and public land development will in tandem bring about the desired character.



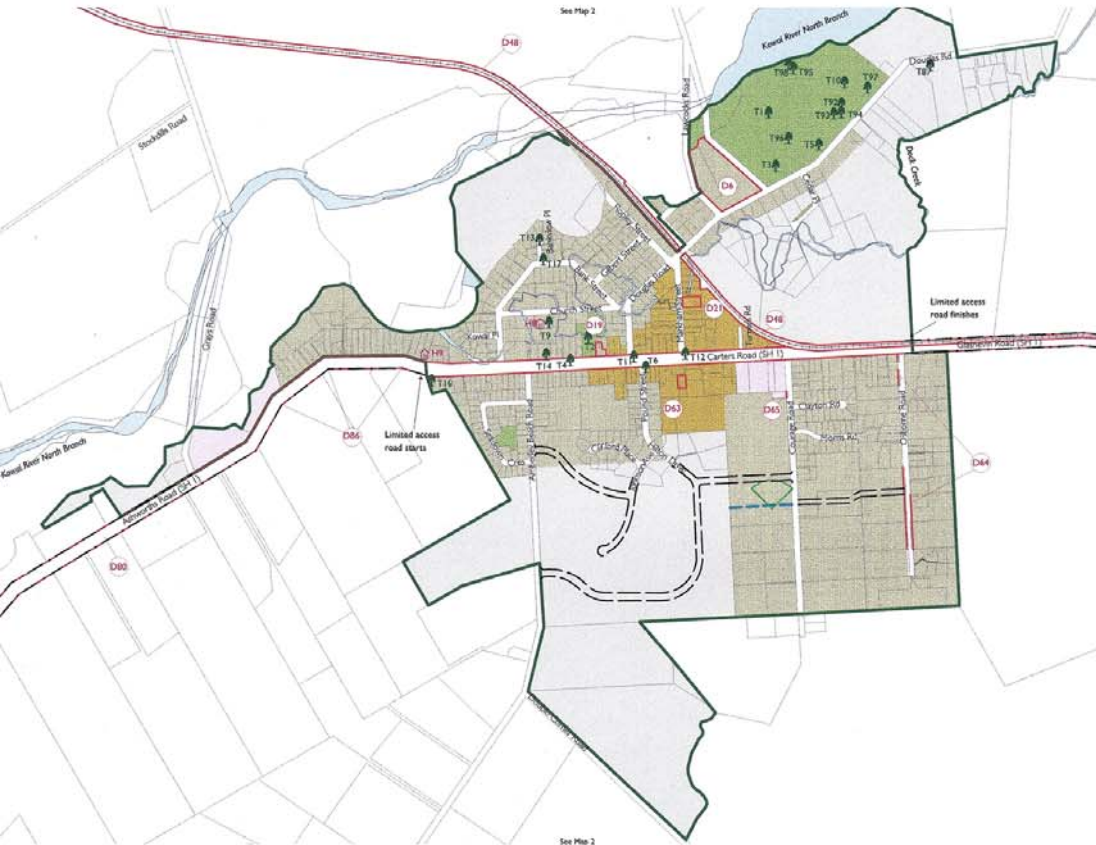
### 3. EXISTING PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT

#### District Plan

- The Hurunui District Operative Plan shows the Council's current official growth provisions for Amberley over the next 10 years.
- This provides for residential expansion to a minimum average lot size of 350m<sup>2</sup>, particularly in the north west (Courage/Osborne Roads), and for rural lifestyle expansion to a minimum average lot size of 2,500m<sup>2</sup> in the east, north west and far south.
- It also provides for business development in the Carters Road/Markham Street areas, and for a small industrial area southeast of the Courage/Carters Road intersection.
- No provisions are shown for expansion of town amenity, such as a green belt or open space system.



# Amberley Zoning



## Urban Management Areas

- Urban Boundary
- Industrial
- Open Space
- Residential
- Rural Lifestyle
- Business
- Ashley Forest Village Comprehensive Development Zone
- Public Works
- Urban Amenity Strip

## Scheduled Sites

- Designated Site
- Notable Tree
- Heritage Feature
- Archaeological Site
- Significant/ Potentially Significant Natural Area
- Coastal Environment Management Area



## Fault Lines

- Definite Active Fault Trace
- Definite Fault Trace
- Possible Minor or Propagating Fault Trace

## Road and Rail

- Limited Access Road
- Indicative Road
- Railway

## Other

- Coastal Hazard
- Seawater Inundation Line
- Subject to Flooding or Ponding
- River
- Building Line Restriction
- Walkway
- District Boundary

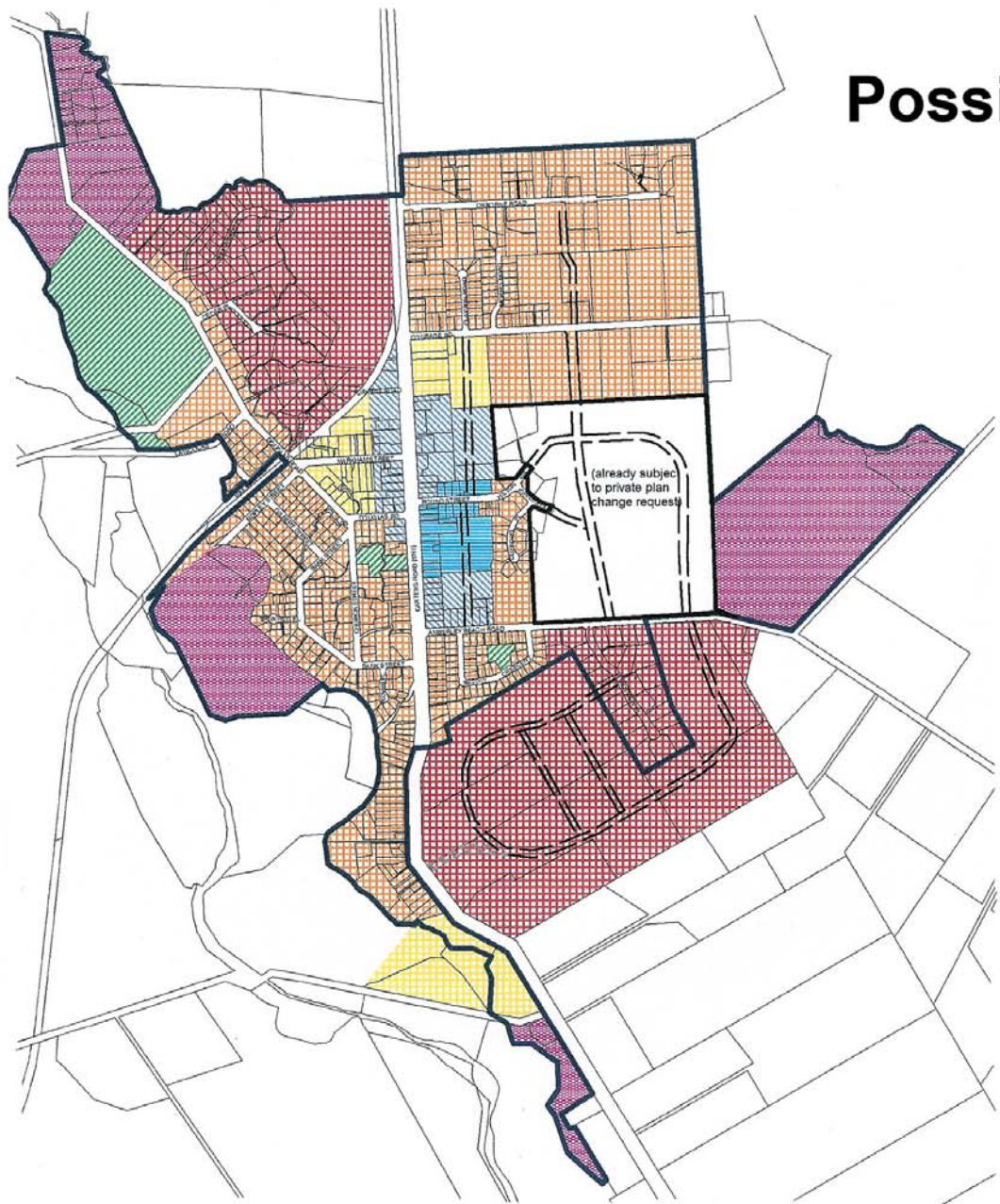


### Amberley Concept Development Plan

- This plan is not formal Council policy but is a community-based vision of growth that Amberley residents would like to see, prepared for the Amberley Ward Committee in 2005. It contains the following features:
  - Residents want to see Amberley as a 'rural village' with a 'sense of place' based on surrounding rural farmlands and vineyards, and an identifiable 'theme';
  - Recent population growth, particularly in the elderly age group, and lowest in the 15-34 age group;
  - 'Managed growth' and a compact town are favoured, based on 'out of the rat race' choices;
  - Different housing types for elderly, families and singles;
  - The 'problem' of the State Highway, but also its asset value to business;
  - The lack of a defined town centre or main street 'life';
  - Markham Street worthy of enhancement;
  - Lack of town 'entrances'
  - Business expansion expected;
  - Parks, greenways, waterways and environmental quality
- The attached plan 'Possible Rezoning for Consultation' was developed in 2006, based on the above.
- Compared to the District Plan it shows the Business Zone extended south to Amberley Beach Road, and new Business Zone south of Pound Street, extensive new residential areas south of Amberley Beach Road and in the north west, and industrial expansion in the Markham Street/Douglas Road area and south of the town.
- These plans are taken as the context in which this landscape-based Town Concept has been prepared.



# Possible Rezoning for Consultation



- Rural Residential Zone
- Industrial
- Business Zone
- Residential
- New Residential
- Open Space
- Urban boundary
- New Business Zone (excludes residential and industrial)
- Indicative Roading
- Possible Future Road

## 4. RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

### REGULAR HOUSING AREAS

#### Section Size

- Early residential sections were 'quarter acre' sized (1,000m<sup>2</sup> approx), but in the 1950's-70's sizes decreased to 1/5 acre (700m<sup>2</sup> approx);
- It is **recommended** that a section size of between 700m<sup>2</sup> & 800m<sup>2</sup> be reinstated as the standard for family housing in Amberley. This will enable a gardened, tree-clad 'small town' atmosphere to be maintained for the future, while allowing a compact town to be retained. There is anecdotal evidence that sizes above 800m<sup>2</sup> are shunned by average families, being too expansive.

#### Houses

- There is a sizeable proportion of 1950's-70's state and private houses, with a few early villas and cottages remaining;
- Houses, old and recent, are all single- or two-storied, but recent houses generally are larger than previously;





## Gardens

- Houses, old and recent, are almost all set back from the street and surrounded by their own garden;
- Until the 1980's garages tended to be at the side or rear of houses, with a garden in the front. In recent housing garages are commonly on the street side, usually attached to the house, and the front yard is more a vehicle courtyard than a garden
- Trees grow in both the private gardens and the streets and provide wind shelter, shade and a liveable microclimate for day-to-day life, and a visual backdrop for the skyline of roofs and poles.
- Front fences in the older town are generally low or absent, even fronting SH1. Garden plantings thus merge visually with the street, creating an atmosphere of spaciousness over and above that of the individual street or property, in older areas. In newer areas, front fences are more likely to be tall and of solid masonry or palings, which separates houses from streets, visually.
- It is **recommended** that rules be introduced to control fencing on street frontages



## Trees

- Pre-1970's residential areas are mostly well-treed, predominantly with exotic species. Because of the trees, large numbers of houses are generally not visible from any one place, in the residential areas. The street scene comprises perhaps 5 to 10 houses set within the surrounding treed skyline, and the potential 'vastness' of a residential area is broken down to human-size. This 'humanising' attribute should be maintained in the future expansion of Amberley's residential areas.
- Except in areas of small-sized sections the 'treeless' appearance of recent housing areas is more a function of newness than of the amounts of tree and garden plantings. Probably new areas where average and larger sections occur will become quite 'treed' in 10 – 20 years. Areas of smaller sections, e.g. 400m<sup>2</sup>, will have to rely on public plantings in streets and parks for a treed character.
- It is **recommended** that the Council adopt a policy of requiring private sections to be large enough to allow for tree plantings throughout the bulk of Amberley – i.e about 700m<sup>2</sup>.



## Street Layout

- Pre-War areas consist generally of a street 'network', with few cul-de-sacs, whereas post-war housing areas tend towards cul-de-sac road layouts; Cul-de-sacs seek to create quiet living environments unbothered by passing traffic, but also are 'bypassed' areas, removed from the life of the wider town.
- Recent 'named' subdivisions extend the cul-de-sac concept by actively seeking to create 'unique places' that by implication exclude the wider town.
- Too-extensive a frequency of such closed-off layouts will stifle the circulation and sociability of a town
- It therefore is **recommended** that the Council should seek a future town layout based on a network layout of streets as far as possible.

## Re-subdivision

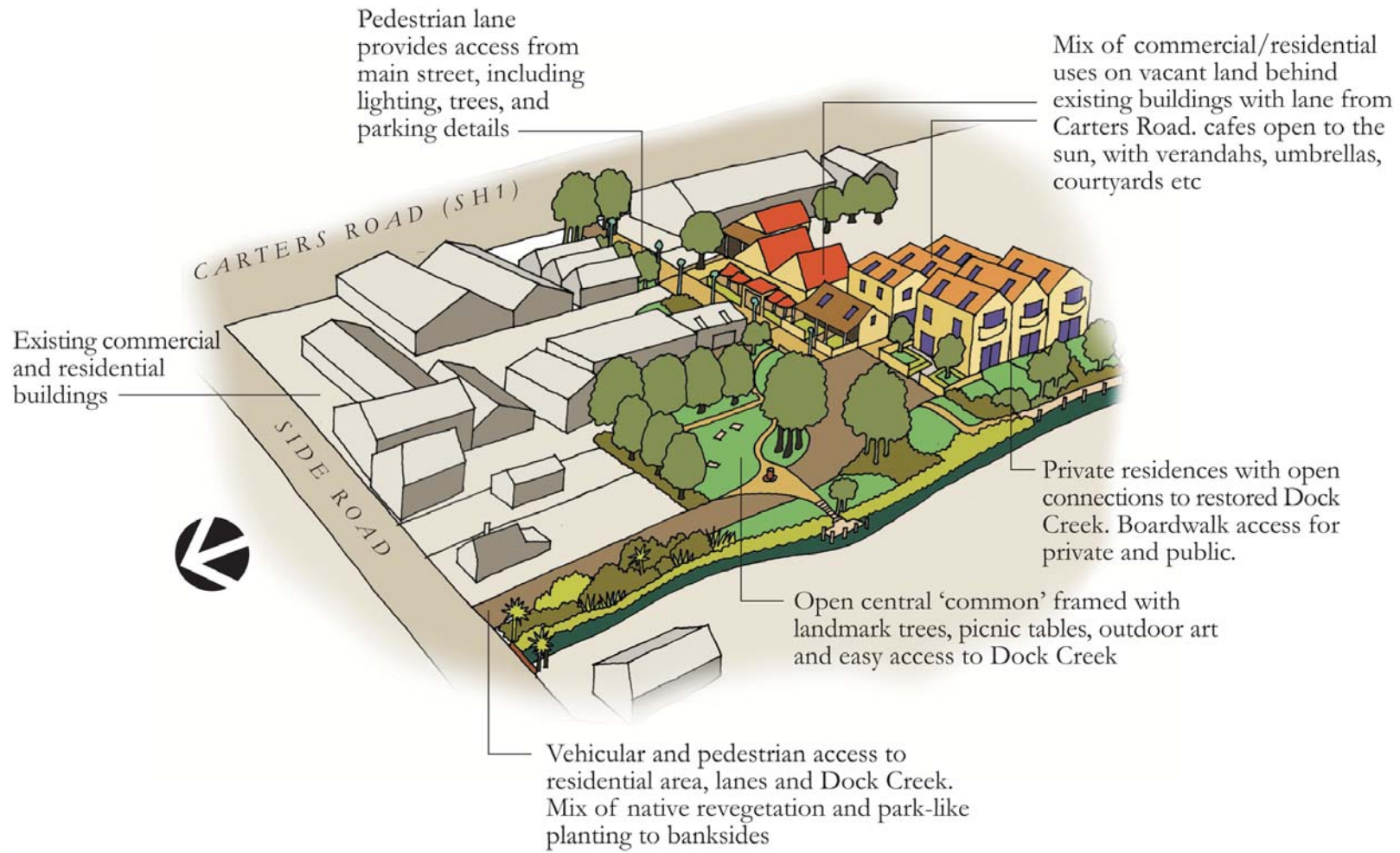
- Current District Plan rules have decreased the permitted minimum residential lot size to 300m<sup>2</sup> which is beginning to result in infill housing and cross-lease type re-developments, for instance in Ropley Street. This style of development will change the small town character of Amberley if it continues.
- It is **recommended** that the minimum lot size for general Residential areas should be raised to 700m<sup>2</sup>, to avoid re-subdivision and to maintain a traditional spacious, predominantly single-dwelling residential character as the norm for Amberley.

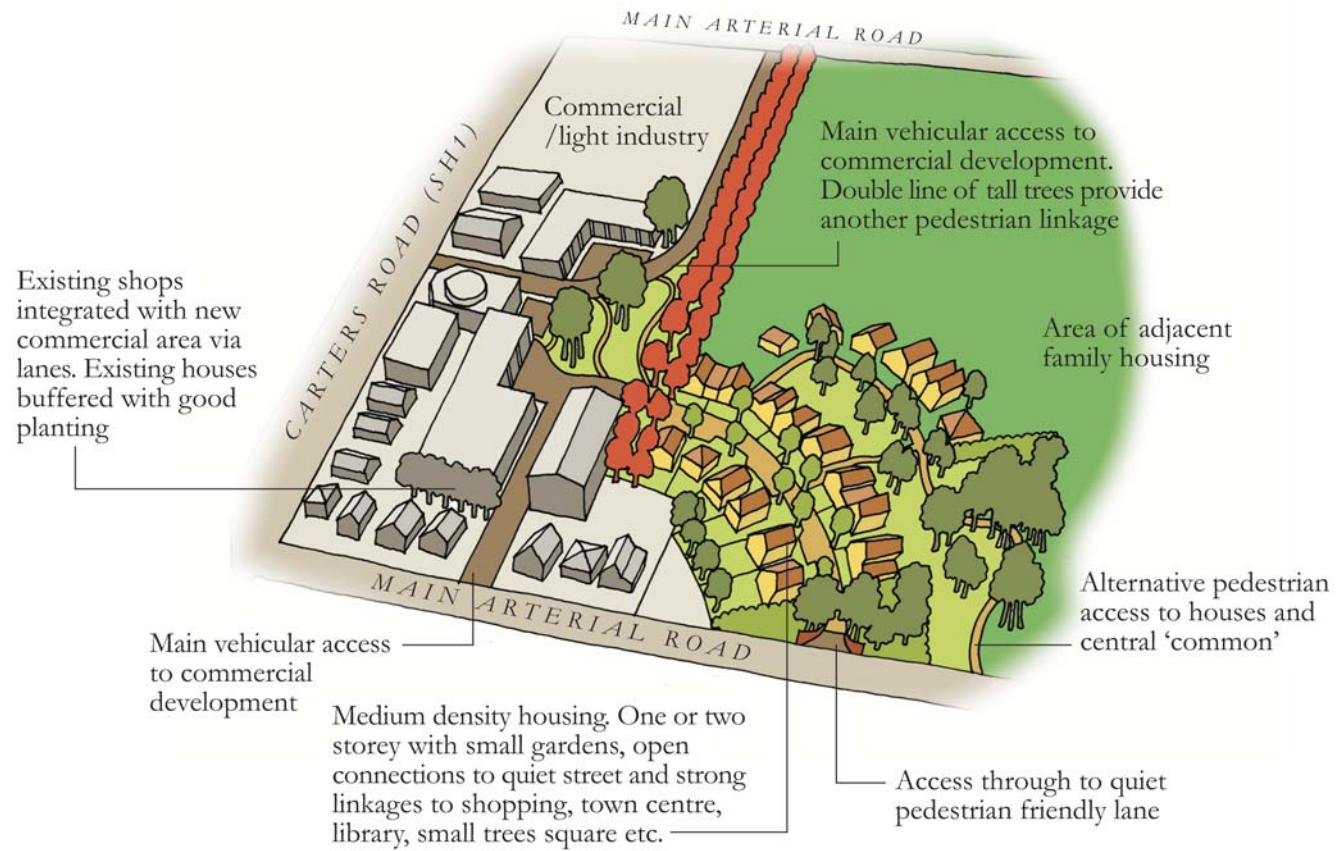


## INNER AREA HOUSING

- Council studies suggests a market exists for non-family ‘couples’, retirement and rental units in Amberley. It therefore is suggested that areas of more compact non-family housing types be built into Amberley. Such housing would be at higher densities, with smaller sections, side yards and higher site coverage than the regular housing areas. Areas of such housing would be of different character to the traditional suburban housing of Amberley, and also may differ between the market segments identified above.
- The existing minimum section size of 300 – 400m<sup>2</sup> may be appropriate for such areas, although the intention being to achieve a tighter built form, this also could be achieved by comprehensive development of larger sections.
- Any areas of denser built form should be located near the main street commercial areas. For instance, retirement housing with good foot access to shops and community areas would enable the elderly to continue participating in normal life beyond their motoring years.
- It is envisaged that any such housing type would form only a small proportion of the total housing in Amberley, say 10 – 15%, and would be grouped in 3 or 4 areas connected to the town centre.
- Buildings in this inner housing area should aim to retain the 2-storied profiles of the Amberley central area;
- An area of ‘residential warehouses’ might be appropriate adjacent to the commercial area, allowing for artisan’s workshops and similar small enterprises with living above or adjacent.
- With such higher density housing, it will be necessary to achieve small town ‘leafiness’ on surrounding public land, not within each section. A comprehensive planning approach between developer and Council would thus be required, to ensure proper integration of house and streets designs, lanes, walkways and circulation, open space and tree plantings.







## 22 Residential Character

## ‘OUTER SUBURBS’ HOUSING

- The years since the 1970’s have seen a number of ‘rural-residential’ developments on the periphery of Amberley, particularly in the north-west, towards the Kowai River, and in the south-east along Amberley Beach Road.
- A distinction is made between 4 or 5 hectare developments, which retain significant rural character, and 2,000 – 5,000m<sup>2</sup> developments, which have little rural character and are essentially of spacious suburban character.
- In this study ‘rural residential’, refers to the larger 4 and 5 hectare rural-oriented developments, which are discussed in the following section. The smaller 2,000 – 5,000m<sup>2</sup> developments are regarded as spacious ‘outer suburban’ uses, and are discussed following.
- Areas of 2,000 – 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> developments are likened to Fendalton in Christchurch, which developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century in typically 1 acre (4,000m<sup>2</sup>) sections. This later matured into the spacious, extensively-treed urban landscape traditionally associated with Fendalton.
- Areas of such housing would retain a leafy small town character for Amberley but should not be the norm as it would price regular families out of the town.



## RURAL-RESIDENTIAL AREAS

- 4 or 5 hectare rural-residential conversions lessen the open rural scale of the former farmlands as paddocks are cut up, shelter and amenity trees planted at closer intervals, houses, driveways and gardens built. Such areas are more visually-enclosed and of smaller scale than the rural farmed landscape and also differ in function, the production of food having given way to residential and lifestyle pursuits.
- Many rural features remain in rural-residential areas, such as cattle stops and mail boxes at entrances, rural wire fencing, an absence of kerbs, footpaths, street lighting, engineering services and parking lanes on the roads. Also the general treed outlook.
- Because natural elements continue to predominate, rural-residential areas are still regarded as ‘natural’ landscapes in RMA terms, on the continuum from pristine to highly developed. It is this which distinguishes them from ‘suburban’ landscapes within Amberley itself.
- The Council should ensure that the loss of productive rural land through rural-residential subdivision does not occur arbitrarily, or to such an extent that the rural context of Amberley is extinguished.





### Summary, Residential Areas

- Amberley's residential areas comprise the majority of the town and therefore contribute greatly to the town character.
- The 'small town, spacious' theme is suggested as a point of difference for Amberley's future housing.
- New **'regular' housing areas** should comprise sections of about 700m<sup>2</sup> to establish a garden environment for the future.
- New **'outer suburban' areas** should consist of 2,000-5,000m<sup>2</sup> sections that provide spacious living without unnecessarily taking up rural land
- New **'inner area' housing** should provide denser accommodation for various specialized groups adjacent to the business area, but must be coordinated with surrounding public land, and comprehensively designed, to ensure a small town feel is maintained.
- Besides rules on section size, a spacious small town theme can be encouraged by Plan rules limiting fencing, buildings and extensive paved areas on the street frontages of private lots. Also to promote suitable tree planting on private lots.
- To achieve consistent results in future expansion, the Council will need to have developed a comprehensive vision acceptable to the community, and to maintain firm rules in the District Plan.



## 5. THE CHARACTER OF RESIDENTIAL STREETS

- Amberley's streets are a key asset of the town's ambience. They are not just a means of getting from A to B and distributing services, but also provide the land whereby trees and grass can create a spacious setting for the housing. The more built up streets like Markham Street and Carters Road also provide an identity which makes the town memorable.
- This study proceeds with the assumption that street developments might be managed as an integral part of maintaining a small town character for Amberley.
- In cross-section the traditional residential streets of Amberley comprises asphalt roadway with side parking, gutters to collect runoff, paved footpaths and a strip of grass plus line of street trees on one or both sides. Services such as water supply, sewerage, telephone and power are either underground or on poles above. Street lighting is on poles.
- The difference between a harsh-feeling, sun-baked, rain-lashed street, and a shady, cool, gentle street is generally in the amounts and effects of its grass strip and any tree canopy which may have developed. However, the amounts and types of gutters, paving and other engineering structures, and the generousness or narrowness of the width also contributes to the street feel and character.
- The residential streets of Amberley mostly fall on the 'pleasant' side of half-way in character.
- Older streets are generally 20m. wide, leaving space for grass, and for trees whose canopies shade the public face of Amberley. The spacious, leafy feeling of the streets is increased by the views into private gardens, where they have low or open front fences.
- As befits a small town, the streets are simple and fairly uncluttered by vehicles, signs and 'street amenities' such as areas of shrub plantings and furniture. While such amenities have their place, overly fussy streets are more characteristic of an urban area than a small town.



- The aim for Amberley's streets should be for simplicity and spaciousness.
- Generally, the legal width should be no less than 15 metres, with more where possible, to ensure space for generous tree planting.
- In cross section, the paved width should be crowned but with as little formal kerbing as possible at the sides. Modern practice provides for side drainage in grassed swales, which feels much more 'country' than regular linear kerbing and footpaths. Grass can be laid on an engineered subsurface to withstand vehicle wear and tear.

### Network or Cul de Sac?

- The early street pattern of Amberley is a network of through streets while more recently has been a preference for no exit culs de sac. A cul de sac provides a quiet living environment, devoid of passing traffic, but too great a prevalence of culs de sac decreases the ability of a town to 'network'. Cul de sac are a convenient form of town expansion in that it is easier for developers to plan for a given block of land when they don't have to coordinate with neighbours. However districts built up from such discrete developments are frustrating to navigate.
- A basic premise of the current urban design trend called 'New Urbanism' is the avoidance of communities housed in no exit streets. This study urges the Council to plan for a road system of open grids, with any culs de sac being small and a small minority of the total housing.
- To achieve a coherent street pattern for the future, the Council will have to take a lead and define an 'outline roading plan' for the town, coordinated with those for open space, services and tree belts. Such a pattern is not likely to arise from the uncoordinated designs of successive development applications.



### Curved or geometric streets?

- Older residential parts of Amberley, such as the Church, Bank and Gilbert Street areas, have a 'geometric' pattern comprising sections of straight streets at differing angles, as dictated by the creeks and topography of the area. This is distinguished from the 'curvilinear' pattern of recent streets, where alignments are continuously curved, like spaghetti. An example of the latter is in the Bryndwr/Burnside area of Christchurch.
- A too-straight street tend to lack character and focus, whereas a series of continuously curving ones tend to be disorienting for users. This study suggests a generally 'geometric' approach to the future street pattern of Amberley, whereby different sectors of the town are aligned in organized patterns, but avoid continuous street curvature.

### Summary, Residential Streets

- Coordinating the environmental design of residential streets is a prime part of retaining a leafy, small town feel for the future;
- Streets should be wider than functionally necessary, to create space for the public environment of Amberley;
- Streets should have as much grass and tree canopy as possible, and as little visible engineering as possible;
- As far as functionally possible, streets should be simple and uncluttered, as befits a rural town;
- In general, the future street pattern of Amberley should consist of a 'geometric network', with cul-de-sacs being minor in number and short in length





## 6. CHARACTER OF THE COMMERCIAL AREAS

Amberley possess three distinct forms of commercial activity, and thus character:

- local supply and retail businesses;
- rural service and supply businesses;
- rural manufacturing businesses.



## LOCAL SUPPLY AND RETAIL BUSINESSES

- Many traditional premises are built up to the street, business often being carried on open to the street, if not actually spilling onto the footpath. This can be seen in the interesting doors and windows of Amberley's commercial buildings, which afford glimpses into the workshops and industriousness of the town.
- There is a feeling of connection between street and business through simple architecture, parapets, signs, verandahs, big shop windows, welcoming recessed doorways to shops and service building. The feeling of connection also is engendered by the abrupt, unadorned transitions from building façade to footpath, without fussy planting, 'amenity areas', paving detailing or parking areas.
- Spaces between buildings serve as parking, loading, working and storage areas, while vacant sections add to the feeling of a lack of urban pressures.
- The re-use of surviving older commercial buildings adds character to Amberley and maintains link to the older town, as in Markham Street. This should be encouraged including old buildings converted to new uses, such as that on the Ropely/Gilbert St corner.
- Recent commercial buildings are more varied in style. Some are set back from the frontage or turned sideways, presenting a blank face to the street. Others offer a traditional 'canopy and shop window' set up to the street, while set back 'malls' with parking in front, in the Los Angeles idiom, have been built on the Carters/Douglas Road corner and in the south.
- Local feedback in the Amberley Concept Development Plan emphasizes Amberley's 'main street environment conflict', between the scale of state highway traffic and local usage.



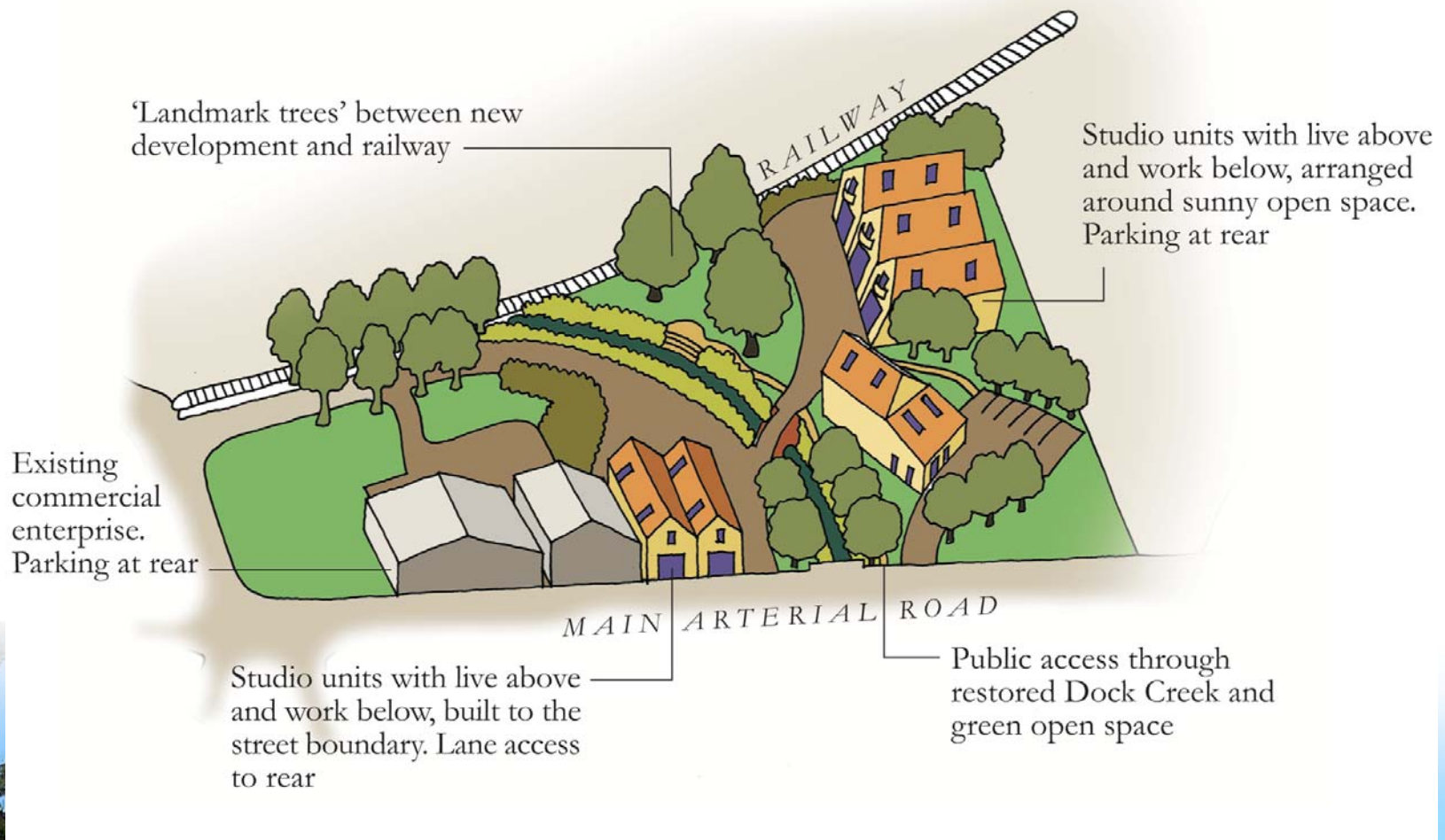
- Commercial businesses are the lifeblood of modern Amberley and the Council needs to find ways of humanising the street and unifying the diversity of developments without strangling business activities.
- Local retail commercial activities should be consolidated in a compact area between the 'fish&chip' building in the south and the public toilets in the north.
- New activities should not be established beyond these points on Carters Road.
- A unified feel should be maintained by aligning businesses up to the road frontage, with street parking or alleyways to parking at the rear or off side streets. As far as possible parking should not be between commercial frontages and the street.
- Commercial buildings should seek to maintain an open relationship with the street by presenting doors and windows to passers-by, not blank frontages.
- The Council should encourage the 'recolonisation' of Markham Street by businesses serving the local market. A small town feel can be maintained better here than the main street, which is suited to the larger scale of the passing traffic.
- The Council toilets are an important 'landmark' for highway users and should be maintained in an open, visible location.

### Main Street Avenue

- A programme of avenue-tree plantings for the main street is suggested, as a means of unifying the architectural diversity and maintaining a human feel for this big, busy space. However significant proportions of main street turnover originate from passing traffic, so visual openness to signage and buildings would need to be retained. An avenue tree programme is discussed in section 7 below. Increased numbers of 'tree refuges' would assist pedestrians in crossing the busy road.

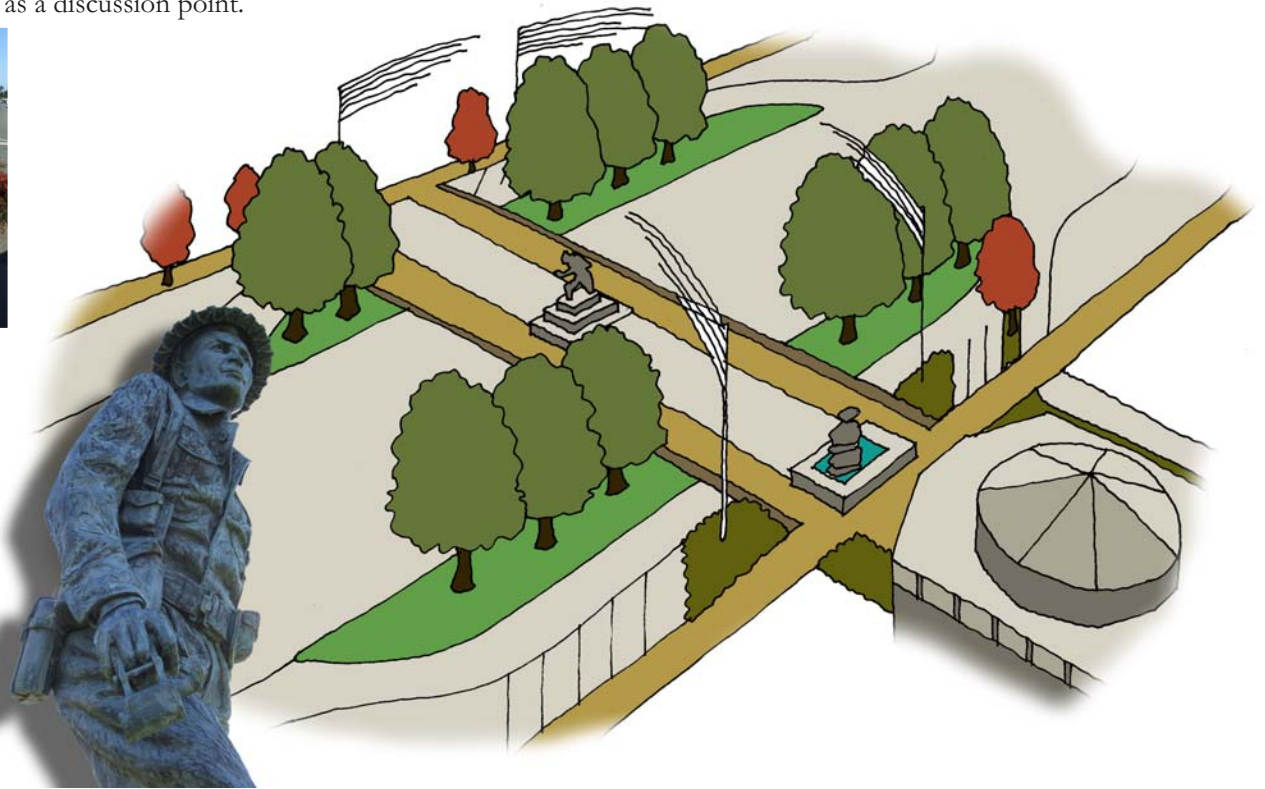






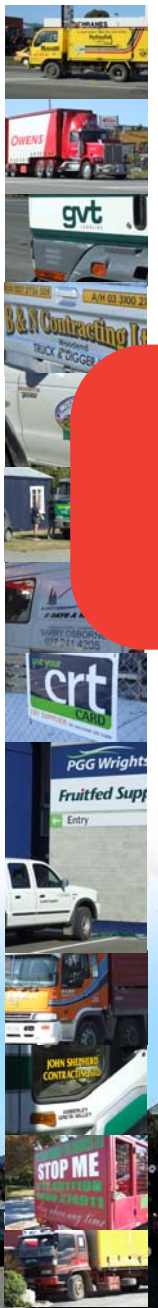
### Town Centre

- Feedback in the Amberley Concept Development Plan notes the lack of a ‘town centre’.
- Mainly, this lack is felt probably because of the uncoordinated street feel.
- Elements of a ‘centre’ exist at both the Library and Council buildings, but these are isolated and lacking in the scale necessary for a focus.
- A centre requires meaning to the populace, plus a dignified space big enough for town gatherings. In old towns it often was in front of the Town Hall or cathedral, but could also be a commercial space.
- Originally, the focus of Amberley would have been the Boer War memorial at the Markham Street/Douglas Road intersection, but this point no longer has its former functional importance for this role.
- A centre would not necessarily need to be on the main street, but it is difficult to see any other locations that fit the bill currently.
- Lack of a specific ‘centre’ would not be felt so much if the ‘avenue’ idea above marked the start and finish of Amberley’s ‘downtown’.
- Possibly the best area for a centre, were it to be pursued, would be at the Library, which is both central and has a civic role. In this location a feeling of ‘centre’ could be partly achieved by collecting and aligning the town monuments (e.g. Upham, Boer War, WWI & II) and coordinating design of the avenue trees, paving, flagpoles, lighting, side spaces and adjacent buildings at this point. However, it is rather too linear a space, and not ‘civic’ enough in scale, to properly fulfill this role.
- A sketch idea for the Library area is included as a discussion point.



## RURAL SERVICE & SUPPLY BUSINESSES

- These areas, largely at the north end of Carters Road, cater for trucking and farm supply activities. They also include the Ravensdown fertiliser works and various construction supply and rural machinery supply and servicing agencies.
- Currently there are very wide highway margins in the north of Carters Road (west side), where trucks pull off, sometimes 3 or 4 abreast, for servicing, fuelling or who knows what. While not 'scenic' in the 'English Landscape' tradition (trees, grass and greenery), these areas are always interesting and lively, and visibly represent a cornerstone of Amberley's rural service economy.
- Tractor, machinery and fuel sales add to the rural servicing character.
- It is desirable that such businesses remain in view and operate to a reasonable degree in a casual, rural manner, unfettered by fussy urban-oriented rules. Which is not to say safety and environmental standards should not be maintained as well.



## RURAL MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES

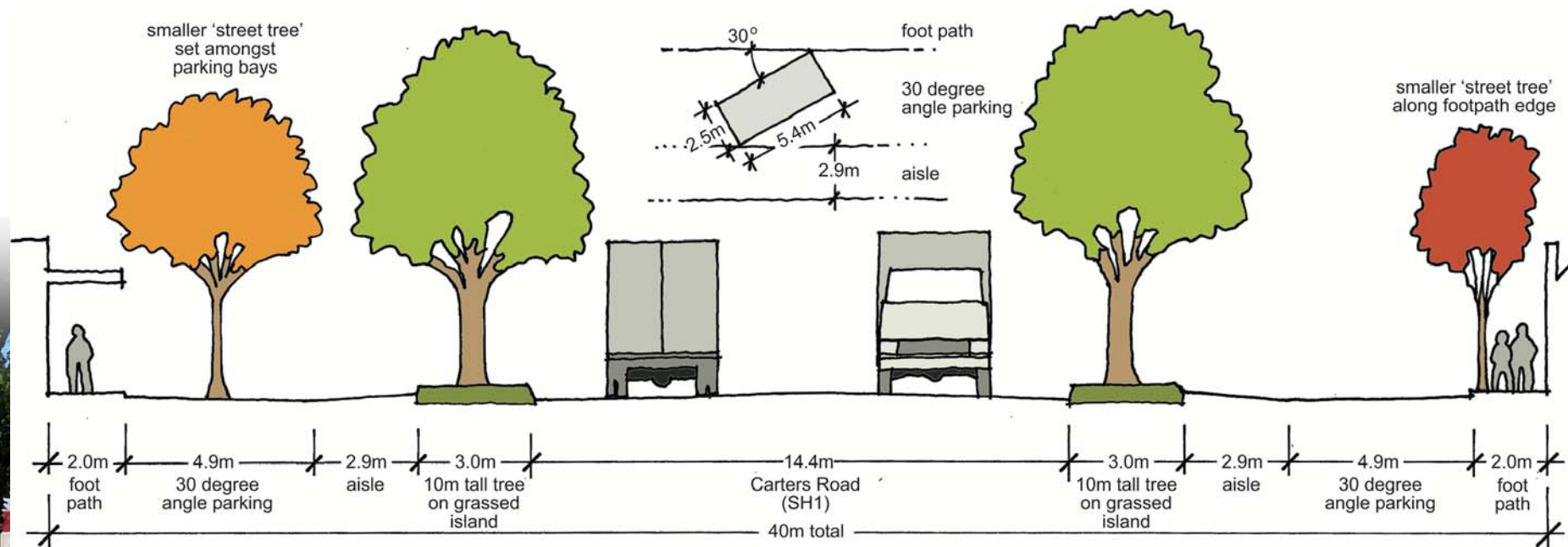
- Amberley contains areas of rural manufacturing businesses including concrete and timber products and supplies and a fertilizer works. These generally have extensive yards given over to storage, loading, unloading, and display, and sizeable, 'workmanlike' (i.e. not always pretty) buildings and signage. Roadside maneuvering and parking areas are often untidy and dusty or muddy.
- These areas have an industrial character which, in the wrong locations, can impact unfavourably on the town and highway character., but also are important to the lifeblood of Amberley. Growth thus should generally be encouraged.
- While high profile main road locations are obviously valued, it is desirable to avoid further ribbon effect at the south and north ends of town.
- It therefore is suggested that future manufacturing business be consolidated into an industrial area, probably in the north of the town near the rural servicing operations.
- The Amberley Concept Development Plan shows an expanded Industrial area south of Courage Road. This is supported as a suitable area, adjacent to existing premises. However the impacts on houses on the north side of Courage Road would need mitigating, and it is suggested a buffer strip of about 20 metres setback would be required.
- It is suggested that a roadside 'tidy up' be conducted adjacent to existing businesses at the south end, to regularize vehicle turn-ins and parking and improve outlook from the highway. This should include plantings of shade trees, but in ways that maintain views to existing businesses and signage, visual openness, and the rural character of this area. An overly engineered road margin is not envisaged.
- Maintaining the potential for railway access from manufacturing areas should be a priority.



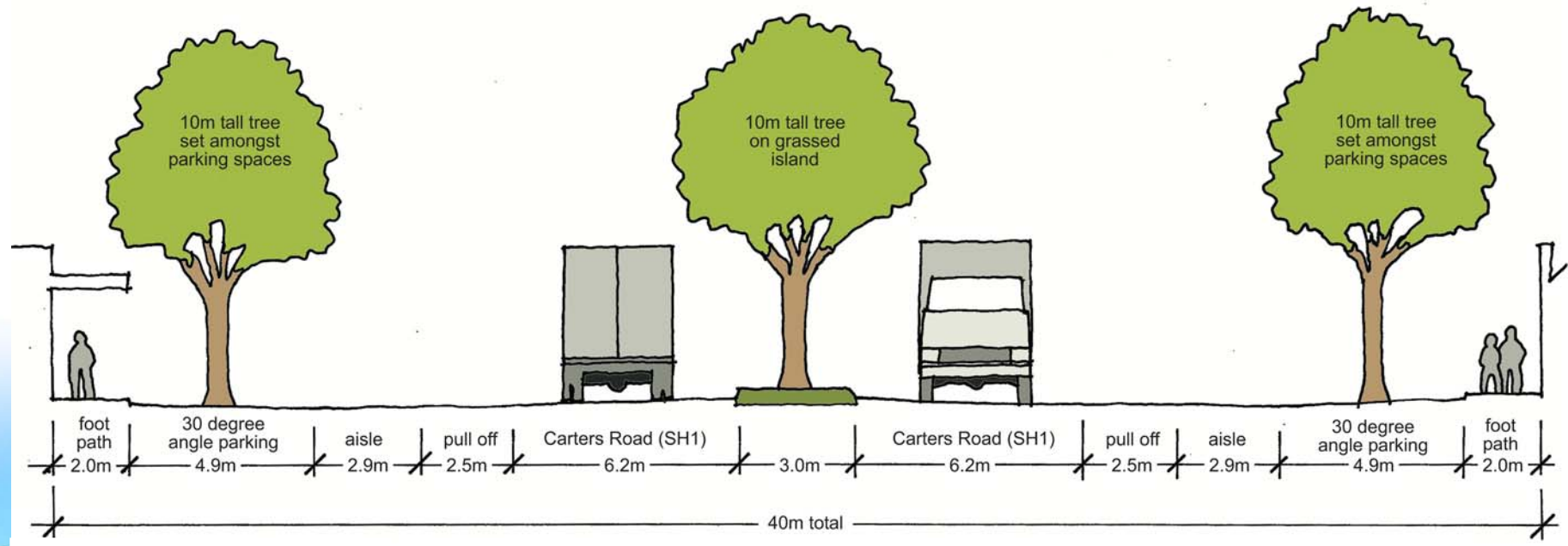
## 7. CHARACTER OF THE COMMERCIAL STREETS

### Main Street

- A 'jewel in Amberley's crown' is the width of its main street, which at 40m., is double the norm for old towns.
- While in some respects a barrier for locals, it also provides a spacious feel for the street and gives options for integrating highway and town demands, that would not exist on a normal street.
- In particular, the width offers space for the trees that will be essential for retaining human scale in the main street, remembering that Transit NZ requirements have to be provided for as well, on a state highway.
- It is suggested that the main street character be coordinated by establishment of a major tree avenue throughout the commercial area.
- It would need to be decided if such an avenue should be central on the road reserve, as in Oamaru, or peripheral, as in Ashburton.
- As well as creating a shady environment, the tree growth areas would provide pedestrian islands, for residents crossing the road.
- Car parking and maneuvering would occur between the trees.



- Tree should be of deciduous type, and should attain a large size in time, such as plane or maple. Lower branches should be 'limbed up' as the trees grow, so that eventually an open environment up to about 3 metres would exist under the branch canopy.
- On footpaths, a second line of smaller trees would reinforce the main trees, but at a size more compatible with nearby buildings. Trees such as flowering cherry could perhaps serve this role.
- The ground below should be as natural and 'unengineered' as possible.
- The atmosphere of footpaths and adjacent properties would be transformed once such an avenue were grown.
- It is reiterated that Transit NZ would need to be party to any such proposal.
- It is noted that significant numbers of heavy trucks trail through the main street, and that a sense of separation from these would benefit footpath life markedly.
- It is recommended that the Council should plan for and implement an avenue tree scheme for the commercial area of Carters Road.



## South End

- Just south of the commercial part of Carters Road, from the park south to Bank Street, a generous belt of grass and trees provides a substantial contribution to the town's rural feel. Some carry tree protection discs. Individually the trees are nothing special, but collectively, Amberley would be a much less memorable town without them.
- This area of roadside trees should be sacrosanct in future developments.
- From Bank Street south the road reserve width continues, but the trees are either small or newly planted. Highways 2000 plantings occurred in this area. The few large trees currently existing are on private land.
- There also are attractive rural views east from the state highway for traffic entering town from the south.
- The experience of urban, treed space should have a definite starting point for traffic entering Amberley from the south. This should be a 'gateway' of stately, large trees, and avenue plantings should extend to this gateway

## It is recommended:

- that the area of large trees south of the Police Station should be carefully maintained and extended by the Council, in association with Transit; and
- that the Council actively manage and promote avenue tree planting on the highway margins at the south end of town; and
- that the Council plant landmark trees flanking the highway, to act as a gateway for traffic entering the town from the south; and
- that to maintain a rural feel, housing development be kept back 20 – 40 metres from the highway east side, the area to be a landmark tree area in the future; and that in all areas, drainage as far as possible be by grassed swales, and that kerbing be minimized.



### North End

- Sizeable trees do not exist at the northern end of town, where the town entry has far less character than in the south. Nor does much space exist to plant them. There are a few trees, particularly bordering the railway, but small in size and number.
- There are however attractive open views to the hills to the west and the Amberley Hills immediately to the east.
- This area also includes the rural servicing areas previously referred to.
- For motorists, this area has a dual character: Northbound it is the entry to the Waipara wine country. Southbound it is arrival at the first town of the Christchurch periphery, after the long rural drive from Picton and Nelson.

### It is recommended:

- that the Council undertake a programme to increase the amounts and size of roadside plantings at the north end; and
- that the Council should establish a group of landmark trees flanking the north entry into Amberley at about the 70kph sign, to act as a northern gateway to the town.





## Markham Street

- Markham Street retains a heritage character from both the older buildings and the simple street form. The Amberley Concept Development Plan indicates this character is valued by Amberley residents
- It is suggested elsewhere that retail commercial businesses serving the local market, eg cafes, should be reestablished in the east half of Markham Street, away from main street traffic. This could encourage a small town commercial character for local life.
- If this were implemented, it is suggested that an avenue of trees, perhaps plane trees, be planted in the parking lanes of Markham Street, and that the footpaths be widened into this area.
- It is **recommended** that the Council investigate the creating of a small town, locally-oriented retail enclave in eastern Markham Street.

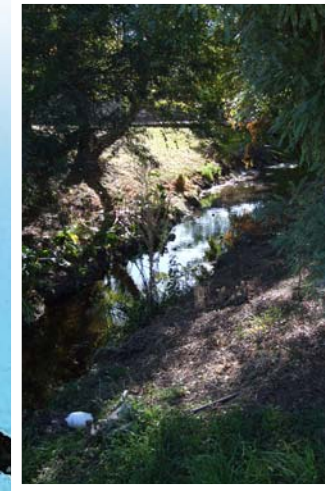


## 8. NATURAL CHARACTER IN AMBERLEY

- Amberley is bounded by the Kowai River and enlivened within the town by the system of streams focused on Dock Creek. The river acts as a natural margin for town expansion, while Dock Creek provides topography and a waterway within the town.
- Other natural features with possibilities for increasing the character of Amberley are the climate, winds, sun, temperature and the views to surrounding hills and mountains. Amberley has cold winter winds, a cool sea breeze, and the distinctive buffeting nor'wester, the latter celebrated by the widely-known café of the same name. It also suffers from summer heat at times.

### Tree Microclimate

- A comfortable response is to ensure life is carried on within a microclimate of trees, which screen out cold winds, create sunny areas at ground level, or in the heat of summer, create welcome shade. To do this, areas for tree planting should consistently be provided for in town expansion approvals.



### Mountain and Hill Views

- Views within Amberley commonly focus on Mount Grey to the west or the low hills north of the town. From the north of town there also are long views towards distant mountains, possibly the Puketeraki Range. Mount Grey is in many ways the 'guardian' of Amberley.
- It is suggested that in future expansion, open space and road alignments should be towards Mount Grey or the Amberley Hills to the north, thus retaining periodic views of the surrounding hills from within the town.

### Housing Areas Broken into Neighbourhoods

- To maintain a feeling of naturalness, it is suggested that in future expansions, Amberley's residential pattern is broken up between belts of town belt and parklands. In this way a pattern of significant, continuous natural areas can be built in to the future town fabric. These can incorporate necessary parks and reserves as well as road margins and land required for environmental services, such as soakage, runoff and flood holding areas.



### Town Boundaries

- In the absence of significant natural boundaries, particularly in the east of the town, these, if coordinated by an open space structure plan, could provide the basis for a significant open space/natural character system in an expanded Amberley.
- It is suggested that Town Belt trees similar to those around Hagley Park in Christchurch be established at the margins of the planned urban area, particularly where natural boundaries do not exist in the east. These would maintain an orderly boundary between town and country.

### Park Boundaries Open to Roads

- It is suggested that a proportion of roads should border the future open spaces, parks and belts, thus retaining an open, natural feel for Amberley. Parks should not be hidden away behind houses that turn their backs on them.

### Landmark Trees

- The Council should actively set aside spaces of sufficient size to accommodate large landmark trees that will be a legacy to future generations.
- Landmark trees should not be in positions where they will shade private land or endanger day-to-day activities, for instance during winds and storms.
- Typical species for landmark trees could included, but not necessarily be limited to Wellingtonia, Lebanon Cedar, Japanese Cedar, Douglas Fir, European Beech, Ash, Oak, Eucalyptus, Acacia, Kauri, Totara, Kahikatea, Matai, NZ Beech.
- The essential feature of such trees is that in time they become very large, and add impressive forms, features and textures, thus contrasting in scale with, and enlivening, the regularity of life in towns.



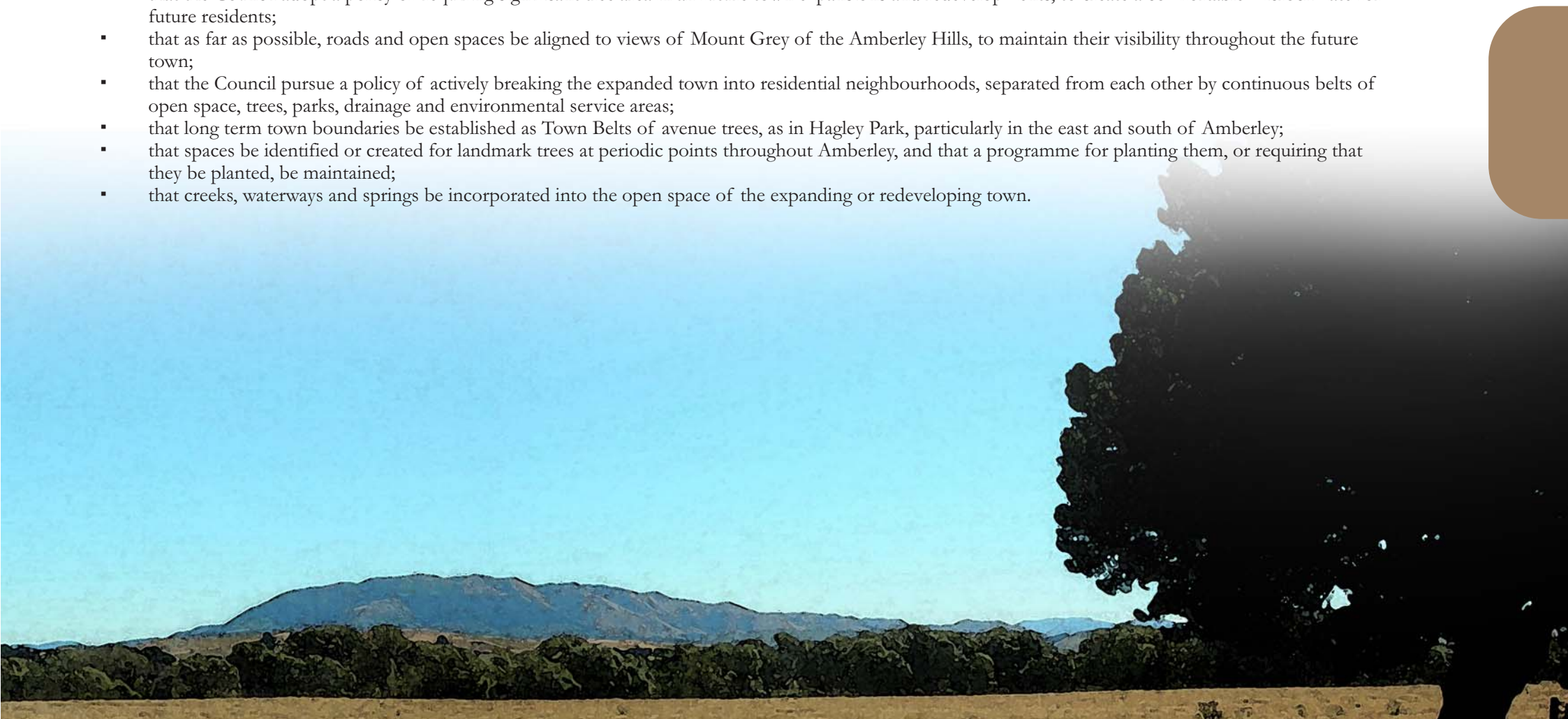
### Creeks, Springs and Waterways

- Wherever they may occur or be engineered, there should be a policy of opening up waterways, creeks or springs and incorporating them in spacious open spaces, as central items of natural character in the future town.

### Summary, Natural Character

It is recommended:

- that the Council adopt a policy of requiring significant tree area in all future town expansions and redevelopments, to create a comfortable microclimate for future residents;
- that as far as possible, roads and open spaces be aligned to views of Mount Grey of the Amberley Hills, to maintain their visibility throughout the future town;
- that the Council pursue a policy of actively breaking the expanded town into residential neighbourhoods, separated from each other by continuous belts of open space, trees, parks, drainage and environmental service areas;
- that long term town boundaries be established as Town Belts of avenue trees, as in Hagley Park, particularly in the east and south of Amberley;
- that spaces be identified or created for landmark trees at periodic points throughout Amberley, and that a programme for planting them, or requiring that they be planted, be maintained;
- that creeks, waterways and springs be incorporated into the open space of the expanding or redeveloping town.



## 9. TOWN EXPANSION

- For the foreseeable future, Amberley's growth should be to the east and west, not north and south, to maintain a compact town and avoid becoming too linear along the state highway.

### West

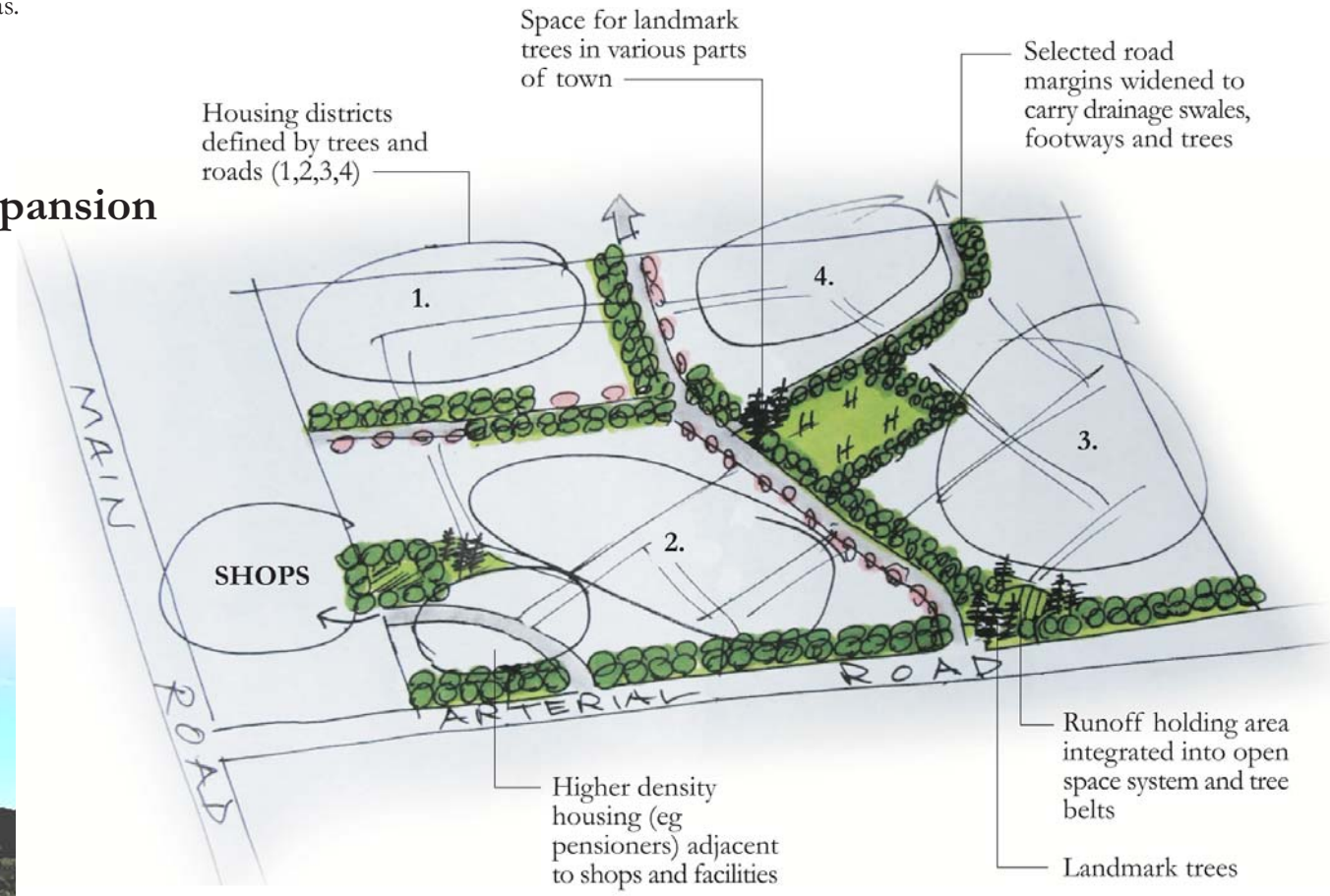
- Growth westwards is constrained by the floodplain of the Kowai River, but it would seem reasonable that the existing rural-lifestyle area in the north west, along Douglas Road, should 'fill out' as provided for in both the District Plan and Amberley 'Rezoning for Consultation' plan.
- At some point this area may establish its own satellite services, perhaps a shop, but in the interests of maintaining a compact town, rural-lifestyle development should not for the foreseeable future extend along Douglas Road further than currently zoned.
- Parts of the Rural-Lifestyle area nearest the railway would be well suited to industrial usage, and if this should occur, a buffer area would be required between residential and industrial land uses.



## East

- This appears to be the most extensive available area for town expansion in the foreseeable future, although it has the disadvantage for family housing of being on the opposite side of town from the school.
- Extensive areas in the east are shown for residential expansion in both the District and 'Consultation' Plans. The amounts seem large compared to the size of the existing town and some care will be required in coordinating orderly expansion within the wider area available.
- The District Plan shows much of this to be as Rural Lifestyle expansion, but in keeping with the aim for a majority of sections to be 7-800m<sup>2</sup>, it is suggested that the smaller 'regular' suburban size would be more appropriate in much of this area.
- On the theme of integrated development, espoused earlier in this Study, a sketch is attached showing a hypothetical development approach to this land. The theme is integration of the various private and public requirements, so open areas are aligned and contribute to outlook from private residences, as well as to town form. When coordinated, the various components, such as a runoff holding pond, can do 'double duty' by also adding to the town form and to natural character of the private housing areas.

## Concept for Integrated Town Expansion

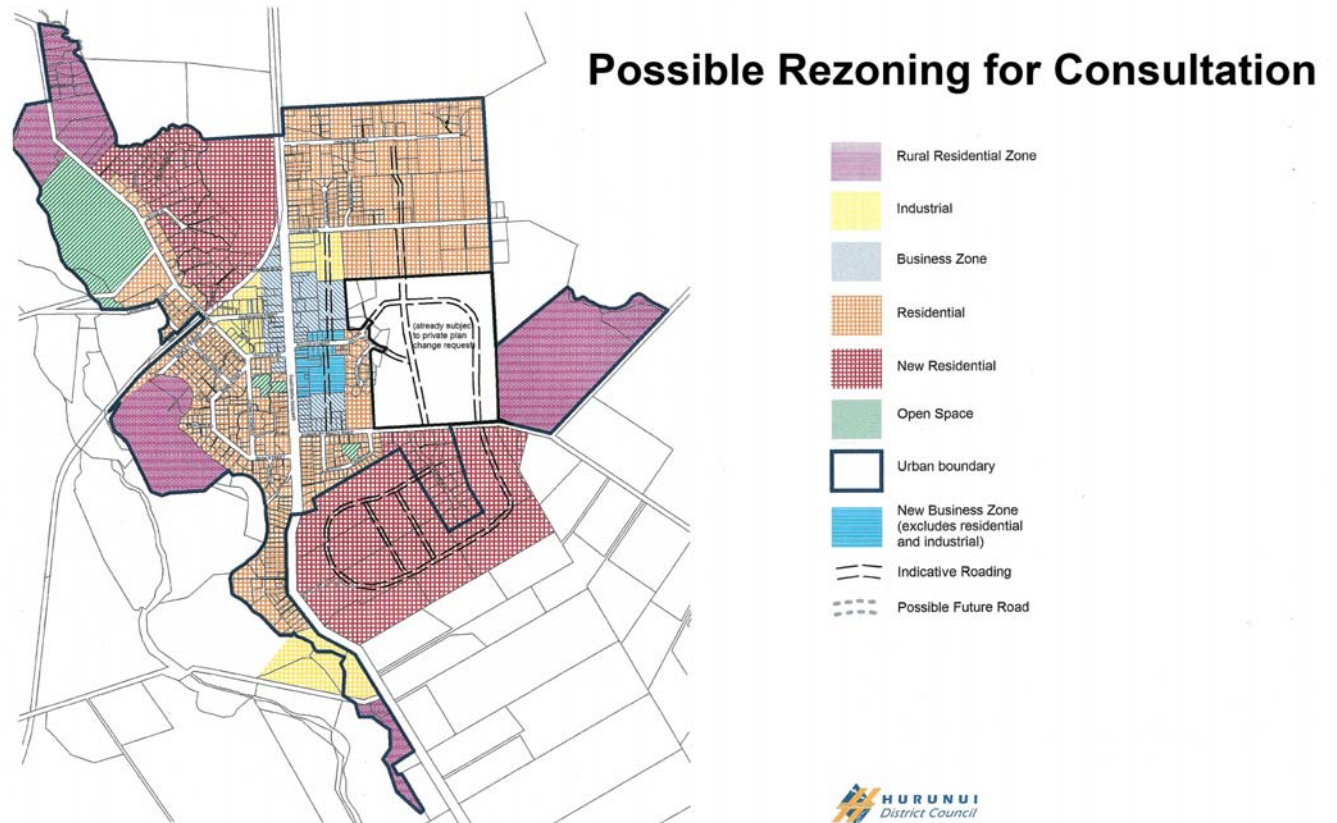


### North East

- The District Plan provides for a large area of residential expansion in the north east, around Courage and Osborne Roads. There is no landscape reason to not develop this land, but care should be taken to integrate the layouts with the existing town, especially with future residential areas south of Courage Road. Otherwise it would be easy for this area to become 'cul-de-sac-ville'.
- A buffer area should be maintained between this housing and any expanded industrial area south of Courage Road.

### South East

- The 'Consultation Plan' suggests an additional area be rezoned for housing in the south east, south of Amberley Beach Road, over and above that in the District Plan. There is no landscape reason not to so develop the land, but the total amounts of this land plus that north of Amberley Beach Road, plus that in the Courage-Osborne Road area, is surely beyond the immediate growth needs of Amberley?
- The rate of supply of new land is beyond the interests of this character study, but in the interests of orderly growth of the town edge, which is a character issue, it would seem that the Council will have to establish some prioritization within these possible areas.
- When the south east area is to be developed, it is suggested an area adjacent to the State Highway 1 be retained as open space. This is in the interests of maintaining an open character to the town's southern approach, as opposed to the series of back fences that will otherwise arise. It is suggested that the open space/built boundary should run in a straight line from corner A to corner B marked on the plan on this page.





### Far East

- The District Plan shows a distant ‘wing’ of rural-lifestyle development on Double Corner Road, in the ‘far east’ of Amberley.
- When this land is developed, careful attention should be paid to its integration with the future residential areas to the west, towards Amberley, and to hypothetical future expansions of the Courage/Osborne Road areas to the northwest.
- In the interests of a properly functioning future town, the Council needs to ensure that any developments today will link up with future developments in adjacent areas.

### Amberley Hills

- Existing housing in Osborne Road is encroaching onto the lower slopes of the ‘Amberley Hills’ to the north. These hills overlook Amberley and form a northern skyline for the town. Currently they are rural.
- There is no landscape reason to not allow housing on lower parts of the hills, where there would be sites with some views, albeit south facing.
- However if this should occur the Council should be adamant that no housing is located in the upper half of these hills, as seen from the town. The situation is the same as the Port Hills of Christchurch. The Amberley Hills are a natural backdrop to the town and should remain in a rural state, in the interests of maintaining the natural character of Amberley.
- These hills have a western end facing State Highway 1, just north of the Amberley town limits. In the interests of maintaining the natural character of the town approach, there should be no building development on either the upper or lower slopes of the western end.

