



LEGACY PROPERTY

URBAN DESIGN STUDY: RESPONSE TO COUNCIL COMMENTS

ORCHARD HILLS NORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

24/11/2022

AJ+C
ALLEN JACK+COTTIER

AJ+C acknowledges that we operate and function on the lands of the Wangal, Kamaygal and Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, who have left a legacy of culture, wisdom and knowledge embedded in these lands and waters.



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ORCHARD HILLS NORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL COMMENTS

This report has been prepared by AJC Architects (AJ) on behalf of Legacy Property as part of the Orchard Hills North Planning Proposal, responding to Council comments on proposed DCP controls and the indicative design provided as a proof of concept.

The report focuses on certain critiques and suggestions, but we also note points of support that should be reflected in controls:

"Having a public square is a great idea"

"The idea of making The Avenue pedestrian focused is strongly supported"

"The use of trees to screen off car parking areas is supported (and should be preferred over engineered solutions such as shade sails)"

Other Council comments that appear to indicate a preference for an alternate outcome can be summarised in two key themes:

1. Reorient the retail centre north to Werrington Creek.
2. Confirm the pedestrianisation of Castle Road.

This report explores potential design responses to both themes, with commentary of the pros and cons of each.

Generally, the principle of orienting the retail centre to a pedestrianised Castle Road and expanded Werrington Creek corridor is strong. It does, however, come with certain trade-offs. Based on the current retail brief, it is AJC's advice that the stronger option is to position the retail centre further south on the site and orient it more to the Local Park and Primary School to the west (as well as the east-west through-site link between the two).

However, both options have significant merit. The intent of the proposed DCP control sheet is therefore to provide flexibility for a future design to balance and respond to the site's fantastic opportunities of two adjacent public open spaces, significant site constraints in terms of overall area and triangular shape, and the retail brief of the time.

The only comment not addressed in these two themes is Council's concern that *"a childcare centre near a roundabout does not seem ideal considering impacts of vehicular noise/traffic. It would be better to have such a use opposite to the proposed school site."*

We do not believe the level of traffic at the roundabout intersection will cause sufficient noise issues to concern child care uses. The Boulevard is intended to be designed as a safe/slow street, appropriate to the Local Park and Primary School on the other side of the street. The Primary School is intended to be directly accessible from the child care via a mid-block crossing that aligns with the east-west through-site link immediately north of the primary school.

In this case, the intent of showing a child care in the indicative design is to indicate contributory street frontage at that location, as would be required by the proposed DCP controls. In our project experience child care is an appropriate ancillary use to a neighbourhood retail centre, particularly given the primary school immediately opposite, and so it was selected as a potential tenant type to show in the illustrative design. However an eventual development application may not include a child care centre.

We emphasise the indicative designs are notional, intended to show one potential outcome as a proof of concept for the proposed DCP controls. The indicative designs are not informed by any secured tenants, and are not submitted for approval. They are submitted to support the proposed DCP controls, which are submitted for approval. These are shown on the next page.

The remaining content in this report includes AJC's reactions to Council's initial comments, including alterations to the previous indicative design as well as an additional indicative design prepared for discussion.

1.1 PROPOSED DCP CONTROLS

Objectives

- A. To provide an attractive, accessible and lively community focal and gathering point for Orchard Hills North.²
- B. To provide appropriate interfaces from the centre to surrounding uses.
- C. To provide active uses at street level which facilitate safety and passive surveillance.²
- D. To ensure appropriate safe and efficient vehicular access to the site.¹
- E. To ensure that urban design and landscaping encourages pedestrian amenity and community activity.²

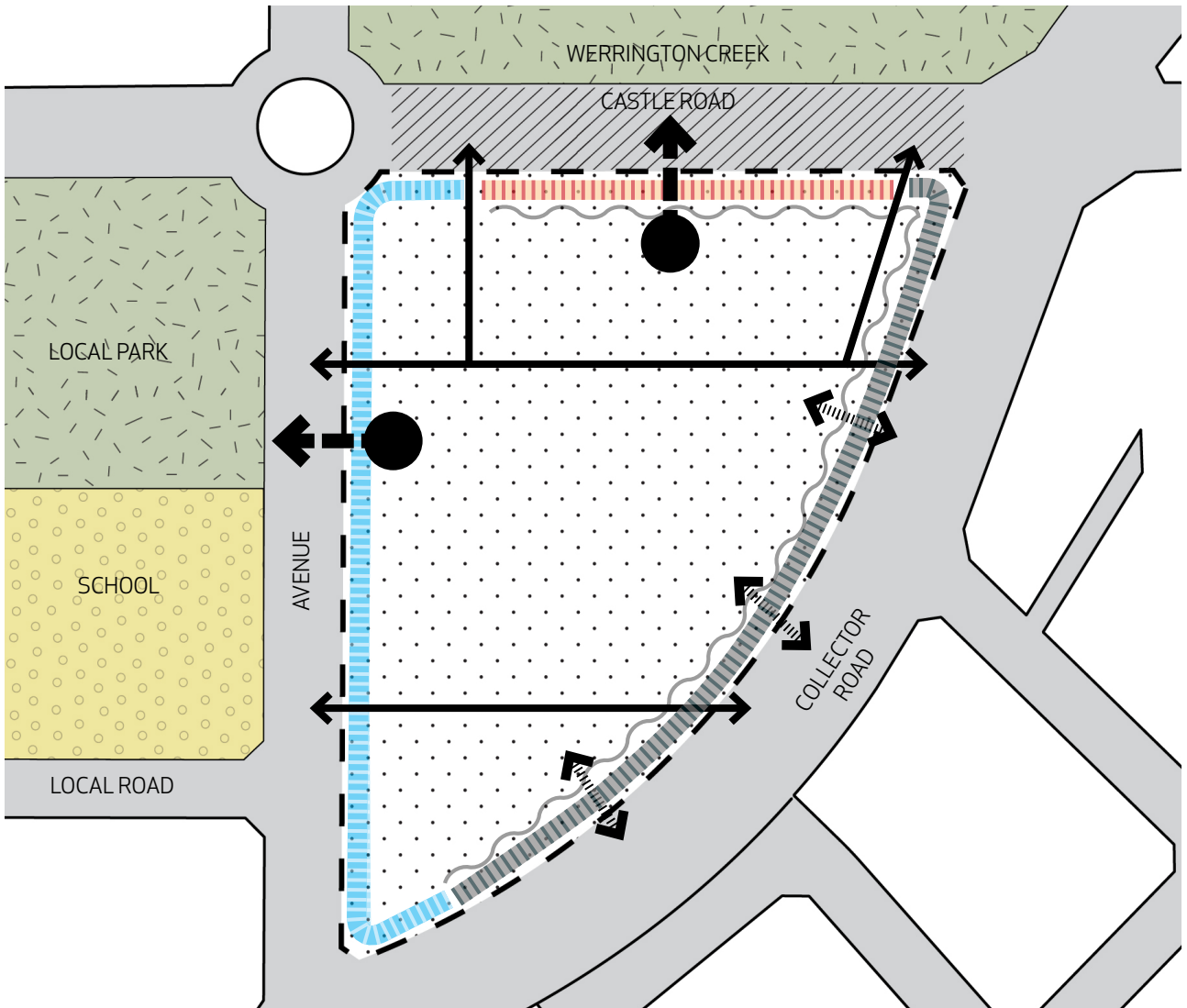
Controls

- 1. Orient major entrances to surrounding public streets and public open spaces.
- 2. Provide direct pedestrian access into the main retail centre entrance from an adjoining public street, without needing to cross the car park.
- 3. Accentuate main entrance with an activated plaza, pavement widening or other pedestrian-oriented open space.
- 4. The main entrance is to be fully accessible from the street into the centre, without the use of a lift.
- 5. Minimise surface parking adjoining the 'Avenue'.
- 6. Maximise active and other contributory frontages facing the 'Avenue' and the Local Park.
- 7. Where possible, sleeve or screen parking and service areas on other streets with contributory development (such as retail, commercial, community and/or residential uses).
- 8. Position necessary parking entrances away from the centre of the northern boundary, to facilitate the future pedestrianisation of Castle Road.
- 9. Provide service access off the Collector Road only. Avoid any circulation strategy that requires large trucks to navigate using the Avenue or surrounding Local Roads.
- 10. Loading [requirements] associated with the development shall be provided on-site¹, with no reliance on public roads for queuing space or the unloading of goods.
- 11. Provide acoustic screening to loading and service areas.
- 12. Screen all street-facing surface parking, blank walls and loading/service areas with architectural design treatments, the use of public art and/or dense perimeter landscaping.
- 13. Off-street surface parking areas are to provide an adequate amount of shade, either by trees or shade canopies, to provide amenity and minimise micro climate (heat island) impacts.¹
- 14. Provide 1 medium tree (minimum 8-metre height at maturity) per 8 car spaces on site, not counting car spaces otherwise covered by canopies, solar arrays, or other fixed shading.
- 15. Retaining walls must be a maximum of 1.5m in height, located within the lot boundaries, using materials that are appropriate for the public domain.

Source/Based On:

¹ Draft Orchard Hills North – Site Specific DCP (WSP, Elton, 2022)

² Penrith Development Control Plan 2014 E1 Caddens (Penrith City Council, 2022)



KEY

Neighbourhood Centre

Open Space

School

Residential

Orient primary retail entrance to Local Park or Werrington Creek

Screen all Parking & Service Areas with Landscaping

Potential Parking Access Points

Potential Service Access Points

Maximise active and other contributory frontages facing Local Park and Avenue

Locate main service and loading areas to Collector Road

Design northern boundary to facilitate potential pedestrianisation of Castle Road

1.2 ISSUE 1: POTENTIAL REORIENTATION TO WERRINGTON CREEK

Relevant Council Comments to this theme:

"There is a missed opportunity to capitalise on the green asset that is the Werrington Creek corridor. This 'green' land presents opportunities to 'create' a landscape feature that contributes to the character of the centre. Ideally the centre should be designed to address the green corridor and to integrate with it visually. Instead, the location of the main carparking area effectively isolates the centre from this green asset – including its connection to the broader pedestrian/cycle network linking the centre with the wider OH North and Caddens developments."

"Consider shifting the building footprint further north towards the north-west corner – with active frontages partly along the Local Park (as per the proponent's objectives) and partly along the northern pedestrianised section of Castle Road and Werrington Creek (finer grain retail wrapped around the building)."

AJC Response:

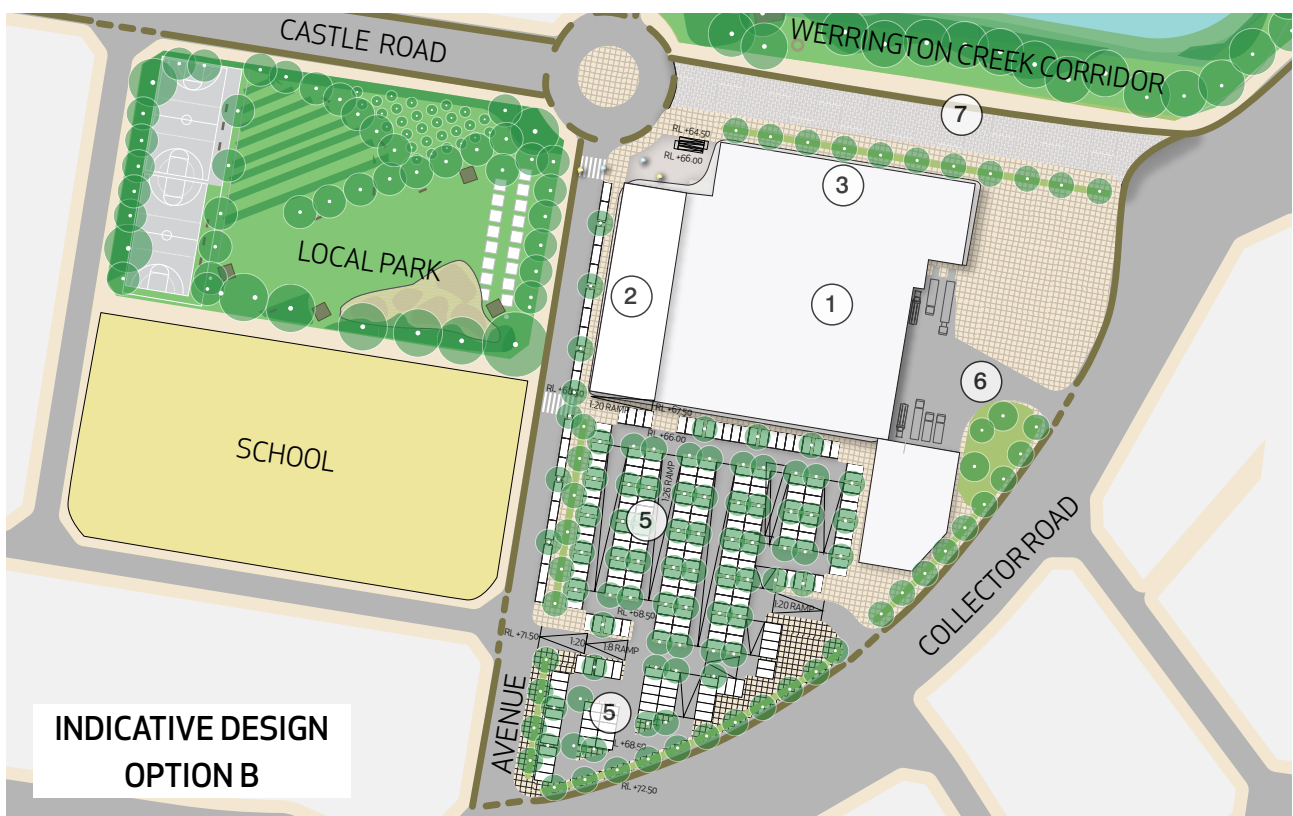
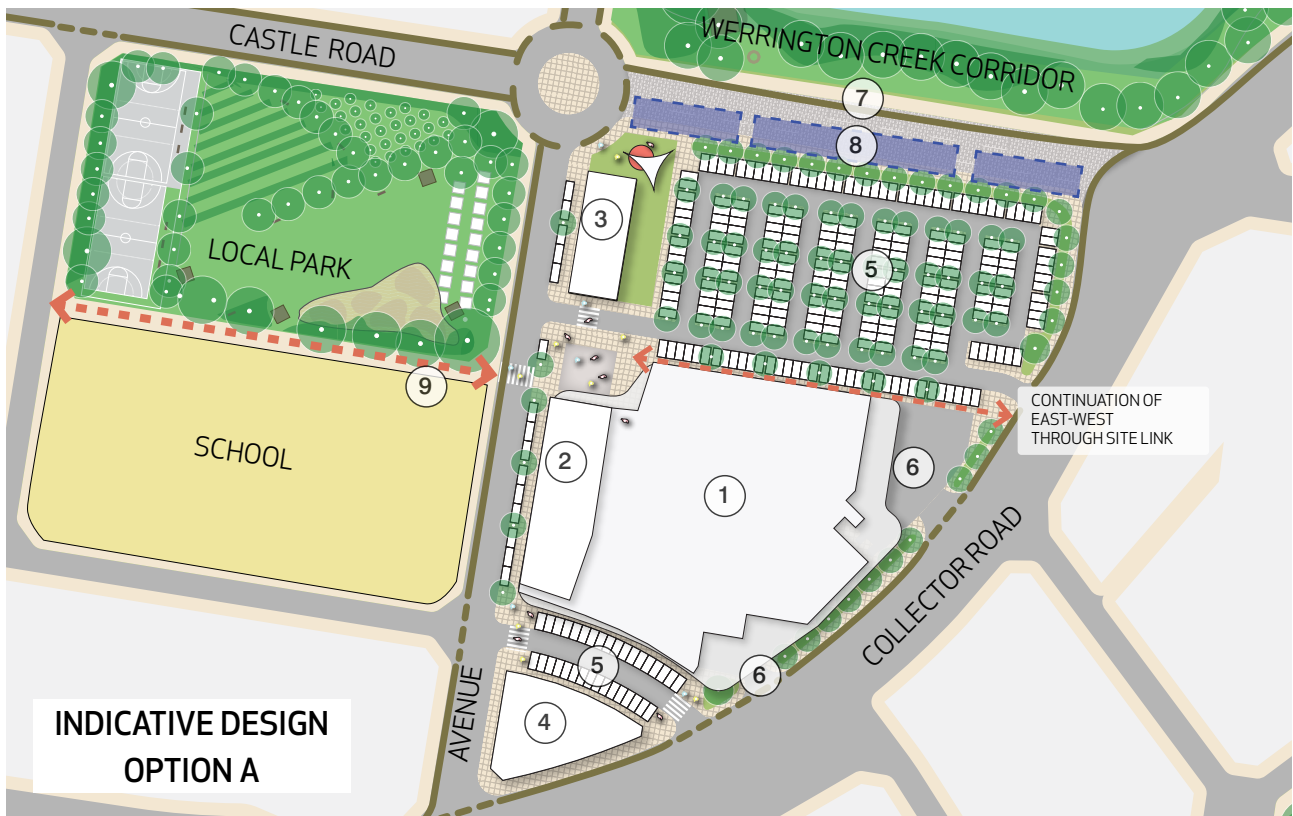
We agree the Werrington Creek corridor is a fantastic asset that a retail centre design could potentially capitalise upon.

Nevertheless, AJC's current advice to Legacy is that the best place-outcome currently available for a retail centre anchored by a full-line supermarket in this location is one that orients itself to the Local Park to the west, rather than the Creek to the north. Our reasons for this advice are described on the next few pages.

However, in response to Council's valid points above: we want to emphasise that **the intent of the DCP Controls is to provide a flexible framework that creates principles and priorities without locking in a building envelope before a design brief is finalised.** This is precisely for the reason raised here. Area requirements for the supermarket box, parking and loading requirements vary significantly depending on the tenant type. A full-line supermarket is understood to be an absolute requirement for a viable retail development in current market conditions, and that requirement is currently influencing our advice. However, market conditions change, and if a small grocer-style supermarket is preferred in future then it could result in a reduced supermarket footprint, less specialty retail, fewer parking spaces and smaller truck/loading requirements. In this case, northern orientation to the Werrington Creek corridor may well be the superior outcome.

To test the best outcome for the current requirement for a full-line supermarket, AJC has prepared two studies. Option A, issued previously, orients towards the Local Park to the west. Option B moves the centre to better orient to the Werrington Creek corridor as well.

Note that both Options have been prepared in an honest endeavour to achieve a deliverable outcome through a short design exercise. Each attempts to maximise contributory frontage to the two adjacent open spaces while fitting the requirements for flat rectangular areas on a sloping triangular site. The pros and cons of each are described below.



KEY

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Neighbourhood Retail Centre | 6. Loading & Service Areas |
| 2. Level 1 Commercial Above | 7. DCP-proposed pedestrian and cycleway |
| 3. Contributory Uses (shown as Childcare) | 8. Future Strata Commercial replacing Council road reserve |
| 4. Contributory Uses (shown as Gym) | 9. East-west through-site link |
| 5. Surface Parking | |

Council Comment:

"This northern edge of the building could:

**Capitalise on great views to the Werrington Creek Corridor*

**Offer outdoor uses with good solar access during the winter months*

**Activate the pedestrianised section of Castle Road"*

Council Comment:

"Having a public square is a great idea – consider re-locating it to the north-west corner, activated by a chamfered building edge. This will then be located on a key desire path – between the Local Park and the Werrington Creek Corridor – and also offer good visual connection between the two."

AJC Response:

We absolutely support the notion that active/contributory frontage would be preferable along Werrington Creek. We focus first on activating open spaces, then on activating pedestrian-oriented streets, then activating or sleeving as many other street frontages as possible while still satisfying the large loading, parking and service requirements of the typology.

As will be described, we have explored an option to achieve the objective indicated in the comment above. However, our recommendation remains to focus active frontage on the western edge, as moving the building north to provide better frontage to the Creek creates trade-offs that we do not consider are sufficiently justified by the additional level of activation to the northern boundary.

In any retail centre, but particularly in a suburban neighbourhood model, the total quantum of externally-facing specialty retail (that is, street-facing shops) is limited by certain ratios and amenity requirements. This makes it unlikely that external retail can be supported along *both* Castle Road *and* the Avenue. If the Centre is to orient itself to Castle Road while retaining the level of action shown to The Avenue (which we and Council support), then we suggest that the additional activation along Castle Road will need to be provided by other uses such as a Community Facility.

AJC Response:

The north-west corner does have those advantages, and we support the idea of using the plaza as a connection between the Creek and the Local Park via the retail centre.

However that location does come with trade-offs:

- The plaza sets the main retail floor level, and the northwest corner is the lowest level on site. This sets the design level for the whole retail site very low, which is likely to require significantly more extensive retaining walls than would be required if it was located at a mid- or high-point on the site.
- The northwest corner of the site is out of alignment with the Primary School and east-west link through the park/school site. This diminishes the relationship between the School and the Retail. The Option A location creates a three-way node of the park/school/retail connected by the east-west link.
- In the Option B arrangement, moving the plaza to the northwest corner moves it away from the parking lot. Given this is a suburban retail centre, the parking lot will be the main arrival point for the great majority of visitors. By not combining the square with the retail entrance from the car park, the activation of the public space will be significantly reduced.

AJC's advice is that, of the two options, the better location for the square is at the centre of the site.

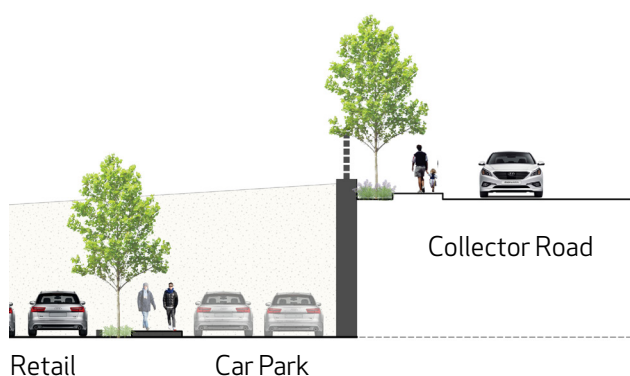
Council Comment:

"the car parking area should be located either to the east or the south of the building. This will allow the building to naturally shade a part of the car park, particularly during the afternoons."

AJC Response:

The condition described above - using the building to shade the retail entrance facing the parking by positioning the main lot - would be our preference. However, the site has a steep south-to-north fall.

Surface parking should always have minimal slope to prevent trolleys from rolling, but in particular that slope cannot be uphill from the entrance or else it becomes difficult for less mobile customers to push their trolleys to their vehicles. Positioning the parking to the south of the building results in the flat parking level being set down significantly from the street, requiring tall retaining walls and negatively impacting street quality.



Option B, Section along Collector Road

Council Comments:

"The idea of making The Avenue pedestrian focused is strongly supported, especially given it will be a direct connection to the school and local park and the main entry and meeting point for visitors to the centre. Any crossing here is likely to be very busy during school peak hours. Therefore need to make sure pedestrians have clear and direct access to the entry plaza (not obstructed by car parking etc.)."

"Ensure that the development does not become a barrier for residents from the east and south-east of the site to access the Local Park and school"

"The indicated site plan should show clear east-west through-site links and crossing points across the Collector Road and the Avenue Road for residents accessing from the east. The east-west through site link should align with the through site link proposed between the school and the Local Park"

"Also consider the re-alignment of OS8 and new school site. I recall that the new OS8 design includes an east-west pedestrian connection along the school site's northern boundary directly across the road into the village centre. How does that line of connection align with the village centre design?"

AJC Response:

Noting that we strongly support this design objective. Although it was not communicated well in the design previously, we believe that Option A can achieve this in a way that Option B cannot. Option A positions the retail box to the southern end of the site, positioning its entrance and entry plaza in alignment with the east-west link.

In Option B the retail entrance and retail plaza is moved to the northwest corner, where it connects the Creek and Local Park but at the expense of connecting to/continuing the east-west link between Local Park and School.

1.3 COMMENTARY: LAYOUT OPTION A (RETAIL CENTRE AT SOUTHERN END OF SITE)

PROS

- The entire length of The Avenue - a pedestrian-priority street that faces onto the Local Park and Primary School - is almost entirely activated by active and contributory uses.
- The Plaza is positioned at a mid-block node that could become a shared entrance to the School, Local Park and Retail.
- The entrance to the Retail is directly off that Plaza, meaning it is directly aligned to the path through the Local Park
- This path can then continue through east-west through a pedestrian path in front of the retail centre, without crossing any roads or lanes.
- Service frontages oriented away from pedestrian-priority streets.
- Efficient parking layout, minimising site area required for surface parking.
- Parking is downhill from the retail centre, allowing a greater gradient on the surface lot to somewhat ameliorate the site slope.
- Legacy's yield targets and Council's DCP parking requirements to support them are met.
- With Council support, if Castle Road is pedestrianised then potentially the reserve could be partially reallocated to developable area, allowing strata commercial/office to sleeve the surface car park. Discussed later.

CONS

- Long extent of service and parking frontage along Collector Road.
- Long extent of surface parking frontage along Castle Road.
- Triangular nature of site requires additional parking to the south to meet DCP target, resulting in a split (main/secondary) parking lot arrangement
- Limited active or contributory frontage along Castle Road/Werrington Creek within the site area, and consequently limited interaction between the Creek and the retail site.

AREA SCHEDULE	GLA m2	Mix	Parking
RETAIL			
Majors	3,800	65%	190
Mini-Majors	600	10%	20
Specialty	1,470	25%	49
Internal	(1,135)	70%	
External	(335)	30%	
TOTAL RETAIL	5,870		
COMMERCIAL	2,520		36
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	8,390		

Parking Required **295**

Parking Provided **295**

WERRINGTON CREEK CORRIDOR

CASTLE ROAD (COUNCIL RESERVE, POTENTIALLY TO BE PEDESTRIANISED)

FUTURE STRATA
COMMERCIAL TENANCIES
ACCESSED FROM CAR PARK



LOCAL PARK



**CONTINUATION OF
EAST-WEST LINK**

PLAZA



EAST-WEST LINK

SCHOOL

THE AVENUE

COLLECTOR ROAD

KEY



1:1000 @ A4






Supermarket/Major
 External Specialty

Mini-major
 Internal Specialty

Service & Loading

 Commercial
  Contributory uses (shown as Gym)

 Level 1 Commercial Above
  Contributory uses (shown as Childcare)

 East-west through-site link

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1.1 COMMENTARY: LAYOUT OPTION B (RETAIL CENTRE AT NORTHERN END OF SITE)

PROS

- Plaza location visually and physically links the Local Park, retail site and Werrington Creek corridor.
- Community uses front the Castle Road/ Werrington Creek within the site area, improving interaction between the Creek and the retail site.
- Plaza has unobstructed northerly aspect, with pedestrian access direct to Werrington Creek Corridor (assuming Castle Road pedestrianised)
- Potential still exists for east-west link to continue through Retail Centre (although in this layout the connection is broken by the loading area of the Mini-Major).
- Residual land area on northeast corner would ideally be filled with additional residential lots (requiring a land zoning change), improving frontage to Collector Road and effectively screening main loading area.
- Set-down of surface parking from surrounding streets reduces incidental visibility of parking from passing traffic/pedestrians.
- Meets Legacy's retail yield target.

CONS

- The Plaza, which sets the FFL of the retail centre, is at the lowest point of the site, resulting in the rear surface parking being below the level of the surrounding street.
- Plaza's adjacency to roundabout is a poor urban outcome.
- The east-west through-site link between Park & School is weakened by the shift of the Plaza out of this alignment.
- CPTED issues are caused by the diminished visibility of a submerged parking lot.
- Long extent of service and parking frontage along Collector Road, although improved from A.
- Long extent of parking frontage along The Avenue, a pedestrian oriented street facing the Primary School. Poorer outcome than Option A.
- Inefficient parking layout due to its position at the angular end of the site - increasing the footprint of surface parking while reducing the number of spaces.
- Does not meet parking target.
- Does not meet Legacy's non-retail yield targets. Inability to meet parking requirement for retail limits addition of upper level floor uses.

AREA SCHEDULE	GLA m2	Mix	Parking Req.
RETAIL			
Majors	3,800	65%	190
Mini-Majors	800	10%	27
Specialty	1,760	25%	59
Internal	(1,275)	70%	
External	(485)	30%	
TOTAL RETAIL	6,360		
COMMUNITY	500		7
DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	6,860		

Parking Required	283
Parking Provided	243



KEY

- Supermarket/Major
- Mini-major
- External Specialty
- Internal Specialty

- Commercial
- Level 1 Commercial Above
- Retaining Wall

- Community Uses (Council-run)
- Service & Loading

1:1000 @ A4



1.2 ISSUE 2: PEDESTRIANISATION OF CASTLE ROAD

Relevant Council Comments to this theme:

"The proposed development does not seem to take advantage of the proposed pedestrianisation of Castle Road. The car park located all along the pedestrianised section of the road seems to be a missed opportunity. It also compromises the potential of the pedestrian/cycle connection to encourage active travel (in)to the site as a preferred entry point."

"Potential closure of Castle Road at the northern end of the village centre site. This is identified in the DCP but not in the OHN masterplan. Is there a level of certainty around this road closure progressing?"

AJC Response:

We understand that the potential pedestrianisation of a section of Castle Road was proposed in the Planning Proposal for Orchard Hills, however also that it is a Council Road and there is no current Council motion supporting its pedestrianisation.

From an urban design perspective, in our view that street would benefit from being pedestrianised. It would not necessarily provide any particular circulation function, as equivalent walking/cycle tracks could be provided within the open space. However, it would better connect the Local Park to the Werrington Creek and, on a site-specific level, would provide more site area to help bridge the vertical distance between the Creek and the Retail Centre's pad.

From a retail design perspective, there is not a clear benefit in the street being pedestrianised. Tenants in external specialty, particularly in suburban locations, require passing vehicular traffic to be viable, as they have much less passing pedestrian traffic than the interior specialty (since a significant percentage of shoppers will have entered the retail centre before passing most of the exterior).

Walkers, joggers and cyclists passing by on regional open space tracks may contribute somewhat, but there is no strong desire line or origination point to create a large amount of traffic, and these are not a natural user group of a grocery-anchored retail centre (while they are exercising).

On balance, we proposed a DCP map that identifies the potential pedestrianisation as a potential future condition to relate to.

Given the lack of a clear circulation function, rather than pedestrianising the street it would be our recommendation to extinguish the reserve and reallocate part of it to the Creek public open space and part of it to developable area.

Using the indicative Option A design as a reference, this would allow sleeving of the retail car park with low-scale strata commercial and/or destination retail tenancies that provide contributory frontage facing north onto the Creek, made possible by utilising the visibility and vehicular/service access from the retail car park to the south (their rear). This would result in an overall improvement in the retail scheme as well as benefits to the Creek corridor.





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