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**CITY OF CANTERBURY**

**CANTERBURY BOWLING CLUB  
PLANNING PROPOSAL  
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION REVIEW**

**Report**

**S14-0007 R-01 05/06/2014**

# CANTERBURY BOWLING CLUB PLANNING PROPOSAL

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION REVIEW REPORT

Client  
JBA Urban Development Services

For  
Canterbury City Council  
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*Note: This document is Preliminary unless validated.*

*Cover Image:*

*Site of the former Canterbury Bowling Club showing existing mature trees.*



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## Introduction



*The existing rail authority owned path directly north of the site provides an important pedestrian/cycle link that will connect the proposed Town Centre to the Cooks River and the Close Street site.*

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been commissioned by JBA Urban Development Services for Canterbury City Council and prepared by CLOUSTON Associates.

The purpose of the document is to provide an objective review of the recreation and open space aspects of the proposal for the reclassification and rezoning of 15 Close Street Canterbury (see Figure 1) under the Canterbury Bowling Club Planning Proposal.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this report are to:

- Evaluate the recreational potential of the site, in particular drawing on the findings of the recently completed Canterbury Strategic Recreation Plan (SRP) Review 2013.
- Provide a clear and robust rationale to support a reclassification and rezoning of the site to reflect the residential/civic/community facility uses as proposed in the Masterplan prepared by Olsson & Associates dated May 2014.

### STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This review is set out under the following chapters:

- Background and Planning Context: provides key studies, plans and strategies for the development of the Town Centre that have informed this document.
- The Site and Development Proposal: provides the current status of the Close Street site and surrounds and the 2014 Masterplan for future redevelopment.
- Open Space and Future Demand: provides an overview of existing and future demand for open space on the site and its immediate context.
- Issue and Opportunities: provides an analysis of the site and its context identifying issues and opportunities.
- Conclusion and Recommendations: provides a conclusion and recommendations which take into consideration all background information provided and assessed in this document.

## INTRODUCTION



Figure 1: The project site and local context.



Figure 2: Demonstration area taken from Canterbury SRP Report (2013) illustrating the links to parks that require enhancing to provide for the future open space and recreation needs of Canterbury City.



Background and Planning Context

*The riverside reserve opposite the Close Street study site provides informal parkland, a fenced dog training area and the continuation of the shared pedestrian/cycle river foreshore path linking to active recreation spaces and the proposed Town Centre.*

## BACKGROUND AND PLANNING CONTEXT

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### BACKGROUND

Council has been developing proposals for the substantial upgrade of the Canterbury Town Centre to meet the needs of the growing population and to re-activate the commercial town centre. The Canterbury Bowling Club site is immediately adjacent to this area of redevelopment and in light of the closure of the Bowling Club, the opportunity to integrate its future use and development forms the focus of this proposal.

### PLANNING CONTEXT

Key studies, strategies and plans in the development of the Town Centre that have informed this report are outlined below:

- Canterbury Town Centre and Riverfront Precinct Public Domain Strategy (2007)
  - Proposes the redevelopment of the Canterbury Town Centre and Town Square and includes the implementation of improvements to the Public Domain
  - Defines the guiding direction and design principles for the Public Domain to help shape and integrate the proposed urban spaces as part of a usable linear network of streetscapes, civic squares and public realm that reinforce local and regional linkages to the Cooks River.
- Canterbury Town Centre and Riverfront Precinct DCP (2011)
  - Addresses the anticipated demand for local infrastructure generated by mixed use and urban renewal developments in the Canterbury Town Centre.
  - Provides reasonable development contributions for the provision of infrastructure for public benefit by creating a centre based on 'Transit Oriented Development' between the rail and Cooks River with good access to public transport and to enhance the existing traditional Town Centre.
- Urban Design Study: 15 Close Street, Canterbury NSW (2014)
  - Provides analysis of the possible location site for a multi-purpose Community Facility Centre at 15 Close Street, Canterbury
  - Develops a Masterplan that identifies the legibility and access to and from the site for mixed residential and commercial use and a Community Facility provided by street linkages, civic squares and spaces. The Masterplan complies with SEPP 65 for solar access and cross ventilation and provides a transition of building height across the site from the eastern boundary (3-5 storeys) to the western boundary (6-8 storeys) adjacent to the site.
- Canterbury Strategic Recreation Plan: Review and Audit (2013)
  - Provides an objective review of the adopted Strategic Recreation Plan (2011)
  - Refines the 'Action Plan', in order of priority, to provide achievable targets for future open space and recreation objectives in the Canterbury LGA
  - Develops a Structure Plan which provides the 'big picture' to assist in the longer term for open space in the public realm across the Canterbury LGA.
  - Illustrates Canterbury as a demonstration area (see Figure 2) showing how Council's increasing residential population and the expected demands on open space might be addressed specific to the Canterbury City area.



Close Street is accessed by vehicles travelling south via a left hand turn only from the busy Canterbury Road. The proposed new Town Centre is located to the west and accessed by vehicles travelling both north and south and turning into Charles Street.



Site topography is sloping and comprises two level and open terraces. Access is made by sets of concrete stairs that are not universally accessible.



Bankstown Railway line is located directly north of the study site with Canterbury Railway Station on the Canterbury Road overbridge. Currently a local pedestrian/cycle path, parallel to the rail line corridor, provides public access directly north of the study site.



The Riverside Reserve is one of many public open space and recreation spaces along the Cooks River foreshore and located directly opposite the study site. A small fenced area is designated for dog off-leash exercise and training.



The heritage listed Canterbury Sugar Works (built in 1840) provides an immediate sense of history and place, visually connecting to the Cooks River and the Boat Harbour where sugar cane was shipped from the Philippines.



The study site contains a number of well established and exemplar tree specimens including this mature *Dracaena draco*.

## THE SITE AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

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### CURRENT STATUS OF THE SITE

The site is located at 15 Close Street, Canterbury and is owned by Canterbury City Council. It comprises an area of approximately 10,780m<sup>2</sup> and is legally described as Lots 1 and 2 in DP 818683 (see Figure 3).

#### Access

Vehicle access to the site is made by a left hand turn into Close Street from the busy four lane Canterbury Road that is situated to the west of the site. Pedestrian access is available directly from Close Street (ie: the south west) and also via a gate (currently locked) on the northern boundary of the site allowing direct access to the public path owned by the railway authority which links to Canterbury Road.

#### Topography

The site is situated on a north to south slope varying in gradient up to 1:12.5 and broadly set on two terraces, accessed by two sets of concrete stairs between each level. A steep vegetated bank on the eastern end of the site creates the transition from the former bowling green to Close Street. An open stormwater flowpath runs north south on the eastern boundary.

#### Railway

The Bankstown Railway Line bounds the site to the north, and (see Figure 3) Canterbury Railway Station is located on the railway bridge at the intersection of Canterbury Road, Jeffrey Street, Broughton Street and Tincombe Street. The study site is not visible from the Station.

#### Close Street

Close Street bounds the southern section of the site and is a minor access road for the residents of the Sugar Mill residential development to the east. Close Street divides the site from the Council owned Riverside Reserve.

#### Riverside Reserve

The Riverside Reserve, located immediately to the south of the site, is part of the Cooks River foreshore open space system that follows the course of the river. The Reserve includes the shared path and Cooks River cycleway, a continuous route along or close to the river from Homebush Bay to Botany Bay. The Reserve provides a fenced dog off-leash exercise and training area and areas of informal parkland with trees and grass.

#### Adjoining Properties

The adjoining property to the east contains the former Canterbury Sugar Mill residential development. The heritage listed Georgian stone building was constructed in 1840 as a sugar refinery. In 2000 it was developed as part of a luxury residential block. Adjoining properties to the west of the site include light industry fronting an L-shaped laneway, a 1930s apartment block and a number of empty retail shops facing Canterbury Road.



Figure 3: The Site today covers an area of approximately 11,000 square metres.

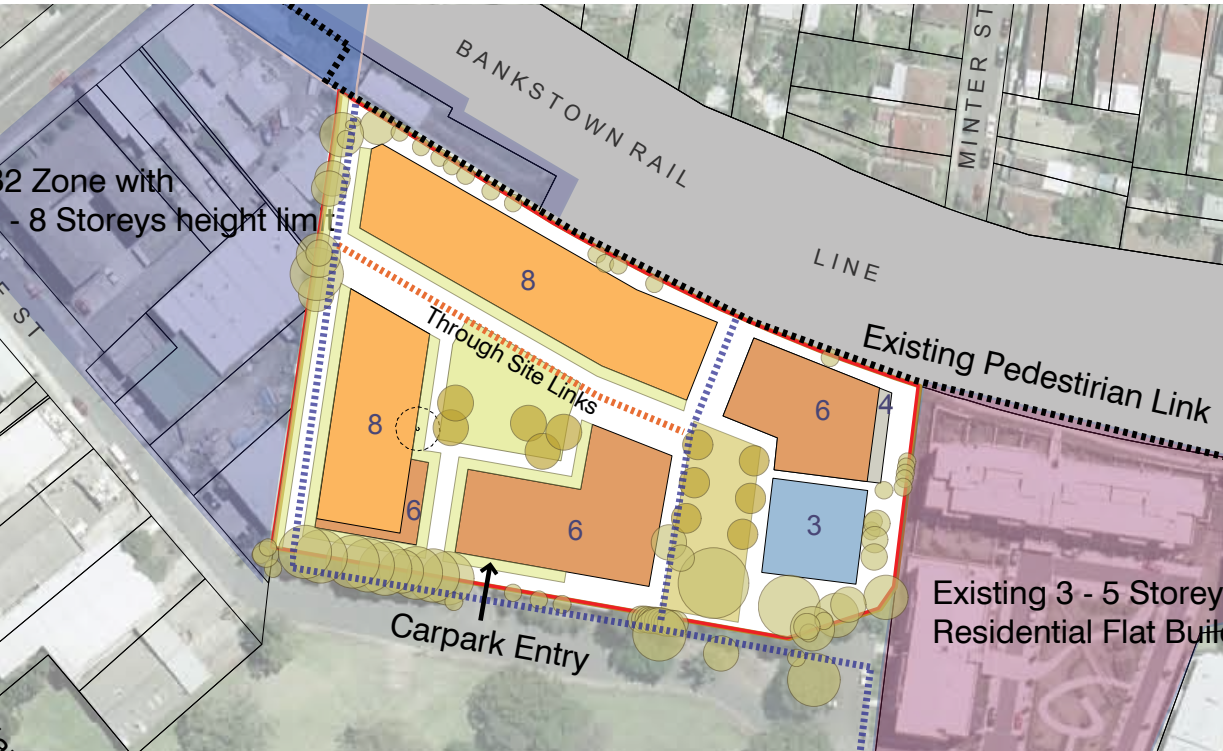


Figure 4: The Masterplan - Extracted from Olsson & Associates report Urban Design Study: 15 Close Street Canterbury NSW (May 2014).

## THE SITE AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

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### Vegetation

An arborist report has been prepared for the site which identifies existing vegetation on the site. Most trees are located on the site boundaries and predominantly of exotic species. Mature species include a *Dracaena draco* (Dragon Tree) in excellent condition, an avenue of *Lophostemon confertus* (Brush Box) and a number of conifer species in good condition.

### THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

In 2014, the Canterbury City Council commissioned architects Olsson & Associates to develop a draft Masterplan. The Masterplan was completed in May 2014 (see Figure 4) with the following elements in the preliminary scheme envisaged:

- Four residential buildings up to six and eight storeys along the railway side, the western boundary and fronting Close Street, capable of accommodating 315 apartments
- One three-storey community facilities building in the south-eastern corner of the site fronting Close Street and proximate to the Sugar Mill residential development
- Two public squares/communal areas – one centrally located between residential buildings, and one located adjacent to the community facility building
- Retention of existing trees that do not impact or compromise the building envelopes
- An east-west oriented through site link
- Vehicle entry and exit from Close Street
- A maximum 449 car parking spaces comprising 426 residential and visitor spaces and 23 car parking spaces for commercial and community facility uses.

There are two principal communal open spaces identified for the site, that to the west enclosed by the proposed residential development and that to the east fronting on to and related to the proposed multi-use Community Facility building.

The draft Masterplan considers the location and retention value of existing trees on site as assessed by the Arborist Report (2014). It recommends trees to be prioritised for retention that will provide a well-landscaped setting as part of the future development.

If the site is to be redeveloped as envisaged by the draft Masterplan, the site will need to be reclassified as Operational Land and rezoned for residential and/or community uses.

## Open Space and Future Demand



Proposed upgrades to Tasker Park will provide multi-functional facilities for organised sport, passive recreation and improved river foreshore habitat to meet the predicted increase in Canterbury's residential population.

### OPEN SPACE QUANTUM AND EXPECTED DEMAND

To establish the merits of a rezoning application for the site's land uses beyond its current recreation zoning, an overview of the existing open space on the site and in its immediate context, as well as the implications of the expected change in population, is an essential consideration.

#### Local Context

The planning strategies noted in the previous section of this review all address a changed future for the Canterbury Town Centre, both in terms of the relocation of its commercial centre and in the increased density of population and the shift in the precinct from low to medium density detached housing to high rise apartments.

There are three aspects of these change that have a direct bearing on the future community's access to public open space, namely:

- Accessibility of the open space, both existing and proposed
- Increased demand for open space and recreational opportunities from local population growth
- The nature and quality of that open space that will meet the new demand.

With respect to the amount of public open space, Canterbury is already well served with a significant quantum of parks and reserves; some six reserves of differing setting types and sizes lie within 500m of the site and a further 12 reserves within 1km of the site.

Most significantly, the majority of the reserves within 500m of the site and proposed Town Centre can be accessed off-road by cyclists and walkers, using the Cooks River Foreshore path (a local part of the subregional Bay to Bay trail) on both sides of the river.

The already burgeoning apartment development in the immediate locality is increasing demand for recreation and open space; this will continue as the developments foreshadowed in the Town Centre Masterplan are realised.

While there appears to be a significant quantity of existing and readily available open space in the locality, and while Council has put energy into upgrades to the river foreshore path and associated environmental initiatives such as the Cup and Saucer Crekk wetland at Heynes Reserve, a number of these reserves are either relatively unembellished, laid out in a manner that does not optimise recreation opportunity (eg Canterbury Park) or of some age with respect to facilities and amenities.

Redesign with multi-functional responses such as those envisioned for Tasker Park in the *Canterbury Town Centre Public Domain Strategy* will better provide for the predicted increase in population. These planned upgrades and refinements will consolidate and improve organised sporting facilities whilst improving passive recreational qualities and sustainable values for the water and foreshore habitat.

## OPEN SPACE AND FUTURE DEMAND

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### The Site and Future Demand

Whilst the site enjoyed high levels of local recreation use as a Bowls Club in its heyday, in recent years the patronage of the Club and thus the quantum of local recreation contribution progressively deteriorated to a point where the Club was no longer viable and the community was gaining minimal benefit for outdoor recreation uses.

With respect to the three criteria considered above the site itself can be assessed as follows:

- Accessibility – highly accessible for pedestrians to the north (rail corridor path), to the east from Canterbury Road via Close Street, to the south and to the river adjoining the Cooks River Foreshore Reserve and shared cycleway
- Increased Demand – should the site itself be developed for residential and community/civic or other mixed use residential/working population 'generators' it will also generate the need for day-to-day recreation and open space access that is not solely dependent on adjoining reserves. The Masterplan (see Fig 4) suggests that this is viable with the inclusion of two civic plazas/spaces totalling 1,255 m<sup>2</sup> of community open space
- Nature and Quality of Open Space – the characteristics of the existing site lend themselves to a range of potential open space settings. However, with respect to sports uses, the site is relatively small at 1.07 Ha and located on a minor access road that would not make it suitable for any significant volume of traffic.
- Sports are well provided for in the immediate vicinity at Tasker Park (field sports and aquatic centre) which is planned for future improvements as part of the River Precinct development and at Canterbury Park (field sports, athletics, tennis courts and bowling greens). Both facilities are less than 1km from the site.

Additionally, while the site can and should cater for the immediate day-to-day needs of its residential and working population (shade trees, seating, walking, play, shelter, picnic, runabout space for small children, minor community event space, etc), the site immediately adjoins a river foreshore reserve that is principally used for a fenced dog off-leash exercise/training area and a route for the foreshore path, but which is otherwise relatively underused.

If upgraded as part of the ongoing Cooks River Foreshores improvement program this river foreshore reserve would be a complimentary local open space for both the site and adjoining development sites.

## Issues and Opportunities



Access between the site and the station is well used by local residents but highly limited by two railway buildings west of the site. This is neither an amenable or safe walking environment.

A site visit was carried out with Council at the Close Street site and its surrounding neighbourhood. Analysis of the site and its context was identified under the following key headings:

- Access and Circulation
- Open Space and Recreation
- Cultural Heritage and Environment
- Image and Character
- Built form and Infrastructure
- Management and Maintenance

Figure 5 provides an illustrated summary of the site analysis.

### ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

- Sloping site of 1:12.5 and two sets of concrete steps to access the terraced site does not afford universal access across the north/south Close Street site.
- Poorly connected to the Town Centre and Town Square proposed to the north of the site with no right turn access from Close Street.
- Unsafe pedestrian access with no footpath along Close Street site frontage and fast through traffic from the Sugar Mill residence.
- Well maintained shared walk/cycle path along Cooks River foreshore but lacks continuation of path link from Close Street to river foreshore.
- Rail authority owned path directly north of Close Street site boundary connects to Canterbury Road but is very narrow and has sharp and unsafe dog leg around railway buildings and a section of ageing raised timber walkway.

### Opportunities

- Development of universal access as part of the redevelopment design process of the site.
- Liaison with RMS for right hand turn from Close Street onto Canterbury Road
- Provision of pedestrian overpass to link with proposed Town Centre and Town Square.
- Opportunity for possible shared traffic zone/footpath along Close Street site frontage to slow through traffic and provide safer crossing.
- Extension of shared universally accessible path from Close Street to river foreshore pathway.

### OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

- The site provides broad and level open spaces which are currently unused.
- There is currently no designated play area within the study area.
- There is currently no designated civic spaces within the study area.
- A well maintained shared path provides access along the Cooks River foreshore linking with public open recreation eg. Tasker Park, Mary MacKillop Reserve, Ewan Park and Sutton Reserve.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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### Opportunities

- Provision of basic recreational needs on site (shade, seating, play for small children.
- Design potential for some flexible open space with designated play space for toddler age as part of any redevelopment process.
- Provision for green corridor links through the site connecting internal and external open space resources.
- Inclusion of community and civic open space that provide meeting and minor community events adjoining multi-purpose Community Facility building.
- Liaison and investigation with Council to provide designated play space for older children in the Riverside Reserve for this and other developments.

### CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Significant trees within the site are located on the outer rim of the upper terrace and along the Close Street frontage should be retained where possible to provide shade and visual amenity.
- Stormwater (with Gross Pollutant Trap and protective fencing) runs along the eastern boundary between the site and adjacent buildings entering the Cooks River to the south.
- Ongoing programs by Council re-establishing endemic plant communities and natural habitat increasing biodiversity and visually enhancing the river edge and surrounds.
- Significant value of the nearby heritage listed Sugar Mill and now residential development site.
- Boat Harbour, adjacent to the Sugar Mill is a man-made rectangular shaped harbour built for Sea Scouts in the 1960s and now a haven for waterbirds.

### Opportunities

- Retention and/or relocation of existing significant trees eg. row of Brush Box, Dragon Tree, Conifer spp. as part of any redevelopment/design process.
- Integration of WSUD principles into any stormwater upgrade.
- Interpretation of significant local social and cultural history reflecting the context of the site, the river and its links to the Sugar Mill and Boat Harbour.

### IMAGE AND CHARACTER

- Mesh fence boundary, rubbish skips and car park at site entry from Close Street are unsightly and help turn the site away from the major asset of the river.
- Existing path owned by rail authority, along the site's northern boundary, has low visual amenity.
- Views of the river from the site are blocked by Mangroves along the river edge.
- Views are blocked to the west by buildings used for light industry.
- A large electricity pylon visually impacts the western approach along the foreshore path into the Riverside Reserve.

### Opportunities

- Design of a more visually appealing front entry as part of the site's redevelopment process that connects with the river, the foreshore and Riverside Reserve.
- Potential for improved visual connection to river via slot views through Mangroves.
- Upgrade to landscape character of Riverside Reserve.

### BUILT FORM AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Existing built form surrounding the site consists of light industry and commercial uses to the west and boutique residential to the east.
- The shared river foreshore path connects the site to the proposed Town Centre and public transport.
- The shared railway path connects the site to the proposed Town Centre, the proposed Town Square intersection and public transport.
- Close Street adjacent to site has no footpath.

### Opportunities

- Development of low to mid density residential development west of the site will afford greater connection for the growing community to the proposed Town Centre.
- Upgrade to Close Street to provide safer pedestrian access.

### MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- Stormwater enters the Cooks River from the site.
- Requirement of ongoing management and maintenance to public open space, green corridors and civic centres.

### Opportunities

- Development of partnerships with residents/community for involvement in voluntary planting/management of railway path edge to encourage a sense of ownership and provide passive surveillance.



Opportunity to liaise with rail authority for partnership with local community for volunteer based native revegetation of railway path edge



Opportunity to liaise with Council to upgrade and enhance river foreshore path link to proposed the Town Centre.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



**Access and Circulation:** Lack of footpath and abutting rear to kerb parking in front of the site on the Close Street boundary is unsafe for pedestrian traffic.



**Open Space and Recreation:** The decommissioned bowling greens across the site are level and clear providing opportunity for community spaces and civic plazas as part of the development/design process.



**Environment and Heritage:** Opportunities exist to retain significant trees on site to provide a well landscaped setting from the outset of the development process.



**Image and Character:** The character of the landscape surrounding the site is of a passive space linked to the Cooks River. However, direct views of the river from the site are blocked by Mangroves growing along the river edge.



**Built Form and Infrastructure:** Safe pedestrian access along Close Street is compromised by the footpath culminating west of the site on the northern road edge and at the Riverside Reserve on the roads southern edge.



**Management and Maintenance:** A stormwater flowpath on the eastern edge of the site between the site and the adjacent residential development requires ongoing maintenance providing opportunity to integrate WSUD principles.

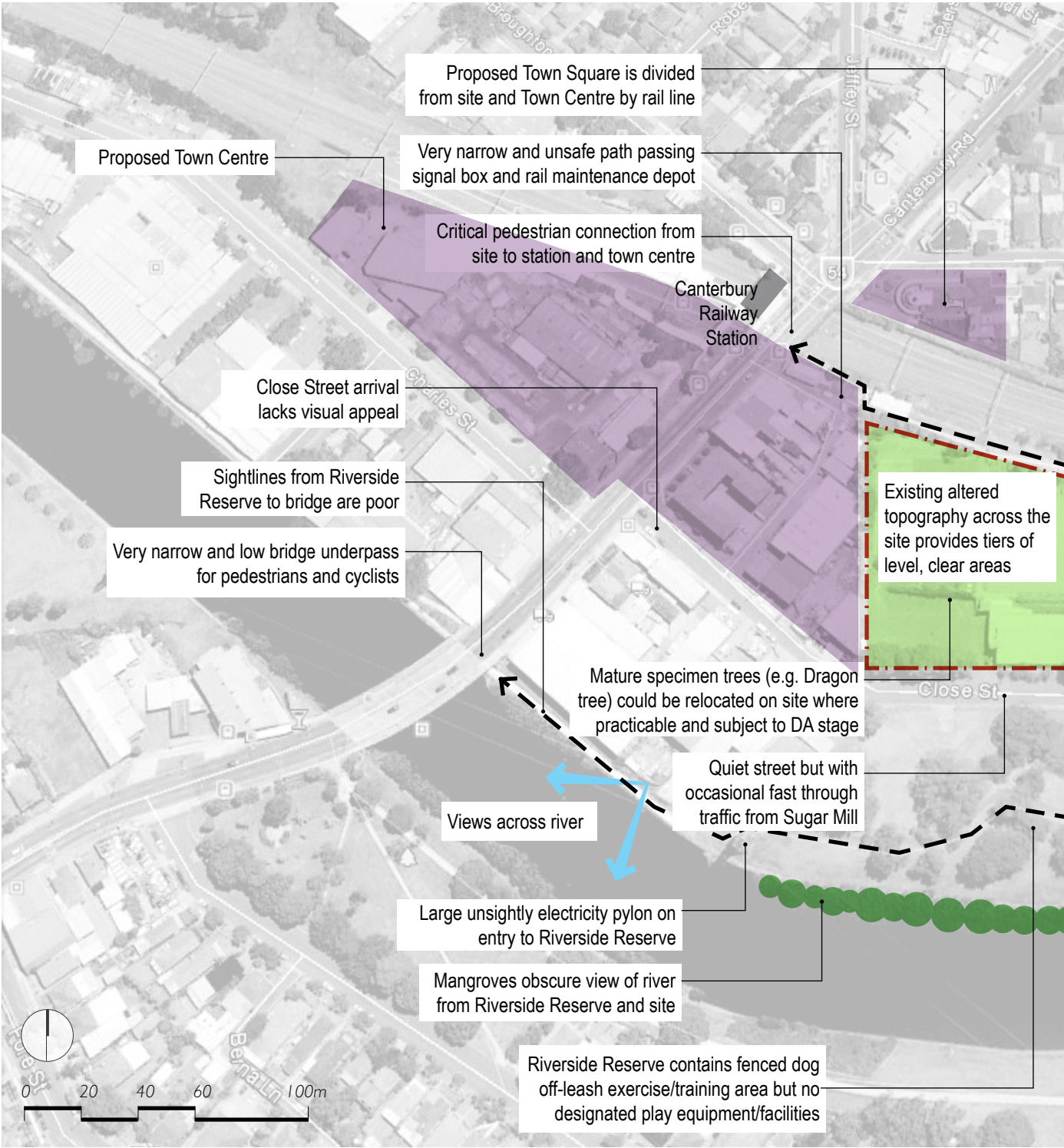
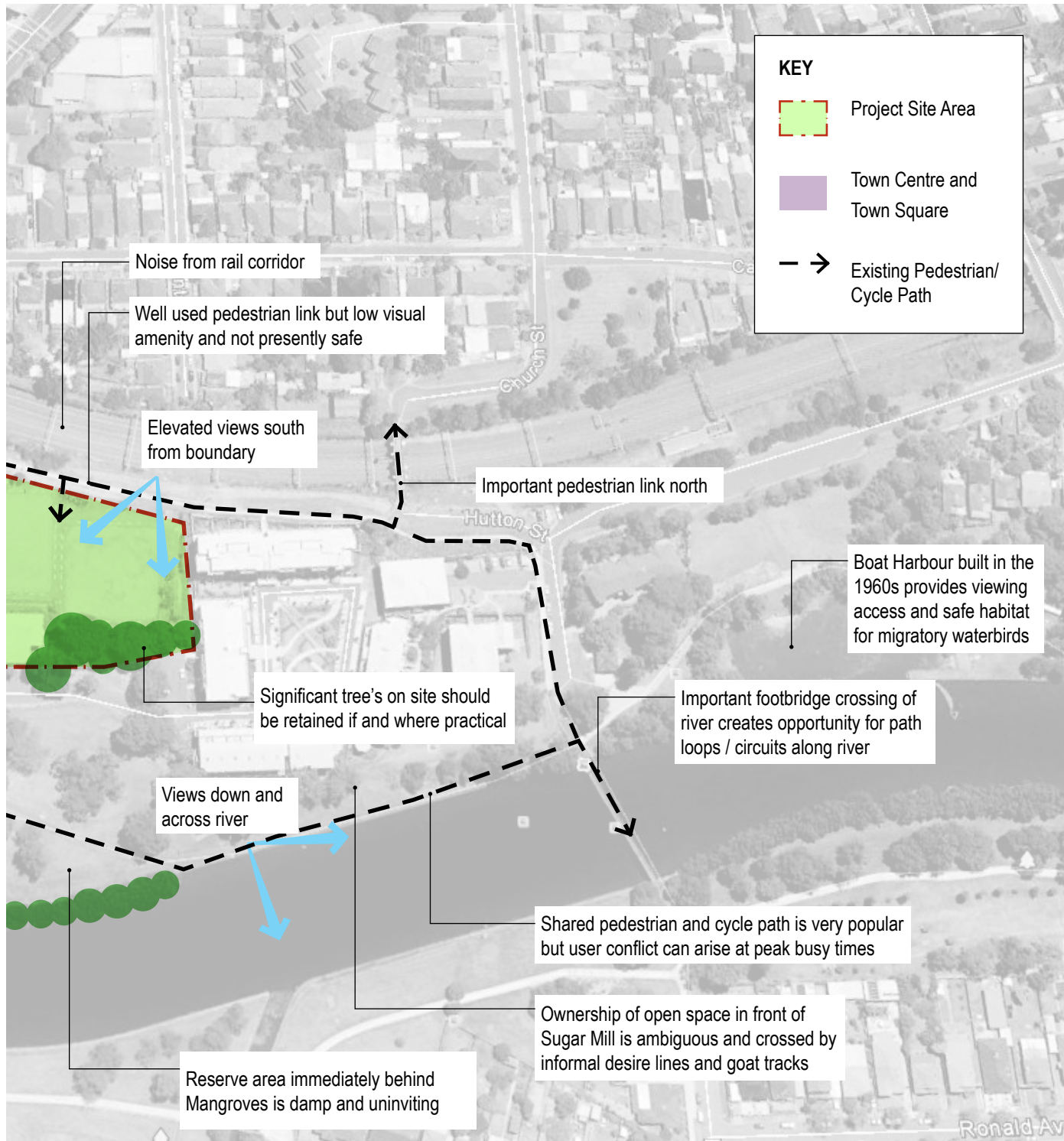


Figure 5: Site Analysis

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



## Conclusions and Recommendations

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing analysis a number of conclusions and recommendations can be drawn in evaluating the recreation and open space implications of the proposed rezoning.

#### Conclusions

- The projection of residential population growth uses for the Canterbury Town Centre will generate additional demand for open space and recreation. In particular, accessibility to open space for apartment dwellers within a short walk (max 5-10 minutes) of their building will be essential.
- The Canterbury Town Centre precinct is well serviced with extensive existing public open space, readily accessed by the river foreshore paths and river crossing bridges.
- The variety of recreational settings and opportunities within 1km of the Canterbury Town Centre and the site is significant and many of these reserves could readily accommodate additional uses if redesigned to meet contemporary demand.
- The site can and should offer open space and recreation opportunities for day-to-day needs of a residential and working population generated by development on the site itself. However, there is no shortfall of open space or recreation opportunity within the locality that would suggest that the site should be solely dedicated to public open space in the future.

Consequently, this review concludes that the proposed rezoning of the site to accommodate residential, commercial and civic uses can be justified from an open space and recreation perspective.

The proviso for this conclusion is that the site itself should provide for the day-to-day passive recreation needs of its future working and residential population (shade trees, seating, walking, play, shelter, picnic, runabout space for small children, minor community event space, etc), through the layout and design of the Masterplan illustrated in the Urban Design Study: 15 Close Street Canterbury NSW prepared by Olsson & Associates (May 2014).

*Recreational river loops associated with the Bay to Bay shared cycleway along the Cooks River foreshore provide links from the site to the proposed Town Centre*

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Recommendations

Figure 6 illustrates recommendations and options for future access to and recreational use of the site based on the Olsson & Associates Masterplan. Key recommendations include:

- Negotiations with the rail authority to achieve improved and safer access to the site from Canterbury Road via the rail-side path. In particular, achieving a wider path, preferably by relocation of the old signal box and the maintenance depot building. In the latter case, if not achievable, the path may need to be realigned into the site itself to provide a safer route.
- Provision of a permeable network of footpaths across the site between the apartment buildings.
- A dedicated cycle path on Close Street linking to the river foreshore path.
- Conceptual development of two open spaces on the site as shown in the Masterplan and as described above.

As the Masterplan is further developed through design, the paths, cycle trails, structure planting and open spaces should also be developed in parallel.

Given the critical broader context of the site's open space and recreational linkages associated with the Cooks River, Figure 7 illustrates a recommended local open space precinct concept that would serve both the site and the wider Town Centre redevelopment.

Key features of these proposals include:

- Creation of mapped and promoted walking circuits that link the reserves to the Town Centre and the site, eg river loop and a district loop, using footbridge crossings of the river as focal points.
- Development of a staged program of masterplan upgrades to the existing reserves to meet anticipated demand for capacity and diversity of recreation opportunity.

It is recommended that this precinct open space strategy would be developed in concert with stakeholder and community engagement, particularly with residents in new apartments dwellings to ascertain the anticipated demand.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Figure 6: Recommendations for future access to and through and recreational use within the Close Street site

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

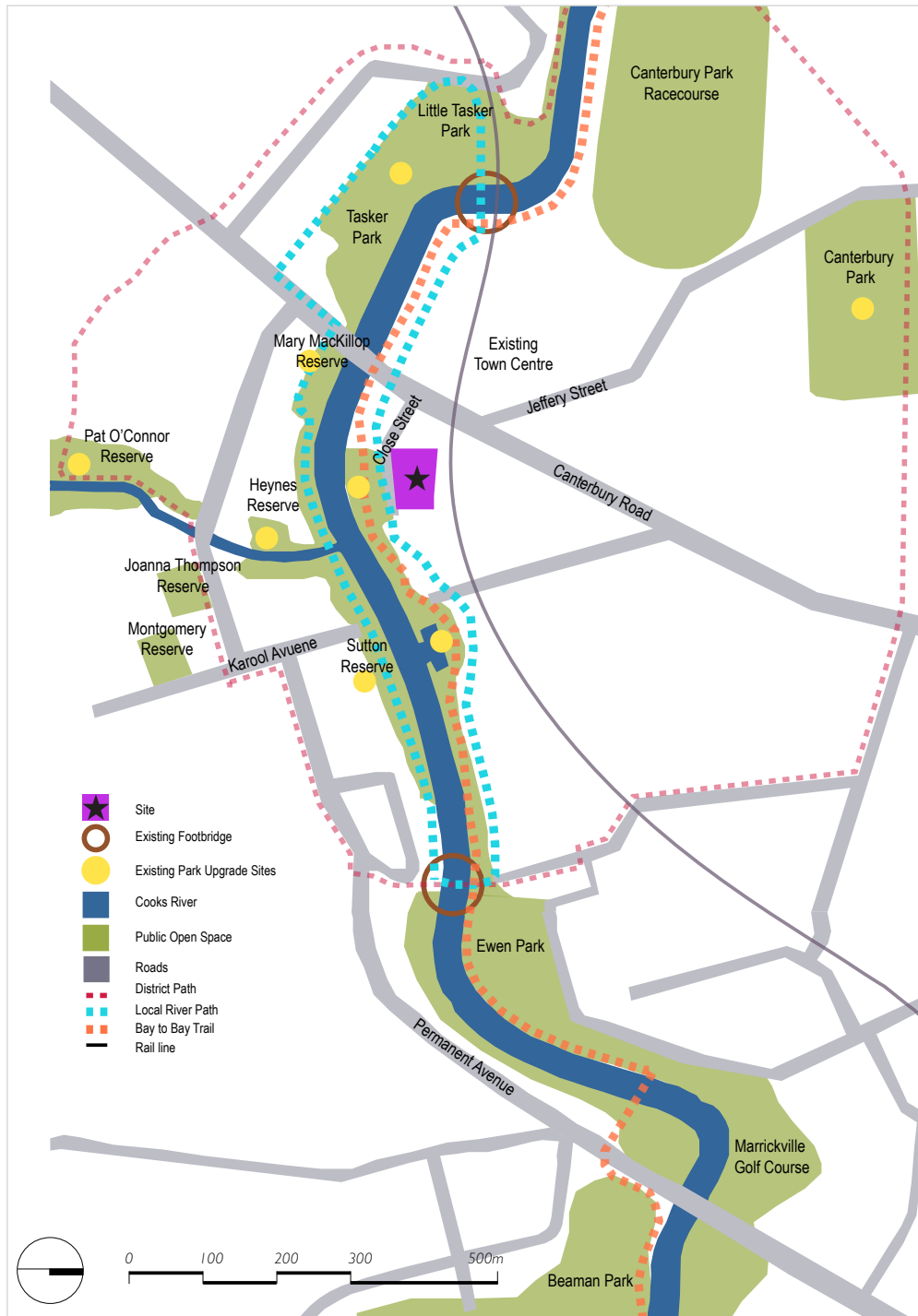


Figure 7: Recommendations for local open space precinct concept that links the Close Street site with the wider Town Centre proposed redevelopment

