

FRANKTON MIXED USE ZONE  
urban design assessment



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February  
2011

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## 1. Introduction

RA Skidmore Urban Design Ltd. has been requested by John Edmonds and Associates, on behalf of Shotover Investments Ltd., to provide urban design advice in relation to a proposed plan change to rezone land adjoining Hansen Road and State Highway 6 from Low Density Residential to a zone capable of accommodating a mix of commercial and high density residential uses. The following report provides an analysis of the land in relation to its surrounding context and sets out key urban design considerations to be addressed by the proposed Plan Change.

Following a site visit and an analysis of the subject land and the evolving settlement pattern of the Frankton Flats, the writer has provided advice setting out urban design considerations for the development of appropriate District Plan provisions.

The report is set out in the following manner:

- Section 2:** Provides an overview of the various statutory and non-statutory documents that have guided the assessment;
- Section 3:** Sets out a description and analysis of the subject site in relation to its surrounding context;
- Section 4:** Sets out the current District Plan provisions that relate to the site and analyses their appropriateness in the context of the evolving surrounding environment.
- Section 5:** Sets out the key urban design principles/considerations that should be addressed in the Plan Change provisions.
- Section 6:** Sets out conclusions from the analysis carried out.

## 2. Guiding Documents

The overarching purpose of the Resource Management Act (1991) (the Act) is to manage natural and physical resources in a manner that enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while:

- Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
- Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and
- Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.

Within this overarching statutory framework, a number of statutory and non-statutory documents are relevant and have informed the following urban design assessment.

### **The Queenstown Lakes District Operative District Plan (2007)**

Chapter 3 of the Queenstown Lakes District Operative District Plan (2007) (the “District Plan”) sets out a vision for the sustainable management of the District’s natural and physical resources. It notes that community aspirations for the District involve four basic elements:

- (i) *ensuring that activities can be supported by and do not deplete or damage the natural resources of air, water, ecosystems and the land and the intrinsic values these provide, especially the visual amenity.*
- (ii) *enable the social, economic and health concerns of the community to be met by appropriate services and facilities.*
- (iii) *identifying and enhancing those values or resources, both natural and physical, which provide the community character and image of the District and which in turn allows both individuals and communities to provide for their social and economic well being, both now and in the future.*
- (iv) *ensuring that growth and development does not compromise those resources and amenities which are the reasons why people choose to live in and visit the District<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> Section 3.6, Queenstown Lakes District Operative District Plan, 2007

A District-wide policy framework is set out in Chapter 4. Section 4.2 relates to landscape and visual amenity, with an overarching objective to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity values<sup>2</sup>. In relation to this objective, Policy 7 seeks:

*To identify clearly the edges of:*

- (a) *Existing urban areas;*
- (b) *Any extensions to them; and*
- (c) *Any new urban areas*
  - *by design solutions and to avoid sprawling development along the roads of the district.*

Section 4.9 relates to urban growth and seeks to ensure growth and development occurs in a manner that maintains the quality of the environment and its landscape values, and is responsive to the built character and amenity of existing urban areas<sup>3</sup>. The framework also seeks to achieve a land-use pattern that promotes a close relationship and good access between living, working and leisure environments<sup>4</sup>.

Objective 6 relates specifically to the Frankton Flats area and states:

*Objective 6 – Frankton*

*Integrated and attractive development of the Frankton Flats locality providing for airport operations, in association with residential, recreation, retail and industrial activity while retaining and enhancing the natural landscape approach to Frankton along State Highway No. 6.*

### **A Growth Management Strategy for the Queenstown Lakes District (2007)**

The Council has prepared the Growth Management Strategy to help guide the Council and the community in planning for the future growth and development of the District. It is a non-statutory document. Section 2 of the Strategy sets out a number of principles the Council will apply when managing growth pressures that the District faces. Of particular relevance to this assessment are the following principles:

- Growth is located in appropriate areas to protect the environment, consolidate development in high density areas and to support new growth areas where these are needed;
- The quality of the environment is improved through good design of individual developments and precincts.

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<sup>2</sup> Obj. 4.2.5, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Sec. 4.9.3, Obj. 1 and 2, Queenstown Lakes District Operative District Plan, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Sec. 4.9.3, Obj. 4, *ibid.*

## **The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol**

The following assessment is also guided by the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. It is a non-statutory document that has been prepared by the Ministry for the Environment in conjunction with an Urban Design Advisory Group to provide a platform to make New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design. It forms part of the Government's Sustainable Development Programme of Action and Urban Affairs portfolio. The vision for the Protocol is:

*Making New Zealand towns and cities more successful through quality urban design.*

The Urban Design Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities that create quality urban design – the seven C's. These are: context; character; choice; connections; creativity; custodianship and collaboration. These design qualities are based on sound urban design principles that are recognised and demonstrated throughout the world. Both the Queenstown Lakes District Council and RA Skidmore Urban Design Ltd. are signatories to the Urban Design Protocol.

## **Queenstown Lakes District Urban Design Strategy (November 2009)**

In fulfilling its commitment to the Urban Design Protocol, the Queenstown Lakes District Council has prepared an Urban Design Strategy (November 2009). While a non-statutory document, it provides a useful guide in setting out the Council's current approach to addressing urban design considerations. The strategy identifies 6 key urban design goals that represent the community's aspirations for its urban environments:

- Distinctive built form – creating neighbourhoods that reflect their people, culture and history;
- High quality public places – that complement the appeal of the natural setting and foster economic vitality and community well-being;
- Consolidated growth – within urban boundaries with walkable, mixed use neighbourhoods that help reduce travel time and urban sprawl;
- Connected urban form – ensuring people have clear options of transport mode that are convenient, efficient and affordable;
- Sustainable urban environments – where the natural environment, land uses and transport network combine towards a healthier environment for everyone;
- Cohesive communities – where the urban environment promotes a stronger sense of local community by encouraging participation in public life.

### 3. Site and Context Analysis

#### The Site

*Refer 'Site and Immediate Context' plan (Attachment 1)*

The land that is subject to the proposed Plan Change (the "site") is located at the corner of Frankton-Ladies Mile (State Highway 6) and Hansen Road. It has an area of 2.08 ha. The land is generally flat with a hill immediately to the north rising steeply behind the area subject to the proposed Plan Change. The hill area behind the subject land is zoned Rural General.



*View into site from south west*

The site has a generally rectangular proportion with a frontage of approximately 200m to State Highway 6. An unformed paper road cuts through the site in the vicinity of the State Highway 6/Hansen Road intersection and segregates a small site (456m<sup>2</sup>) with frontage to both Hansen Road and the unformed paper road.

An existing house is located in the south eastern corner of the site. A number of mature trees are located around the dwelling. In particular, a Copper Ash tree is a distinctive specimen tree that contributes to the visual amenity of the site. The balance of the site is kept in pasture. Large scale mature poplar trees are located along the Frankton-Ladies Mile frontage and along the western boundary.

#### Context Analysis

*Refer 'Broad Context Analysis Plan' (Attachment 2)*

The subject site forms part of an environment that is undergoing considerable urban transformation. Layers of natural and cultural influence contribute to the urban structure, function and character of the area.

### **Landforms-landscape values**

The subject site sits within a spectacular landscape setting that is a widely valued resource in the District. A number of water features create edges and focal features in the wider landscape but do not have any direct influence over the subject site. These include Lake Wakatipu to the west, Lake Johnston to the north, the Shotover River to the north east and the Kawarau River to the south east.

The site sits at the foot of a steep hill slope. Directly behind the Plan Change parcel the hill rises steeply. The hill landform provides a distinctive north western backdrop to the Frankton Flats. Further to the north the hill lowers. The glacial landform has a gently rounded form. In contrast, the high jagged range of the Remarkables provides a more distant but spectacular backdrop to the urban settlement to the southeast. Other mountain ranges, both immediate and more distant, contribute to the visual dominance of varied natural landforms.



*Hills form a backdrop to the subject site*



*Mountains form distinctive landmarks in the wider context*

### **Movement network**

A full description of the movement network as it is currently configured and is likely to evolve is set out in the report by Traffic Design Group. The subject site is bounded by State Highway 6. This road corridor is an important axis that carries large volumes of traffic and is the main entrance to the heart of Queenstown. The intersection with Kawarau Road forms a major node and is controlled by a round-about. An additional roundabout is proposed to the east of the subject site at the Grant Road – State Highway 6 intersection in association with the development of the Frankton Flats zone.

In the immediate vicinity of the subject site, Hansen Road and Joe O'Connell Drive intersect with the State Highway.



*Intersection of State Highway 6 with Joe O'Connell Drive, Hansen Road and unformed paper road*

Pedestrian connections through the area are fragmented. A footpath is located along the frontage of the subject site however this does not currently connect with any paths to the east or west. A pedestrian path runs through the open space corridor on the southern side of the State Highway. However this walkway is not well connected with the surrounding environment.



*Pedestrian path along subject site frontage*

The State Highway creates a considerable barrier to north-south pedestrian movements across the corridor. Existing and proposed roundabouts do not facilitate easy pedestrian movements.

### **Open Space network**

A large and significant open space area is located across the State Highway from the subject site. The open space contains a range of active recreation playing fields, an events centre and indoor aquatic centre. The Frankton Golf Course is located on the corner of the Frankton-Ladies Mile and Kawarau Road (both part of State Highway 6).

The Frankton Flats zone on the southern side of the State Highway requires a 50m building setback from the road corridor with a requirement for the set-back area to be landscaped. This area has been planted and contains young specimen trees and a pedestrian path.

The subject site is a short distance from the Frankton Arm of Lake Wakatipu and the recreational opportunities provided both on the Lake and around its margins.

### **Land-use patterns**

The land-use patterns in the wider Frankton Flats area are evolving rapidly. Established and expanding commercial nodes are located at the intersection of the Frankton-Ladies Mile and Kawarau Road and at Remarkables Park to the south of the airport. While the Corner Shopping Centre zone is limited to the southern side of the State Highway corridor the establishment of the Terrace Junction centre on the northern side of the corridor, together with the adjoining BP petrol station, has extended the commercial node to straddle the State Highway corridor.



#### ***Commercial development on either side of the State Highway***

A church has recently established adjacent to the subject site with frontage to Hansen Road. The State Highway corridor further to the east is bounded by a range of uses. A small cluster of industrial activity is located on the northern side of the corridor opposite Grant Road. The main industrial area for the Frankton area is accessed from the State Highway via Glenda Drive and runs along the upper terrace above the Shotover River corridor.



*City Impact Church*

The land that is zoned “Frankton Flats Special Zone” has been excavated to accommodate a large basement carpark. However, above ground development has not progressed. The zone provides for a wide range of residential, commercial, visitor accommodation and educational uses as a Discretionary activity and is guided by a structure plan that sets out the distribution of activities and requirements for viewshafts and landscaping.

A Plan Change has been promoted for land to the east of Grant Road (Frankton Flats B). A decision has been released on the Plan Change. However this is subject to a number of appeals. The Plan Change seeks to enable the establishment of a range of educational, residential, visitor accommodation, commercial, industrial, business and recreational activities. It enables a significant area of urban expansion on the southern side of the State Highway. The spatial configuration enabled is guided by a structure plan.

The Queenstown Airport is an important and dominant land-use in the Frankton Flats area. The activity poses limitations on the ability to achieve connections through the area and places limitation on surrounding activities particularly in relation to noise generation.

An historic cemetery is located immediately to the west of the subject site. The stone boundary wall and gate are listed in the District Plan as a Category 2 protected heritage feature (Item 47)



*Historic cemetery*

## 4. Current Zoning

The site is currently zoned Low Density Residential. The site forms part of a band of Low Density Residential zoning that extends along the foot of the hill from Hansen Road back towards Frankton Road to the west. The sites to the east and west have been developed for alternative uses. To the west commercial activities including the Terrace Junction comprehensive retail/commercial development has recently established. To the east, the City Impact Church has been constructed.

As shown in the indicative subdivision plans prepared by Clark Fortune McDonald, the subject site is capable of accommodating approximately 20 duplex capable residential sites. In terms of the evolving activity mix and character of the surrounding environment, it is considered that this is not an appropriate use of the land in an urban design sense.

State Highway 6 is an important transport route through the area and its function will be reinforced in the future with increased use. The State Highway corridor does not provide a setting with an amenity that would be anticipated for a low density residential environment. Given the character of the road corridor and the proportions of the subject site, it is likely that a subdivision layout would create rear boundaries along the State Highway boundary. The District Plan also includes a site standard (7.5.5.2 (xv)) requiring all vehicular access to this site to be via Hansen Road. In this instance it is likely that a poor interface, often referred to as "reverse lotting", would eventuate in relation to the State Highway. This would result in a reduced amenity for the State Highway corridor.

The same Site Standard sets out minimum standards for planting along the State Highway frontage. While this would ensure some level of cohesiveness along the frontage, there is no further control on fencing or building forms and how they would be viewed from the street.

Overall, it is considered that in the context of the evolving character and mix of uses in the immediate and wider area, a Low Density Residential zone is not appropriate for the subject site. Development of the site for low density residential purposes would create a small and isolated enclave that would be dislocated from other low density living environments. The State Highway is a heavily trafficked environment that would encourage a poor interface with a low density residential activity.

## 5. Urban Design – Guiding Principles

In order to determine an appropriate development framework for the Plan Change area it is important to consider a number of general good urban design principles (responding to matters set out in the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and the Queenstown Lakes District Urban Design Strategy) together with the key structuring elements of the surrounding evolving urban environment.

Following is a series of urban design principles and considerations together with recommendations for how the Plan Change can respond to these.

### **Enable establishment of a range of activities that are compatible with surrounding evolving environment**

*[Relates to Context and Choice design qualities set out in NZUDP]*

*Relates to Goal 3 (Consolidated growth) and Goal 5 (Sustainable urban environments) of QLDC Urban Design Strategy]*

- Enable the establishment of a mix of retail, commercial, visitor accommodation and residential activities;
- Ensure reasonable residential amenity is achieved without diminishing the character and amenity of the public realm.

#### **District Plan Method**

- » Provide for retail and commercial activities;
- » Provide for residential and visitor accommodation above ground level.

### **Recognise the State Highway as important axis through area**

*[Relates to Context, Character, and Connections design qualities set out in NZUDP]*

*Relates to Goal 2 (High Quality Public Places) and Goal 5 (Sustainable urban environments) of QLDC Urban Design Strategy]*

- Require a setback of buildings from the State Highway;
- Require cohesive and comprehensive planting along the State Highway boundary;
- Limit fencing along the State Highway boundary;
- Encourage buildings to be configured to create a positive interface with the State Highway;

- Ensure varied building forms (including roofscape) and architectural quality that makes a positive contribution to the State Highway amenity.
- Maintain a visual connection to the interior of the site from the State Highway;
- Ensure parking areas do not dominate the State Highway frontage.

### **District Plan Method**

- » Require a 5m setback from the State Highway boundary (same as current setback requirement);
- » Require preparation of a comprehensive landscape plan to include details of planting along frontage (consistent with requirements currently set out in District Plan) and boundary treatment and interface with buildings;
- » Limit the height of boundary walls along the frontage;
- » Require a Development Plan (DP) for the whole site to ensure the configuration of development blocks maintains a positive interface with the State Highway;
- » Require DP to demonstrate visual connections between the State Highway and the interior of the site;
- » Require DP to demonstrate the location of surface parking areas predominantly screened from view from the State Highway;
- » Reserve control over building design to ensure a varied, interesting and positive interface with the State Highway (should demonstrate visual richness through physical stepping, variation of materials and colours, architectural details to achieve articulation, varied roof forms, visual relationship between buildings and street maintained by using large areas of glazing).

### **Respect topography**

*[Relates to Context and Character design qualities set out in NZUDP*

*Relates to Goal 5 (Sustainable urban environments) of QLDC Urban Design Strategy]*

- Step height up toward north of site against the hill backdrop;

### **District Plan Method**

- » Maintain a lower height limit at southern end of site (State Highway interface) – two levels (9m);
- » Allow higher building forms in the northern area of the site – three levels (14m)

### **Respect character and amenity of historic cemetery**

*[Relates to Context, Character and Custodianship design qualities set out in NZUDP*

*Relates to Goal2 (High quality public places) and Goal 5 (Sustainable urban environments) of QLDC Urban Design Strategy]*

- Maintain building setback from cemetery boundary;
- Maintain lower scale of buildings at interface with cemetery
- Ensure building design creates a quality built interface with cemetery.

### **District Plan Method**

- » Require 4m setback off cemetery boundary;
- » Maintain lower height limit (2 levels, 9m) along full length of cemetery boundary;
- » Provide assessment criterion to ensure building design at the western end of the site addresses the cemetery character and amenity.

### **Capitalise on views to surrounding landscape features**

*[Relates to Context, and character design qualities set out in NZUDP*

*Relates to Goal 1 (Distinctive built form) of QLDC Urban Design Strategy]*

- Enable additional height in the southern area of the site to obtain views across the site to the mountains in the wider context;
- Require large areas of glazing for buildings along the State Highway frontage to maintain a visual connection to the wider landscape setting.

### **District Plan Method**

- » Stepped height limits (as above) from south to north of site;
- » Assessment criteria for building design to ensure glazing maintains a visual connection to surrounding landscape (particularly for buildings along State Highway interface).

### **Ensure a cohesive and high amenity environment is created**

*[Relates to Character, Choice, Connections, and Creativity design qualities set out in NZUDP*

*Relates to Goal 1 (Distinctive built form), Goal 2 (High quality public places) Goal 4 (Connected urban form) and Goal 6 (Cohesive communities) of QLDC Urban Design Strategy]*

- Ensure accessways, parking areas, amenity open spaces and building blocks are configured in a manner that creates an efficient, easily navigated and pleasant environment with a high quality public realm;
- Require comprehensive landscape treatment of the site to contribute to the amenity and character of the site and surrounding environment. Consideration should be given to the retention of any existing specimen trees that make a particular contribution to the amenity of the area;
- Require open space amenity areas within the site;
- Ensure surface parking areas are visually broken with specimen tree planting, largely screened from view from the State Highway, and distributed in a manner that integrates well with adjoining buildings;
- Ensure storage and loading areas are appropriately located to service anticipated activities and are screened from view from public streets;
- Ensure good amenity for residential and visitor accommodation uses are maintained;
- Reserve control over building design to ensure contribution to the character and amenity of the site and wider environment.

### **District Plan Method**

- » Require an overall DP to ensure co-ordinated development on the site;
- » DP should demonstrate the location of accessways, building blocks, parking areas, outdoor open space and amenity spaces;
- » DP should set out an overall landscape concept for the site, demonstrating how retention of existing specimen trees, planting and hard landscaping is used to contribute to the legibility, amenity and character of the site, complementing building forms and mitigating adverse effects of surface parking areas;
- » Require service/storage areas to be screened from view from public streets;
- » Restrict residential and/or visitor accommodation to first floor or above;
- » Require minimum standards for outdoor living space for residential units;
- » Require entrances to upper level residential/visitor accommodation activities to be clearly differentiated and identified from ground level;
- » Include assessment criteria to ensure building forms are well resolved in a manner that contributes to the cohesion, amenity and character of the site and its surrounding context.

### **Provide good connectivity**

*[Relates to Connections design qualities set out in NZUDP*

*Relates to Goal 4 (Connected urban form) of QLDC Urban Design Strategy]*

- Ensure easily understood, direct and convenient movement of vehicles and pedestrians around the site is facilitated;
- Ensure pedestrian access is provided directly to all buildings;
- Ensure good pedestrian connections are provided to the surrounding street network and any established walking trails.

### **District Plan Method**

- » Require DP to set out pedestrian and vehicular circulation through the site and how it connects to the surrounding network of streets and trails.

## 6. Conclusions

The subject site forms part of an environment that is undergoing considerable urban transformation. Recent and planned retail, commercial and community facility development in the site's context mean that the Low Density Residential zone that currently applies to the site is no longer appropriate.

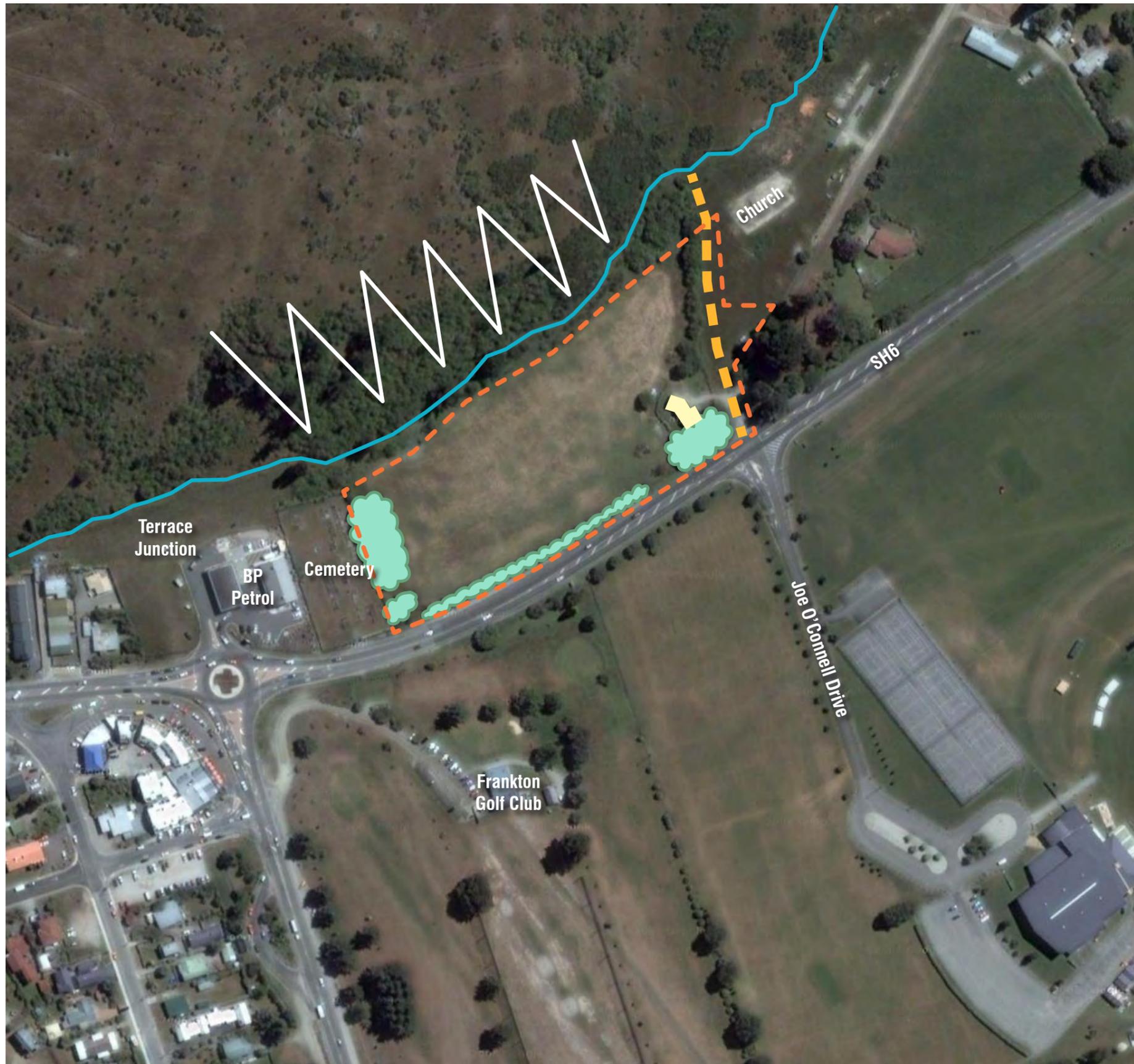
The opportunity exists to create a special zone that is tailored to the characteristics of the site and the way it relates to its surrounding context. From an urban design perspective it is considered that the site is well positioned to accommodate a range of retail, commercial, residential and visitor accommodation activities.

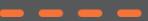
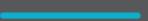
A number of urban design principles/considerations have been determined in response to an analysis of relevant guiding statutory and non-statutory documents and recommendations made for development of appropriate District Plan provisions. These relate to:

- Enabling establishment of a range of activities that are compatible with surrounding evolving environment;
- Recognising the State Highway as an important axis through the area;
- Respecting topography;
- Respecting the character and amenity of the historic cemetery;
- Capitalising on views to surrounding landscape features;
- Ensuring a cohesive and high amenity environment is created;
- Providing good connectivity.

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**February 2011**



KEY	
	Plan change boundary
	Steep hill slope
	Water race
	Mature on-site vegetation
	House
	Paper road

Aerial photograph sourced from Google Earth™ mapping service



KEY	
	Subject site
	Watercourses - defining landscape features
	Steep hill slope
	Main transport routes
	Minor roads in vicinity of site
	Commercial nodes
	Industrial activity
	Airport activity
	Recreation facilities:
	1. Events centre and aquatic centre
	2. Golf course / driving range
	Historic cemetery
	Church

Aerial photograph sourced from Google Earth™ mapping service