



New England High Country Ideas for townscape improvements

Armidale	Bundarra
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Introduction

This report identifies some ideas, concepts and projects for the towns and villages of Armidale, Guyra, Uralla, Walcha, Bundarra, Hillgrove, Wollomombi and Ebor on behalf of Armidale Dumaresq Council. The ideas are to provoke discussions with the community on how their towns and villages could be enhanced now and into the future.

The concept and master plans have been prepared based on a desktop review of available information including the Social and Community Plan prepared in 2009 and site visits undertaken at the end of September 2015. Concept and master plans have been prepared using available documentation including aerial photography from Google Earth Pro and cadastre information if available.

The Social and Community Plan (2009) covers the Local Government Areas of Armidale, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha. It identified various issues and recommendations for improvements for some of the towns and villages. A summary of the key issues identified at that time are outlined in the following table.

Our key observations from the site visits and desktop review are as follows:

Themes / Destination

- Each town or village has its own theme or contributes to an overall theme for the High Country, which assists in creating a much larger destination, e.g.
 - Armidale - Cathedral City with significant heritage and provides all of the services for the region.
 - Guyra - Lamb + Potatoes Festival as well as its significant heritage and open space areas
 - Uralla - Heritage trail
 - Walcha - Premier public art town
 - Bundarra - Significant heritage buildings and the River
 - Ebor - The Waterfalls and the River
 - Hillgrove - Significant heritage, Gold and the Waterfalls
 - Wollomombi - Gold and the Waterfalls.

Tourism

- Heritage, gold or waterfall Trails (walking, hiking, horse, bicycle)
- Public art
- Riparian areas
- RV/caravan/truck overnight stays
- RV disposal areas
- Churches
- Cemeteries
- Festivals
- Communication - wifi
- Museums
- Culture
- Food
- Air shows
- Helipads

Connectivity / Permeability

- Wayfinding - gateway signage, signage
- Road design speed
- Street lighting
- Mobility
- Footpaths
- Cycleways
- Scooter ways
- Disabled parking spaces
- Pedestrian crossings
- Streetscape treatment - landscape, street trees, furniture, banners

Community and Open space facilities

- Playgrounds - safety, new equipment
- Recreational facilities - multi-use, skate parks, free facilities, outdoor exercise, jogging tracks, dog parks/facilities.
- Halls
- Libraries
- Art centres
- Outdoor venues

Social and Community Plan (2009) - Key Issues		
Armidale City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upgrade playgrounds• Fenced playgrounds• New playground equipment• Safety in playgrounds• Childcare centres• Scooter safety• Mobility issues• Disability parking spaces• Street advertising - safety risk to disabled• Free recreational activities• Lack of street lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Men's centre (Indigenous)• Unused train racks• Rail - trail venture• New library building• New England Regional Arts Museum (NERAM)• Upgrade of Armidale Dumaresq Folk Museum• Permanent stage including facilities to operate an outdoor cinema• Maintain the range of parks
Guyra	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agriculture• Annual Lamb & Potato Festival• Communication• Mother of Ducks Lagoon - upgrade• Little Llangothlin Lagoon - no sign posts• Waste - recycling plant• Flying the Australian Flag• Flying the Indigenous Flag• Play equipment upgrade - Rotary Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdoor basketball court• Pedestrian crossing - Bradley Street• Reduction speed - Bradley Street• New England Highway - reduce speed and pedestrian crossings.• Walking trails• Community centre• Short term camping - Moth of Ducks Lagoon
Uralla	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundries + tourism• Rocky River• Merino Sheep and wool• Orchards and wine• Wireless broadband• Tower Mount Mutton• Satellite tracking station• Galleries - pottery• Historic and heritage sites• Clubs - fossicking, bowling, golf• Greater access to sports equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvements to BMX track• Picnic tables, play ground• Catering all needs• Not enough sports• Mens Shed• Analogue to digital• Upgrade Gilmore Park• Signposting - Porter Park, Pioneer Park• Colocation of BMX and skate park at sportsground• Communication capabilities
Walcha	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aspley River• Main north railway line - Walcha Road - closest point to town due to steepness• Daily countrylink service - Sydney and Armidale• Mountain climate• Sheep grazing, cattle + timber• Disability parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shops - wheelchair access• Carpark visibility improved• Council's streetscape program• Open Air Gallery• Premier public art town• Cultural activities• Safety signs - slow speed• Off street parking limit
Bundarra	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K-12 Central School• \$20k grant - new playground equipment installed• No activities for youth - no tennis court, skatepark or cinema• Mens Shed• Swimming Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• River too low in summer to swim• Library not open enough - resources too old• Beautification of the town - new street trees (some street tree planting undertaken)• Attract people and make them stop and look around• Community vegetable patch, - Council purchase, plant and look after it.
Ebor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Village Link - Village view - 60% complete• Key services• Lack of infrastructure• Cater for tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local waterfalls• Footpaths• Public amenities• Community hall upgrade (\$50k grant)

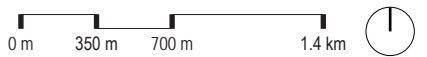
Armidale - Key Principles

Key Principles

1. Reinforcing the City Centre
 - Improve connectivity and permeability throughout the City and linking to the open space and other precincts.
 - Creation of a night time economy.
 - Improve activation and enhance the streetscape and the mall.
 - Possible redevelopment / transformational projects to reinforce the city centre.
2. Hospital / Railway Precinct
 - Potential for other urban renewal opportunities in Armidale exists within the existing heritage precincts, e.g. around the hospital/railway precinct that could be redeveloped as a mixed use health precinct including medical practices, consulting rooms, residential accommodation for staff and visiting staff.
3. Dumaresq Creek Open Space
 - Ensure connectivity along the corridor linking the city to the university.
 - Retain and enhance connections and views to and from the city centre.
4. University City
 - Continue and improve linkages with the University and TAFE.
 - University campus and student accommodation within the City Centre to improve the links between the university and the City to reinforce Armidale as a university centre, e.g. Cambridge, Oxford, New York.
5. Armidale Airport Precinct
 - Position New England Regional Airport as a growing hub.
 - Support and grow existing general aviation and aviation related business activity.
 - Diversify current airport income through expansion of the airport's property portfolio.
 - Upgrade and expand current airport infrastructure, capabilities and services.
6. Southern Bypass
 - Potential for a southern bypass from the New England Highway connecting the Armidale Airport precinct through to the Acacia Industrial Area and onto Waterfall Way.

- Legend
- ① Armidale City centre
 - ② Hospital and rail precinct
 - ③ Dumaresq Creek open space corridor
 - ④ University of New England
 - ⑤ Armidale Airport precinct
 - ⑥ Possible long term southern bypass
 - ⑦ Industrial precincts
 - ⑧ North west NSW line
 - ⑨ Disused railway line

Precinct overview



Armidale - City Centre Master Plan

Connectivity /Permeability

- ① Maintain, increase and improve connectivity and permeability by increasing and activating pedestrian links to the mall, car parks, open space and connecting to the civic centre.
- ② Reopen Dangar Street North to improve connectivity.
- ③ Reinstate the street grid pattern to improve connectivity and way finding and legibility including making the East and West Malls two way.
- ④ Link key precincts e.g. the City centre to the hospital and railway precincts through street tree planting and extension of cycleways/ pathways.

Creating Sticky Streets

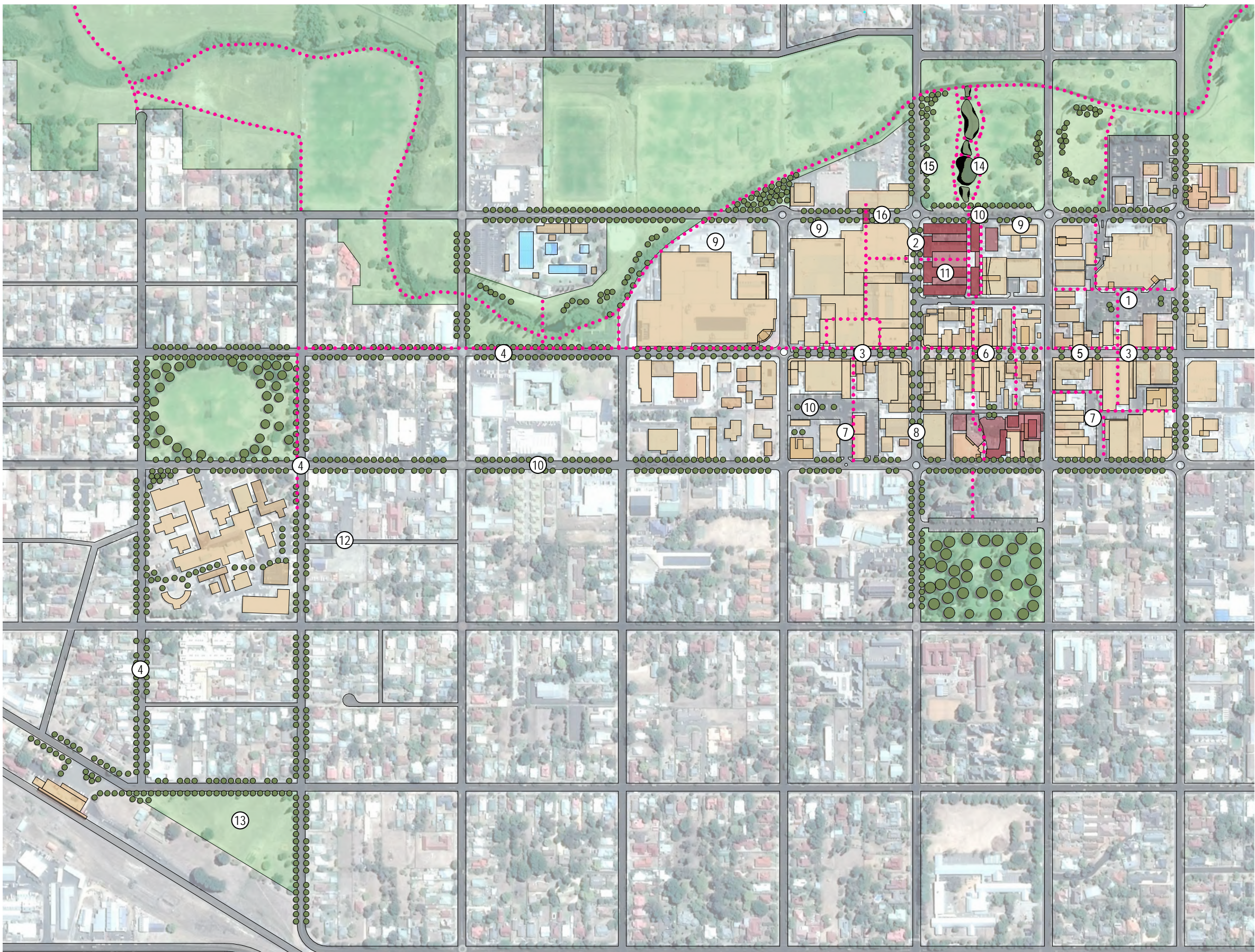
- ⑤ Activation of the city centre through vibrant and enticing shopfronts and street frontages.
- ⑥ Declutter, upgrade and update the Central Mall.
- ⑦ Reinforce the City Centre by improving the streetscape, activating laneways and car parks and inclusion of public art.
- ⑧ Encourage short term improvements, attractors and flexibility, e.g. parklets, 'park'ing days, food trucks, mobile flower vans, ibike, public performances.
- ⑨ Development to connect to and contribute to the Dumaresq Creek open space corridor and not present a blank wall onto the corridor.
- ⑩ Grow the green infrastructure by extending street planting, greening up car parking areas and the inclusion of bioswales, solar lights and green roofs.
Enable a night time economy.

Reinforcing the City Centre

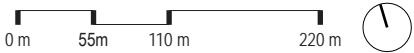
- ⑪ Undertake transformational projects, e.g. Redevelopment of the Dangar Street carpark. Promote development of key sites to activate the City, e.g. Integrating with the University/ TAFE to provide a City campus.
- ⑫ Potential to provide infill development to support the hospital / railway precinct subject to meeting heritage requirements.
- ⑬ Promote the local identity through its heritage, food/agriculture, university city, the hospital, street tree types, planting, art.
Incorporate gateway treatments at appropriate locations to include similar themed signage and landscape treatment.

Dumaresq Creek

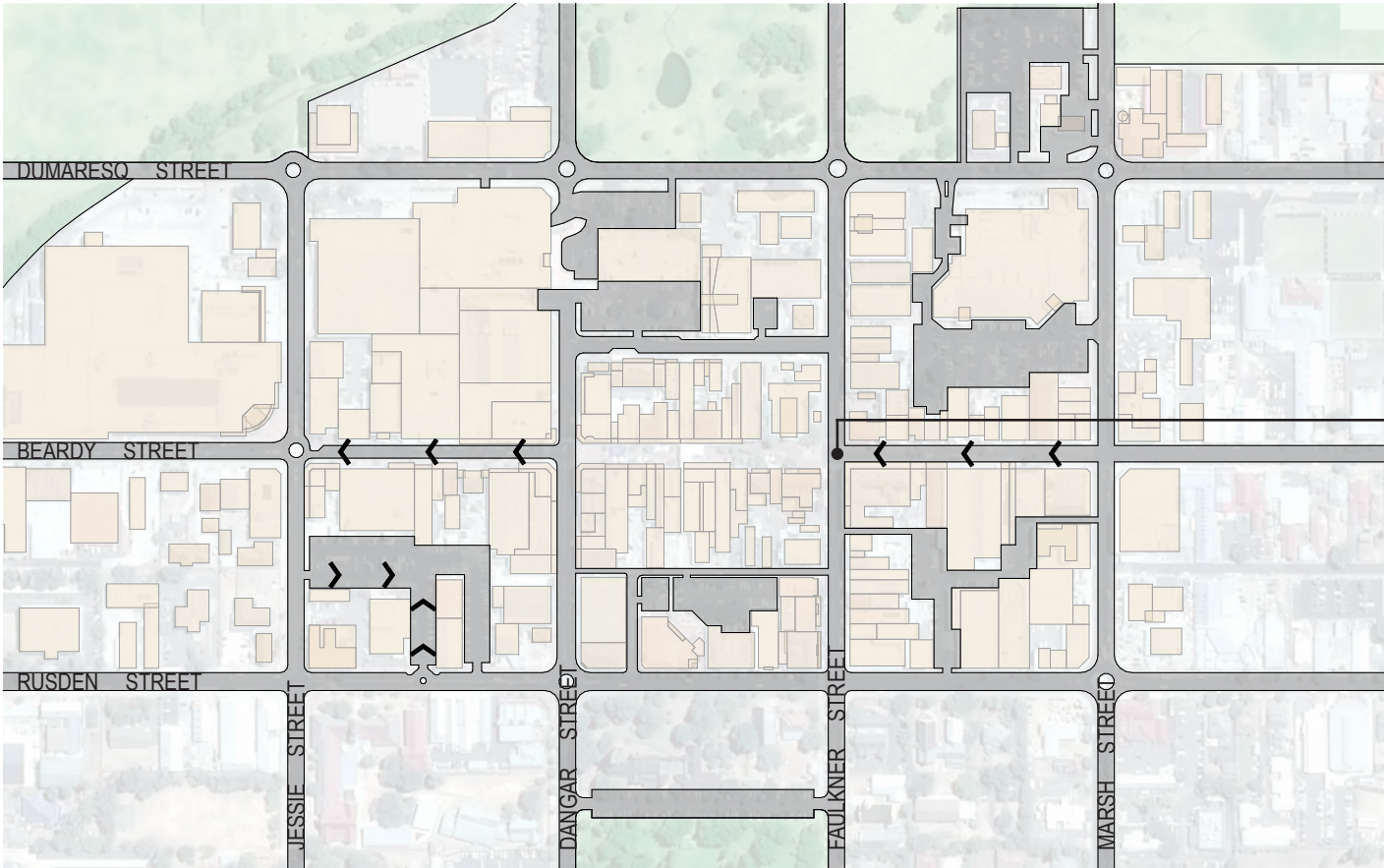
- ⑭ Enhance Dumaresq Creek open space corridor and link with pedestrian pathways to the city centre.
- ⑮ Provide additional coach and vehicular parking in close proximity to city centre.
- ⑯ Possible pedestrian overbridge linking the land uses across Dumaresq Street.



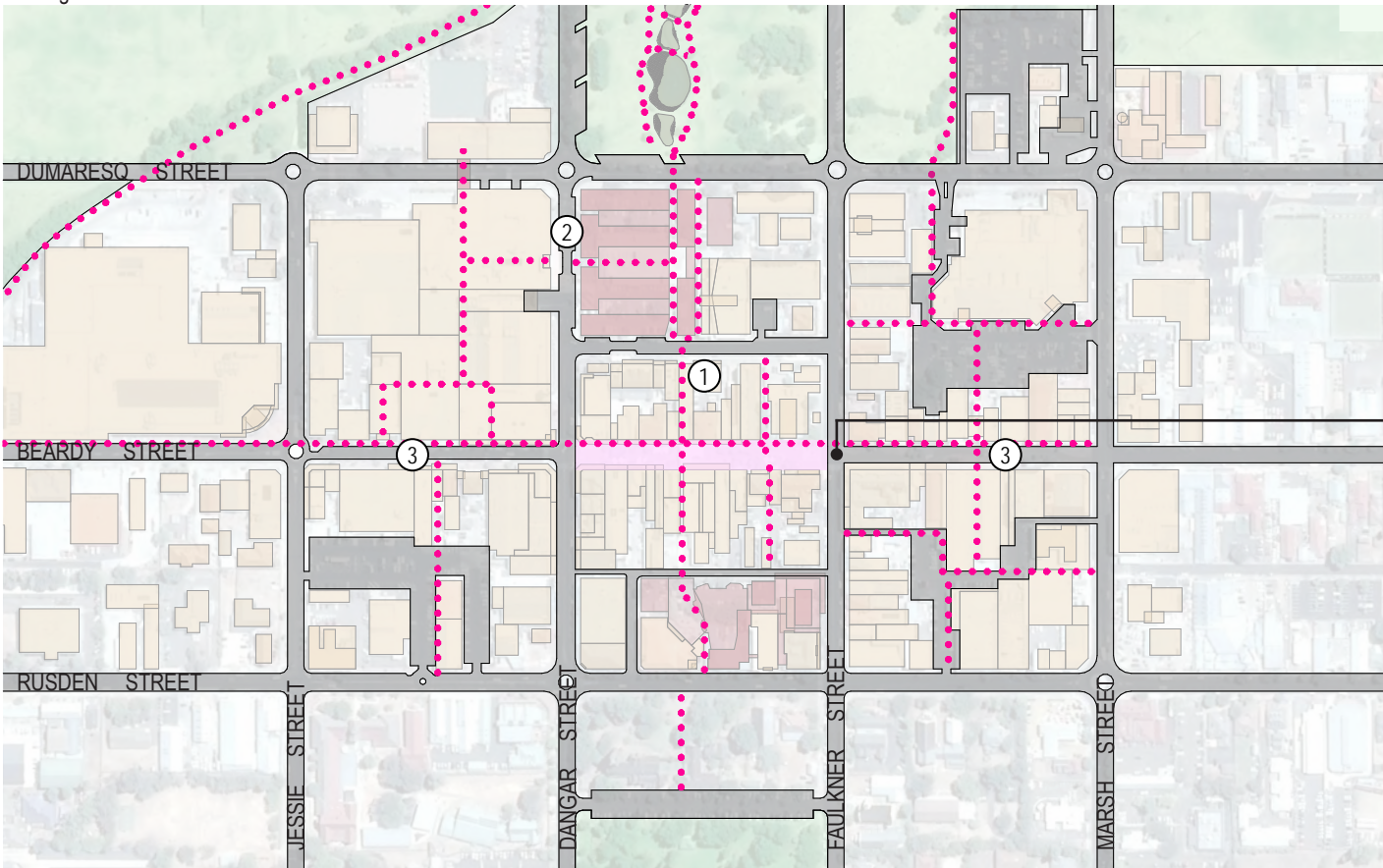
City Centre Master Plan



Armidale - Connectivity / Permeability



Existing road network



Proposed connections



Possible streetscape improvements - Beardy Street East Mall two way road network

- ① Maintain, increase and enhance pedestrian connections to improve the city's permeability.
- ② Reopen Dangar Street north to improve connectivity.
- ③ Reinstate the street grid pattern to improve connectivity and way finding and legibility including making the East and West Malls two way.

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets

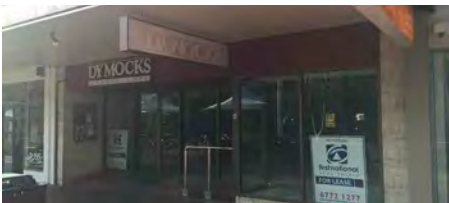
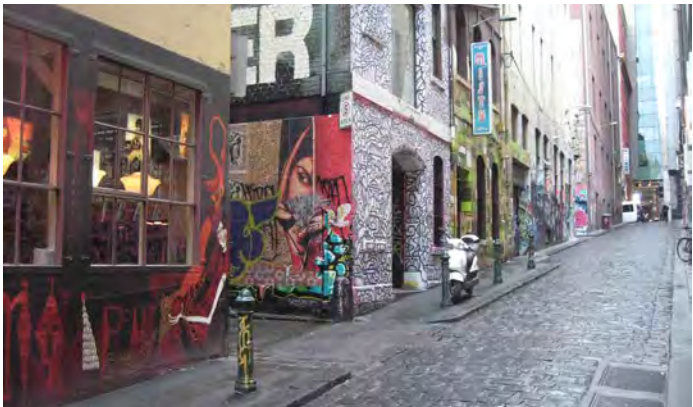
Activation

Create walkable and sticky streets. Sticky Streets are for people to enjoy and linger because of enticing opportunities to participate in public life and not just move through the street. A street is least sticky when there are blank walls or windows blocked with lifestyle images.

There are a number of blank and inactive shopfronts and walls throughout the city as shown on the following images. Shop owners and developers are encouraged to 'contribute to the streetscape'. There are a number of ways to improve activation through the presentation of the shopfront, the window displays, hanging window displays, art work or shown on the opposite images.

Vacant shopfronts should also contribute. This could include the upcoming events in the area. Attracting people to a shopfront also leads to releasing of that shop.

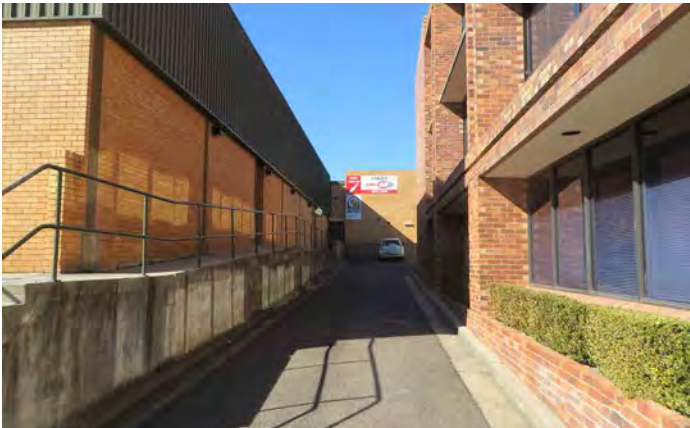
Screening of blank walls and carparks by sleeving development around the carpark or green walls or a landscape treatment assist in beautifying and / or activating the streetscape and enticing visitors to the city centre. New developments under construction should also be encouraged to create changes and contribute to the streetscape.



Existing shop fronts

Examples of shop front activation

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets



Existing blank walls



Examples of screening blank walls and carpark

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets

Activation

Streetscape improvements will improve the amenity for visitors and assist in slowing traffic and creating a walkable area. It is also the destinations that attract and stop visitors, eg the cafes, shops, and therefore window and building display is a key component. Flexibility and short improvements also are attractors such as parklets, 'park'ing days, public performances. Other people are the main attractions.



Possible improvements to the Dangar Street streetscape (view to the south from Rusden Street)

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets



Possible improvements of the Dangar Street streetscape (View looking north from Beardy Street)



Possible improvements to the Jesse Street and Beardy Street intersection

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets

Beardy Street Mall

The Beardy Street Mall is an important connector and central meeting space for the City of Armidale. Over time, additional infrastructure has been added without any coordination or continuity or theme. The various infrastructure located in the mall obscures the elevations of the shopfronts and it makes an unattractive space where visitors do not want to visit or linger. Some observations include:

- The sail structure makes a large area very dark in winter.
- There are eight different lighting types within the mall and another separate pole incorporating security cameras.
- There are a variety of bin types as well as a number of bins located at each end of Central Mall.
- A number of shopfronts do not contribute to the activation of the mall by having blank walls and windows and uninteresting window displays.
- The fountain is not used and is an immovable structure.
- There are many immovable structures including phone boxes, rubbish bins, bicycle racks, lights, security camera poles, shade structures, umbrellas, stage, seating, playgrounds, tables and chairs, signage, flag poles, banner poles, gardens, water fountain, water bubblers, fencing, street trees located within the Mall. Whilst this infrastructure is needed, the amount, type and location needs to be addressed. The immovability of this infrastructure restricts movement through the space as well as significantly decreasing the flexibility of the space and its future uses.



Beardy Street and Mall - Lighting - 8 different types



Beardy Street and Mall - Garbage Bins



Beardy Street and Mall - Immovable structures (excluding lights and garbage bins)

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets

Opportunities for the mall include:

- Declutter, upgrade and update.
- Incorporate as many north-south connectors leading to the malls as possible.
- Flexibility allows the space to be used for different events.
- People are the main attractions.



Artist impression of the upgrade and refurbishment of The Mall (view looking west)

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets



Artist impression of upgrading and refurbishment of The Mall (view looking east)



Artist impression upgrading and refurbishment of The Mall (view looking east)

Armidale - Creating Sticky Streets



Possible reactivation of the pedestrian link to the central mall



Possible reactivation of the pedestrian link to the central mall - 'the body wash'

Armidale - Reinforcing the City Centre

Dangar Street Carpark - Potential redevelopment

A potential site for renewal is the Dangar Street carpark. The carpark and closure of the street has disrupted the function of the flow particularly for visitors into town and reducing the ability to get access in and around the town centre and is an unsightly area for a carpark that has the potential to improve views to Dumaresq Creek.

The city centre is disconnected from Dumaresq Creek open space. It turns its back on the Dumaresq Creek and presents a wall of garages, carparks and blank buildings to one of the city's major attributes. The proposal would provide an activated street frontage and provide visual and physical connectivity between the city centre and the Dumaresq Creek Open space corridor.

A public carpark could still be incorporated by sleeving development around the carpark e.g. residential development, apartments or serviced apartments high accessibility to the town centre's amenities - shops, cafes, clubs, sporting facilities etc. Parking could also be provided as part of the Dumaresq open space corridor.

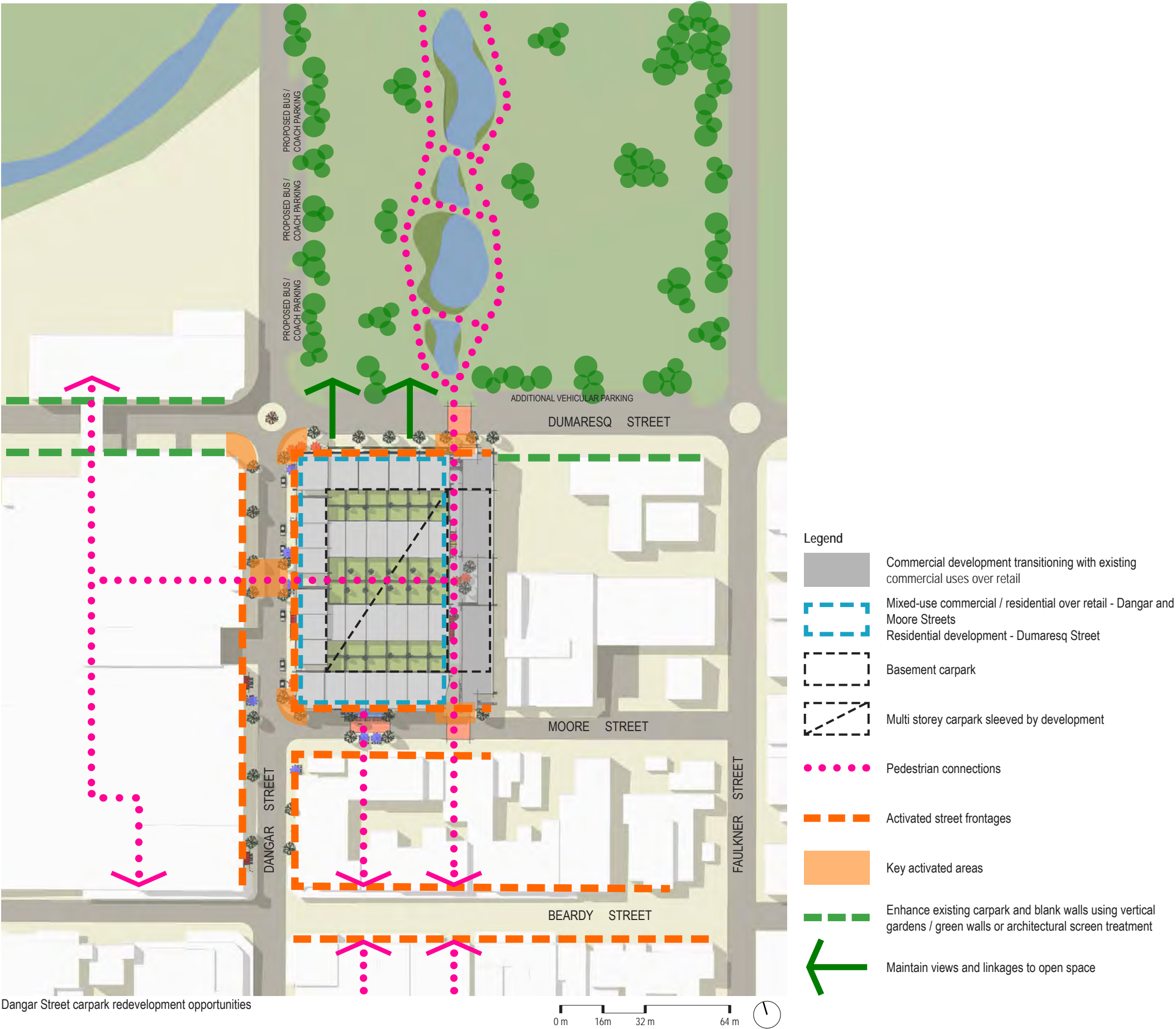
Consider opportunities to enhance Civic Park to make it an exciting and vibrant open space that will become a major outdoor recreational use for residents and visitors. Expanding the existing pond to create an interesting wetland with interpretative signage and attracting bird life and enhancing water quality. Provide additional seating and picnic shelters set in an intimate garden setting. Create a series of interlinked open spaces connected to the City. Possibility to include an outdoor performance venue.

Develop a landscape approach that might be based on various themes, such as sustainability, local heritage and cultural identity.

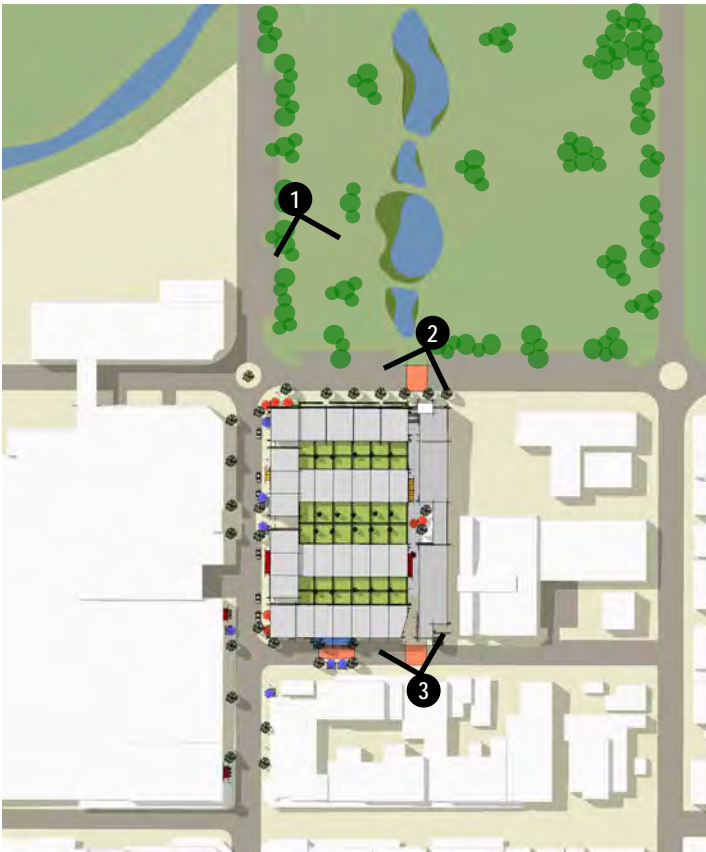
Alternatively there could be a potential for UNE to provide some campus infrastructure in the town centre supported with student accommodation to forge links between the university and the local community and reinforcing Armidale as a university city e.g. Cambridge, Oxford, New York and in a way that many other universities have a campus.

This redevelopment would also assist a night time economy by people living in the town centre.

The following provides a possible development scenario for the Dangar Street carpark.



Armidale - Reinforcing the City Centre



① Dangar Street North - raised eye view looking south



② View to the south from Dumaesq Street



③ View to the north from Moore Street

Armidale - Reinforcing the City Centre



④ View to the south from Dangar Street



⑤ View to the south from Dumaresq Street



⑥ View to the north-east from Dangar Street

Armidale - Reinforcing the City Centre



Artist impression of the reopened Dangar Street north

Guyra - Key Principles

The Town is a lineal form split by the rail corridor (disused) and the New England Highway. The Town centre is not obvious from the Highway with limited signposts and not easily visible.

An area has been designated on the Highway for vehicular parking and a pedestrian access provided to link to the Town Centre. Including the activation of the disused railway and creating east west pedestrian links across the railway.

Various streetscape improvements have been carried out throughout the Town. Guyra also has a significant heritage culture including buildings, parks, nature reserves, the disused rail stockyards and bridge and the avenue of trees in Coakes Park located throughout the Town, along the main street and in the surrounding areas. Guyra also has the Lamb and Potato Festival, which attracts many people each year.

Key Principles

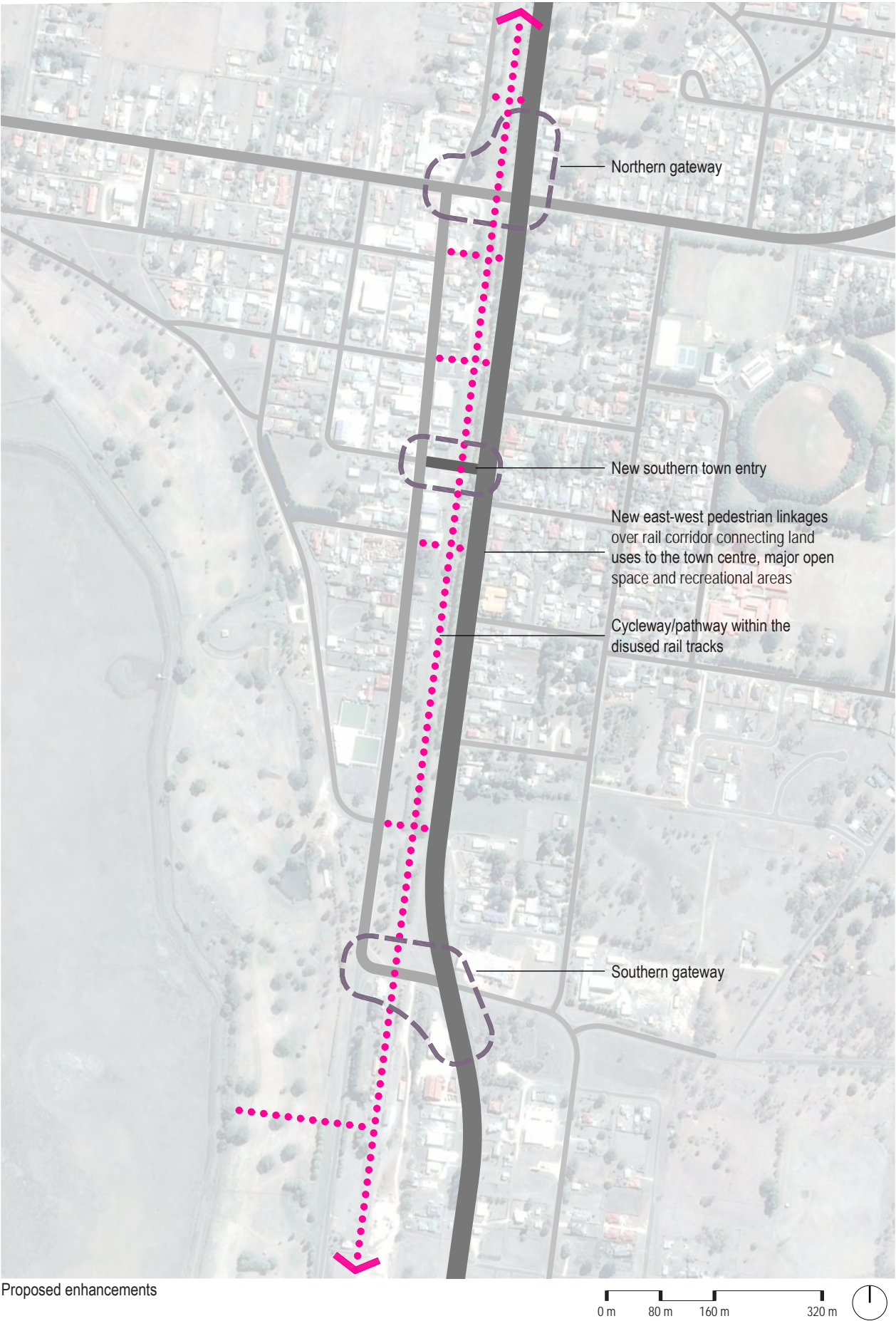
1. Reconnecting the Town Centre
 - Improve the east west links from and to the Town Centre, the open space and wetland areas and the school and hospital.
 - A new southern entry to the Town Centre would assist in better connection and providing a further opportunity for attracting visitors to the town.
 - Gateway treatments.
2. Enrich the cultural heritage
 - Promote the cultural heritage through heritage trails with signage and maps similar to Uralla's heritage scheme.
 - Encouragement of improvements to the front facades and setbacks within the Town through upgrading schemes.
3. Improving streetscape amenity
 - Continuation of the streetscape improvements along Bradley Street and at the gateways and the linkages to the Town Centre.

4. Creating additional attractions for the town
 - Activation of the disused railway with a cycle / pedestrian links along the railway connecting the town.
 - Incorporate various themes along the trail including:
 - Town entry - northern approach.
 - Town entry - southern approach.
 - Southern Gateway - creating a theme that is recognisable and distinct for Guyra and implement in the gateway areas to attract visitors.
 - Central meeting place - creation of an area where people will meet and connect visitors and residents.
 - Town Gardens - inclusion of outdoor activities such as gardens, basketball courts. Contribute to the Lamb and Potato Festival.
 - Railway precinct - Encourage complementary uses to promote the railway heritage.

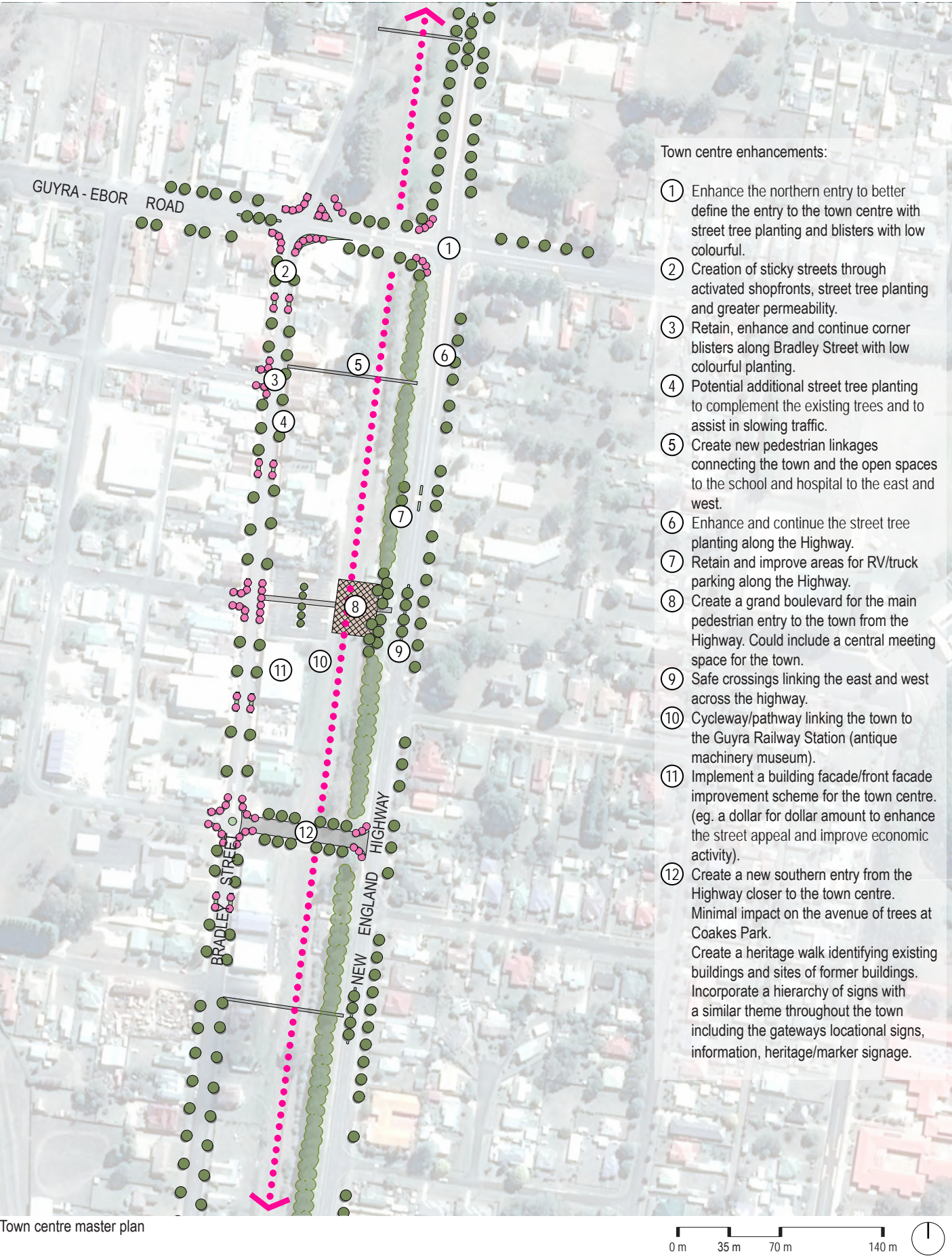
- Legend
- ① Guyra Town Centre
 - ② Railway Precinct
 - ③ Disused Railway Line
 - ④ Mother of Ducks Lagoon Nature Reserve
 - ⑤ Guyra Showgrounds
 - ⑥ Guyra Central School
 - ⑦ Guyra Public Hospital
 - ⑧ Industrial Precincts
 - ⑨ Guyra Sewerage Treatment Works

Precinct overview

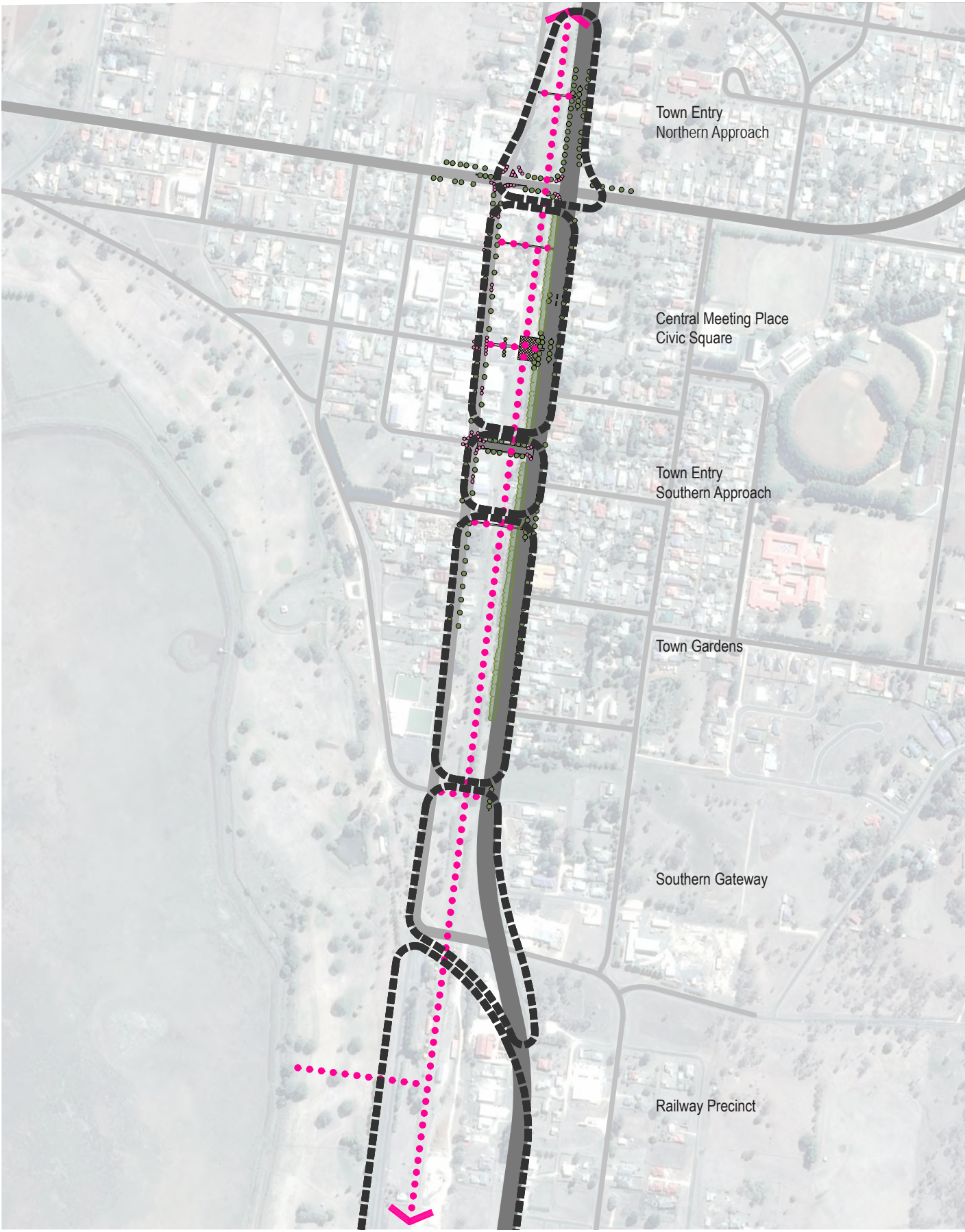
Guyra - Town Centre Master Plans



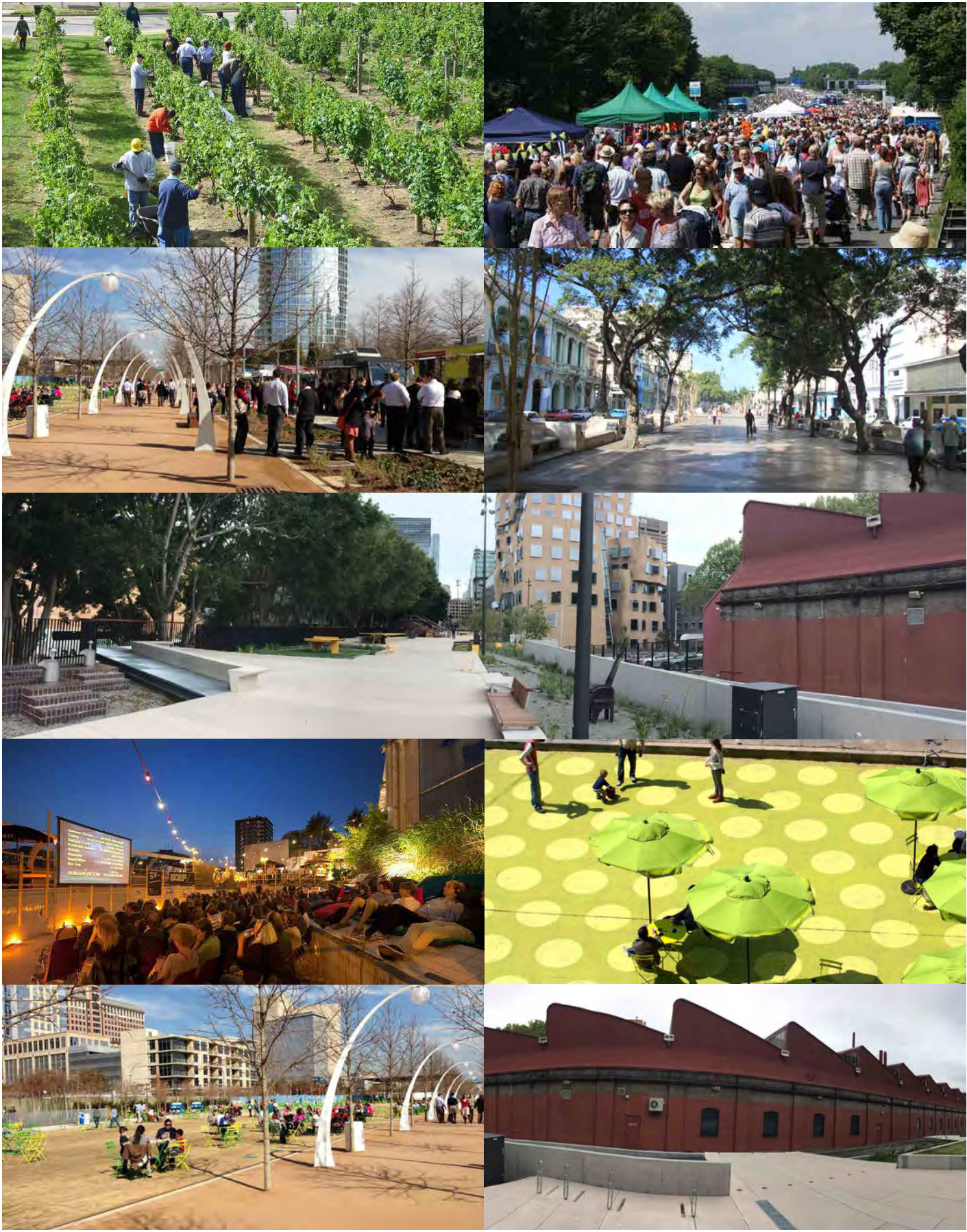
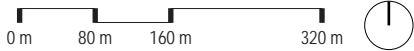
Guyra - Town Centre Master Plans



Guyra - Town Centre Master Plans



Potential precincts for the trail



Examples of treatment for large linear areas

Guyra - Town Centre Master Plans



Artist Impression of possible streetscape improvements to Bradley Street

Uralla - Key Principles



Uralla - Town Centre Master Plans



Artist impression of the New England Highway streetscape

Uralla - Town Centre Master Plans



Southern entry streetscape



Northern entry signage - New England Highway



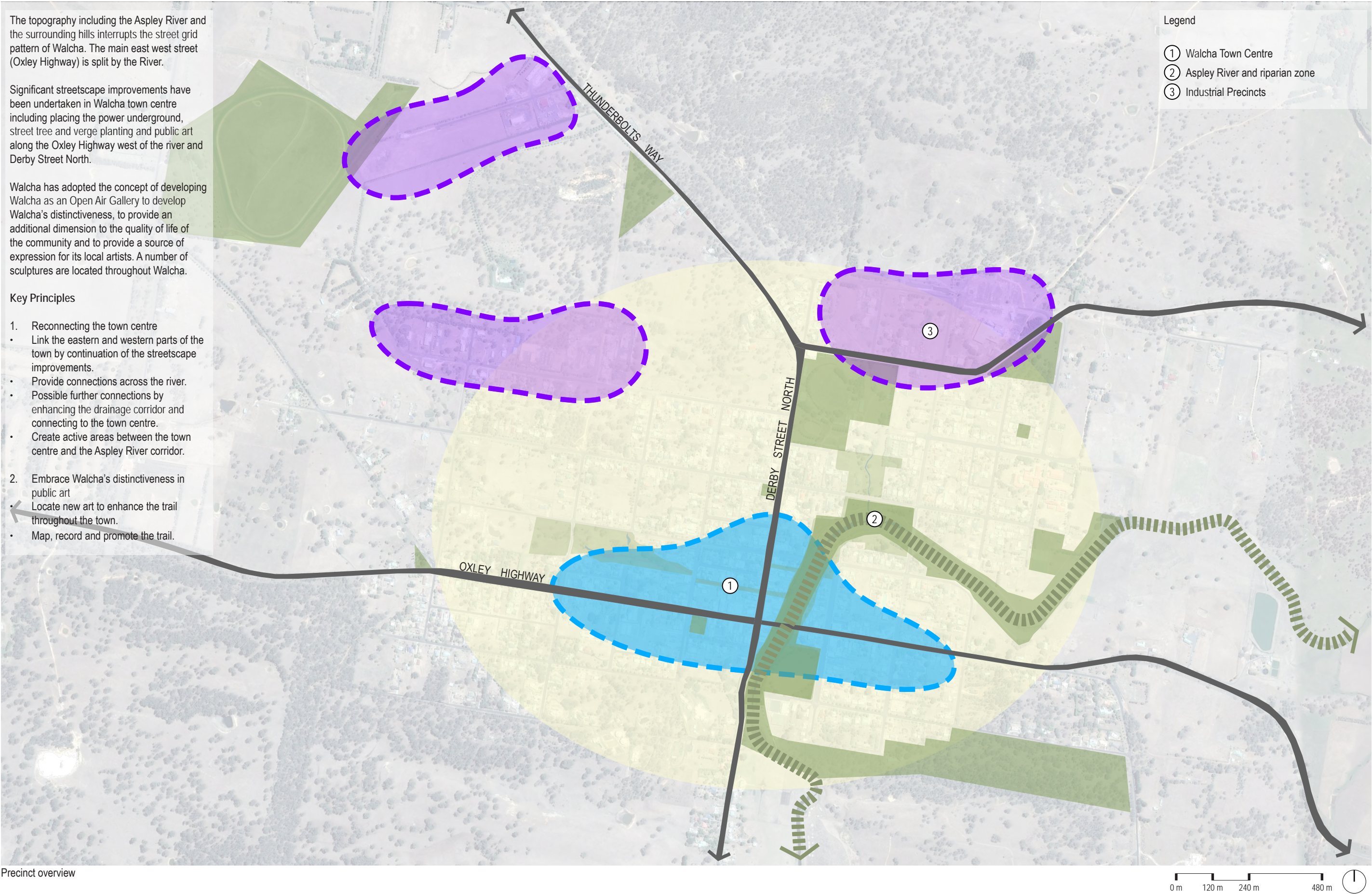
Southern entry signage - New England Highway



Eastern entry signage - Thunderbolts Way
Existing signage



Walcha - Key Principles



Precinct overview

Walcha - Town Centre Master Plans



Walcha - Town Centre Master Plans



Artist impression of possible streetscape improvements to Oxley Highway west linking the main street

Bundarra

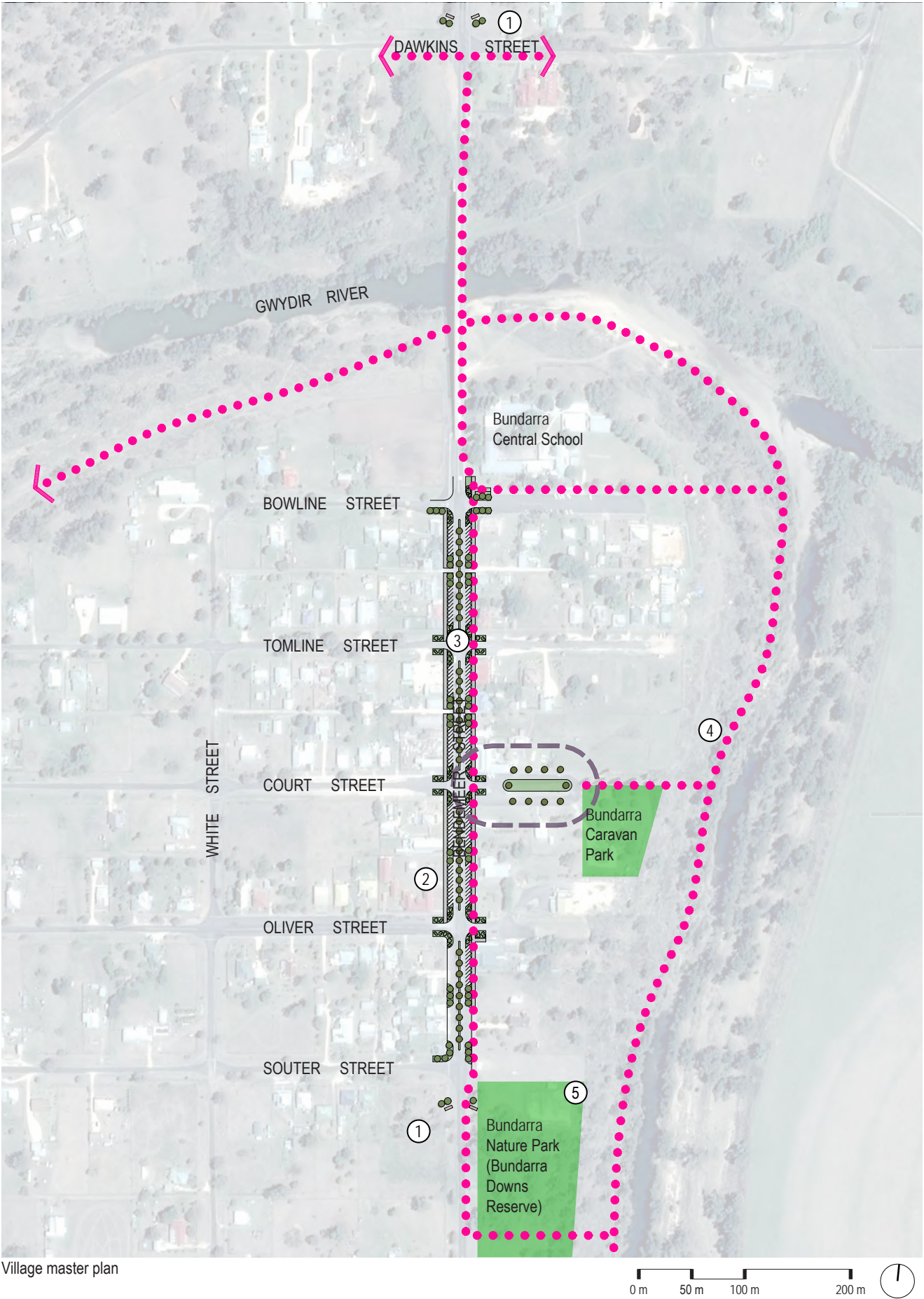
Bundarra has many attributes to offer its residents and visitors including the Gwydir River, the Bundarra Nature Reserve, the wide streetscape and the number of significant heritage buildings particularly along its main street.

A Draft Management Plan has been prepared for the Bundarra Nature Reserve (Bundarra Downs Reserve), which proposes a new cricket run, tennis courts to be resurfaced, the area to be fenced using stock fence and environmental conservation. It states that the projects are to be undertaken by the school children.



Existing built form

Bundarra



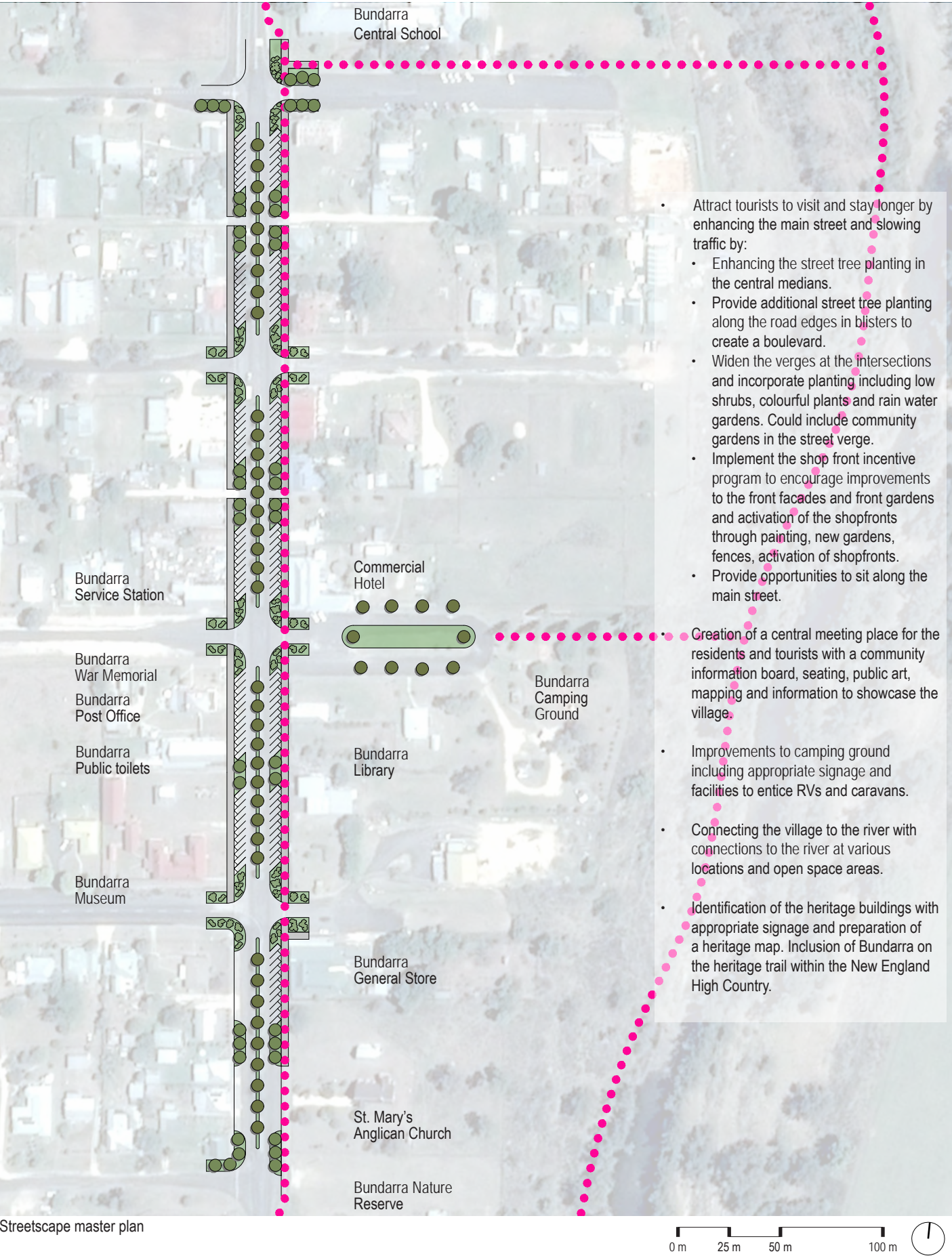
Village master plan

- ① Gateway treatment on the northern, southern and western approaches welcoming visitors as well as identifying the services in the village.
- ② Capitalise on the significant heritage buildings located in the village by developing the heritage theme through improvements to facades, fences, signage and a trail.
- ③ Enhance the main street by additional street planting in the medians, corners and along the verges and in blisters to assist in enticing visitors to stay.
- ④ Connecting the village and the open space:
 - Provide linkages to the Gwydir River
 - Provide an informal walking trail along the Gwydir River linking the village with the Nature Reserve, Caravan park, the school and the showground and the river.
- ⑤ Enhancement of the Nature Reserve in conjunction with the community including:
 - New cricket run
 - Resurfaced tennis courts
 - Rural stock fence
 - Possible location of a skate park
 - Preservation of conservation area.



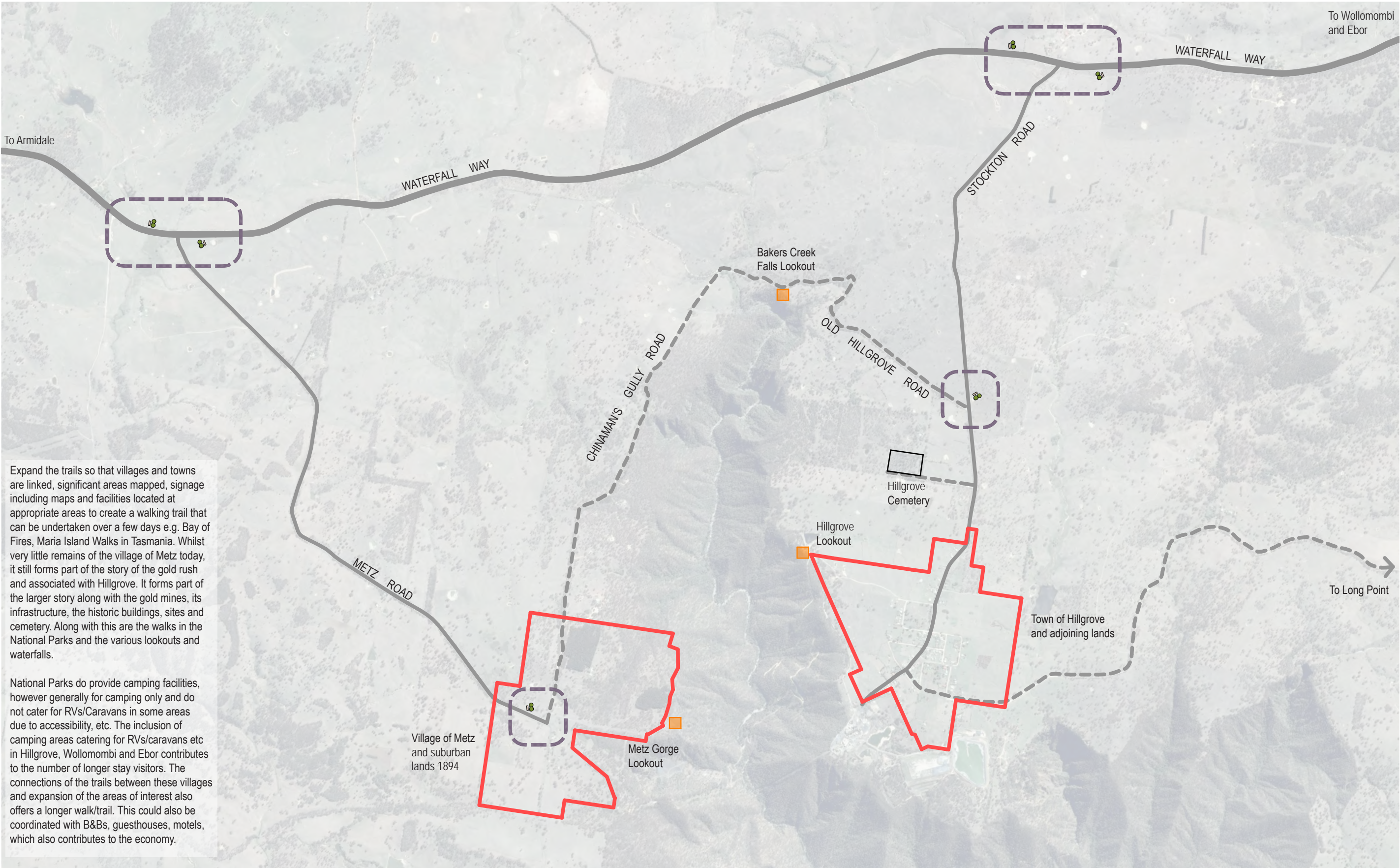
Examples - Informal paths, heritage signage

Bundarra



Artist impression of possible streetscape improvements to Bendemeer Street

Hillgrove



Gold + Waterfalls Trail

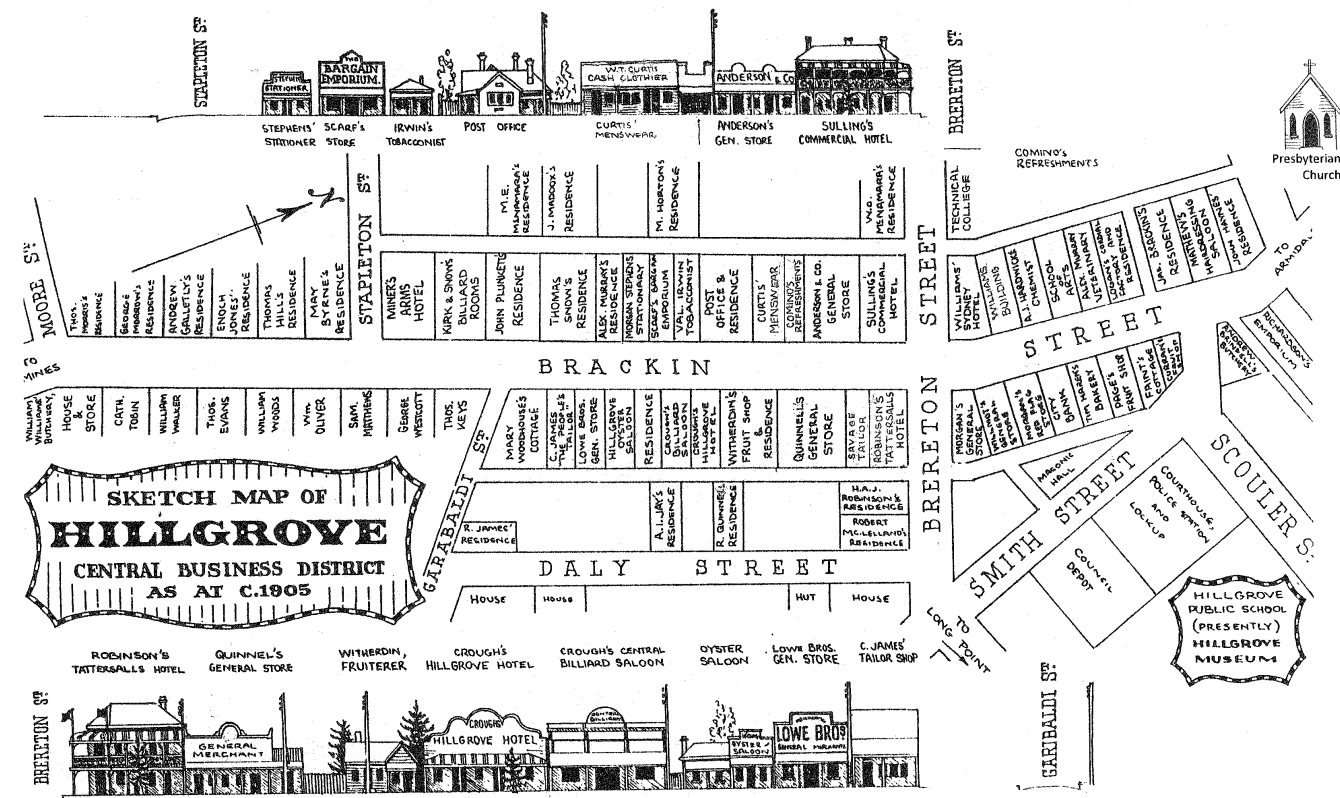


Hillgrove

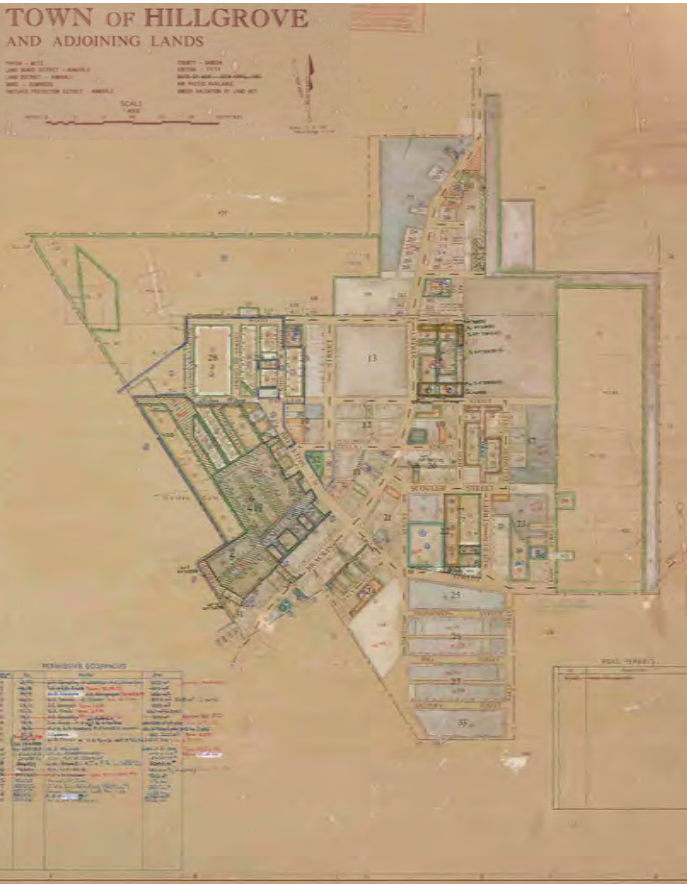


Hillgrove

BRACKIN STREET, WESTERN SIDE between BRERETON AND STAPLETON STREETS



BRACKIN STREET EASTERN SIDE between BRERETON AND GARIBALDI STREETS



Historic maps

Existing built form

Wollomombi



Village centre master plan

Wollomombi



Connection to walking track



Ebor

Key Principles:

Ebor is the north western gateway to the Armidale LGA and the south western gateway to the Guyra LGA. It is a key tourist destination with the Ebor Waterfalls and walking trails.

- Reinforce Ebor as a tourist attraction.
- Enhance the village streetscape with rainwater gardens and street tree planting.
- Improve connections to and from the waterfalls and facilities in the village.
- Improve gateway signage.



Ebor Falls



Existing infrastructure





Village master plan

- ① Gateway treatments should be located at the entries to the village and include appropriate signage and landscape treatment.

② The Village Link Pathway connects the village to the Falls. It has been completed in part. The extent of pathway along the southern portion of the Waterfall Way in the Village should be extended and improved providing accessible pathways for pedestrians and cyclists.
- ③ A pedestrian bridge could be constructed over Guy Fawkes River providing better amenity for walkers and cyclists.

④ A service lane is located in front of the shops within the village. A wide verge is located in front of the school. The service lane could be extended the full extent providing safer access to the shops and schools. The median could then be planted with feature trees to improve amenity.
- ⑤ Pedestrian refuges should be provided across Waterfall Way to assist in slowing traffic and provide safer crossings for pedestrians.

⑥ Street tree planting should incorporate feature trees within the village. Rainwater gardens could also be established along the verges within the village as the verges are quite steep providing drainage.

