

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERS

The broad landscape character of the site is predominantly agricultural with a suburban edge.

The majority of the site is visually exposed flat land form with few outstanding landscape features other than vegetation in the form of scattered trees, electricity pylons and windrows/fenceline planting. The northern portion of the site is more topographically interesting with mounded landforms and mixed vegetation.

Four landscape characters have been identified in the study area to provide a broad visual character assessment of the Croskell Precinct. For the purpose of this report these have been named:

- 1. Remnant Vegetation
- 2. Water Body
- 3. Industrial
- 4. Agriculture

These character areas have been defined using a combination of onsite analysis and visual inspection by a Registered Landscape Architect combined with desk top review of data, site contours and aerial photography. The outline of these character areas has been based on natural features rather than property boundaries.

The following pages describe the attributes of each landscape character area and the locations of these character areas can be seen on the plan at the end of this section.

1. Remnant Vegetation

There are three main areas of remnant vegetation character. This character describes dense, mature vegetation as seen in the planted pine forest interface to the west of the abattoir site (1), the dense scrub of the leptospermum patch to the south of the site (2) and the mature trees that have colonised the loose material surrounding the quarry site (3). *Numbers refer to the annotations on Figure 3.*

2. Water Body

This character type is typified by constructed wetlands – open water with aquatic and ephemeral planting, man-made dams and a water body that has formed in the old quarry pit.

The dam on the abattoir site is particularly picturesque and sits nicely in a graded landscape with a backdrop of mature pine trees. There is an even larger dam at 1450 Thompsons Road. This rectangular water body is significant in scale, but does not offer any natural character worthy of retention, its sole function being for crop irrigation.

3. Industrial

This character type describes the quarry site extents, abattoir itself and a concrete batching plant (previously a construction materials depot).

4. Agriculture

This character type describes cleared pastures for grazing, cultivated land for growing crops and a number of large commercial sheds for a poultry farm that was not stocked at the time of the site survey.



Planted pine trees



Vegetation at the quarry site, 1520 Thompsons Road



Water filled quarry pit at 1520 Thompsons Road



Water body at 1500 Thompsons Road



Construction material stockpiles at 1550 Thompsons Road



Aerial view of batching plant

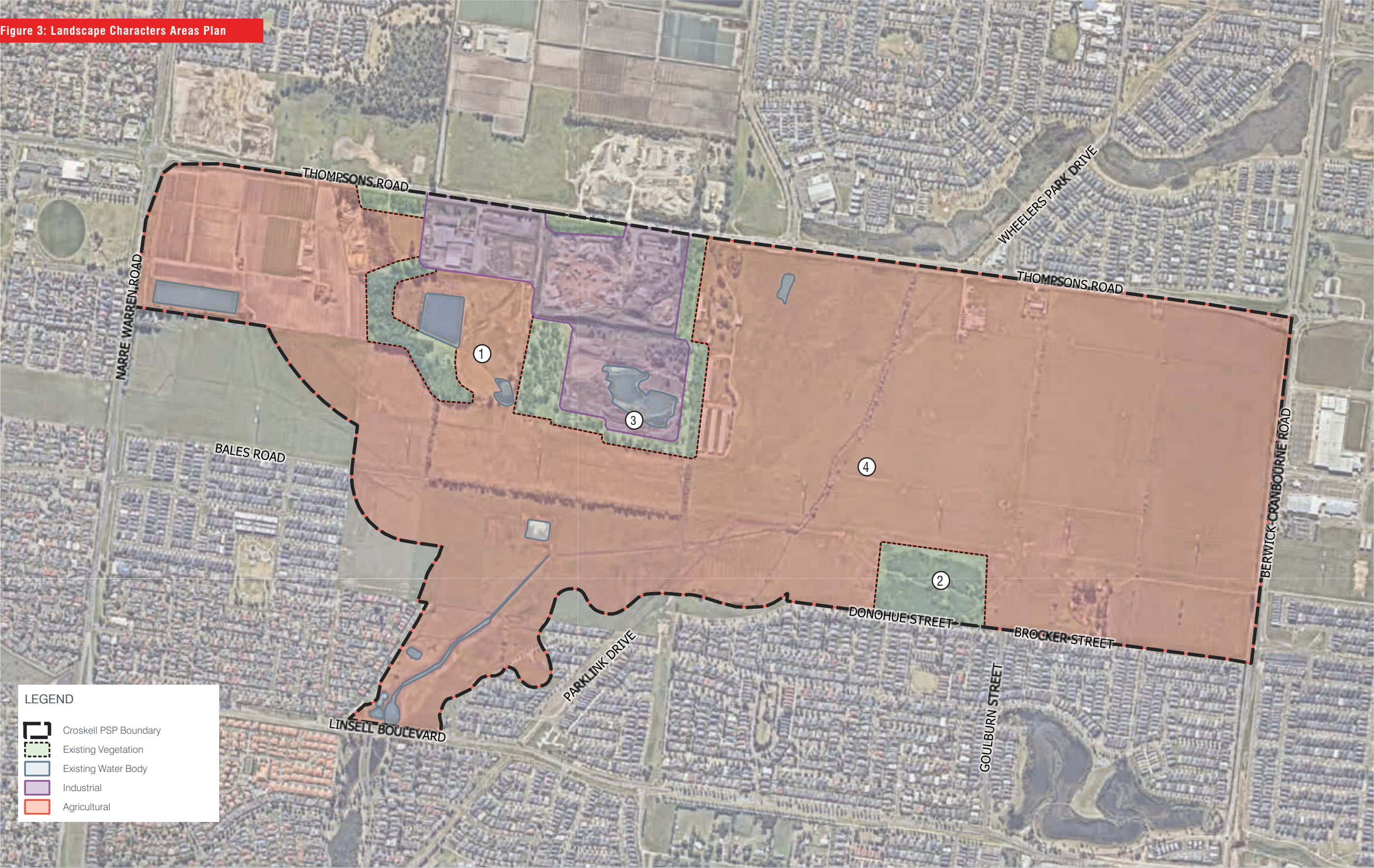


Paddocks used for livestock, 350 Narre Warren Road



Large open paddock under pylons are a feature of the site

Figure 3: Landscape Characters Areas Plan



KEY VIEWS AND SIGHT LINES

Given the low number of landscape features on or around the site, key views are limited.

The Heritage House provides a good vantage point to the south at an elevated position. Some of the higher points of the site are man-made and inaccessible due to steep grades or loose material underfoot. They also do not provide views of anything significant. Whilst you can see a long way, particularly east to west at the southern portion, this is purely because the land is relatively flat and cleared for grazing. We anticipate that through the course of developing the site, many views will become obstructed other than through the easements and proposed waterways. This clear view corridor along the easement will become a feature and should inform the programming of this open space. Views from the Heritage House could be retained through selective road and open space placement around the property so as not to completely obscure this vantage point as this site would serve well as a way finding / orientation point in the landscape, particularly with the large *Phoenix canariensis* alongside it.

A view over water is considered a valuable opportunity and this currently comes from Linsell Boulevard looking north. As the constructed wetlands and waterways are further developed, this wedge of Melbourne Water land will provide a nice outlook for surrounding residents and passing road traffic.



Key View from Springmont Farm and Heritage House looking south (Refer Figure 2 for location of photographs)



Views along the length of the electrical easement



Key View from Springmont Farm and Heritage House looking south (Refer Figure 2 for location of photographs)



Views over the existing wetland

EDGE CONDITIONS

Croskell is bound by major roads to the north and east with residential and commercial to the other side of them.

The southern boundary comprises local residential roads with houses fronting on to the local roads or houses backing onto the PSP area. The western boundary mostly comprises farmland covered by an adjacent PSP and includes an 'Investigation Area' which will be developed in accordance with the proposed land use for Croskell. The northern and eastern boundaries are defined by arterial roads.

In Figure 4 associated with this section we have identified both an immediate edge condition; what's physically there on the ground at the site boundary, and an adjoining interface; what extends beyond this, as this paints a fuller picture of how the site currently sits and interacts with its surrounds. Understanding both of these conditions will ensure better integration of Croskell with the surrounding PSP's. The design response should seek to sensitively integrate the new development with the old via 'soft' transition of typologies.



Thompsons Road



Berwick-Cranbourne Road

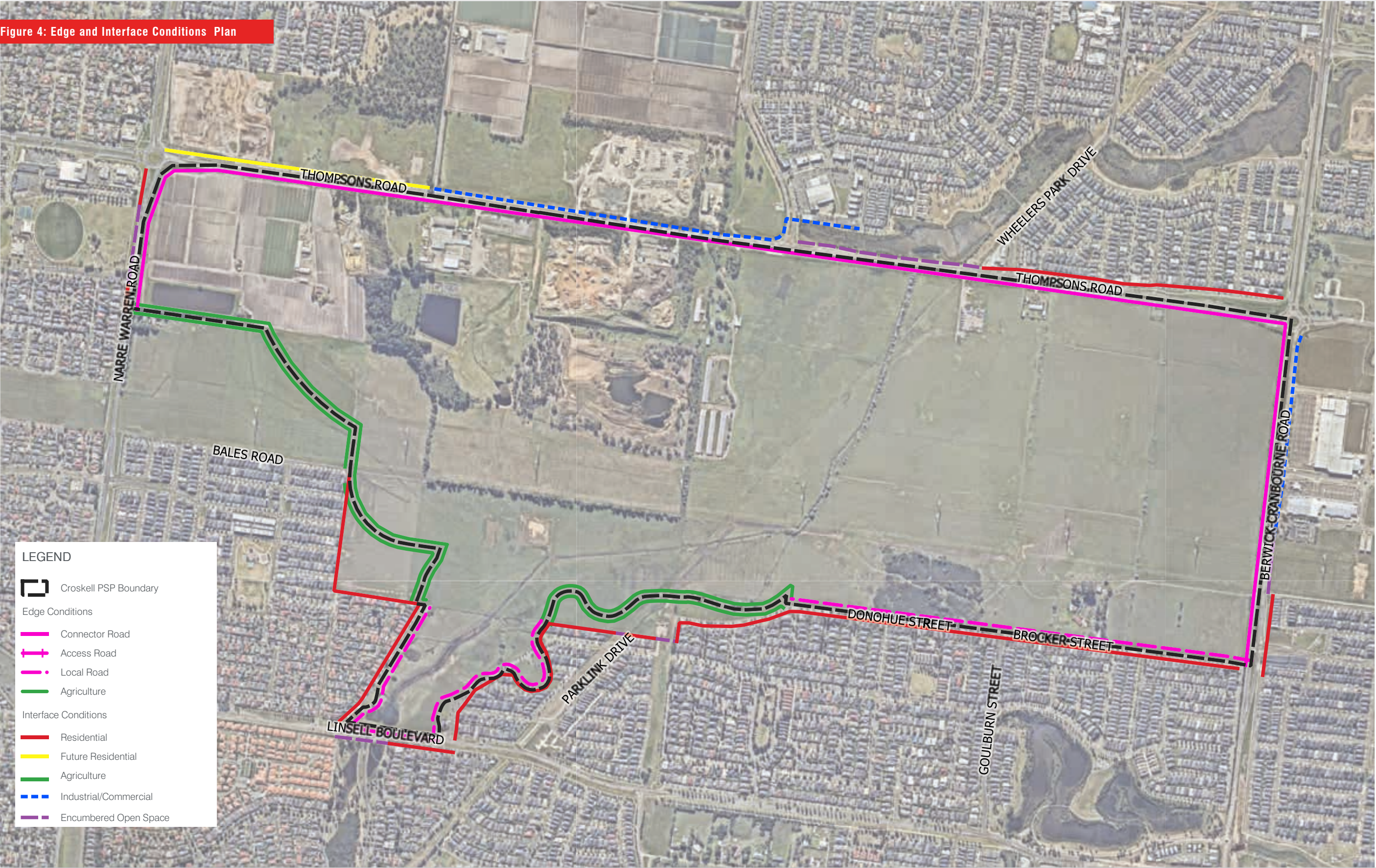


Brockers Street



Rear lots abutting the pipe track at Tangemere Way Figure 4: Edge and Interface Conditions Plan

Figure 4: Edge and Interface Conditions Plan



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Opportunities and constraints to assess the value of retaining visual features in the PSP area:

Opportunities

- Retain existing good quality and well-established vegetation
- Activate the easement(s) and utilise the viewlines that these encumbered spaces frame
- Enhance waterways
- Part of a wider network of connected open space utilising the Melbourne Water pipetrack which contributes to City of Casey's Walk and Ride Strategy
- Repurpose the heritage house as a community asset
- Natural topography – significant flat areas suitable for development and all abilities access with some elevated positions for views/wayfinding and interest

Constraints

- Landform – steep batters in some locations
- Uncompacted fill
- Potentially contaminated land
- Significant transmission and water easements limiting land use
- Major road interfaces as barriers to adjacent PSP's
- Sensitive interfaces with existing development
- Heritage overlay



Good quality tree



Activate easements

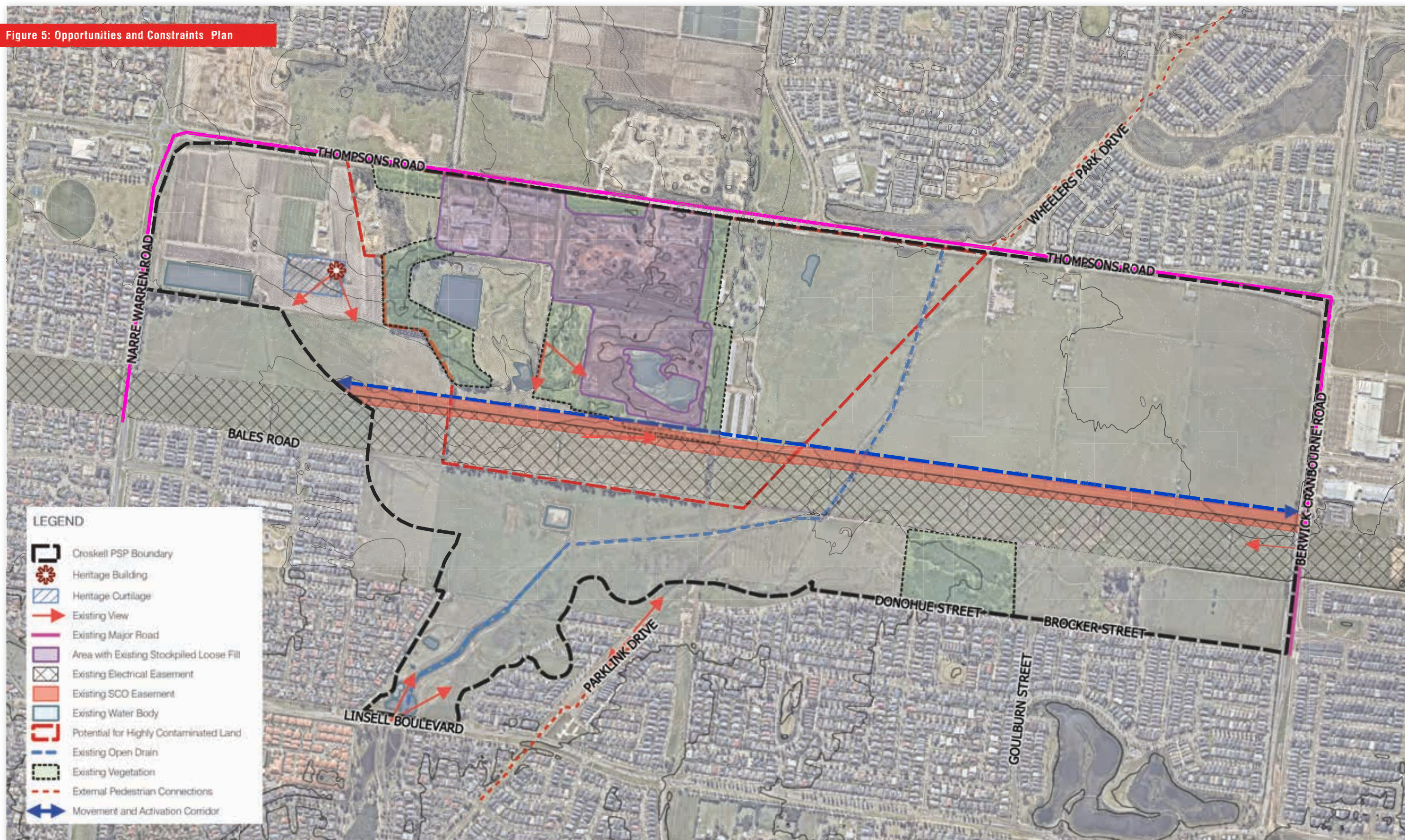


Heritage House



Potentially contaminated, uncompacted quarry site

Figure 5: Opportunities and Constraints Plan



RELEVANT CASE STUDIES

1. Remnant Vegetation

Examples of retained vegetation can be seen at [True North Estate](#) in Melbourne's north. Linear reserves have been created to provide ample space for the tree's TPZ's and provide immediate amenity to residents. The reserves are both extensions of other open space and the road reserve, allowing for enhanced pedestrian centric connectivity across the estate.



2. Overhead Electrical Easement

The wetlands in [Roxburgh Park](#) are an excellent example of activating overhead transmission easements with pedestrian connections, stormwater management assets and providing habitat for indigenous fauna. These connected wetlands provide a large passive recreation reserve for the public with lots of visual interest. Similarly, transmission easements in Thompsons Road PSP, Ringwood, Epping Road West and Plumpton PSP have similar water assets but also incorporate fitness stations, public art, seating, viewing platforms and feature landscape planting or open lawns. The Pinewood easement has a commercial nursery and tennis courts within its extents.



RELEVANT CASE STUDIES

3. Repurposing Historical Buildings

Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings are well demonstrated at [Hehr's Pine Park Farm](#) in Whittlesea. The former bluestone stables have been converted into a Cafe for the local community, with the possibility of other farm buildings being developed to add to the commercial hub. The surrounding landscape has been enhanced to frame the building and adds a layer of amenity. Interpretation is utilised to inform people of the history of the site.



OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Objectives	Recommendations
1. Retain existing vegetation to preserve the landscape character of the site	1.1 Trees assessed as having a high and very high arboriculture retention value (refer Arborist Report) or historical value (refer Heritage Report) should be prioritised for retention.
	1.2 Large significant trees identified as having high retention value (refer Arborist Report) to be incorporated into the public realm, open space, road reserves, widened road medians or easements where possible.
	1.3 Windrows and fence line planting to be retained, protected and incorporated into streetscapes boulevards and reserve designs.
	1.4 Retain areas of native vegetation and/or significant vegetation, particularly along roadsides, windrows and creek corridors. Any areas identified by an Ecologist/Arborist as high quality and/or significant should also be retained.
	1.5 Retain and enhance areas of significant vegetation, as identified in the Arborist Report as whole areas rather than fragmenting into smaller patches or individual trees.
2. Establish a sense of place by retaining and enhancing key features/ characteristics of the landscape character types	1.6 Minimise clearing of roadside vegetation.
	2.1 Align the urban design arrangement of roads, lots and public open spaces to retain identified landscape character elements such as; significant vegetation, historic buildings, areas of topographical interest and water bodies. Incorporate these landscape character elements into the public realm where possible.
3. Protect and enhance natural waterways and drainage corridors where applicable	3.1 Incorporate natural waterways and drainage corridors into open space.
	3.2 Preserve scenic views to and from waterway corridors, through placement of roads (especially footpaths), shared paths and adjoining open spaces. Provide active interfaces to the waterway as well, avoiding backing or siding lots onto these spaces.
	3.3 Embellish natural drainage corridor with native revegetation planting to enhance ecological function, habitat, aesthetics, recreational value and to improve public amenity.
	3.4 Incorporate additional amenity such as play spaces and BBQ/ community gathering spaces adjacent to waterways to broaden the usability of the space and encourage public interaction.
	3.5 Minimise vehicle crossings where possible to ensure there is visual continuity and linear views are maintained.

Key Objectives	Recommendations
4. Preserve, where possible, views to significant landmarks	4.1 Provide offset or open space around the elevated Heritage House area to make this a landmark and preserve views from the hilltop looking south
	5.1 Where possible provide linear connections between open space reserves to improve connectivity and maximise usability. This includes the water and electrical easements which will provide the main views through the site and provide the 'open sky' typology not found in the rest of the development. These view corridors will also inform how the easements are programmed.
5. Locate the open space network to preserve visual character features and provide linear connections	5.2 Connect either physically or visually retained landscape elements such as areas of remnant vegetation, water bodies and the Heritage House.
	6.1 Retain buildings identified as having heritage value and explore opportunities for adaptive re-use to provide links to the past use of the site and contribute to local identity.
6. Retain significant buildings and visual character elements as place making opportunities	6.2 Cultural heritage assessments and management plans to be undertaken to determine cultural value and define appropriate boundaries.
	6.3 Consider the arrangement and alignment of roads and linear open space reserves as a way of visually linking character elements to retain a sense of the broader landscape character.
7. Create a complementary and sensitive interface to the adjacent existing landscape character	7.1 Replicate existing land use at interfaces to create seamless transition into the new PSP area. Also consider mixed uses and uses that are complementary to the existing uses. The transition developments should have clear building height guidance.
	7.2 Utilise building setbacks, internal roads and public open space to break up the linearity of the northern, eastern and southern interfaces. Avoid rear fences onto open space and even side fences where possible.
	7.3 The remnant vegetation patch at the southern edge of the site in particular should be retained in some format given its unique character.



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