

## Landscape Assessment

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Ashburton Proposed Business 9 Zone

## Background and Scope

In June 2005 the Ashburton District Council adopted a District Development Plan. This Development Plan was the outcome of a Study which considered a range of options for growth of the District. Council's preferred option for non-commercial business growth is to rezone the 123ha block to the north east of the Ashburton township.

Boffa Miskell has been engaged by the Ashburton District Council to assist in the preparation of a Plan Change to rezone this block of land from Rural B to Business. This zone would provide for light through to heavy industrial activities.

The identified benefits offered by this site include:

- Immediate access to the railway line and State Highway 1
- Opportunity to relocate the rail siding from central Ashburton (resolving central town traffic hold-ups and enhance visual amenity)
- Size – potential to accommodate longer term growth
- A Greenfields site offers the opportunity to facilitate a higher standard of design and amenity
- Separation from residential areas, (but not rural residential)

The following landscape assessment of the site has been prepared as part of the Section 32 documentation for the Proposed Plan Change. As this is a Plan Change, the assessment is at a “high level” identifying a range of possible effects from industrial development on landscape values as well as appropriate mitigation of these effects .

This assessment includes the following:

- A description of the proposed rezoning principles and rules.
- A description of the site and the surrounding locality in relation to landscape values
- A description of the types of effects that could be anticipated from industrial business development on those existing values
- Identification of options for mitigation that could be adopted. These should include buffers, setbacks, height controls, landscape standards
- Specific recommendations as to the appropriate width of a buffer to protect landscape/amenity values, any additional setbacks if required, landscape treatment within the buffer and the wider industrial zone and the height of buildings.

## Description of the Proposed Rezoning

The site for the proposed rezoned business area is 123.8 hectares in size, and is located on the northeastern side of Ashburton between Company Road and the railway line. The site abutts the existing freezing works on the eastern side. Refer to the following 'Outline Development Plan Business 9 Zone'.

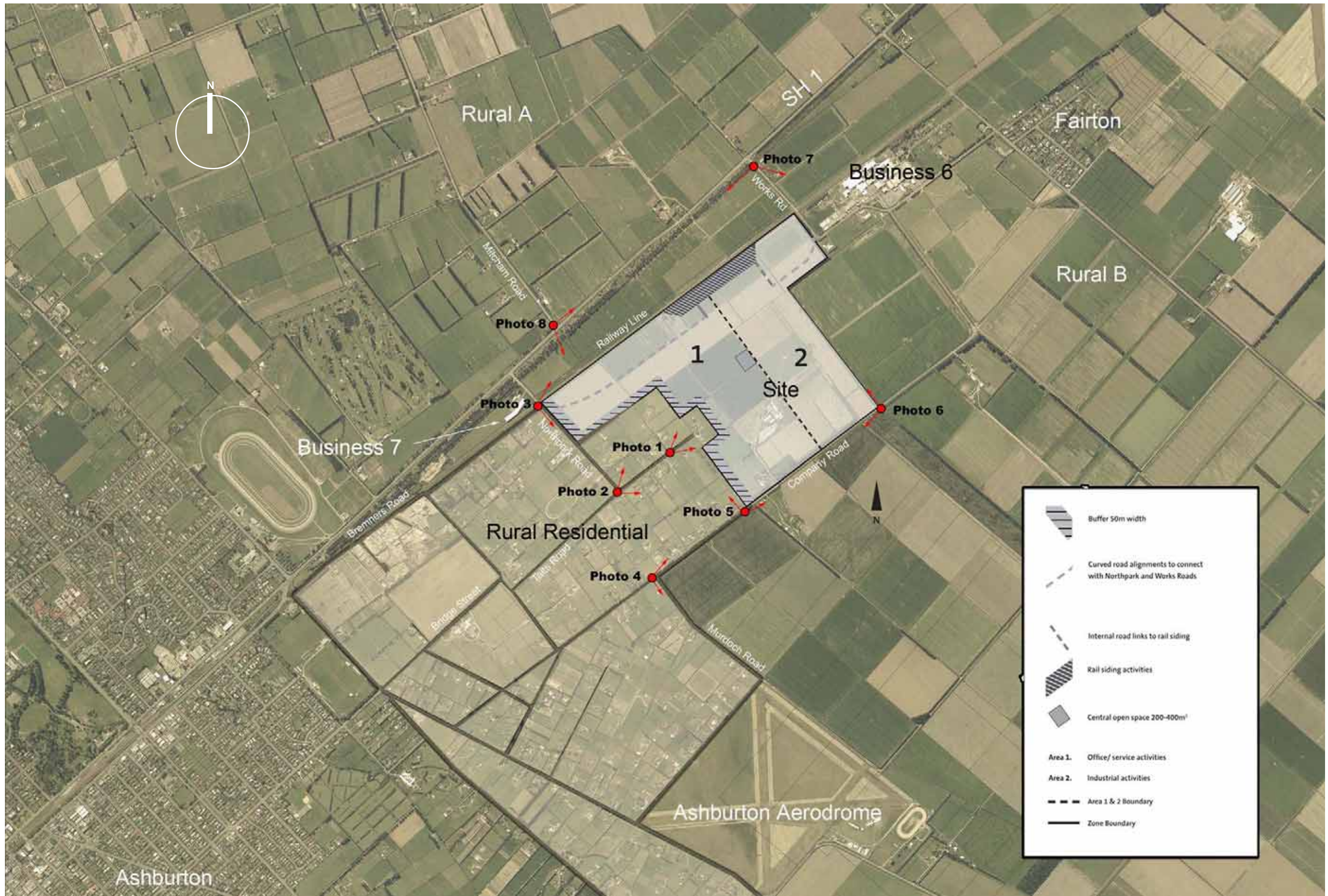
The Business Zone would have a new set of business zone provisions . Some rules may be the same as those existing in the Plan, but new ones are proposed as well. Industrial activities would be graduated from light to heavy from the west to the east. The proposed maximum height of buildings permitted is 10m.

Activities would range from small scale - office and warehousing to larger scale and processing industries. Part of the site is likely to develop as a transport hub with rail siding. The potential number of workers depends on types of businesses and the area of the site rezoned. It could range between 840 to 2,300 people employed on the site.

A 50 metre wide landscape buffer strip is proposed between the adjacent rural residential land to the west of the site. The buffer would contain:

- Large trees and walking/cycling path opportunities.
- Stormwater management – containment and soakage areas.
- Mounding up to 3m high within the buffer to be graduated into ground and located towards business boundary.
- Cycle and walkway linkages– within buffer adjoining Rural-Residential Zone as well as link to Company Road, Tait's Road or BremnersRoad.

Main vehicle access points would be from Company Road, Works Road and Northpark Road. Bremners Road in conjunction with Company Road would be the primary local traffic connection to Ashburton town. Road design would discourage heavy vehicles using Bremners Road and most of the residential section of Northpark Road. A preliminary traffic study indicates up to an additional 7,762 vehicles per week day.



Outline Development Plan Business 9 Zone - Approx. Scale 1:20000

## Description and Values of the Site and Surrounding Landscape

The site is surrounded on three sides by an agricultural landscape typical of the patchwork Canterbury Plains. To the east of the site is generally zoned Rural B with a minimum allotment size of 50 hectares. This area is a highly modified landscape with geometric grids of paddocks, shelterbelts and road/rail networks with scattered structures of farm houses and out-buildings. Across SH 1 is a Rural A Zone with a minimum allotment size of 8 hectares. This zone is currently very similar in rural character to the Rural B zone adjacent to the site.

Surrounding landuses include dairy and other stock farming, cropping (wheat, barley, oats, ryecorn, maize), and industrial activities associated with farming such as meat processing works. Also with the surrounding landscape is the Fairton Freezing Works (zoned Business 6 adjacent to the site), a small area zoned Business 7 adjacent to the west of the site, the township zone of Fairton, and the Ashburton Aerodrome (scheduled permitted activity in the Rural B Zone).

These rural landscapes are highly managed. This creates a “tidy” appearance that has a visual coherence and degree of amenity value. The tidy simplicity, openness and large scale of these rural landscapes contributes to their rural amenity values.

To the southwest of the site is a Rural Residential Zone. In this zone, the visual density of dwellings and lots appears higher than the rural zones. The minimum lot size is 1 hectare. This area retains a rural character with small paddocks associated with houses, shelterbelt plantings and farm post and wire/rail fencing along boundaries, farm utility buildings, and some stock grazing. The character of the Rural Residential Zone is domesticated by the visible uniform spread of houses and gardens, the manicured gardens and edges of roads, and the enclosure of open views of the broader landscape. The fine grain rural scale of this area makes it an attractive residential area with characteristics of the rural environment.

The site itself is part of the Rural Zone and is rural in character. It is currently managed as farmland with paddocks, shelterbelts and farm buildings. Part of the site has been used as a piggery. Shelterbelts and farm fences dissect and frame parts of the site. Views into the site are often obscured by boundary shelterbelts. The site is made up of broad scale paddocks with many open views to the surrounding landscape and inland hill country/mountains. The existing open paddocks and shelterbelts contribute to the rural amenity values of the site and surrounding landscape.



Photographic Viewpoint 1 - View looking down Taits Road towards the site.



Photographic Viewpoint 2 - View looking down Taits Road towards the site at the intersection with Northpark Road. Photographs 1 and 2 illustrate the rural residential character of the Rural Residential Zone. A degree of enclosure is created by the shelterbelt/hedge plantings. Farm fencing and utility buildings and equipment add to the rural character. Tidy road edges and gardens create an attractive domesticated sense of rural character.



Photographic Viewpoint3 - View from the corner of Bremners Road and Northpark Road looking east at the corner of the site. This view illustrates the open broad scale of the rural character fo the site adjacent to the Rural Residential Zone.



Photographic Viewpoint 4 - View looking eastward down Company Road at the intersection with Murdochs Road. This view shows the broad scale of the rural zoned landscape with long shelterbelts and deep views across large paddocks. The left side of the photograph is the Rural Residential Zone and the other side of the road in the photograph is the Rural Zone.



Photographic Viewpoint 5 - View showing the boundary point along Company Road between the Rural Residential Zone and Rural Zone of the site. Existing shelterbelt planting currently screens views into the site from this section of Company Road.



Photographic Viewpoint 6 - View looking westward into the site illustrating the existing broad scale rural character.



Photographic Viewpoint 7 - View from Works Road looking southward towards the site. The foreground paddock is not part of the site. The distant shelterbelts are on the site. The photograph shows the existing freezing works illustrating the visual distance and separation of potential buildings on the site from this viewpoint near State Highway 1.



Photographic Viewpoint 8 - View looking eastward towards the site from the corner of Mitcham Road and State Highway 1. This photograph shows a typical view of the existing planting along State Highway 1 that would screen most views to the site. Some pocket views allow for fleeting views through in places.

## Anticipated Landscape Effects of the Industrial Business Development

The following are anticipated landscape effects that could occur as part of the proposed change of zone and landuse from rural farming to business and industrial use:

- 1 Replacement and reduction of the open character of the rural landscape in the area.
- 2 Removal of existing shelterbelt plantings could reduce the rural character of the site when viewed from the surrounding landscape, and the potential to integrate the site to the rural landscape along boundary edges.
- 3 A greater sense of enclosure and reduced rural outlook will occur from some places.
- 4 Potential for commercial character to dominate the rural outlook from the surrounding landscape.
- 5 Night lighting could urbanise the rural outlook and character in the area.
- 6 Large-scale buildings have the potential to visually dominate the rural landscape.
- 7 Signage and visually extensive carparking could dominate and commercialise the rural amenity.
- 8 The appearance of utility/industrial facilities and structures could have an adverse effect on the rural character.
- 9 Business development potentially creates significant adverse effects on rural landscape, amenity values, outlook and character from the Rural Residential zone.

## Options For Mitigation of Potential Adverse Landscape Effects of Industrial Business Development

The following are recommendations aimed to avoid, remedy or mitigate the potential adverse landscape effects identified above:

### Landscape Treatment

Provide a landscape buffer zone of 75-100 metres between the Rural Residential Zone and the proposed Business 9 Zone to retain a sense of rural outlook and amenity for rural residential dwellers. The width of the buffer could vary between 75-100m depending on the proximity of neighbouring houses. This buffer zone should include mounding and evergreen and deciduous tree plantings and shelterbelt-style screening. Grass mounding for noise mitigation with a maximum gradient of 1:3 (mowable) feathered out to gently marry-in with surrounding landscape levels. The buffer zone also creates potential opportunities for walkways, cycleways, stormwater management, and community facilities i.e. playgrounds.

It is recommended that the layout of the proposed rezoned area be masterplanned to retain existing shelterbelts where practicable and provide for new shelterbelt plantings that integrate the site into the surrounding landscape particularly at the boundary edges.



00A13 - Resene Baltic Sea



4-050 - Resene Bronzestone



12B23 - Resene Siam



12B21 - Resene Flax



12B19 - Resene Locus



10B23 - Resene Peat



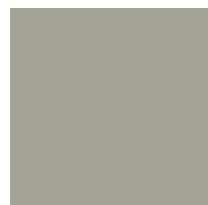
10B19 - Resene Canvas



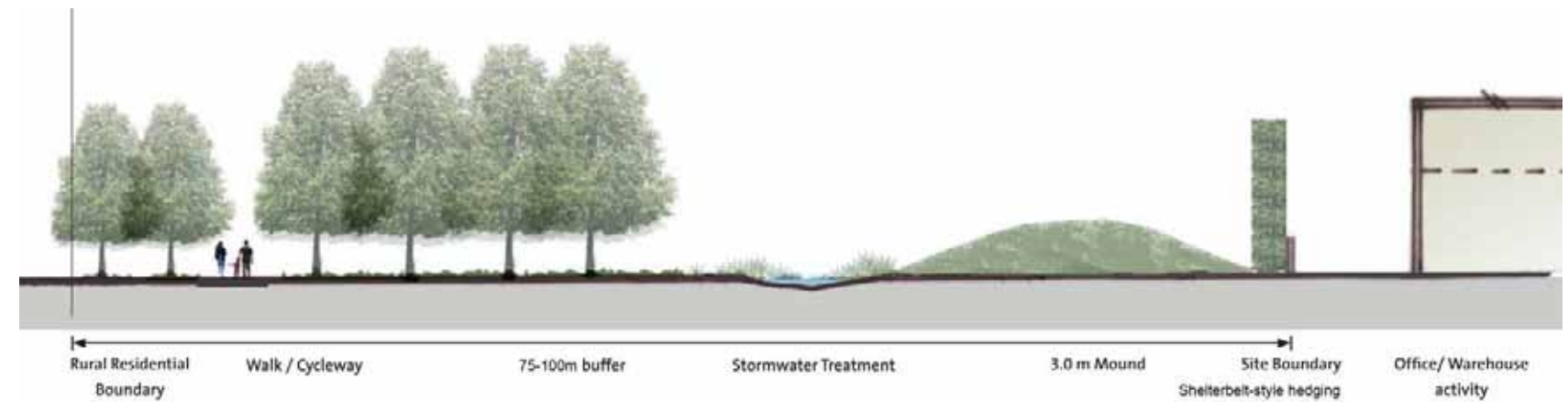
16A07 - Resene Boulder



18B19 - Resene Hit Grey



10A05 - Resene Delta Grey



Indicative Cross-section of Recommended Buffer Treatment - not to scale

### Building Design

Limit the height of buildings to 10 metres - consistent with the rural-residential area.

Develop building design guidelines that control the bulk and location of buildings around the perimeter of the site. These should aim to reduce the potential for extensive continuous and blank facades without any windows particularly facing the proposed buffer zone. Public safety of importance – cycle/walk ways need to be open to surveillance, avoid siting behind mound and away from dense planting .

It is recommended that all buildings are painted colours that are consistent with tones and hues of the rural plains landscape - that is, colours in earth tones of greys and ochre browns and greens. A recommended palette of British Standard colours is illustrated as part of this assessment. All colours have a reflectivity value of less than 50%. The purpose of this palette of colours is to integrate the visual appearance of potentially large buildings into the surrounding landscape colour environment. Dark toned and low reflectivity colours generally have the effect of reducing the visual bulk of buildings.

### Car parking

Along the edge of the Rural Residential Zone and Company Road contain large areas of carparking away from the perimeter of the site. Any carparks that are visible from beyond the site should be screened with edge planting.

### Fences

No tall fences. Timber post and rail or post and wire for boundary fences. Hedges along boundaries would also be appropriate.

## Lighting

All lighting around the perimeter of the site should be low level lighting directed downwards with a covered shade.

## Signage

No advertising or signage facing the rural-residential zone. All signage should be concentrated at the entry points to the site and within the site. Avoid signage around the boundaries of the site.

## Storage Areas

Storage and utility areas should be screened by hedges or mounding along the Rural Residential Zone boundary.

## Conclusions

The proposed location of the new Business/Industrial zone offers many advantages such as size and transportation accessibility. It also provides an opportunity to create an area that has an appropriate and quality level of design and mitigation within the rural context of the site. An apparent constraint of the site is the close proximity of an existing Rural Residential Zone.

This assessment concludes that a 75-100 metre buffer with attractive landscape treatment and screening would mitigate the potential loss of rural outlook and amenity from the residents living in the adjacent Rural Residential Zone. Furthermore, it is recommended that building design controls are used to ensure that the business and industrial development that would occur on the site is visually harmonious with the surrounding rural landscape.

If these mitigation measures were included as part of the proposed rezoning of the site, the potential adverse effects on the rural amenity of the surrounding landscape would be minimal. The rezoning would change the character of the site and the outlook from the surrounding area but appropriate mitigation would maintain a level of amenity appropriate to the site and surroundings.