

Strategic Theme:

7

Attractive Entrances into Town

Strategic Priorities aimed at presenting a friendlier image of Blenheim to traffic passing by or entering the town

Initiatives under this Theme include:

- Encouraging new development on the site that is highly visible for passing traffic on State Highway 1 (Sinclair Street).
- Encouraging development on Council-owned land by the fire station as a positive showpiece to passing traffic on State Highway 1 (Sinclair Street).
- Constructing an entrance feature at the entrance to the town centre by the intersection of Sinclair and Alfred Streets.
- Greening Sinclair Street in order to give the State Highway a friendlier and more attractive image upon passing the town centre.



5.7.1 The first impression of Blenheim

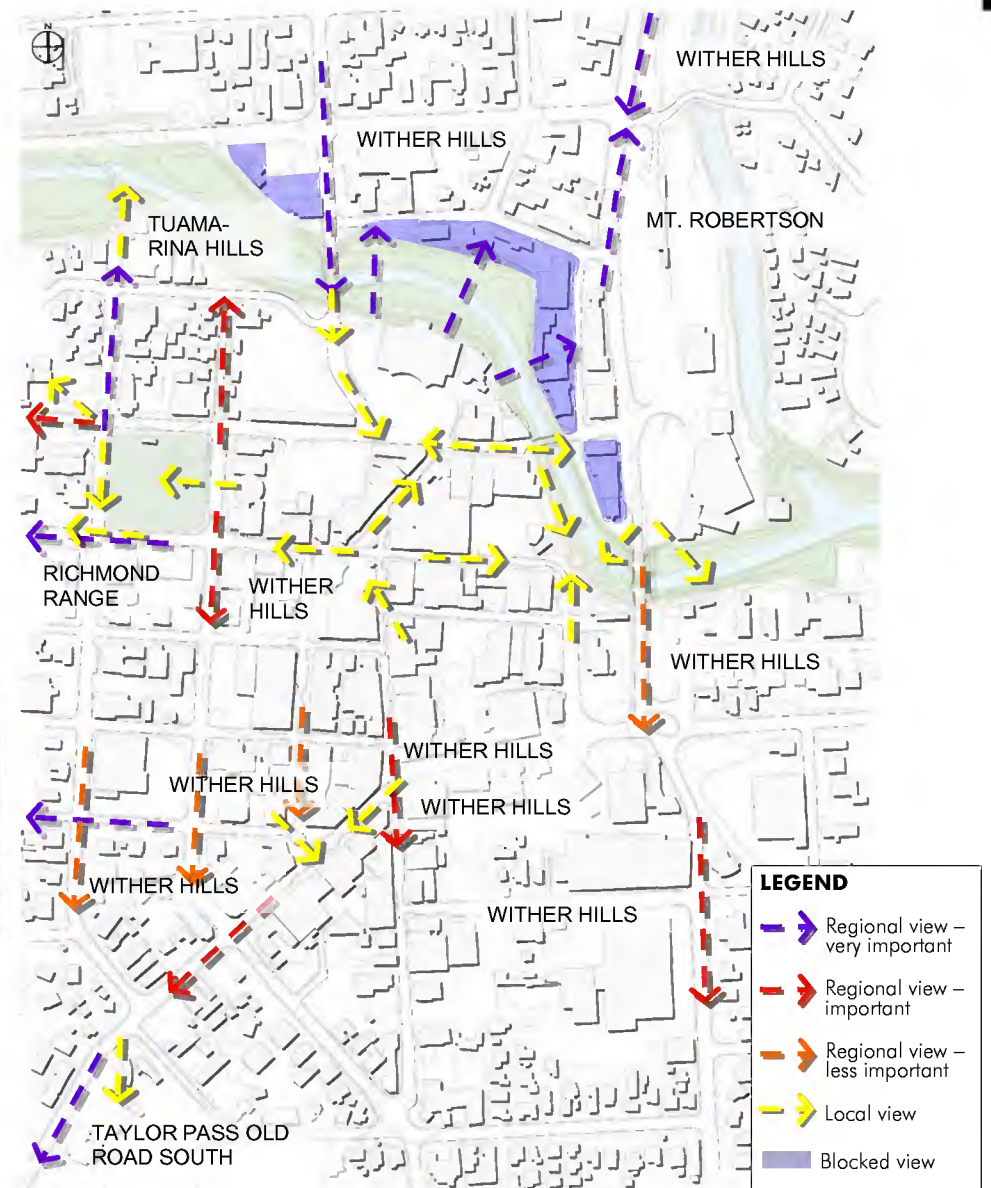
About 1.2 million ferry passengers arrive in the South Island every year, with approximately 50% of them travel past Blenheim. For many of them it is their first encounter with Blenheim. An aim should be making the first impression they get when entering the town as positive as possible.

The dominating natural features around Blenheim are the Wither hills to the south and the Tuamarina Hills to the north of the town. These ranges form an impressive backdrop to most of the views in and around town (refer to figure 5-77). However, the urban landscape of the Blenheim Town Centre does not present its best side to travellers on the State Highways, particularly SH1. Light industrial buildings dominate Grove Road and Sinclair Street, which makes for a less interesting and car-dominated environment. Many buildings southwest of the Taylor River turn their backs to the State Highway. The entrances (Hutcheson Street from SH6 and Alfred Street from SH1) into the town centre could be more attractive to entice people in for a stop. The Main Street roundabout (or 'egg-about') offers a very complicated traffic situation with a railway line crossing traffic flows twice. It is currently not an effective and inviting entrance to the town centre.

This poor interface is starting to change with recent developments such as the amphitheatre with associated public spaces on the river's edge as well as the Raupo Café in highly visible places. Several other opportunities exist to improve Blenheim's image to people entering or passing by.



LEFT FIG. 5-76: Blenheim's presentation to State Highway 1

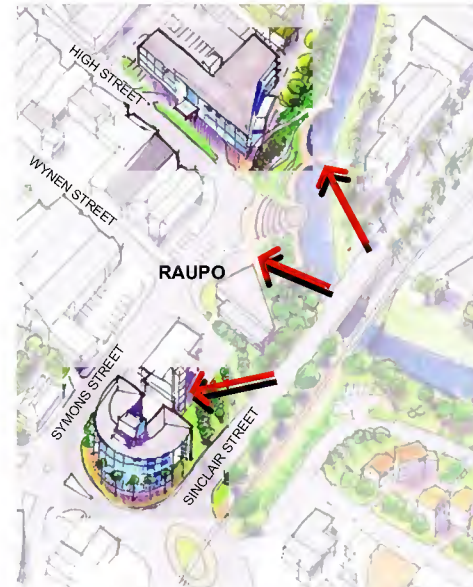


ABOVE FIG. 5-77: View shaft analysis with the Wither Hills to the south and the Tuamarina Hills to the north dominating most of the long distance views

5.7.2 Development opportunities in highly visible locations

Two highly visible sites should be earmarked for high quality development:

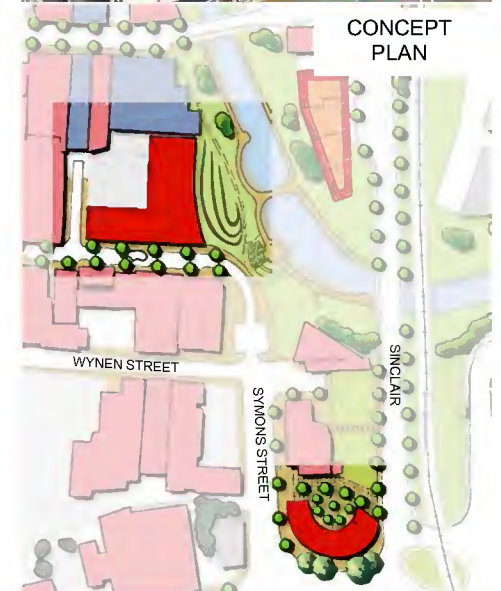
- The Council owns some land on the riverside at the end of High Street. This site should be developed in conjunction with the proposed riverside park (Refer to Strategic Theme 5). The motorbike business (former service station) could be included in this to increase the development capacity. Potential uses to be attracted are an international hotel; apartments with commercial uses on the ground floor; or corporate headquarters. Crucial to the safety and amenity in the proposed riverside park are uses in the ground floor and preferably in the upper floors of the building that actively engage with and overlook the public open space.
- The carparking site to the south of the fire station is strategically located on State Highway 1. It has good accessibility by local, regional and national car traffic and within walking distance from the primary shopping zone. This Council-owned land has good capacities for the development of an iconic office building or an international hotel as a showpiece to passing traffic on State Highway 1 (Sinclair Street). Coordination with the functionality of the fire station is required as some of the parking space is used by the fire brigade. Inclusion of the fire station site would increase development capacity, but is not considered crucial.



ABOVE FIG. 5-78: Artist's impression of possible development on two sites highly visible from Sinclair Street



LEFT FIG. 5-79: Artist's impression of a possible development on the riverfront overlooking the proposed new park of the end of High Street



ABOVE FIG. 5-80: Location and conceptual plans for the two development opportunities

5.7.3 Greening of Sinclair Street

Vegetation around Sinclair Street could be increased in order to give the State Highway a friendlier and more attractive image upon entering and passing the town centre. It will also assist with traffic calming and will make crossing easier. Council has developed landscape plans for Sinclair Street in 2005. These are supported in principle as part of this Town Centre Vision.

Key recommendations include:

- Planting additional palm trees at the railway and river access points.
- At the railway entrance sites there is opportunity to create a bush walk environment and picnic seating areas adjacent to the car parking area.
- Where possible *Liquidambar styraciflua* will be planted as the avenue tree, connecting with Main Street and the town centre planting.
- To visually connect with Main Street secondary small trees, such as cabbage trees, cherry trees and lancewoods will be encouraged.
- The planting islands will contain local indigenous groundcover species.

There will be more scope for improvement when the proposed re-routing of SH 1 (refer to Strategic Theme 8) is constructed and the State Highway status is lifted from Sinclair Street.



ABOVE FIG. 5-81: Artist's impression of the greening of Sinclair Street, with an entrance statement located in the Alfred Street roundabout.

5.7.4 Entrance feature Alfred Street roundabout

Apart from directional signage, an entrance feature by the Alfred Street roundabout could assist State Highway users to turn into the town centre more easily. Figure 5-82 depicts an option which uses Tui sculptures on cables suspended from the Marlborough Lines building to a vertical element in the middle of the roundabout. Using the middle of the roundabout for a sculpture typical to Blenheim is another appropriate option that should be considered.



ABOVE FIG. 5-82: Option for an entrance statement in the Alfred Street roundabout: A flight of Tuys directing State Highway users to the town centre



ABOVE FIG. 5-83: Council plans for the planting of trees and shrubs in Sinclair Street (July 2005, Opus)

5.7.5 Cost estimation, timeline & prioritisation

Ref.*	page	Action	Admin./ Physical	Timeline: short (<2yrs); medium (2-5 yrs); long (>5yrs)	Priority: high/ medium/ low	Comments/ assumptions
A4	82	Viewing corridor/gateway study to identify view corridor and associated gateway opportunities within the CBZ, focussing on approaches from Picton, Christchurch and Nelson.	administrative	Short term	Low	
C2	83	Encourage development of a hotel and/ or restaurant on location of service station and adjacent carpark to generate activity over an extended part of the day in this area and front onto proposed riverside park as in C1.	administrative	Short term	High	
Q1	83	Investigate fire station relocation options.	administrative	Short term		
Q2	83	Encourage development on the land between the fire station and Sinclair street and between the fire station and Main Street for commercial uses, positively addressing these two streets.	administrative	Medium term		

*) Refers to Blenheim Town Centre Draft Implementation Strategy