



Photograph of nearby Victoria Battery taken from © Haurakirailtrail.co.nz (Janurary 2021)

Introduction

Introduction to project overview and site



Project brief and vision

Develop a masterplan for Paeroa Racecourse, to support a Plan Change. Embrace the history of the site and enhance the local character of Paeroa.

As part of the design process, options will be explored with the client to investigate the sites potential. A successful masterplan will respond to the sites constraints and opportunities, to illustrate how a mixed use development provides for a well considered development, with a good return on investment.

The design solution will need to be:

Mixed use

- A collection of buildings and spaces which positively contribute to the site and each other, as well as to the Paeroa community
- Maximise connection with the views, solar access and landscape amenity
- Provide a high level of visual amenity within the development lots and streetscape
- Retain a connection to the site's important heritage

Landscaped

- Selected species ecologically appropriate to the location and situation to support native biodiversity whilst maintaining the sites Racecourse heritage
- Consider hierarchy of landscaped spaces and provide practical areas that add value
- Integrate stormwater, ecology and recreational needs seamlessly

Connected

- Pedestrian and cycle friendly
- Consider appropriate connections to the wider area including the Rail Trail and Paeroa town centre.

Commercially viable

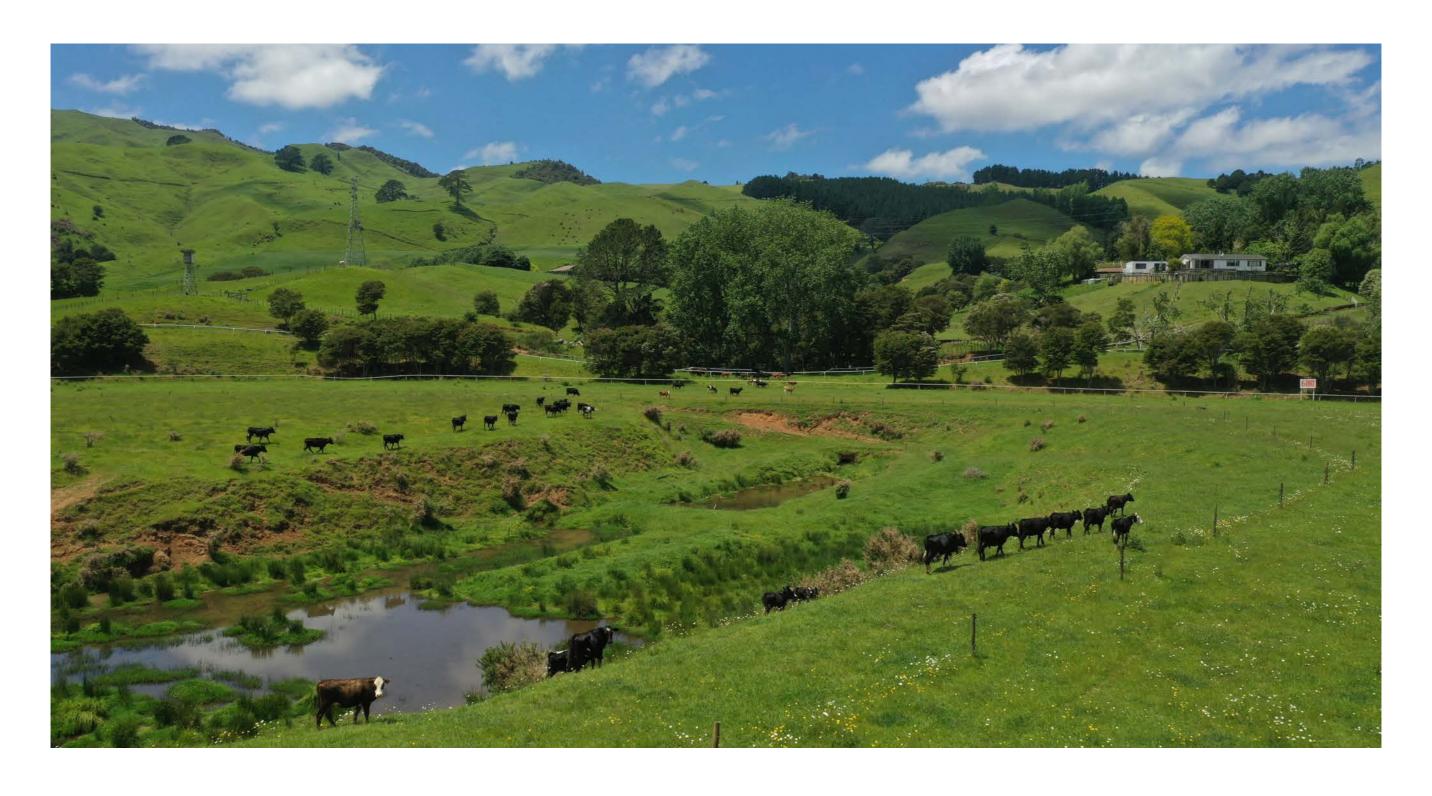
- Future proofed development options to provide for commercial proposals that will be successful
- Consider an appropriate density and staging that will meet the projected growth strategy sustainably.



The site



The site



The site



Factors informing the development brief

The project brief is clear in terms of process, however the proposed accommodation and yield will be informed by ongoing site investigation and options exploration with the client team.

There are a number of influential factors that may inform the development brief. These include:

Economic assessment

The initial economic scoping report prepared by Insight Economics, dated 18 December 2020, summarises the current profile of the local dwelling stock, demographic profile, population projections and notes on tourism activity.

The report provides a valuable snapshot of Paeroa generally, and starts to inform an appropriate development response tailored to the area. A summary of the elements that may direct the development brief include:

Profile of local building stock

- The existing housing stock is relatively old, with more than 50% of homes constructed before 1970, and nearly 90% built before 2000.
- Since 2000, section sizes have decreased, and floor areas have increased with median land area being 700 sqm and the median dwelling floor area being 168 sqm
- The median land value per sqm is \$213 which equates to \$149,100 for a 700sqm site
- The report notes higher land values per sqm are achieved with smaller section sizes, however less than 5% of homes built since 2000 are on sections less than 500 sqm.

- 60% of homes built since 2000 are brick, and most have a profiled metal roof or tiles
- House prices are tracking upward, with an average house price in 2020 of \$545,000
- Since 2016, new building consents per year has significantly increased ranging from 9-20 per year

Population and demography

The 2018 Census data notes a total of

- 1,713 households and 4,269 people
- An average median age of 50 this is 13 year higher than the national average
- Predominately European ethnicity (65%) with a significant percentage of the population identifying as Maori (26%) - this is an 11% higher than the national average.
- 54 % of the population identify as not religious with 40% as Christian
- 56% are partnered and 44% non partnered (a increase of 5% over the national average of people non partnered)
- 17% of the community are studying (either part or full time)
- Only 35% of the community are employed full time with 13% employed part time.
- 47% of the community are not in the labour force and 5% of are unemployed
- The report notes that more of the community are likely to have personal incomes of less than \$30,000 (based on the national average)

A summary of the households and dwellings identified in the 2018 Census notes that the town is comprised predominately of 3 bedroom, detached dwellings. It also notes the majority of households have 2 or fewer cars.

The figures show there is high home ownership (63%), and for those that rent the many of households (50%) have a weekly rent of between \$200-300

Growth projections

The details of the growth projections are outlined in the report however in summary the growth assumptions adopted by Hauraki District Council note:

- A population growth for Paeroa of 1,070 between 2018-2048
- A population growth for the district of 3,045 between 2018-2048

Taking out the homes consented in 2018-2020 (36) this identifies the need for an additional 1,034 homes in the next 27 years. **This is an average of 38 homes a year.**

Tourism

The report provides information on tourism spend and clearly demonstrate growth in the district (excluding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic).

To note, is that retail made up the bulk of the expenditure, followed by food and beverage. Accommodation made 6% of the total spend.

It's noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a reduce impact on the area due to the higher proportion of internal tourism.

Summary

Based on discussions within the project team meetings, and an assessment of the existing facilities across Paeroa, we note the following accommodation could be considered and tested as part of the development brief:

Suggested development brief:

- Private residential a mix of section sizes for 'vacant subdivision' with section sizes ranging from 500-700+ sqm
- Tourist accommodation consider options for a boutique / higher end motel, hotel or serviced apartments. Apartments may provide flexibility for low care residential or 'lock up and leave'.
- Conference / events facilities explore options for flexible spaces - could be part of original buildings?
- Education / vocational courses consider vocational education that might work alongside the tourism offering.
- Supermarket there is space for a larger supermarket to be accommodated as part of a mixed used development, however this will need to be thoroughly balanced with the need to retain a vibrant town centre.
- Supporting retail / commercial / food and beverage - if appropriate consider supporting 'big box' or specialist retail and F&B that doesn't dilute the success of the town centre.
- Childcare centre Consider small pre-school to accommodate growth?

Site context and analysis

Exploration of site specific context, constraints and opportunities



Site - location





GIS - local scale



GIS - property boundaries

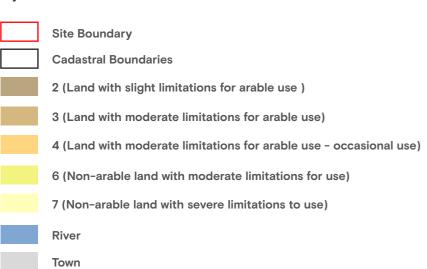
Key

Site Boundary

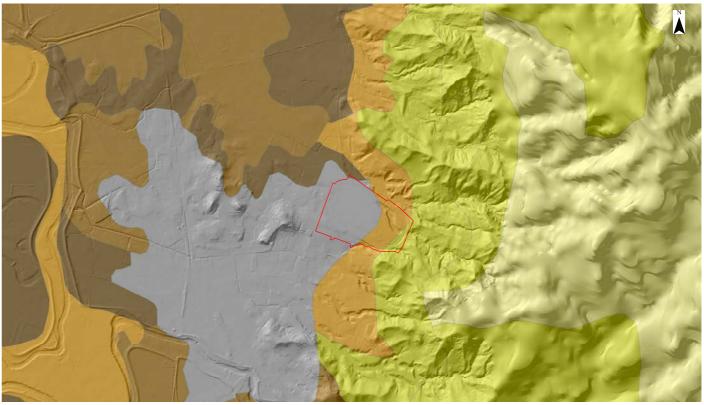
Cadastral Boundaries

GIS - land use capabilities

Key



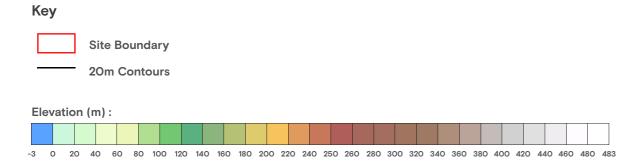


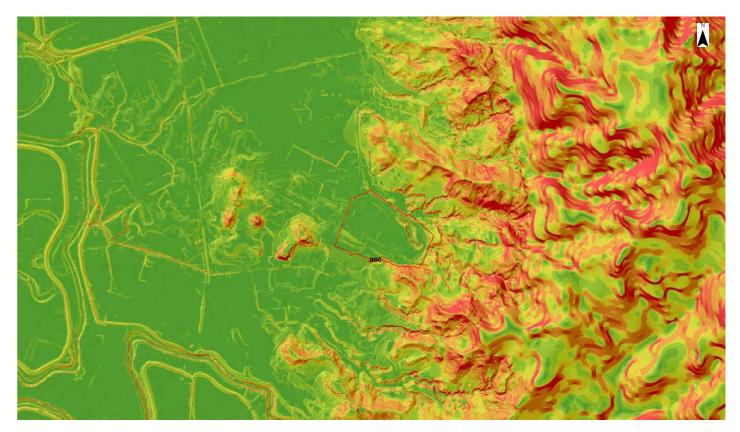


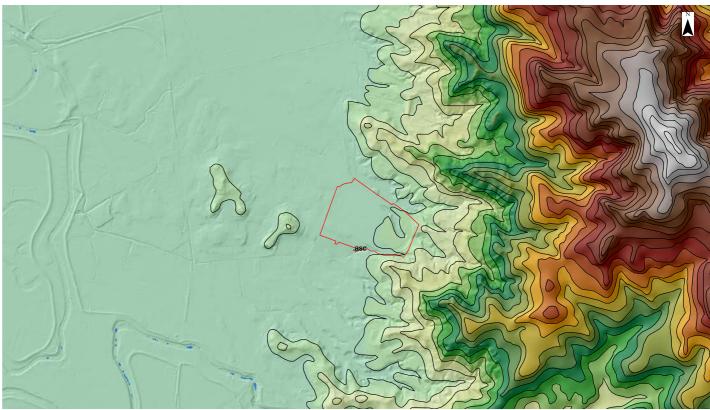
GIS -typography

Key Site Boundary Slope (Degrees): 0 - 3 (Flat to gently undulating) 4 - 7 (Undulating) 8 - 15 (Rolling) 16 - 20 (Strongly rolling) 21 - 25 (Strongly rolling) 26 - 35 (Steep) 36 - 42 (Very steep) 43 - 72 (Precipitous)

GIS - slope





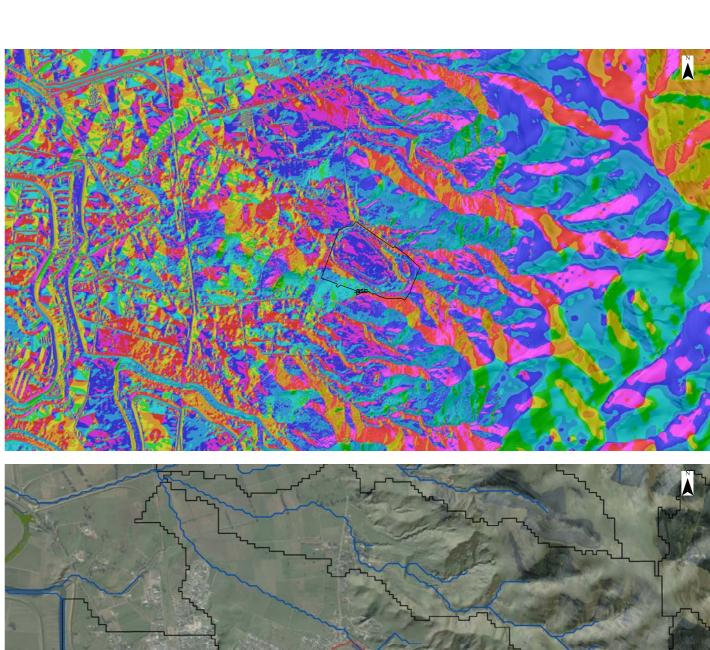


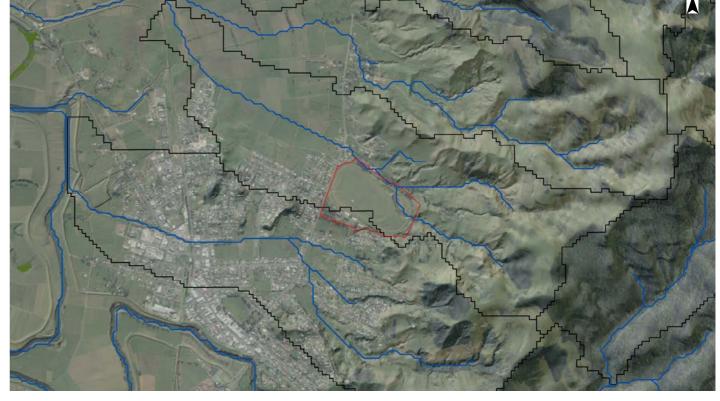
GIS -aspect



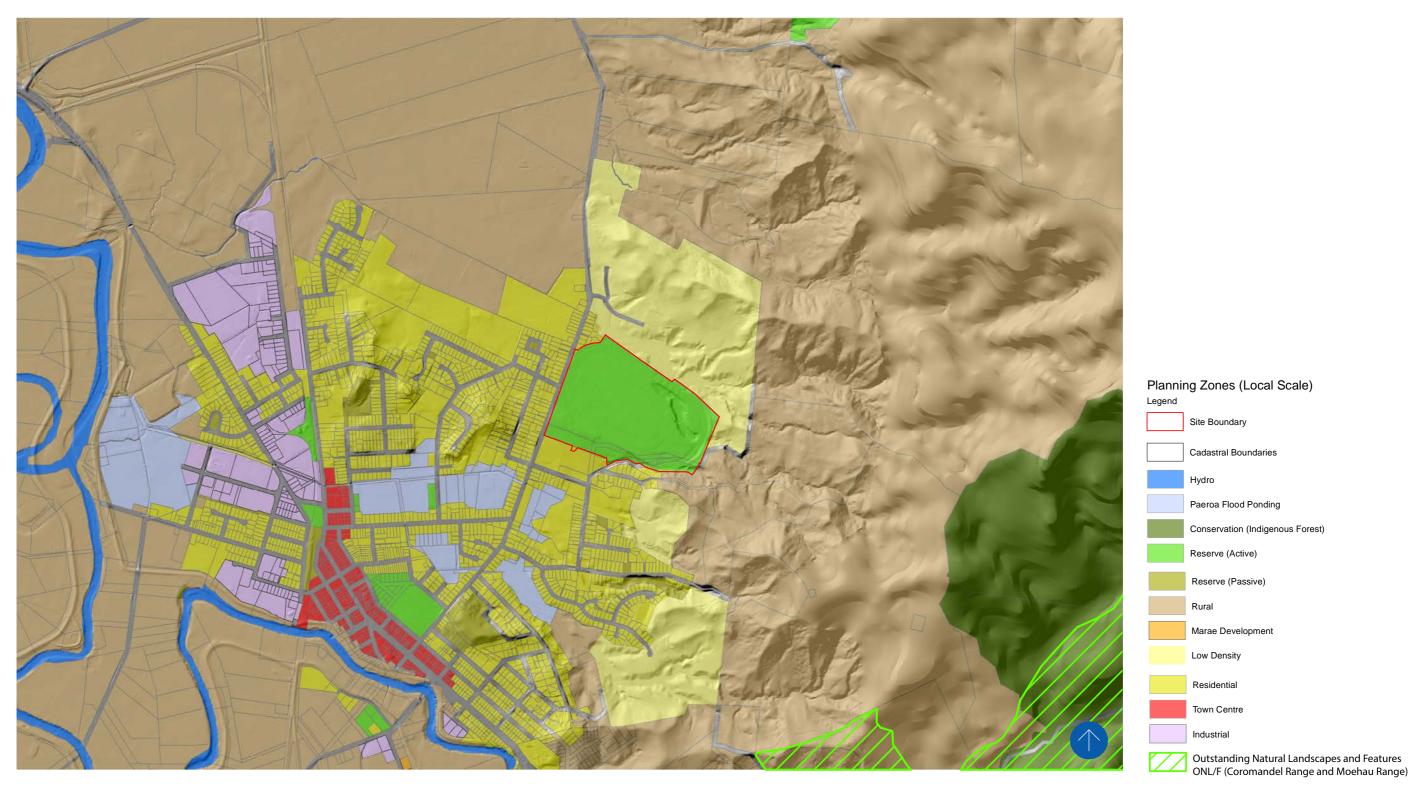
GIS - hydrology

Key Site Boundary Catchments (Order 2) Rivers and Streams





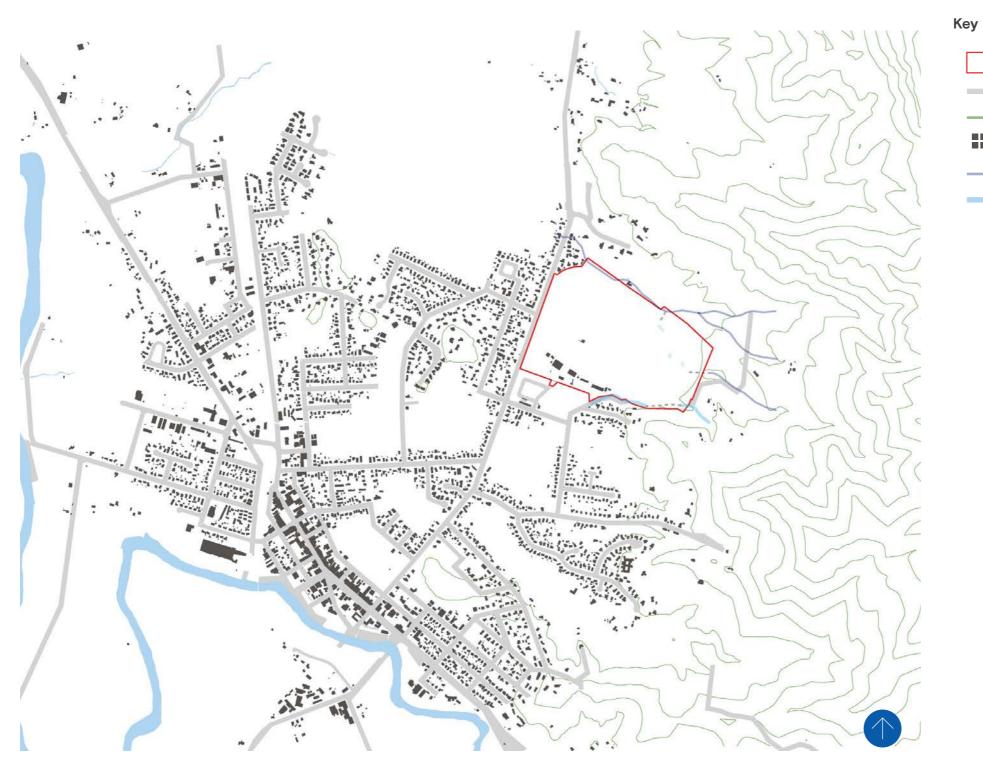
GIS - zoning



GIS - transport network



Paeroa - local grain



Site boundary

Road Network

Contour lines

Local grain of building footprints

Local streams

Ohinemuri River

Paeroa - reserves



Key

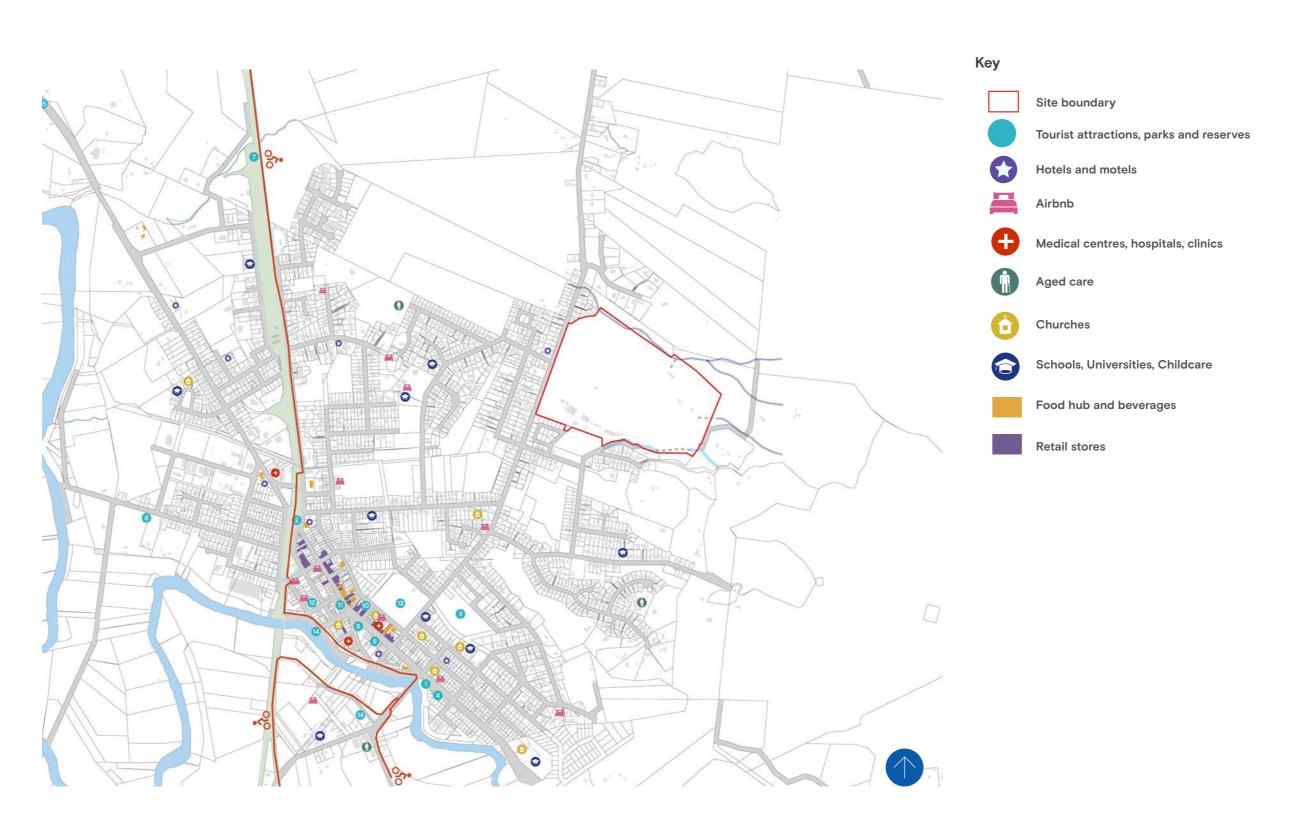
Site boundary



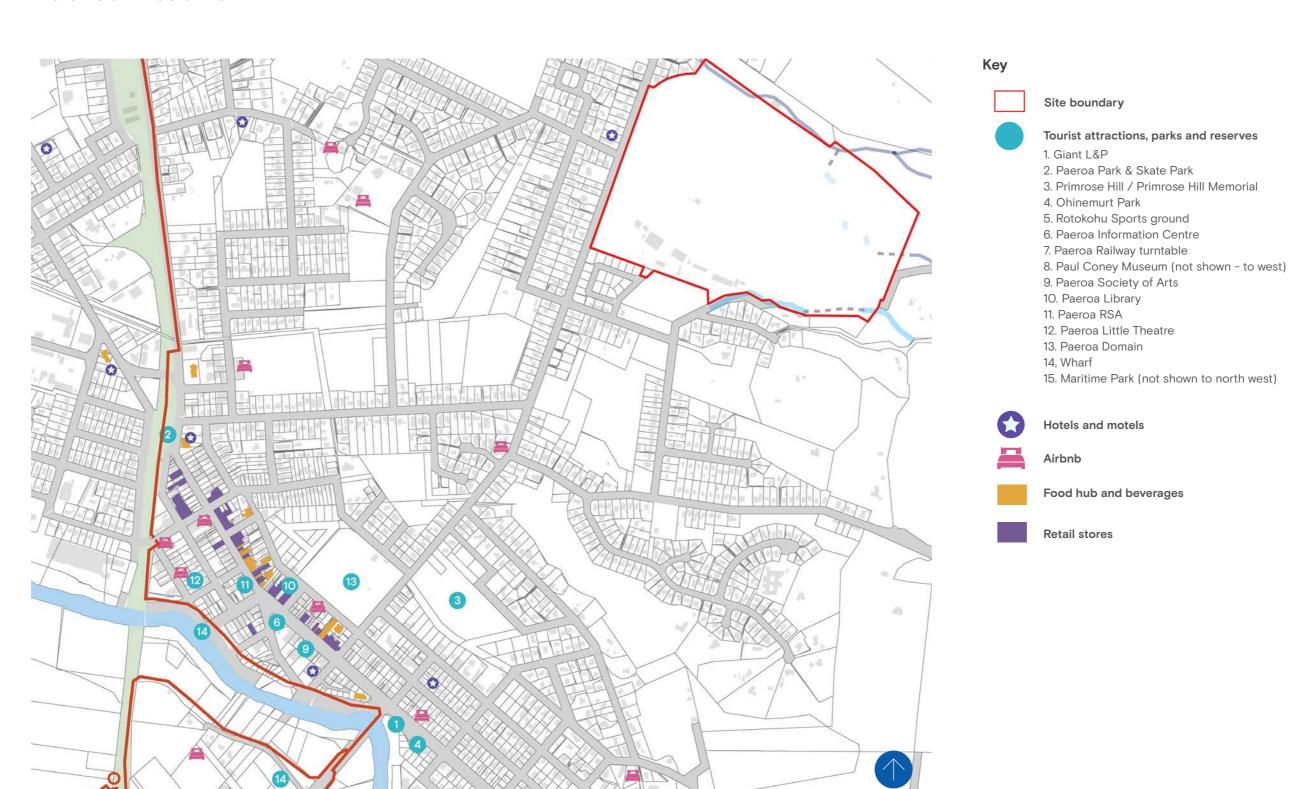
Reserves

- 1. Primrose Hill
- 2. Paeroa Domain
- 3. Paeroa Park
- 4. Paeroa Skatepark
- 5. Shoalhaven Street Recreation Reserve
- 6. Taniwha Street Reserve
- 7. Washington Square Recreation Reserve
- 8. Brenan Field Recreation Reserve
- 9. Edwards Place Recreation Reserve
- 10. Merv Parker Recreation Reserve
- 11. Kinsella Place Recreation Reserve12. Shaw Avenue Recreation Reserve

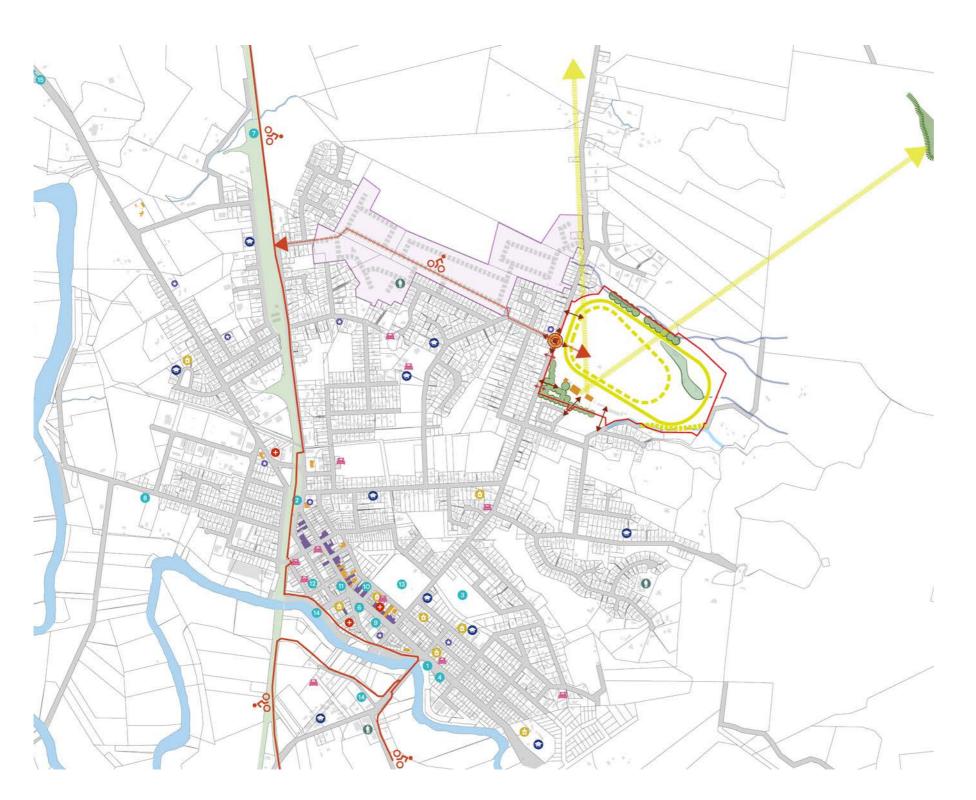
Paeroa - local amenities



Paeroa - tourism



Paeroa - Racecourse site



Key





Possible link with Hauraki Railtrail



New roundabout connection



Possible pedestrian and cycle connection to site



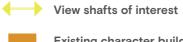
Outer Racecourse track



Inner Racecourse track



Ponding area



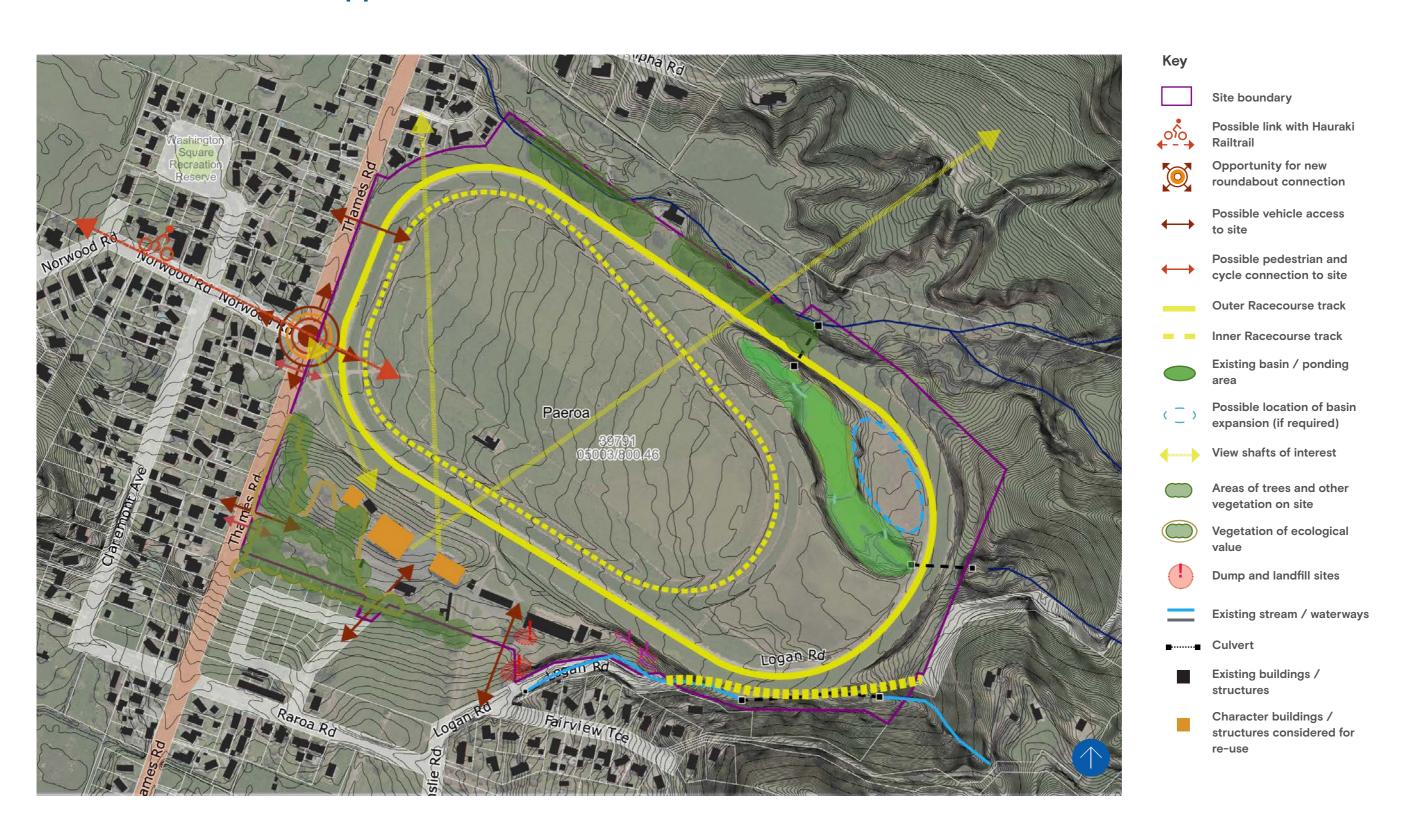
Existing character buildings / structures considered



Existing trees and other vegetation of value



Site - constraints and opportunities



Site character - built form and artefacts









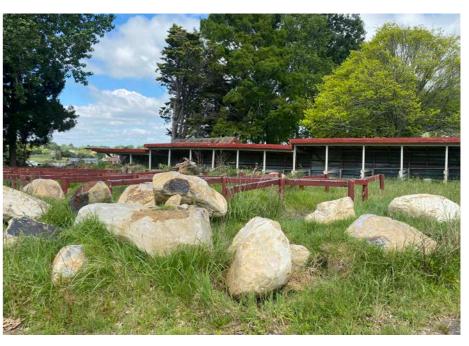




Site character - built form and artefacts













Site character - landscape



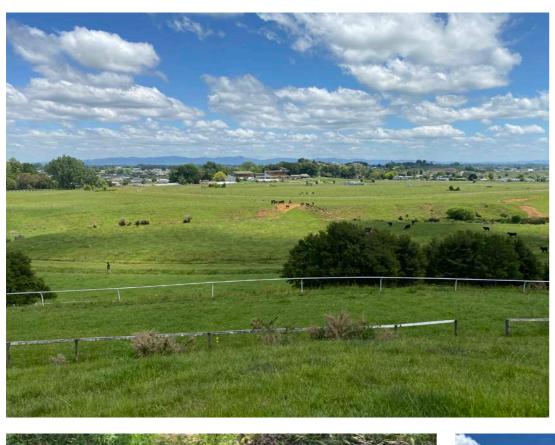








Site character - landscape





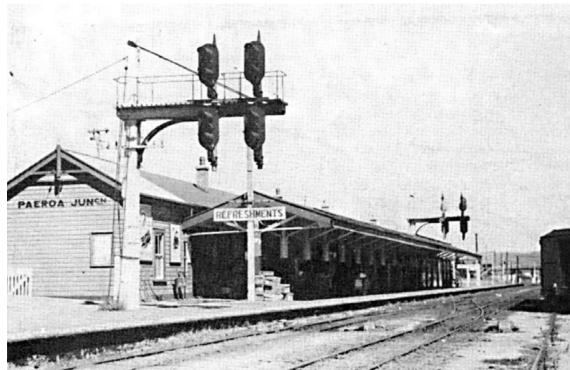






Local history











Paeroa sits near the original settlements of Te Raupa pā, Opita pā, and Waiwhau pā, located at the junction of the Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers. First settled in 1842 by European farmers looking for fertile land, the area now known as Paeroa experienced explosive growth after gold was found there in the late 1860s.

Striking it rich: Paeroa's gold rush and refinery operations

Following the discovery of the area's gold veins, an influx of people looking to make their fortunes grew the town into a thriving river port. By 1890, three major companies had begun gold refining operations near the town—and today, Paeroa's history and culture are inextricable from the ambitious spirit and excitement associated with the gold rush.

Gold mining and environmental impacts

Although gold mining brought wealth and prosperity to Paeroa, it also had significant effects on the environment. In 1895, an Act of Parliament made it legal for companies to dump debris from their processing plants into the Ohinemuri River, polluting it to such an extent that all river life soon died. The pollution came to an end in 1954, when the last processing plant in Waikino was closed.

Accommodating for growth

The incredible inflow of miners required the town to provide increasing amounts of hotels and boarding houses to accommodate population growth. Records from around 1891 show five larger-sized hotels in the town at the time — the Criterion, the Belmont, the All Nations, the Commercial, and the Paeroa. The latter is still operational today.

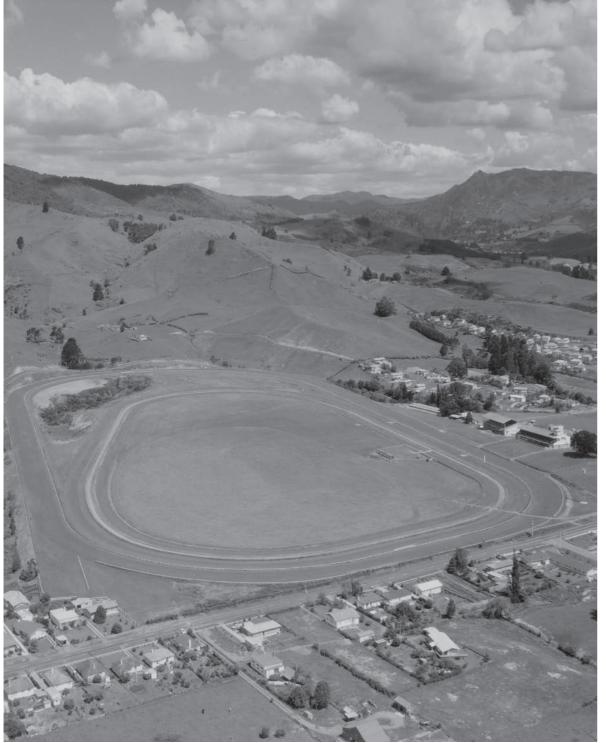
Building transport connections

The demand for transporting people and resources through the area resulted in the construction of an extensive railway network. By 1895, Paeroa connected to Te Aroha, Hamilton, and Auckland — and by 1897, a connection was established with Thames.

1905 saw the construction of a railway line through the Karangahake Gorge to Waihi, ending horse-drawn traffic in the area and affecting waterway shipping.

By 1970, railways around the country shuttered in the wake of the rise of the private motor vehicle. Today, the old railway track functions as a recreational cycle trail called the Hauraki Rail Trail, which connects Paeroa to Thames, Waihi, and Te Aroha.

Local history







The home of L&P

Paeroa is well-known as the origin of the famous lemonade drink Lemon & Paeroa (L&P), which finds its source in the mineral spring located on Junction Road. The spring provided high-quality mineral water for early settlers and miners alike and was first bottled commercially in 1910.

The drink we know now as L&P began commercial distribution around 1926 and was originally called Paeroa and Lemon. A large L&P bottle statue, located in the Ohinemuri Reserve along State Highway 2, pays homage to this key piece of Paeroa's history.

The Paeroa racecourse: then to now

The Ohinemuri Jockey was founded in 1876, just one year after the opening of the Ohinemuri goldfields. Beginning on St Patrick's Day, the annual two-day meeting of the race club was one of the most important events in the town. In 1897, the club purchased the original racecourse site, adding additional pieces of land over the years. Today, it encompasses 130 acres.

The racecourse structures have a rather calamitous history. The original grandstand was fully destroyed by fire in 1903 and rebuilt for the 1905 meeting — and in 1938, just after the club erected a framework to extend the stand by 90 metres, gale-force winds demolished the entire structure. In 1973, the old north stand was torn down and replaced by a park-like area on the hill.

1979 saw lightning strike the judges' tower, igniting a fire that spread to and consumed the members' stand. After two years, a new stand with racing amenity officially opened on 3 November 1981 in a ceremony presided over by Prime Minister Hon. Robert Muldoon.

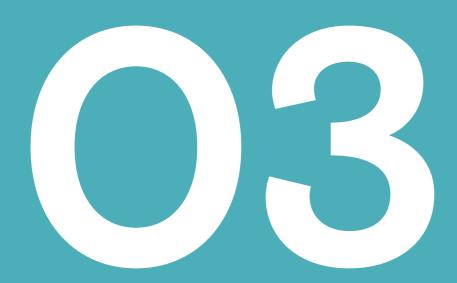
Paeroa also paved the way for female racing in New Zealand and Australia, with pharmacy assistant Linda Jones becoming the first woman to gain her full jockey's license in 1977 — a nod to Paeroa's rich history of trailblazing.

Historical aerial view of racecourse site.

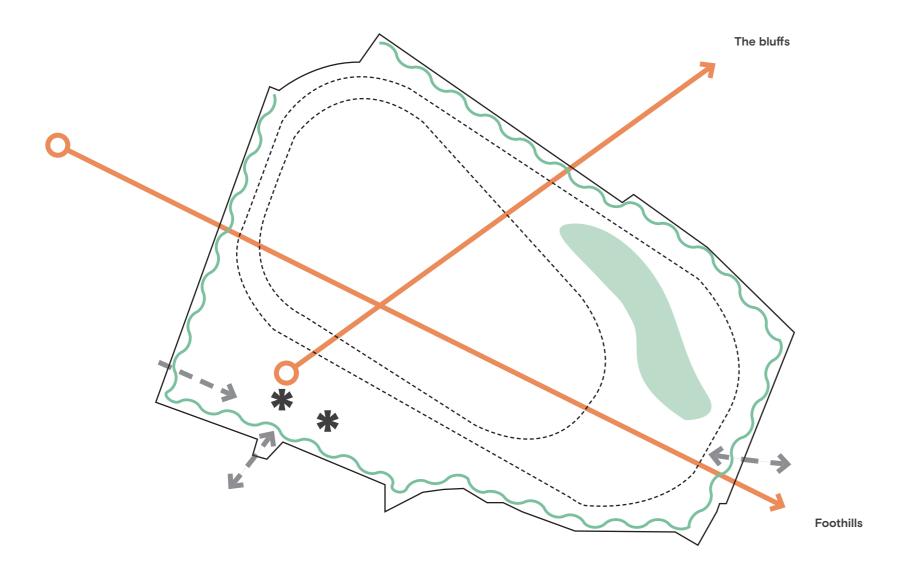


Structuring elements

Structuring elements considered as part of masterplan exploration



Structuring elements



Structuring elements considered in design exploration

The masterplan options explored as part of the design process considered a mixture of approaches to key design considerations for the site.

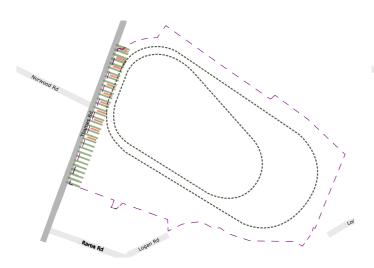
The key areas of concern were:

- The interface with Thames Road
- The connectivity to and through the site and how it relates to neighbouring sites
- What value and usability do the different existing buildings and racetrack items have.
- How much and what type of commercial could be appropriate for the site and where would this be located.
- In what way can open space and amenity be organized throughout the site, finding an interesting balance between the natural environment the site is located in and the geometrical quality of the race tracks.
- How a chapel for weddings and functions could become a key design consideration for the site.

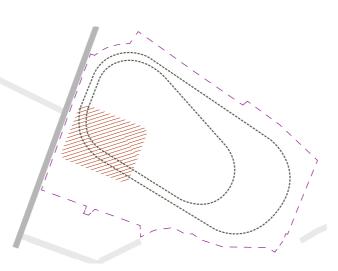
The options explored responded in a different ways to the questions posed, as such, the various options explored considered different design outcomes. The selected masterplan sought to take the most successful elements from each area and combine them to build the best design response that provides balance across the site.



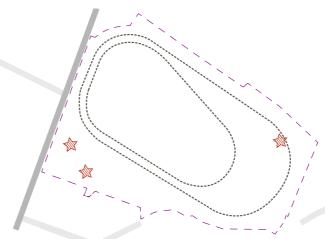
Elements explored in options analysis



Thames Road interface with the site



Focus are for mixed use / commercial activity



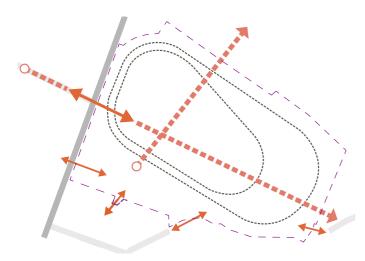
Location of Chapel as key attraction to or into the site



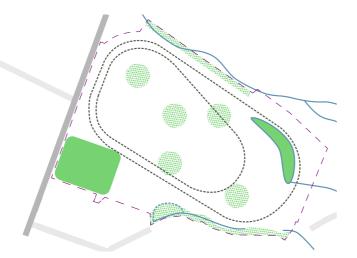
Key to the character of the site, the racecourse tracks will be retained as an integral part of the circulation network.

Other structuring elements, outlined opposite, have been explored to strike a balance between the existing character and future community character.

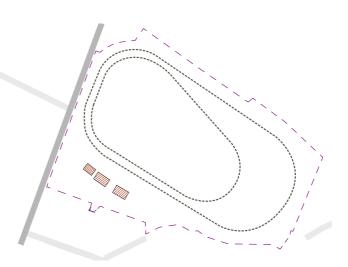
These various elements have been explored as part of the options analysis, resulting the selected masterplan presented as a basis for the proposed Plan Change.



Connectivity with the surrounding environment



Distribution of open space and stormwater solutions



Reuse of existing buildings and the race tracks



Thames Road interface



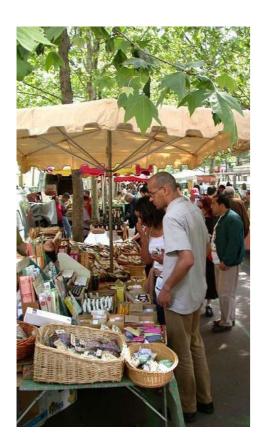
The images opposite illustrate the existing Thames Road interface. The proposed masterplan seeks to strike a balance between residential scale, and retaining the existing character of this iconic site.

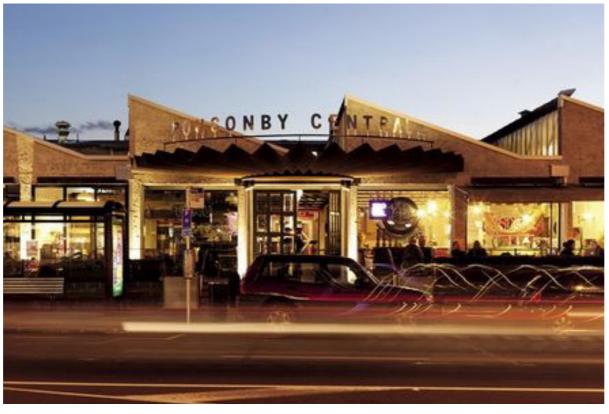
A generous planting buffer is proposed, to improve amenity value, and soften the street edge. This also provides increased separation between the homes opposite and the portion of commercial frontage presented.





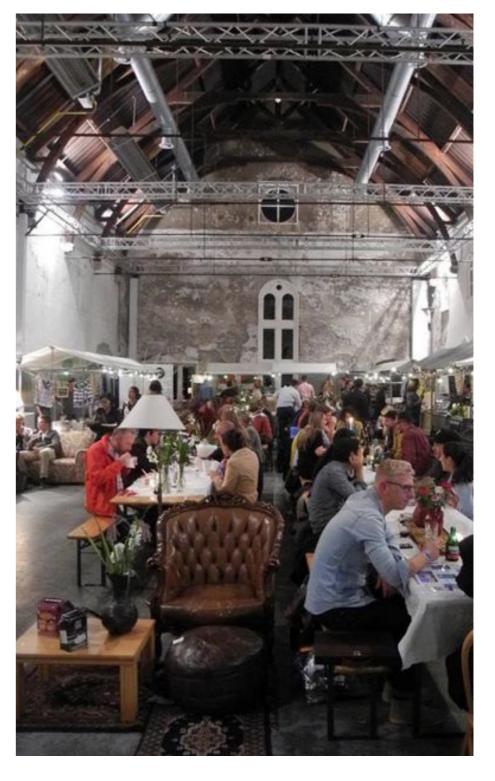
Location of mixed use / commercial activity



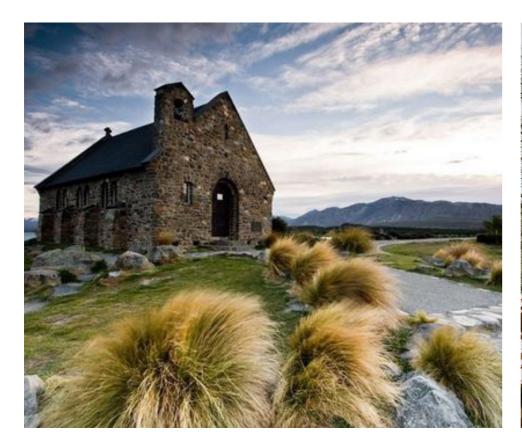




The precedent images opposite illustrate an approach to break down the scale of the commercial uses considered. The character of these buildings will be important to best integrate with both the existing and proposed residential neighbours.



Location of Chapel







Key to the heart of the development, a small chapel is proposed to host events. This will be located with access from the original gateway entry, with long views towards the bluffs, through a protected sight-line (new street). This gateway is a landmark feature along Thames Road, and the new chapel will respect this historic setting and provide a valuable facility for the community.





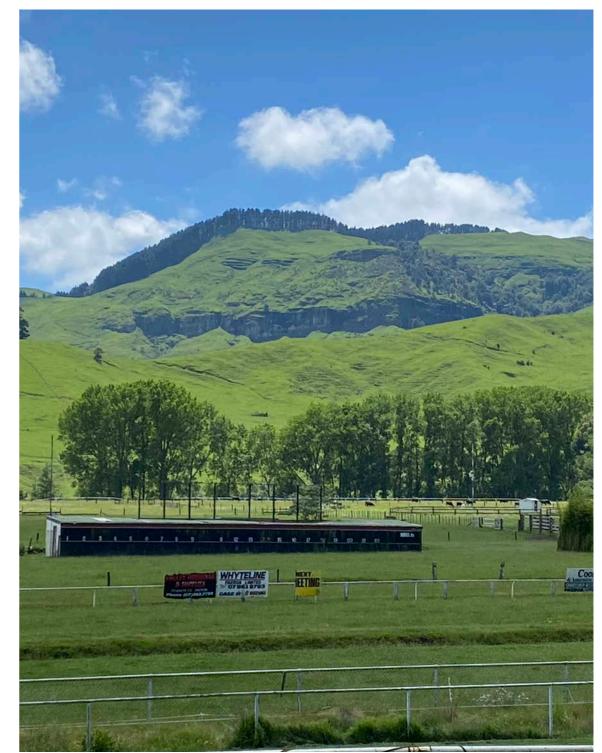


Connectivity with the surrounding environment

Nestled within the existing community, there are various opportunities for both physical and visual connections to neighbouring streets and the hills beyond. Key view shafts, and accesses to the site have been considered to improve connectivity and maximise the visual connection the outstanding views beyond.







Distribution of open space and stormwater solutions













The presence of the existing wetland offers an opportunity to create a unique character within the development. A strategy for an integrated stormwater system has been considered for the site.

Throughout the development, unique recreation opportunies will be considered to enjoy the amenity of these features. These may include walkways, cycle tracks and informal play.

Retention / reuse of existing buildings and the race track





Key to the existing character of the site, the prominent buildings have been assessed. Where appropriate these buildings will be retained and reused as an integral part of the new community.







Masterplan

Masterplan overview



Proposed masterplan

At its heart, a racecourse is a community hub — a lively place that brings people together amidst an atmosphere of energy and camaraderie. We believe a vision for the new era of the Paeroa racecourse could aim to harness this vital spirit and distil it into a modern, mixed-use form — one that captures the heritage and authenticity inherent in this important piece of New Zealand history and preserves it for future generations.

The approach to the masterplan development takes great care to ensure that the racecourse retains its connection to the community. The selected masterplan celebrates the racecourse ring as a unifying signature of the site.

The ultimate goal here is to create a welcoming experience for residents of and visitors to Paeroa — one that encapsulates the heart and soul of the original racecourse and serves as a renewed, revitalised staple of the community.







The diagram opposite illustrates the proposed illustrative masterplan for the racecourse site.

Key



Primary focus area for commercial



Area for residential development (lots and sizes TBC)



Potential location of tourist accommodation (orange outline)



Potential development site (use TBC) around existing structures



Existing structures on site to be retained



Selected chapel location



Key green / park spaces



Stormwater focus area, functionality to be confirmed



Key pedestrian / cycle connection



Landscape strategy



Landscape strategy

The landscape character of the site is defined by the flat expanse of grassed open space of the racecourse grounds, nestled into the rolling foothills at the tail of the Coromandel Range. Situated on the outskirts of Paeroa, the site is located at the northeast suburban fringe where it transitions to lifestyle blocks as Thames Rd heads further north. Views into and out of the racecourse to adjacent residential lots are buffered by groups of mature trees, with the notable exception of Thames Road frontage. Natural watercourses from the foothills have been heavily modified to enable racecourse infrastructure development.

To integrate the proposed land use change of the racecourse with the surrounding environs, the overarching design strategy to guide any development of the site is landscape-led. The intended outcome of future developments shall be integrated with the character of the wider landscape through 6 key moves:

- 1. retention of key landscape viewshafts
- 2. retention of mature trees
- 3. provision of planted buffers and boundaries
- 4. distribution of public open spaces
- 5. considered street tree network
- 6. landscape-based stormwater management

Landscape Connections

The structure plan has been developed with a landscape-led approach, with the resulting alignment of the proposed development areas specifically aligned with consideration of connection to the wider environment. The key objective is to maintain view-shafts and visual connections to the wider landscape, particularly key views to local landmarks such as Black Rock, Taumaharua and the Coromandel foothills. Key views to landmarks such as Black Rock and indeed the foothills of the Coromandel Range where Paeroa derives its name from*.

Restoration and enhancement of the existing water courses also provides an opportunity to strengthen ecological connections and restore hydrological functions, providing catchment-wide biodiversity and freshwater management benefits. There is significant opportunity to restore and enhance the Opukeko Stream tributaries which flow through the site, creating an ecological corridor to connect the wider Ohinemuri Stream catchment.

* paeroa = foothills; a low line of hills at the foot of a higher mountain range and running parallel to it. The full name of Paeroa is Te Paeroa o Toi te Huatahi, meaning the long range of Toi te Huatahi, a famous explorer.

Mature Tree Management

The existing mature trees at the southwest entrance to the racecourse create a distinctive threshold and contribute greatly to the experience of entering the site. The impressive scale and number of specimen trees creates both a grand sense of arrival and significant screen from Thames Rd to the grandstand buildings beyond.

To maintain this strong presence, a programme to manage existing mature trees shall be put in place to protect, maintain and enhance this group of trees. This should consider works within the dripline of these trees, pruning or removal to maintain health and safety of both trees and people, and long-term replacement planting strategies where required.

For the mature poplars to the north and east of the site, a staged succession planting strategy shall be developed.

The intention is to manage the effects of removal of these unsafe trees and replacement with appropriate specimen trees species to maintain a visual buffer and ecosystem functions (e.g. shade, roosting, evapotranspiration, soil stabilisation). Replacement of these boundary trees shall also provide long-term green 'backdrop' and screen reverse views from surrounding lifestyle blocks, and should consider development staging and safe access.









Examples of re-vegetated stream corridor provides opportunity for informal recreation and scenic space for quiet reflection







Examples of tree planting and landscape to commercial blocks

Landscape strategy

This buffer shall also ensure signage and other commercial service requirements integrate with the landscape frontage, rather than visually dominating. This should also include landscape treatments to commercial car parking areas, so that these spaces visually enhance the wider development and promote a pleasant pedestrian environment, rather than detracting and reinforcing the priority of vehicle dominated spaces.

This should also extend to the landscape treatment of proposed intersections with Thames Road, balancing safety of all road users with an aesthetic and welcoming point of entry to the site. As design of any proposed development develops, cultural markers should also be considered at key thresholds and public open spaces throughout the site along with any other opportunities for cultural expression.

Public Realm

A high-quality public realm shall be provided, with a variety of open spaces distributed across the proposed development area. With the 'anchor point' of the mature tree cluster in the southwest corner to surround the proposed chapel, ornamental gardens shall open out to provide high visual amenity at the main street entrance to the proposed development. The chapel gardens could be used for outdoor events, activating the prominent corner to Thames Road. Outdoor space is also available where the farmers' market and other public events could continue to be held amongst the retained racecourse buildings to maintain the popular community use of the site.

A park network to provide local open spaces for residents is distributed across the site, connected with tree-lined streets. To further enhance the street network and provide pedestrian priority at key junctions, landscape pedestrian refuges and build-outs shall be provided as design develops. Opportunity for social and cultural spaces expression shall be explored, with a wayfinding strategy developed to clearly define pedestrian and bicycle networks. This could include public art or cultural markers that relate to the heritage of the site and surrounding landscape.

Street Tree Network

To reinforce the landscape character of the proposed development, a street tree strategy shall be developed. Relating to the road hierarchy, underground service locations and street width, specific tree species shall be selected to create rhythm throughout the development network and reinforce street character and identity.

Different tree species shall be selected to relate appropriately to scale of the street network. This should also include consideration of trees appropriate to the commercial core area, to further integrate the landscape elements across the site.

Stormwater Treatment and Management

A proposed water sensitive design approach for stormwater management is a core component of the landscape-led design strategy. Stormwater treatment and management shall be integrated with amenity and ecological provisions throughout the development, with opportunities to enhance existing features. There is ample space around the wetland for provision of playground assets, which could continue a 'natural play' theme throughout the development or a distinctive play feature which adds to the unique character of the development.

There is also opportunity to explore restoration of the tributary on the south edge to Logan Road to address existing storm water issues and provide amenity where the land is currently unusable. Ecologically appropriate riparian and wetland planting palettes shall be developed to restore natural processes with the intention of creating self-sustaining environments and native biodiversity enhancement. Recreational pathways and natural play spaces shall be overlaid within these spaces, creating multi-functional landscapes which serves both the development and ecological purposes.









Examples of chapel setting opportunities - Chapel Garden linked to landscaped outdoor event space set amongst mature trees









Examples of routes between larger trees and informal pathway

Proposed structure plan



Special Character Precinct

Although the Racecourse site is not listed as a Heritage item, the social and cultural identity associated with the Racecourse is integral to Paeroa and its people. To acknowledge its importance to the community, the masterplan seeks to incorporate key elements that are associated with its established special character.

A special character precinct is suggested as part of the structure plan, to preserve the character of the southwest corner of the site and the historical heart of the Racecourse. The significance of this area is defined by several unique characteristics including:

- The varied topography and gently sloping bank overlooking the Racecourse tracks.
- Established landscape quality, notably the tree-lined entry and long views to the north.
- Identifiable buildings located in this area although technically not heritage buildings, nor of significant architectural merit, their location and scale represent their use and community functions, that allowed the community to come together.
- The original entry gate and location, notably its connection with Thames Road.

Character description:

The character of the precinct is predominately defined by the large number of mature trees, in contrast with the unique utilitarian character of the grandstand buildings. The gently sloping topography around these structures elevated long views of the Racetracks and foothills beyond.

The trees in the precinct are either located along the boundaries of the site, along the accessway, or dotted randomly in clusters of trees creating smaller distinct green spaces. When entering the site through the original hand crafted gates, you are led to the buildings beyond, through the low-level open fence line that created the distinctive boundary along Thames Road. From the gates, the entry building is framed at the end of the tree-lined

route, with views of the large trees that sits on top of the slope directly north off the access way.

Travelling along this entry access, views of the Racecorse are framed, as well as long views of the foothills and Black Rock, the rock formation that sits so prominently behind the Racecourse site.

Developments proposed for the special character precinct will need to be complimentary to the character of this area and maintain the integrity of original the setting that formed such an important part of the community experience every race day.

This does not mean building should try to replicate the style of the existing buildings, but rather use elements that contribute to the character of the area.

Key design considerations for development within the Special Character Precinct:

- Retention of existing mature trees where possible.
- Retain and enhance the tree-lined access road into the site from Thames Road and consider the views framed by this.
- Retain and enhance the original gateway into the site, as well as the low-level post and rail fence along Thames Road within the Special Character Precinct (where a fence is provided).
- Retain an element of level changes, to create gateway effects towards the racetracks (new road and recreational path).
- Frame long views from either buildings and / or landscaped spaces towards\ Black Rock.
- Create / retain pockets of lush green spaces between buildings and mature trees.
- Establish a built form which represents the range of buildings previously on site, maintaining similar space between buildings, and simple 'no-fuss' detailing.



Existing timber enquires building



Grandstand building



Entry experience from Thames Road to Special Character Area



Large trees and landscaped setting



Grandstand building

Street hierarchy



Typical street sections

Opposite, indicative street sections show the scale and character of the proposed streets

Pedestrian and cyclist safety is prioritised with a recreational loop hugging the outer racecourse track.

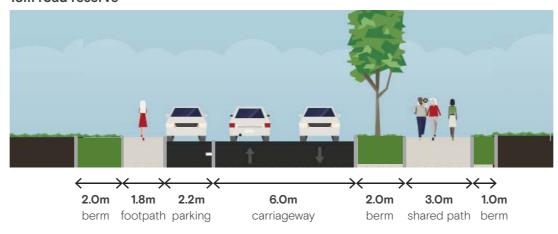
Main entry road - 18m

1.2m 1.8m 2.5m 7.0m 2.5m 3.0m berm footpath berm carriageway berm shared path

10m pedestrian priority reserve (occasional vehicular access)

3.0m 4.0m 3.0m
landscaping shared surface landscaping

18m road reserve





w/ passing bays

16m road reserve







