

04 OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The adjacent map illustrates the key opportunities and constraints of the site and surrounding context. The key elements are addressed below.

Heritage Conservation Area

This area requires sensitive attention to ensure that any proposals do not adversely impact upon the character of the village- including built form and landscape elements. It is obvious that widening Bridge Street for example would have a high impact upon the character of the village and change its sense of place.

Grafton Street

This street was originally planned as the main street, as seen from the original 1902 town plan. The road has a 20 metre wide reserve, has some large trees set back from the pavement edge and follows the alignment of the previous ferry across the river. The trees to the east and west of the Grafton Street interface with the water should be retained as much as practical. It is important to minimise impacts to the house in a prominent position at the southern end of the street. It is noted that this house will be effected by Options 2 and 3, and the owner has indicated it is possible to relocate the house on the land.

Park Consolidation

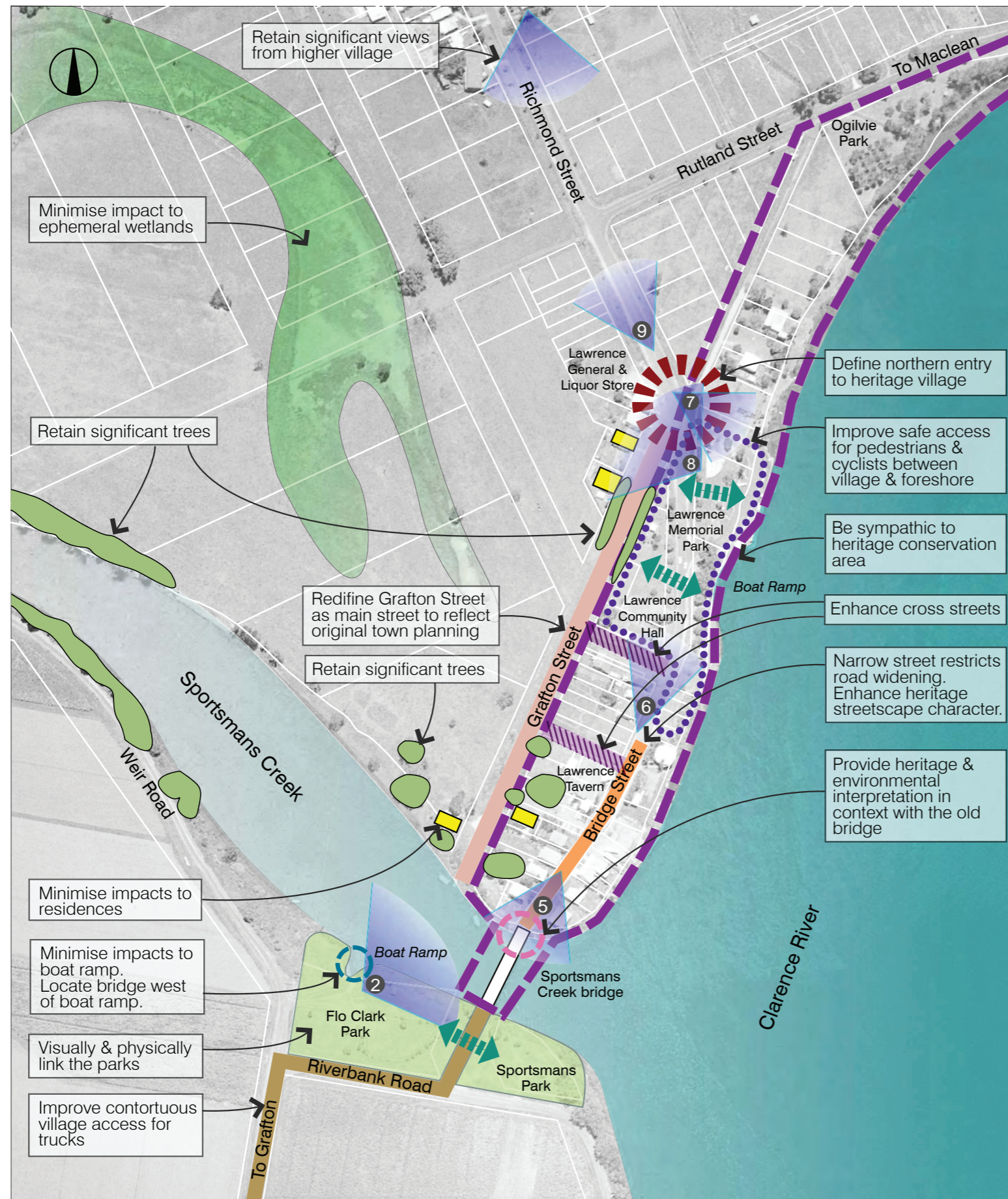
In the long term, with the removal of the old bridge, there is the opportunity that Sportsmans Park and Flo Clark Park be considered as a whole, as the bridge - the current divider between these spaces- would be removed. This would change the nature of Sportsmans Park, and with careful earth shaping, and planting design, the two parks could be seamlessly linked, thereby improving recreational opportunities for the community and consolidating green space.



Without the main traffic along Bridge Street, there is potential to reduce pavement width at the end of the street, create a viewing deck with sunset views over the river and integrate environments/heritage interpretation.



Looking west from Sportsmans Park, with the removal of the old bridge, the embankment to the south can be removed, to open up the views and relationship between these two main parks- Sportsmans Park, and Flo Clark Park.



opportunities & constraints

Environmental & Heritage interpretation - old bridge area

Within the project site environs there are some unique natural and cultural resources that provide opportunities for further consideration beyond the scope of works of this project. It is considered important to highlight these opportunities for further consideration by Council and the community to ensure their potential is not lost. These opportunities are:

heritage interpretation

There are opportunities to integrate some heritage interpretation of Bridge Street, the bridge and the town's development in a location at the southern end of Bridge Street.

The existing heritage stone abutments for the bridge, built in 1902, at the end of Bridge street offer potential to include as an element of heritage interpretation for the community in the long term. Whilst safety and public access issues need to be refined in the design stage, this potential should be explored in the next stage of the project.



There may be potential to retain part of the heritage stone wall on the north bank of the river, at the end of Bridge Street, to incorporate a boardwalk, with environmental interpretation for micro bats, stone wall, fish habitat and sea and salt marsh transition.

This area, along with the adjacent potential for environmental interpretation for the sea grass areas could be well integrated.

environmental interpretation

As the old bridge location is at the meeting point of the sea grass and salt marsh areas, the area also provides ideal opportunity for saltwater plant interpretation.

The undercroft area of the north section of the bridge offers potential for a boardwalk and environmental interpretation for the micro bats, salt grass and sea grass communities.

These ideas are for future community/Council consideration and we recognise they are beyond the scope of this brief.

Ephemeral Wetlands

These wetlands form an ecological resource within the overall floodplain to the west of the town, and are also composed of acid sulfate soils- a major deterrent to construction. They also form an important visual resource for the town, and are viewed from the higher slopes of the more densely populated areas of Lawrence. Minimise any disturbances to these areas.

Pedestrian Accessibility

Any future plans should address the need for safe and convenient access from the village to the foreshore area. At present the main traffic along Bridge street creates an unsafe divide between water and town.

The proposed redesign for the new bridge and roadway infrastructure offers opportunity to improve upon the existing situation. There is potential for creating a slow speed environment with strong, legible links between the town and river foreshore. In addition the northern section of "Grafton Street" which is a laneway and grassed area, provides opportunity for enhanced pedestrian/cycle connectivity between the north and south township areas.

Streetscape Improvements

The proposed project provides opportunity for streetscape improvements to the two cross streets, as well as for Bridge Street.



The bridge demolition provides opportunity for streetscape improvements to Bridge Street. The southern end of Bridge Street would benefit with some small scale street trees. The area closest to the old bridge offers potential for having narrowed pavement, and creation of a community meeting place- e.g. viewing deck with fishing potential and interpretation signage, with seating.

Northern Entry

There is potential to define a northern entry point to the village, in the vicinity of the Lawrence General and Liquor Store. Views towards the park and riverside should be retained, and pavement design and car parking arrangements carefully designed to enhance the legibility, quality and safety of this location.



Framing this impressive view to the Clarence River from the northern town entry is important, as well as retaining the avenue trees to the right along Grafton Street.



The northern entrance into town at present is dominated by asphalt, with little landscape or legibility. There is opportunity to enhance this area to create a strong entry point/gateway into the heritage village.

Impacts upon Residences

There are three houses in particular where impacts need to be minimised, should the main traffic movement move from Bridge Street to Grafton Street. The advantage of using the Grafton Street alignment, is its generous road reserve width, existing rear yards facing the street to the south, and potential to easily mitigate visual impacts with landscape measures.



The existing mature Eucalypts on the outer verge of Grafton Street provide excellent streetscape quality for any future potential widening.



One of the existing residences along Grafton Street is set back for the road. The existing trees provide beneficial backdrop to the road setting.

05 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Contextual view looking down to the heritage village from the higher slopes of Lawrence.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ZONES

We have identified eight landscape character zones in the general vicinity of the study area.

Higher Village

This zone occupies the upper grounds of the township and comprises predominantly residential properties on an elevated position with views towards the floodplain below and beyond. This zone is considered moderate to high in sensitivity due to its general land use and contextual views from many residences.

Ephemeral Wetlands

Comprising of the low lying lands directly south and east of the Higher Village, this zone is characterised by pasture land and wetlands. Within this zone there are a few stands of trees, yet its character is open, providing extensive views beyond. Its sensitivity is considered moderate.

River Bend

This area includes a combination of open pasture land, a couple of residences flanking the Clarence River and Ogilvie Park. Due to the extensiveness of open space, this zone has a rather rural character. Due to its mixed use, a moderate to high sensitivity level has been assessed for this zone.

The Hub

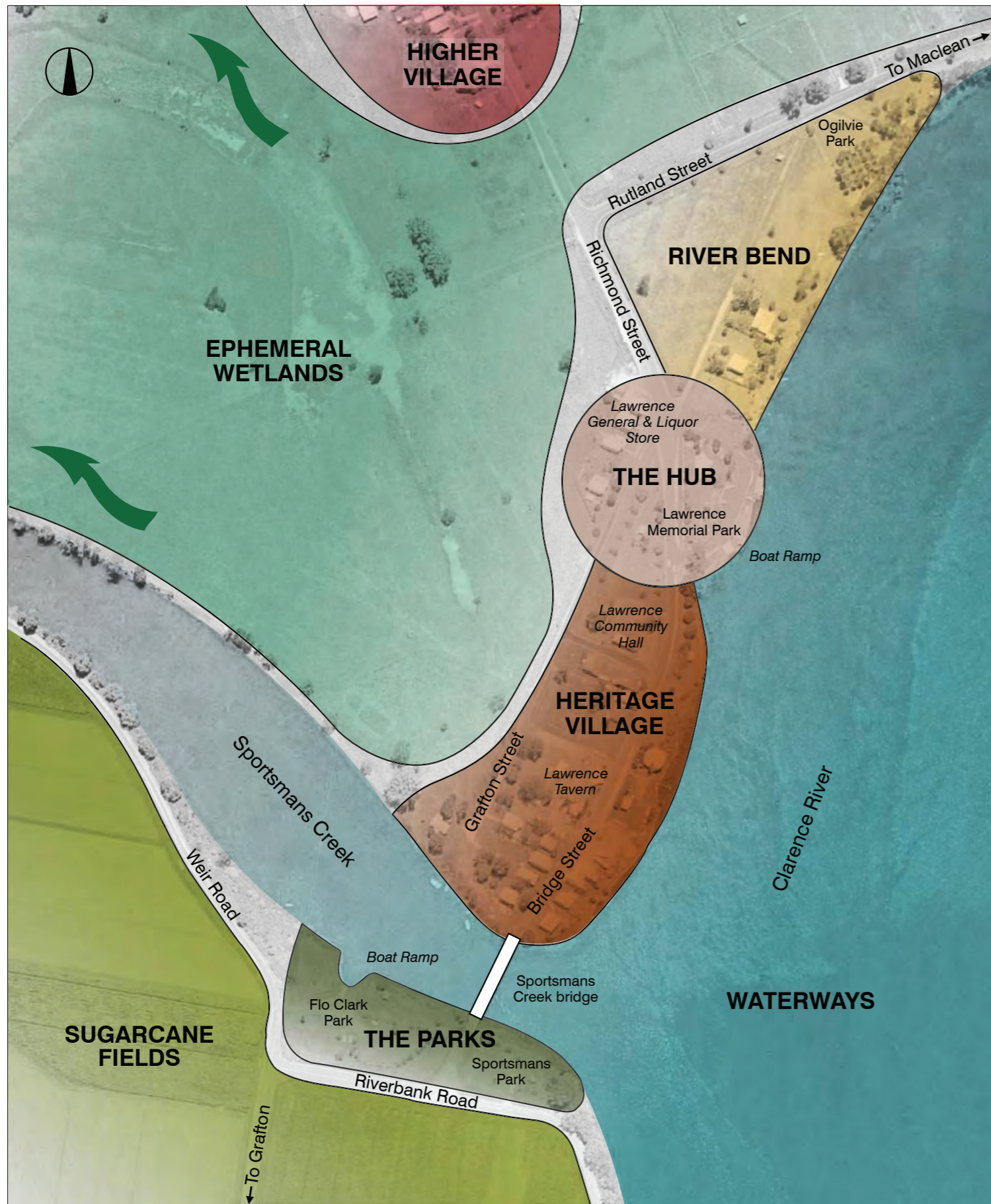
The Hub is defined by the intersection of Richmond, Grafton and Bridge Streets. Lawrence General and Liquor Store strongly marks the intersection from where views towards the Clarence River are attainable.

This zone marks the northern entry point into the Heritage Village and provides a strong sense of context through the visual interrelationship between the waterways, the Heritage Village, the floodplains and the Higher Village. Hence, the Hub strongly contributes to the orientation of the traveller/viewer.

The Hub also includes Lawrence Memorial Park from which a boat ramp provides recreational access to the river. It also includes a playground, picnic facilities and a memorial in memory of local servicemen who served in both world wars, Borneo, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. A moderate to high sensitivity level has been determined for this zone due to its strategic location and its interface of parks and water.

Heritage Village

The Heritage Village is an ensemble of residences with a number of them under heritage protection. This ensemble, including the former Baptist Church has a strong visual inter-relationship with the waterways of the Clarence River and creates a picturesque setting that defines its identity. Considering its significance to the township's identity and heritage value, a high sensitivity rating is considered appropriate.



The Parks

This zone comprises two parks, Flo Clark Park and Sportsmans Park. These two parks provide direct views towards the existing bridge and the Heritage Village beyond. Flo Clark Park has picnic facilities and a boat ramp, and Sportsmans Park has a picnic shelter and dilapidated BBQ. These parks consist of mown grass with and stands of trees. Panoramic views are attainable from these parks towards the Clarence River and Sportsmans Creek, as well as direct views across to the heritage village. This recreational area with contextual views is considered sensitive to change.

Sugarcane Fields

This zone, located to the south, is dominated by the green and homogeneous character of the sugarcane fields. Depending on the harvest time, these fields will either provide open views to the landscape beyond or create an enclosed feeling along the road. This zone strongly contributes to the general character of the landscape and is one of the most southern sugarcane production areas in NSW. In this case a low sensitivity level has been assessed due to its land use.

Waterways

Comprised of creek and river, this zone with its strong green demarcation in the form of a floodway, is visually and environmentally of high significance that defines the western edge of the central part of town. This zone is considered high in sensitivity due to its strategic position within Lawrence, its environmental values and aesthetic appeal. The recreational value of the waterways and visual appeal in context to its transient nature makes this zone moderate in sensitivity.

landscape character zones



Ephemeral wetlands in middleground of the photo



Sugar Cane Fields



Existing gravel track - north Grafton Street - an important pedestrian link within the River Bend zone.



The Hub- approaching the northern entrance to the heritage village



Sportsmans Creek, from the southern end of Grafton Street



Looking across Flo Clark Park, across Sportsmans Creek to the heritage village and floodplain to the west



Looking across to the village from Sportsmans Park - key panoramic water views are a feature of this park- of Sportsmans Creek and the Clarence River.



The Heritage Village has special built form, landscape and contextual character that must be respected. View corridors to water between housing and across parklands are special elements through the town.

06 URBAN DESIGN VISION & OBJECTIVES



URBAN DESIGN VISION

Key to the success of this project is to sensitively integrate the new bridge crossing in the landscape. It is considered that the location of the bridge is critical to minimise impacts to a number of sensitive areas as identified in our landscape character analysis. Second to this is the structural treatment of the bridge itself; hence the route is the determining factor.

The new bridge would allow the use of heavy vehicles along this route and this would influence the magnitude of impact on the affected areas. Hence careful consideration is required on the new alignment. This alignment should take into consideration the future desired character of the setting and in particular the heritage ensemble within the Heritage Village.

The bridge should consider views onto the waterways as part of the arrival sequence into Lawrence from the south. It should not dominate the landscape but express simple clear lines sympathetic to the rural setting.

URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Based on our site analysis, the following urban design project objectives have been identified. These objectives will assist in identifying a short list of preferred options to be further developed:

- retain the integrity of the Heritage Village and minimise impacts to public parks and recreational facilities
- minimise impacts to the overall natural landscape character and quality of the setting, including waterways and floodplain
- locate the structures so that they do not obstruct key views / vistas that give the township and the landscape character its special quality
- mitigate impacts to the sensitive environs such as the floodplain, heritage elements, local residences etc
- develop a route/alignment which provides effective linkages to Rutland Street
- provide user-friendly facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
- develop a scheme that is compatible with the desired future character and land use of the township.