Cessnock City Council

Branxton Urban Design Framework

Job No: 08271
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**Urban Design Framework**  
Branxton

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1.0 OVERVIEW

Branxton is currently a highway town, bisected by the New England Highway, one of the main routes between Sydney and Brisbane. As a result, the town is disrupted by noise and visual pollution from constant heavy vehicle movements, and also experiences pedestrian safety issues. Following the construction of the planned Hunter Expressway, Branxton is presented with a unique opportunity to evolve into a town with strong, community based village atmosphere.

The built form and heritage character of Branxton, in a traditional sense, is not a strong point. However, the strong rural connections linking the town to the surrounding farmland areas and the existing network of open space is of significance. This open space network helps to reinforce the current role of Branxton as a rest stop for travellers on the New England Highway. There is an opportunity, following the bypass, to capitalise on this character to draw people from the new Hunter Expressway. In addition, the location of Branxton also serves to provide an opportunity for the town to be a gateway to the Hunter Region as a whole.

The establishment of a clear and concise vision for an area is integral for the redevelopment of an area. Given the extensive history of vehicle movements along the New England Highway, the role of Branxton as a highway town is somewhat ingrained. This raises the question of what is to become of the town following the construction of the Hunter Expressway. By establishing this framework now, Branxton will be able to adapt and change its role to one which acts as a destination and a gateway, rather than a small town that you pass through on your way along the New England Highway. This vision builds upon the existing strengths of the town.
2.0 INTRODUCTION

What is an Urban Design Framework (UDF)?

Urban Design Frameworks are strategic planning tools that set out an integrated design vision for the desired future development of urban places. The design quality of the urban environment is more important than ever. The viability of suburbs, towns and major centres requires sharpened competitiveness in response to economic, technological, demographic and social changes. Urban Design Frameworks provide direction for interventions that shape open space, buildings and landscape. They draw upon and integrate the traditional disciplines of architects, landscape architects, engineers, strategic, cultural and social planners, heritage advisers, economists and other specialists.

An Urban Design Framework differs from a strategic plan or a masterplan. It combines the direction setting and coordination aspects of strategic planning with the detailed and practical components of an overarching set of design principles.

Urban Design Frameworks involve the generation of ideas and the preparation of realistic design concepts based upon the following elements:

- Consultation: Consultation is a key element in the development of a Framework. This ensures the community embraces the strategic vision and subsequent projects. Consultation can range from community information sessions to the establishment of working groups whose role it is to see the project past the production of the report;

- Research: In depth review of the history of the site, its existing planning controls, field work and site data gathering;

- Analysis: The coordination of the consultation and research outcomes/data. and

- Assessment: The process is about determining the appropriate outcomes for the vision, strategy and framework

This Urban Design Framework seeks to create an attractive centre with a strong village atmosphere for Branxton following the construction of the Hunter Expressway, and as such many of the urban design elements discussed relate directly to the village character of the town centre. However, an overarching vision for the town as a whole has also been developed.
3.0 STUDY AREA

Settlement Description

Branxton is located 18 kms north west of Maitland and 167km north of Sydney. It is a town in Cessnock City LGA and is situated on the New England Highway between Maitland and Singleton.

The Hunter River is located on the northern side of Branxton flowing towards Maitland. It is centrally located between Cessnock, Maitland and Singleton.

3.1 Township Profile

The 2006 Census identified the following statistics for the 2335 postcode:

- Population was 5,084 persons. Of which 50.5% were males and 49.5% were females;
- The median age group is 35 years;
- 25.3% were children aged between 0-14 years
- 2.1% of residents were indigenous persons; and
- Of the families living in the area, 51.7% were families with children.

These statistics are unusual considering the median age group for most rural towns is above 55 as young people find it easier to find work outside the area. The high proportion of children and family groups justify the large number of schools for a small population.
4.0 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

4.1 State/Regional Planning Policy

Lower Hunter Regional Strategy

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS) sets out a broad scale regional approach to the growth and development of the Hunter Region. Branxton is mapped as being within the existing urban area of the Lower Hunter. The overall strategic aim of the LHRS is as follows:

• ensure that sufficient employment lands are available to cater for 66,000 new jobs;
• plan for an additional 160,000 residents and 115,000 new dwellings;
• establish important green corridors, to protect and even enhance the Region’s strong environmental and biodiversity assets; and
• reinforce the role of the Newcastle City Centre as the Regional City.

The proposed Urban Design Framework for Branxton emphasises the green corridors of the region, does not compromise the provision of new jobs or residences and does not detract from the role of Newcastle as the Regional City, thereby meeting the overall strategic aims for the region.

4.2 Local Planning Policy

The land use zones currently applicable to the Branxton settlement, pursuant to the Cessnock Local Environmental Plan (1989) are illustrated below:
Figure 1 – Zoning under the Cessnock LEP 1989
The objectives and permissible forms of development for these zones are outlined below.

Zone No 1 (a)  Rural "A" Zone

1 Objectives of zone
The objectives of this zone are:

(a) to enable the continuation of existing forms of agricultural land use and occupation,
(b) to ensure that potentially productive land is not withdrawn from production,
(c) to encourage new forms of agricultural land use,
(d) to enable other forms of development which are associated with rural activity and which require an isolated location, or which support tourism and recreation, and
(e) to ensure that the type and intensity of development is appropriate in relation to:
   (i) the rural capability and suitability of the land,
   (ii) the preservation of the agricultural, mineral and extractive production potential of the land,
   (iii) the rural environment (including scenic resources), and
   (iv) the costs of providing public services and amenities.

2 Without consent
Agriculture (other than animal boarding, breeding or training establishments, pig keeping establishments, feed lots or poultry farming establishments); commercial vineyards; forestry; stables.

3 Only with consent
Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 2 or 4.

4 Prohibited
Advertising structures; amusement parks; automotive uses; boarding houses; bulk stores (other than those associated with an agricultural use); commercial premises (other than those primarily intended to provide services to tourists); heliports; industries (other than home industries or rural industries); junk yards; liquid fuel depots; mortuary chapels; motor showrooms; multiple dwellings; recreation facilities (other than those ancillary or related to a tourist recreation facility); residential flat buildings; shops (other than those primarily intended to provide services to tourists or general stores); transport terminals (other than the storage and servicing of vehicles associated with the occupation of the owner); warehouses.

Zone No 1 (c)  Rural–Residential/Rural (Small Holdings) Zone

1 Objectives of zone
The objectives of this zone are:

(a) to enable small holdings development to be carried out on land which is suitable for that purpose, and
(b) to enable other forms of development to be carried out on land within the zone if they are in keeping with the rural character of the locality and are compatible with existing or likely future small holdings.
2 Without consent

Agriculture (other than animal boarding, breeding or training establishments, pig keeping establishments, feed lots or poultry farming establishments); dwelling-houses; forestry stables accommodating no more than 3 horses.

3 Only with consent

Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 2 or 4.

4 Prohibited

Advertising structures; aerodromes; amusement parks; animal boarding, breeding or training establishments; art galleries; automotive uses; boarding houses; bulk stores; caravan parks; cellar door facilities; cemeteries and crematoria; clubs; commercial premises (other than veterinary establishments); commercial vineyards; conference facilities; extractive industries; feed lots; gas holders; generating works; helipads; heliports; horse training establishments; hotels; industries (other than home industries or rural industries); institutions; integrated tourist development; junk yards; liquid fuel depots; mines; mortuary chapels; motor showrooms; multiple dwellings; pig keeping establishments; places of assembly; poultry farming establishments; reception establishments; recreation facilities; refreshment rooms; residential flat buildings; retail plant nurseries; roadside stalls; sawmills; service stations; shops (other than general stores); stock and sale yards; timber yards; tourist accommodation buildings; tourist recreation facilities; tourist-related craft shops; transport terminals; warehouses; wine storage facilities; wineries.

Zone No 2 (a) Residential "A" Zone

1 Objectives of zone

The objectives of this zone are:

(a) primarily to provide for low density residential development,
(b) to enable residential flat buildings which are compatible with single dwelling development,
(c) to provide for other forms of development which may appropriately be located in a residential zone, and
(d) to ensure non-residential development is of a type, scale and character which will maintain residential amenity.

2 Without consent

Dwelling-houses.

3 Only with consent

Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 2 or 4.

4 Prohibited

Advertising structures; aerodromes; amusement parks; animal boarding, breeding or training establishments; art galleries; automotive uses; bulk stores; cellar door facilities; cemeteries and crematoria; clubs; commercial premises; commercial vineyards; conference facilities; extractive industries; feed lots; gas holders; generating works; helipads; heliports; horse training establishments; hotels; industries (other than home industries); institutions; integrated tourist
development; junk yards; liquid fuel depots; mines; mortuary chapels; motor showrooms; pig keeping establishments; places of assembly; poultry farming establishments; reception establishments; recreation establishments; recreation facilities; refreshment rooms; retail plant nurseries; riding schools; roadside stalls; sawmills; service stations; shops (other than general stores); stables; stock and sale yards; timber yards; tourist accommodation buildings; tourist recreation facilities (other than motels); tourist-related craft shops; transport terminals; warehouses; wine storage facilities; wineries.

Zone No 3 (a) General Business Zone

1 Objectives of zone

The objectives of this zone are:

(a) to encourage the provision of retail, commercial and other business services, and associated development such as parking, dwellings, service industries and the like,

(b) to encourage development associated with tourism,

(c) to encourage the concentration of retailing and other related uses and services, and

(d) to encourage improvements in pedestrian networks and pedestrian amenity in business centres.

2 Without consent

Nil.

3 Only with consent

Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 4.

4 Prohibited

Aerodromes; agriculture; caravan parks; cellar door facilities; cemeteries and crematoria; commercial vineyards; extractive industries; forestry; generating works; helipads; heliports; horse training establishments; industries (other than light or home industries); institutions; junk yards; liquid fuel depots; mines; panel beating; recreation establishments; sawmills; stables; stock and sale yards; timber yards; tourist recreation facilities (other than motels); tourist-related craft shops; transport terminals; warehouses; wine storage facilities.

Zone No 4 (b) Light Industrial Zone

1 Objectives of zone

The objectives of this zone are:

(a) to encourage development for light industrial and service trades purposes which will generate employment and contribute to the needs of the City of Cessnock,

(b) to provide opportunities for other activities that support industrial land use, or which are reasonably located in an industrial zone, and

(c) to ensure that industrial or other permitted development is carried out in a manner which does not compromise the amenity of any residential development in the vicinity.

2 Without consent

Nil.
3 Only with consent

   Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 4.

4 Prohibited

   Art galleries; bed and breakfast accommodation; boarding houses; caravan parks; cellar door
   facilities; commercial premises and shops (other than those ordinarily incidental or subsidiary to
   industry, or which are primarily intended to serve persons occupied or employed in purposes
   otherwise permitted in this zone, or which by virtue of their nature, the services provided, or the
   products produced, distributed or sold, are, in the opinion of the Council, appropriately located in an
   industrial zone); commercial vineyards; conference facilities; dwelling-houses (other than those
   ancillary to purposes permitted in this zone); educational establishments (other than those associated
   with purposes permitted in this zone); extractive industries; hospitals; industries (other than light
   industries or home industries); institutions; integrated tourist development; mines; motels; multiple
   dwellings; places of assembly; places of public worship; reception establishments; residential flat
   buildings; roadside stalls; tourist accommodation buildings; tourist recreation facilities; tourist-related
   craft shops; wine storage facilities.

Zone No 5 (a) Special Uses Zone

1 Objectives of zone

   The objectives of this zone are:
   
   (a) to accommodate development by public authorities on publicly-owned land,
   
   (b) to provide for appropriate community uses, and
   
   (c) to enable associated and ancillary development.

2 Without consent

   Nil.

3 Only with consent

   The particular purpose indicated on the map; dams; any public purpose; utility installation.

4 Prohibited

   Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 3.

Zone No 5 (b) Special Uses (Railways) Zone

1 Objectives of zone

   The objective of this zone is to enable development for railways and related purposes on railway land,
   whether in public or private ownership.

2 Without consent

   Nil.

3 Only with consent

   Dams; railways; utility installations.
4 **Prohibited**

Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 3.

**Zone No 6 (a) Open Space Zone**

1 **Objectives of zone**

The objectives of this zone are:

(a) to recognise existing public land used or capable of being used for public recreation purposes, and  

(b) to recognise private recreation facilities on privately owned land or on land where general public access may be restricted.

2 **Without consent**

Works for the purposes of landscaping, gardening and bushfire hazard reduction.

3 **Only with consent**

Agriculture (other than animal boarding, breeding or training establishments, pig keeping establishments, feed lots or poultry farming establishments); bowling or golf clubs; buildings for the purposes of landscaping, gardening or bushfire hazard reduction; caravan parks; child care centres; community centres; dams; environmental facilities; forestry; helipads; kiosks; mines; racecourses; recreation areas; recreation facilities; showgrounds; stables; utility installations.

4 **Prohibited**

Any purpose other than a purpose included in item 2 or 3.

**Cessnock City Council Draft Local Environmental Plan 2009**

Cessnock City Council is currently reviewing the existing Local Environmental Plan (1989) in line with Standard Instrument documentation advocated by the Department of Planning. The Draft Cessnock Local Environmental Plan (2009) sets out the proposed zonings for Branxton.
Figure 2 – Proposed zoning under the Cessnock LEP 2009
The objectives and permissible forms of development for these zones are outlined below.

**Zone RU2 Rural Landscape**

1 **Objectives of zone**
   
   To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base.
   
   To maintain the rural landscape character of the land.
   
   To provide for a range of compatible land uses, including extensive agriculture.
   
   To enable other forms of development which are associated with rural activity and which require an isolated location, or which support tourism and recreation.
   
   To ensure that the type and intensity of development is appropriate in relation to:
   
   - the rural capability and suitability of the land;
   - the preservation of the agricultural, mineral and extractive production potential of the land;
   - the rural environment (including scenic resources); and
   - the costs of providing services and amenities.

2 **Permitted without consent**

   Extensive agriculture; home occupations; horticulture.

3 **Permitted with consent**

   Agricultural produce industries; cellar door premises; dual occupancies; dwelling houses; environmental protection works; farm buildings; health consulting rooms; hospitals; livestock processing industries; neighbourhood shops; pubs; recreation facilities (indoor) (in association with tourist or visitor accommodation); restaurants; roads; roadside stalls; rural industries; sawmill or log processing works; stock and sale yards; any other development not specified in item 2 or 4.

4 **Prohibited**

   Attached dwellings; boat repair facilities; brothels; business premises; canal estate developments; car parks; charter and tourism boating facilities; depots; entertainment facilities; exhibition homes; exhibition villages; freight transport facilities; hazardous storage establishments; health services facilities; heliports; highway service centres; home occupations (sex services); industrial retail outlets; industries; liquid fuel depots; marinas; moorings; mortuaries; nightclubs; offensive storage establishments; office premises; passenger transport facilities; residential accommodation; retail premises; semi-detached dwellings; sex services premises; storage premises; transport depots; truck depots; vehicle body repair workshops; vehicle repair stations; warehouse or distribution centres; wholesale supplies.

**Zone R3 Medium Density Residential**

1 **Objectives of zone**

   To provide for the housing needs of the community within a medium density residential environment.
   
   To provide a variety of housing types within a medium density residential environment.
   
   To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.
2 Permitted without consent

Home occupations.

3 Permitted with consent

Attached dwellings; bed and breakfast accommodation; boarding houses; child care centres; community facilities; funeral chapels; funeral homes; group homes; health consulting rooms; medical centres; multi dwelling housing; neighbourhood shops; places of public worship; roads; seniors housing; serviced apartments; sewerage reticulation systems; any other development not specified in item 2 or 4.

4 Prohibited

Agriculture; airstrips; boat launching ramps; boat repair facilities; boat sheds; brothels; business premises; canal estate development; car parks; cemeteries; charter and tourism boating facilities; crematoria; depots; electricity generating works; emergency services facilities; entertainment facilities; extractive industries; farm buildings; freight transport facilities; function centres; hazardous storage establishments; helipads; highway service centres; home occupations (sex services); industrial retail outlets; industries; jetties; liquid fuel depots; marinas; mines; mining; moorings; mortuaries; nightclubs; offensive storage establishments; office premises; passenger transport facilities; recreation facilities (indoor); recreation facilities (major); recreation facilities (outdoor); registered clubs; residential flat buildings; retail premises; rural supplies; rural worker's dwellings; service stations; sewerage systems; sex service premises; storage premises; tourist and visitor accommodation; transport depots; truck depots; vehicle body repair workshops; vehicle repair stations; veterinary hospitals; warehouse or distribution centres; waste management facilities; waste or resource management facilities; water recreation structures; waterbodies (artificial); wholesale supplies.

Zone B2 Local Centre

1 Objectives of zone

To provide a range of retail, business, entertainment and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in and visit the local area.

To encourage employment opportunities in accessible locations.

To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.

2 Permitted without consent

Home occupations.

3 Permitted with consent

Boarding houses; business premises; child care centres; community facilities; educational establishments; entertainment facilities; function centres; information or education facilities; office premises; passenger transport facilities; recreation facilities (indoor); registered clubs; retail premises; roads; seniors housing; service stations; sewerage reticulation systems; shop top housing; tourist and visitor accommodation; waste or resource transfer stations; any other development not specified in item 2 or 4.
4 Prohibited

Agriculture; airstrips; attached dwellings; bed & breakfast accommodation; boat launching ramps; boat repair facilities; boat sheds; brothels; canal estate development; caravan parks; cellar door premises; cemeteries; charter and tourism boating facilities; crematoriums; depots; electricity generating works; exhibition homes; exhibition villages; extractive industries; farm buildings; farm stay accommodation; freight transport facilities; hazardous storage establishments; helipads; highway service centres; home occupations (sex services); industrial retail outlets; industries; jetties; liquid fuel depots; marinas; mines; mining; moorings; offensive storage establishments; port facilities; recreation facilities (major); recreation facilities (outdoor); residential accommodation; roadside stalls; rural worker’s dwellings; secondary dwellings; semi-detached dwellings; sewerage systems; sex service premises; storage premises; timber and building supplies; transport depots; truck depots; vehicle body repair workshops; vehicle sales or hire premises; waste management facilities; waste or resource management facilities; water recreation structures; waterbodies (artificial); wholesale supplies.

Zone IN2 Light Industrial

1 Objectives of zone

To provide a wide range of light industrial, warehouse and related land uses.

To encourage employment opportunities and to support the viability of centres.

To minimise any adverse effect of industry on other land uses.

To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of workers in the area.

2 Permitted without consent

Nil.

3 Permitted with consent

Agricultural produce industries; depots; funeral chapels; funeral homes; hotel or motel accommodation; landscape and garden supplies; light industries; neighbourhood shops; pubs; roads; sawmill or log processing works; sewage reticulation systems; timber and building supplies; vehicle sales or hire premises; warehouse or distribution centres; waste or resource transfer stations; any other development not specified in item 2 or 4.

4 Prohibited

Agriculture; airstrips; attached dwellings; boat launching ramps; boat sheds; business premises; canal estate development; cemeteries; charter and tourism boating facilities; community facilities; educational establishments; electricity generating works; emergency services facilities; entertainment facilities; exhibition homes; exhibition villages; extractive industries; farm buildings; function centres; hazardous storage establishments; health services facilities; helipads; highway service centres; home businesses; home industries; home occupations; home occupations (sex services); hospitals; industries; information or education facilities; jetties; marinas; mines; mining; moorings; nightclubs; offensive storage establishments; office premises; recreation facilities (major); recreation facilities (outdoor); residential accommodation; retail premises; rural worker’s dwellings; secondary dwellings; semi-detached dwellings; sewerage systems; tourist and visitor accommodation; waste management facilities; waste or resource management facilities; water recreation structures; waterbodies (artificial); wholesale supplies.
Zone RE1 Public Recreation

1 Objectives of zone

To enable land to be used for public open space or recreational purposes.

To provide a range of recreational settings and activities and compatible land uses. To protect and enhance the natural environment for recreational purposes.

2 Permitted without consent

Nil.

3 Permitted with consent

Caravan parks; child care centres; community facilities; environmental facilities; environmental protection works; helipads; kiosks; recreation areas; recreation facilities (indoor); recreation facilities (major); recreation facilities (outdoor); registered clubs (in association with recreational activities); roads; sewage reticulation systems; waterbodies (artificial).

4 Prohibited

Any development not specified in item 2 or 3.

Zone SP2 Infrastructure

1 Objectives of zone

To provide for infrastructure and related uses;

To prevent development that is not compatible with or that may detract from the provision of infrastructure.

2 Permitted without consent

Nil.

3 Permitted with consent

The purpose shown on the Land Zoning Map, including any development that is ordinarily incidental or ancillary to development for that purpose; group homes; roads.

4 Prohibited

Any development not specified in item 2 or 3.

There are a number of areas of concern regarding the proposed zonings under the LEP. The main areas of concern are as follows:

- The R3 Medium Density zone covers the entire residential area;
- The R3 Medium Density zoning promotes an inappropriate housing density to support continued village character; and
- The IN2 Light Industrial zone to the south west of the residential area appears ad-hoc and does not contribute to the overall village/urban transition atmosphere of the area;
A proposed zoning plan has been prepared to illustrate a possible solution to these issues. This involves providing for R2 Low Density Residential land across the majority of the town, compacting the R3 Medium Density Residential zone to the area directly adjoining the centre. The IN2 zone in the south west of the residential zone is also recommended to be rezoned to R2 Low Density Residential, reinforcing the area adjoining the New England Highway as the sole industrial zoned area for the town.
Figure 3 – Revised Proposed zonings under the Draft Cessnock LEP
5.0 COMMUNITY VIEWS

5.1 Consultation Program
In conjunction with Cessnock City Council, Andrews Neil UDG have undertaken the following processes to allow for strong community feedback for this project:

- Consultation with Cessnock City Council
  This process involved a series of meetings to understand Cessnock Council’s role in the process, determine the desired outcomes and their understanding of current issues in Branxton.

- Community Consultation
  On the 17th of December 2008, Andrews Neil UDG presented some initial concepts to the community. The purpose of the meeting was not to present a solution, rather initiate dialogue which encouraged the community to identify a vision for Branxton. At this session, the community were requested to provide feedback on their vision to Cessnock City Council via phone or a letter. This feedback has been incorporated into this final document as relevant.

- Exhibition of the Draft Document
  The draft document was placed on exhibition to allow the community to assist with the development of the UDF. Where appropriate, feedback from the exhibition period has been incorporated into this document.

- Consultation with the Branxton Business Chamber
  Consultation was undertaken with the Branxton Business Chamber, as key stakeholders in the growth and development of Branxton. The feedback from this consultation has been included into this document where appropriate.

5.2 Key Matters from Community Feedback
The following matters were identified in community feedback. Preferred community direction has been integrated into the Urban Design Framework for Branxton as appropriate:

  Regional Vision
  - To establish Branxton as the “Northern Gateway” to the Cessnock LGA.

  Village Character
  - Need to consider the rural curtilage upon approach to the village as it defines the nature and character of the region;
  - Consistency in built form and landscaping is required throughout the town;
  - New development must be consistent with what currently comprises the character of Branxton;
  - Set a standard/benchmark and require continued compliance;
  - Preference for outdoor parking as this reflects a village character;
  - Maintain the town’s heritage character;
  - Branxton’s sense of community sets it apart from Cessnock;
  - Would like to see outdoor dining and cafes;
  - Need a catalyst to bring people in;
  - Encourage a Farmers Market within Branxton;
  - Would like to see a Sculpture Park in Branxton;
  - Streetscape into town is visually unappealing;
  - Establish a working group, including Council, who will see this project into the future;
  - Do not want landscaping to inhibit signage or visibility of shops; and
  - Target simple things first – quick wins.
Public Amenity
- Provide public toilets in the town;
- Branxton has no kerb and gutter in many streets;
- The condition of roads is not acceptable;
- The only bank and the petrol station have closed through lack of customers; and
- Recreational shed at Miller Park needs refurbishing

Movement, Circulation and Traffic
- The back roads have become a race track to beat traffic lights. Parents are concerned about safety as the cars race past the school;
- Most traffic issues: 5:30 – 7:30 am, 7:30 – 9am, 7 – 7:30pm and 3 – 6pm;
- School zones don’t make a difference to traffic speeds, except when police are around.
- The bus stop at McMullins Street is a hazard;
- Six School buses stop in bus zone outside Victoria House. This has implications for future development at Victoria House;
- There are safety issues between buses and school children;
- There is an opportunity to model Branxton on towns like Berry and Morpeth – small, tight knit and community minded;
- Despite the bypass, the community want to maintain similar road hierarchy and network to that which is in existence at the time of writing this report; and
- Require parking for tourists buses and Grey Nomads.
6.0 ANALYSIS

6.1 Land Uses
Branxton is located within the Cessnock network of small towns and villages which generally service major employment zones such as the Singleton/Muswellbrook coal fields or the vineyards.

Rural land is the predominant land use which comprises pasture, grazing and cropping uses. Rural land constitutes 48 percent of land, while 39 percent of land is forest and bushland. The residual 12 percent comprises urban settlement. There are small pockets of industrial land along the rail line and on the northern side of the New England Highway.

6.2 Local Character
Branxton is characterised by a variety of low density commercial, retail and residential dwellings. Commercial and retail development is clustered along the New England Highway to maximise exposure for passing trade. The local streets to the south of the highway are characterised by low density, predominantly single storey cottages.

There has been little development on the northern side of the New England Highway.

6.3 The Churches
Branxton has three Christian parishes; St Brigid’s Catholic Church, St John’s Anglican Church and the Uniting Church (formerly the Methodist Church). The churches have associated cemeteries which provide a link to the heritage and cultural values of the area.

6.4 Hotels and Motels
Branxton has a number of hotels which address the highway. Built in 1843, the Branxton Inn Arthouse is a heritage listed building which accommodates the Hunter Valley Art Group. This comprises art classes, private functions and conference sessions. This organisation is little known and presents excellent opportunities for the town to create a sense of an artistic village. Other hotels and motels within Branxton include a more modern motel facility located along the main road.

6.5 Schools
Branxton has four education facilities within the town, comprising two preschools and two primary schools. There is no high school in Branxton. Currently, students predominately attend High Schools in Singleton, Maitland, Lochinvar and Cessnock.

6.6 Services
The community is concerned that the town has limited services for the population. These include the lack of a petrol station and a bank. At the community consultation evening on the 17th of December 2008, it was identified that these services were once accommodated in Branxton however, were not supported and subsequently closed down.
Figure 4 – Land Use Analysis
6.7 Heritage

The Branxton area was first occupied by the Wanaruah Aboriginal people. This township was originally part of a larger area known as ‘Black Creek’. The first mention of Branxton was in 1825 when Governor Darling set aside land for the site of a town on the eastern side of Anvil Creek. In 1927 William Bowen received a grant of land which he called ‘Farmborough’. In 1828 he had settled on this land with his wife, daughter and seven servants. In 1839 the railway line was opened and the station named Branxton. From this time the whole of the township area was renamed Branxton.

The town grew slowly and was a stop-over place near a creek crossing. It was predominantly a service town for the farmers in the outlying areas. Industries such as a Flour Mill and Timber Mill were built in Branxton to service their needs.

In the 1800s there were cattle and sheep grazing the land and the cultivation of many different crops – wheat, maize and potatoes. Also before the turn of the century, creamery and milk factories were set up as a response to the needs of the local dairies which needed local processing plants.

The local area of Kirkton has the claim of James Busby planting the first grapes in Australia in 1825. George Wyndham soon followed at Dalwood in 1828, and under the Wyndham Estate label, is the oldest producing vineyard in Australia.

With the mining industry opening in the early 1900s, Branxton and surrounds also became a service centre to the mine workers and their families.

Under the Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 1989 there are a number of heritage items located within Branxton. These are shown in Figure 5.

A number of heritage items are identified in the Draft Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2009 as being located within Branxton. These are as follows:

- I27 – St John's Anglican Church, Cessnock Road;
- I28 – Two Storey Dwelling, 50 Cessnock Road;
- I29 – Branxton Courthouse and Police Station Group, 52 Cessnock Road;
- I30 – Branxton Public School & School House (former), 58a Cessnock Street;
- I31 – Branxton Uniting Church, 5 Clift Street & 9 Drinan Street, Branxton;
- I32 – Branxton Post Office, 4 Drinan Street, Branxton;
- I33 – Sandstone kerbs, gutters and roads in Branxton, John Rose Avenue, Branxton, within road reserve;
- I34 – Horse Trough, John Rose Avenue, Branxton;
- I35 – Bercini Memorial, John Rose Avenue (Branxton Park), Branxton, Lot 7006;
- I36 – Bandstand & War Memorial, John Rose Avenue;
- I37 – The Branxton Inn, 31 Maitland Street;
- I38 – Commercial Hotel, 45 Maitland Street;
- I39 – Royal Federal Hotel, 50 Maitland Street;
- I40 – Branxton Maitland Road Shops & Houses Group, 50, 52, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70 & 72 Maitland Road, Branxton;
- I41 – Dura, 61 Maitland Street;
- I42 – Bank of NSW (former), 65 Maitland Street;
- I43 – Branxton Railway Station Group, Corner Station and Railway Streets;
- I44 – Branxton Railway Cottage (former), 5 Station Street;
- I45 – Roman Catholic Cemetery, Station Street;
- I46 – St Brigid's Roman Catholic Presbytery; and
- I47 – Convent of Mercy, St Brigid's (former), I46 Station Street.
Figure 5 – Heritage Items
6.8 Access

Overview

Branxton is bounded by the New England Highway to the north and the rail line to the south. The land to the east and the west is zoned 1(a) Rural (A) Zone. In the west, a golf course and playing fields provide a rural curtilage to the town.

Growth of the town has been contained between the highway, rail and open space and, as a result, new development has been expanding to the east of the town centre. This area is known as East Branxton.

The New England Highway / Maitland Street

The Highway dissects the town, conveying traffic between Sydney and Scone. This traffic is a mix of heavy transport vehicles, commuters, tourists and local traffic. The acoustic, visual and physical impact of this road is a significant issue to Branxton. The traffic volumes on the New England Highway will generally be reduced following the construction of the Hunter Expressway.

Wine Country Drive

Wine Country Drive connects Cessnock to Branxton and onto the New England Highway. The traffic volumes on Wine Country Drive have the potential to be reduced following the construction of the Hunter Expressway. Clift Street connects Cessnock/Wine Country Drive to the New England Highway. This intersection is heavily congested at peak times.

The Local Roads and Traffic

The local Branxton roads provide a tertiary movement through Branxton. These streets have limited kerb and guttering and are characterised by low scale residential development.

Traffic was identified by the community to be at its heaviest early in the morning and in the mid-afternoon, coinciding with the peaks associated with travelling mine workers. Clift Street and Bowen Street intersect with the highway and are subject to significant delays.
Figure 6 – Access
7.0 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

7.1 The Urban Framework

7.1.1 Precinct Definition

The use of precincts helps identify the distinct and individual characters that separate a town into parts. Precincts identify the required character, built form and scale expected for new development and urban renewal.

The Precincts that follow describe character and atmosphere opposed to population, scale and density. For instance, Precinct 1 - Village Core has expectations of a village atmosphere opposed to a town centre.

Four precincts have been identified within Branxton and are identified below:

Precinct 1 – Village Core Character

This precinct is located between Cessnock Road and Bowen Street and is generally defined by Maitland Road (New England Highway). This precinct is currently highly characterised by its wide streets and the scattering of heritage buildings. In order to achieve a Village character once the Hunter Expressway is constructed the following should be undertaken:

• Establish a village character and atmosphere;
• Eliminate the highway character, identified by the constant vehicle movements, wide streets and heavy vehicle traffic;
• Maintain the densities and scale appropriate for a town with a village atmosphere;
• Provide for the appropriate framework that allows for appropriate services for the town as a whole;
• Establish a pedestrian friendly hierarchy through the use of landscaping features such as raised thresholds, signage, colour and vegetation; and
• Clearly distinguish between the 'Village Core' and the residential precinct;

Precinct 2 - Urban Transitional Character

This precinct is broken into two sections; the eastern approach and the western approach. This precinct will be characterised by open space, fields, sporting fields and some low density urban development, with the edge being achieved by the road and dwellings fronting the road. This will be achieved by:

• Reinforcing existing character of the village.
• Protecting existing open space;
• Utilising landscaping treatments that are reflective of the character of this precinct;
• Building the experience and expectations of travellers on approach to the town through the use of gateways and landscaping treatments
• Using the transition precinct to support the higher density in the central core; and
• Supporting greater setbacks and verges.

Precinct 3 – Regional Parkland Precinct

This precinct contains Miller Park and comprises various sports fields and active spaces. In order to promote the area as a Regional Parkland the following will need to be considered:

• Encouraging travellers to exit the freeway and visit Branxton;
• Establishing Branxton as a regional sporting centre;
• Providing the framework to hold outdoor events and activities such as markets, outdoor cinemas, shows and the like; and
• Providing good connectivity, both vehicular and pedestrian, between Precinct 1 and 3.

Precinct 4 - Residential Living Precinct

The residential precinct represents the largest urban area of Branxton and is dissected by Wine Country drive, with future developments south of the rail line. As the role of this road will increase in volume and character the residential precinct will be split into two sub precincts. Each has the potential for individual growth and character. This will be achieved by:

• Maintaining the existing densities and development controls; and
• Limiting urban expansion promoting village style developments.
Figure 7 – Precincts

Precincts
1. Village Core Character
2. Urban Transitional
3. Regional Parkland
4. Residential Living
7.1.2 Movement Framework

The existing situation summary

The town is split by the New England Highway which has a negative impact on the village atmosphere of the area:

- Maitland Road is Branxton’s main street and is defined by the intersections of Cessnock Road and Bowen street. This currently defines the commercial/retail extent of the town;
- Maitland Road/New England Highway is the primary road with Wine Country Drive as the secondary; and
- Connectivity between Cessnock and the New England Highway is not direct and is interrupted by the dog leg intersection of Drinan Street and Cliff Street. As a result, there is no clear navigation between areas to the south, such as North Rothbury, and the town of Branxton.

Identification of the future movement framework

- Define the precinct, Village Core Character which is defined by two nodal points. These two points are two proposed raised thresholds at the intersections of Cessnock Road and Maitland Road; and the intersection of Bowen Street and Maitland Road (Refer Section 8.1.3) It is important to note that although Branxton is considered a town, the description of the Village Core refers to the desired character of the town rather than the population or level of services.
- Establish a Movement Circuit which links the two ends of the Core and defines the Village Core Character precinct;
- Identify the Urban Transitional Precinct by way of changes to the road carriageway, surface, landscaping and signage; and
- Establish the Cessnock Link between Cessnock and Branxton.

The following two (2) options have been investigated as possible solutions to the issues raised above and are as follows:
Figure 8 – Option 1
Retain current road alignment of Wine Country Drive and the intersection with Maitland Road (New England Highway)
Figure 10 – Option 2

Realign Wine Country Drive to remove the dog leg intersection with Cliff St. This would require the acquisition of land. A park is proposed on the residual road/land, creating a southern gateway to the village core. Note: This is an option for future consideration only. Any future design would be subject to extensive additional and ongoing consultation.
7.2 Gateways

The movement principle identifies four transitional zones which represent gateways to Branxton. The gateway has the following aims:

- Provide meaning and identity to the arrival experience. Identify the crossing of a threshold;
- The gateway identifies a change in level of intensity; and
- Create a strong sense of arrival to Branxton, through the utilisation of buildings, structures and other elements.

The proposed four gateways are identified as follows:

1. **Gateway Node A – Eastern edge of the Village Core Character Precinct;**
   
   Node A is characterised by a raised threshold which marks the beginning of the movement circuit and “Main Street”. This node identifies a precinct and informs people on how they are expected to behave within this space. In this circumstance they are entering a pedestrian priority space where traffic must slow down.

2. **Gateway Node B – Western edge of the Village Core Character Precinct;**
   
   Node B is characterised by a raised threshold which marks the end of the movement circuit and “Main Street”. This node identifies a precinct and informs people on how they are expected to behave within the space and upon leaving the space. In this circumstance they are leaving a pedestrian priority space.

   *Note: Both Node A and B are reversible.*

3. **Gateway Node C – Southern approach to the Movement Circuit;**
   
   Node C connects Cessnock and the Hunter Expressway to the Movement Circuit. This intersection marks the transition between lower residential densities and the medium density of the Core. This Node is characterised by the change in road surface treatments, signage and distant views to the town skyline.

4. **Gateway Node D – The railway bridge;**
   
   Node D is a traditional gateway marker which informs the motorist and the pedestrian that they are crossing a threshold into an independent precinct. There are more opportunities to undertake works to the bridge to represent this.
Figure 11 – Gateways Nodes
7.3 Enriching the Public Realm

7.3.1 Land Use, Built form & Density

Land Use
The village core has been zoned B2 Local Centre under the Draft 2009 LEP. This is a strong determinate of potential built form as it permits shop top housing. The benefits of this type of development are:

- Greater social interaction;
- Greater diversity in social/age groups, built form and hours of operation/use;
- Characteristics reflective of a village community;
- Increased safety and passive surveillance;
- Greater housing choices; and
- This building typology makes an assumption that the primary movement will be pedestrian with extended trips outside the area (for work or recreation) via the Hunter Expressway.

The residential section of Branxton has been zoned R3 Medium Density Residential under the Draft Cessnock LEP 2009. This allows for a much higher density of development than is currently permitted within Branxton. This has the effect of substantially changing the future directions of Branxton, away from a lower density, traditional village character based residential area and towards a mixed low/medium density urban area.

In addition, concern is raised regarding the zoning approach taken in the south western corner of Branxton, with a mixture of IN2 Industrial and R3 Medium Density Residential proposed in what appears to be a largely ad hoc manner based on existing land uses alone. Given the potential for significant land use conflicts and the unstructured development pattern it is worth considering whether there is any significant demand for this industrial zoned land or whether it can be rezoned to Residential, with current operations maintained through existing use rights.

Built Form and Density
The existing village core of Branxton is not extensive and does not have the quantity of heritage buildings which are typically identified with heritage tourist villages.

The built form of Branxton is low density with the greatest density within the Business Zone. These buildings are generally two storeys. However, the traditional nature of the heritage buildings gives the appearance of a higher façade.

This plan has identified areas where the density can be increased. The community generally relates higher density developments with a negative urban design outcome. However, traditional villages are generally restricted to widely spread low density built forms. By creating a dispersed but higher density, village character within the centre of the town there will be a beneficial flow on affect to business and the provision of services within the town will be assisted.

There are many benefits of higher densities which aim in stimulating village life:

- Living in close proximity encourages interaction and a community network which are hallmarks of a rural village;
- Enables people to age in place as they have a stronger community network and reduce isolation;
- Minimizes the need for a car and encourages public transport; and
- Assists in activating the village core.
Figure 12 – Built Form
Scale

Scale and rhythm is an important element in any town, even one without a prominent heritage precinct. A traditional heritage streetscape is comprised of narrow allotments which require narrow building footprints. Often the community will react against contemporary development as it doesn’t seem to ‘fit’ into the context. This is generally because lot amalgamation which is encouraged results in predominantly horizontal facades. This is not desirable in a town the scale of Branxton as it reduces the perceived ‘activation’ and variety. However, development within the village core is encouraged if it is sympathetic and appropriate to existing heritage buildings. The following identifies the objectives of a village scale:

- Use flexibility which allows for adaptive uses such as a terrace house or a small shop;
- Opportunity for individual character in the built form. Each building can have an individual façade;
- Enables easy extensions at the rear of the developments; and
- Establishes a vertical rhythm.

7.3.2 Open Space Network

The open space network reinforces Branxton’s current role as a rest stop for travellers on the New England Highway. Following the bypass, there is an opportunity to capitalize on this character and draw people from the new highway.

To establish the open space network the following will be required:

1. Upgrade Miller Park’s classification of a sub-regional park into the Regional Park for the Hunter;
   - Provide facilities which encourage the use of the Park as an entertainment venue;
   - Invest in existing facilities which maintain its function as a multi use centre;
   - Provide facilities which enable sporting competitions to be held here eg: Little Athletics Regional Event – this will require the upgrade of the field; and
   - Upgrade parking facilities to accommodate the proposed uses.

2. Provide linkages between the parks and open space such as bike paths, clear footpaths, signage and directional elements.
   - Revisit the masterplan prepared for Branxton which outlined works to be completed in John Rose Avenue. This Masterplan should reflect the opportunities identified in this framework; and
   - Establish a clear line of pedestrian and cycle movements between Miller Park, Branxton Oval and the Village Core;

3. Establish a relationship between Branxton Park and the Village Core. This creates an opportunity for events which can showcase the village e.g.: music festivals or large scale farmers markets.
Figure 13 – Current Open Space Network
7.3.3 Landmarks, Vistas & Focal Points

Landmarks

Landmarks help people navigate and orientate themselves within an urban environment. As Branxton is a village, this is not as critical but it is useful for tourists who will detour from the Hunter Expressway.

Key landmarks have been identified on the following plan which must be retained:

- Eastern approach of Victoria House. As the western façade of Victoria House will be obstructed by the proposed shopping centre, the eastern façade should be unobstructed by other buildings in the foreground; and
- Need to establish wayfinding markers on Maitland Road which assist drivers to navigate from Wine Country Drive to Maitland Road. The existing movement networks between Cessnock and Maitland Road are not clear. This can be achieved through lighting, banners, artworks and other methods. This would establish a skyline that would not inhibit the distant views.

Vistas

Vistas provide a strong connection with place and create a long lasting memory associated with the place.

- Distant mountain views when travelling north along Wine Country Drive. Maintain through height restrictions along Maitland Road. Limit height of structures to 7 metres; and
- View of open space comprising Miller Park.

Focal Points

Focal Points can take many forms. Gateways and key nodal points are focal points which provide direction and reduce the blurring of edges. Focal Points are associated with sequential movements or paths. A line is drawn between the focal points to assist with wayfinding. These focal points are typically associated with key buildings or features.

Three focal points have been identified in this framework which mark the beginning, the centre and the end to the village of Branxton and are as follows:

- The Beginning: The eastern threshold at the intersection of Maitland Road and Cessnock Road. This is associated with two key heritage buildings – the Royal Federal Hotel and the Arthouse Hotel;
- The Centre/Core: The Village Centre at the intersection of Maitland Road and Clift Street. This is associated with a key heritage building – Victoria House; and
- The End: The western threshold at the intersection of Maitland Road and Bowen Street. There are no key buildings at this intersection which creates the opportunity to establish a new development opportunities which capitalise on the gateway character of this intersection.
Figure 14 – Landmarks, Vistas and Focal Points
7.3.4 Streets

Street Oriented Public Space

In its current role, the street in Branxton is an unfriendly place for the pedestrian. As the Hunter Expressway will remove the highway traffic from the village there is an opportunity to change this character. The following principles will characterise the village streets:

- Design the street for everyone - the car and the pedestrian both have a role to play;
- Design the street for the appropriate activity:
  - The main street is a public street designed to cater to shoppers and diners;
  - Pedestrian orientated streets; and
  - Slow traffic down within the town. Use traffic calming methods on key roads such as Maitland Road and Wine Country Drive.

Therefore, using the above principles, the following measures to reinforce the street oriented public space within Branxton can be identified:

- Establish a central core to the town. This may be achieved by allowing the temporary closure of the existing New England Highway during market days and the like. This will create stimulation within the central core without impacting on privately held parcels of land.
- Reduce the width of the road and increase the footpath to facilitate on street dining and other uses;
- Use alternative paving treatments and raised sections in the designated village core to slow traffic;
- Promote public art to reflect the character and history of the area; and
- Concentrate activities at key nodal points/focal points such as:
  - The Village Core – markets, cafes, stalls, presentations, relationship to Branxton Park;
  - Eastern transitional node;
  - Western transitional node;
  - Establish strong pedestrian connections between Miller Park and the Village Core;
  - Establish a strong pedestrian connection between the Village Core and Branxton Park;
  - Strategically located street trees so as not to conceal signage or facades; and
  - Consider opportunities to temporarily close the main street to hold market days. The intersection of John Rose Street and Clift Street can reinforce the centre and increase village activities during these times.
### 7.3.5 Animating the edge

Active street frontages are essential to any urban form. The connection between the street and building is critical as it plays a fundamental role in passive surveillance, bringing life to the façade and drawing people back time and again.

Not all streets and frontages in a village are identical. Each play a different role in the urban framework in which the differences between help define the character and role of each precinct. Four precincts have been identified and the indicative guidelines below demonstrate how the objectives might be achieved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precincts</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Indicative Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Village Core Character Precinct – Maitland Street | The Core is the heart of Branxton. The highest attention to detail and design is required in this area as it will have the highest volume of activity and traffic. This frontage will define the character of Branxton. | - No blank facades;  
- 0.5 metre minimum articulation of façade, removing blank, featureless walls from the street through building articulation and design;  
- Windows addressing the street;  
- High quality materials, finishes and details;  
- Where apartments are located above ground, locate habitable rooms to the street for passive surveillance;  
- Encourage narrow building footprints to provide vertical rhythm and scale to the street. Where amalgamation of lots is required, articulate the façade in scale with the traditional lots;  
- Variety of uses eg: mix of retail, commercial and residential;  
- Minimum street setback of 0m; and  
- Encourage verandahs, balconies and awnings which provide shelter to the street and activate the street in all weather conditions. |
| Village Core Character Precinct – Movement Circuit: Cessnock Road, Bowen Street and Drinan Road. | While still part of the Core, the Movement Circuit frontage will present a secondary character to Maitland Street. As it will be predominately medium density residential, the built form will carry a domestic scale and character. | - No blank facades;  
- 1 metre minimum articulation of façade removing blank, featureless walls from the street through building articulation and design;  
- Windows addressing the street;  
- High quality materials, finishes and details;  
- Some mix of uses – predominately residential with opportunities for home offices;  
- Reduce minimum dwelling setbacks to 4.5 metres. Porches and verandahs may come forward to 3 metres. |
7.3.6 Safety & Security

In order to promote community and individual safety, there are four key principles that can be considered during the urban design process. These are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Urban Design Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsociable behaviour in the public realm</td>
<td>• Provide a mix of uses and activities which activate a space both day and night;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Where apartments are located in the Core, provide habitable rooms overlooking the street such as living rooms or bedrooms;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limit blank facades which do not overlook the street. Sometimes the perception of being watched will inhibit unsociable behaviour. (Refer 8.3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of concealment and entrapment</td>
<td>• Minimise the height of planting which provides possible concealment areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Design in transparency to screening and walls which do not provide cover for attackers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Design prominent entries and doors which are visible from the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of community accountability</td>
<td>• Give ownership over the space which encourages people to protect and maintain it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide cafes and markets which spill onto Main Street which gives a sense of ownership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe streets</td>
<td>• Provide well lit and clear paths of travel within the Core;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use signage, materials and physical barriers to identify the pedestrian street from the vehicular street.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.7 Designing for change
Adaptability in built form is becoming a focus of urban design studies. We all grow older and our needs change while our homes don't. Accommodating flexibility in design to provide the opportunity for the owner to adapt and personalise their space to suit their needs is a feature of good design. This is why the following criteria are important for new building design in the Village Core Character Precinct:

- Designing and constructing a framework which allows for internal restructuring with no structural impact;
- Design access to the buildings which accommodate the needs of all people such as wheelchair bound, visually impaired and parents with children.
- Accommodate ageing in place which does not require people to leave their homes.

7.4 Commercial / Development Scenarios
Identify sites which permit redevelopment and are not constrained by heritage restraints:

1. The subject lots are opposite the greatest cluster of heritage buildings (LEP 2009) which includes:
   - The Maitland Road Shops and Houses Group;
   - Former Bank of NSW building;
   - The Royal Federal Hotel; and
   - The Commercial Hotel

The availability of these lots creates the following opportunities for redevelopment:

a. Create a skyline which is visible from Wine Country Drive/Drinan Road which assists with way-finding and hierarchy.

b. Increase the density/bulk and scale by one storey to result in three storeys.

c. There is an opportunity to provide a contemporary representation of a village character. This enables the village to grow and reflect a layering of history, rather than one frozen in time.

2. The relationship between the intersection road and the golf course identifies this corner as a key site. This does not suggest a high density corner element, rather a low scale landscape treatment which establishes the first stage of the rural transition zone.

3. The western roundabout/western node has no heritage listed buildings and has no significant building with any merit. These three sites identified are key development sites.
8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Co-ordination and Commitment

Undertaking a revitalisation of a town is complicated as careful processes and programmes are required to ensure the project proceeds smoothly. Clear lines of communication are needed to for all involved. As identified during the community consultation, Council will need to take an active role in this process. Prior to any detailed future design work being carried out, consultation will be carried out by Council with affected land owners.

8.2 Planning and Design

The Urban Design Framework is a guideline which identifies the opportunities available to Cessnock City Council and the Branxton Community. There are several methods for implementing the ideas identified in this document and are as follows:

- Provide advice and recommendations for the LEP which can accommodate the UDF;
- Prepare a Development Control Plan for Branxton;
- This Urban Design Framework has addressed future development within Branxton from a “best case” scenario. In order for this outcome to be achieved it is recommended that a comprehensive Masterplan and Streetscape Improvement programme be implemented. This would require the preparation of design guidelines to guide and shape development, allowing for a greater certainty in the overall outcome for Branxton;
- Review process between each of the stages listed above will be required to ensure the project remains on track; and
- Sustaining community involvement is important is all parts of the process. Branxton is their home and their acceptance of the proposals will streamline the process. The community should become strongly involved in this process.

8.3 Funding

There are a number of avenues that can be investigated in order to fund Urban Design improvements for Branxton. One of the key areas where funding can be received is through the RTA following the completion of the Hunter Expressway. Following the construction of bypasses along major roads such as the Pacific Highway and the Hume Highway, funding has been provided to Local Government to provide for the making good of former main roads into roads more suitable for a bypass town. Such funding can include the removal of dual carriageway roads in favour of street parking, landscaping and suitable urban design treatments. Given that the driving force behind the revitalisation of Branxton is the construction of the Hunter Expressway, and the removal of the large amounts of traffic using the New England Highway through the centre of Branxton it is considered that this source of funding is the most suitable for the project.
Conceptual Framework
Legend

Opportunity for Medium Density Development
• Consider opportunities to increase density in the village core/circuit.
• The increased density will enliven the core.
• Establish laneways where appropriate to improve accessibility to service these lots.
• Consideration of existing heritage development will be required.

Opportunity for Commercial/ Retail
• Consider opportunities to redevelop sites within the village core/circuit to improve visual & physical amenity.
• These opportunities must be considered in light of heritage restrictions. New development should be viewed as a new layer to the town's character as opposed to a static heritage character locked in time.
• Activate Streetscape.

Main Street
• Establish Main Street as the town's centre which reinforces its village atmosphere.
• Angled Parking
• Locate trees between buildings to maximise visibility of heritage facades and signage
• Avoid central median which could inhibit visibility of building facades and signage
• 'Popout' seating pods to allow for greater on-street dining.

Key Node Points
• Identify entry into Main Street and mark the beginning of the 'Village Circuit'. These points of difference will be highlighted through architectural and landscaping treatments such as raised thresholds.

Pedestrian Oriented Zones
• Address street as pedestrian friendly with contrasting paving & street trees. During market days, these wings expand opportunities to activate the town centre.

Activation of Streetscape Required*
• Refer to 7.3.5 Animating the Edge

Consider opportunities for Grey nomad and bus parking on the edge of Branxton Park. This will enable easy access into the 'Village Circuit'.

Consider reopening John Street if use changes from Childcare Centre to better connect the street hierarchy.

Reinforce this precinct as the heart of village based community activities.

Provide Laneway access to Medium Density developments where appropriate and subject to consultation.

Opportunity to service commercial/retail buildings from rear.

Consider opportunities to close down Main Street for market or festival activities.

Opportunity for Medium Density Development

Consider opportunities to increase density in the village core/circuit.

The increased density will enliven the core.

Establish laneways where appropriate to improve accessibility to service these lots.

Consideration of existing heritage development will be required.

Opportunity for Commercial/ Retail

Consider opportunities to redevelop sites within the village core/circuit to improve visual & physical amenity.

These opportunities must be considered in light of heritage restrictions. New development should be viewed as a new layer to the town's character as opposed to a static heritage character locked in time.

Activate Streetscape.

Main Street

Establish Main Street as the town's centre which reinforces its village atmosphere.

Angled Parking

Locate trees between buildings to maximise visibility of heritage facades and signage

Avoid central median which could inhibit visibility of building facades and signage

'Popout' seating pods to allow for greater on-street dining.

Key Node Points

Identify entry into Main Street and mark the beginning of the 'Village Circuit'. These points of difference will be highlighted through architectural and landscaping treatments such as raised thresholds.

Pedestrian Oriented Zones

Address street as pedestrian friendly with contrasting paving & street trees. During market days, these wings expand opportunities to activate the town centre.

Activation of Streetscape Required*

* Refer to 7.3.5 Animating the Edge