




...there was no there, there....?

Neighbourhood based Urbanism

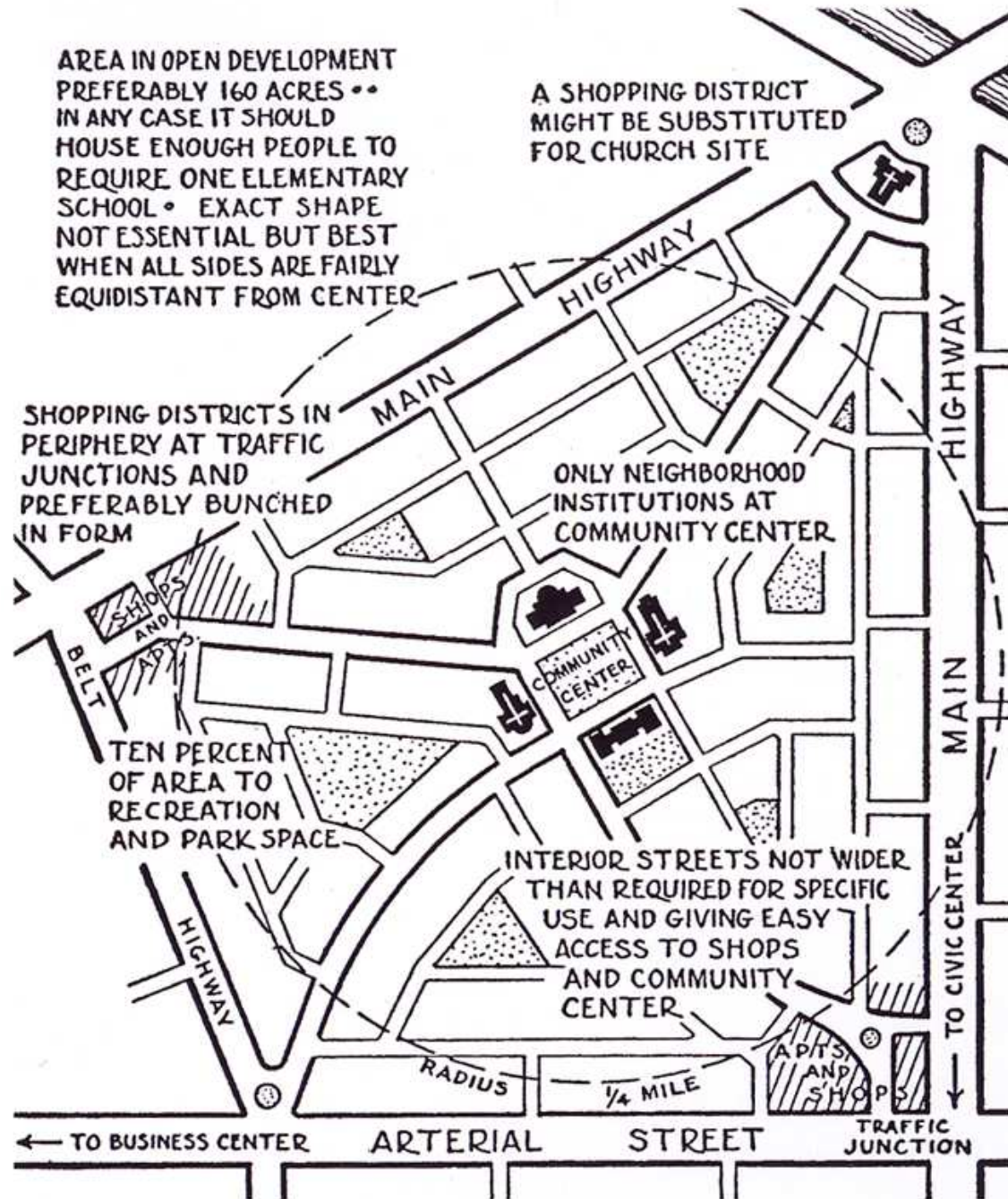
Peter Richards DEICKE RICHARDS Architects, Brisbane, Qld

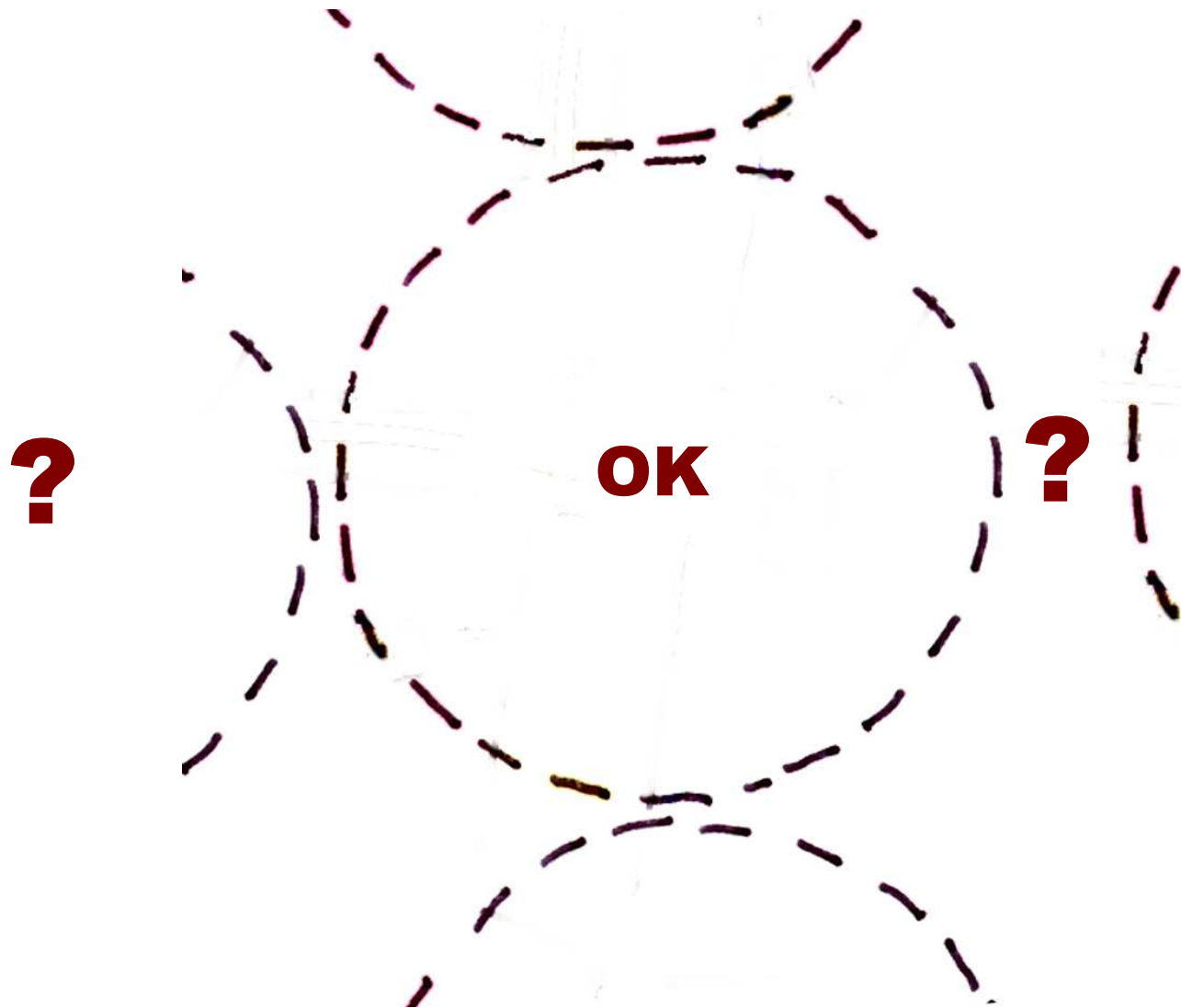
Is the 400m radius circle, the five minute walk, that defines a neighbourhood, a subversive new urbanist plot or an important idea in the structuring of settlements? Where are the centres and edges and do the circles touch?



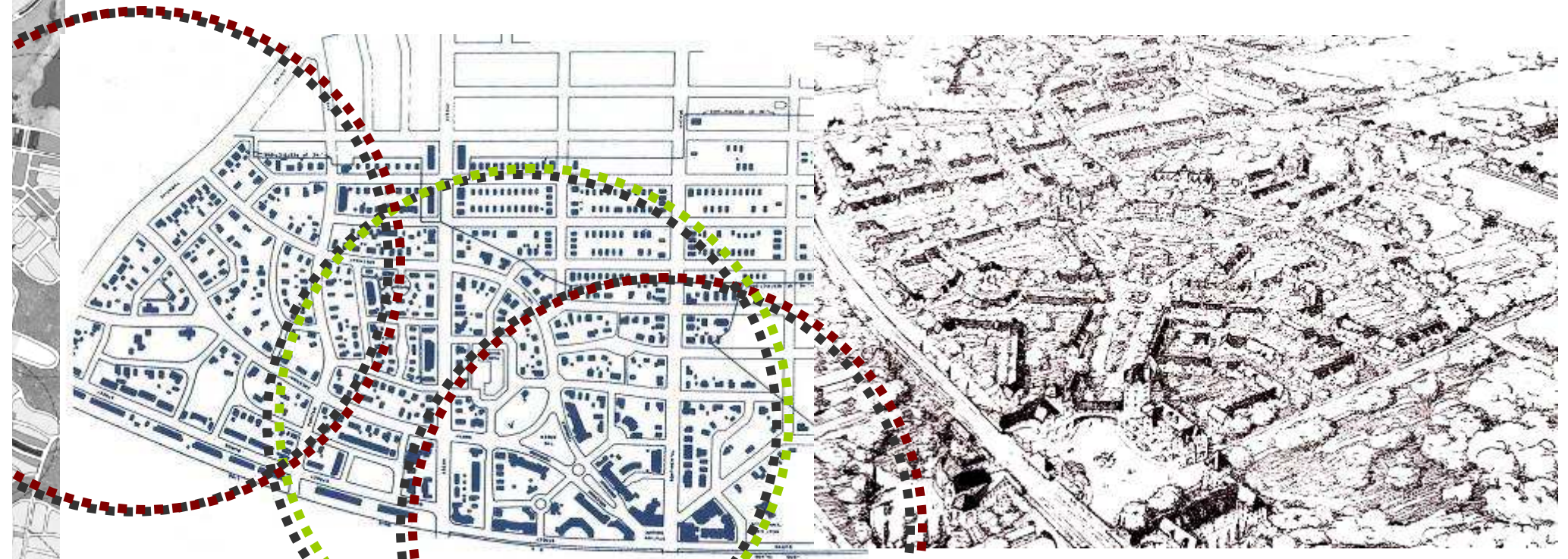
'Traditional' or 'Sustainable Neighbourhoods'
Neighbourhood based Urbanism in inner western Brisbane
Research into Subtropical (?) Neighbourhood Design (not subdivisions)
Two projects

Clarence Perry Neighbourhood Unit 1927

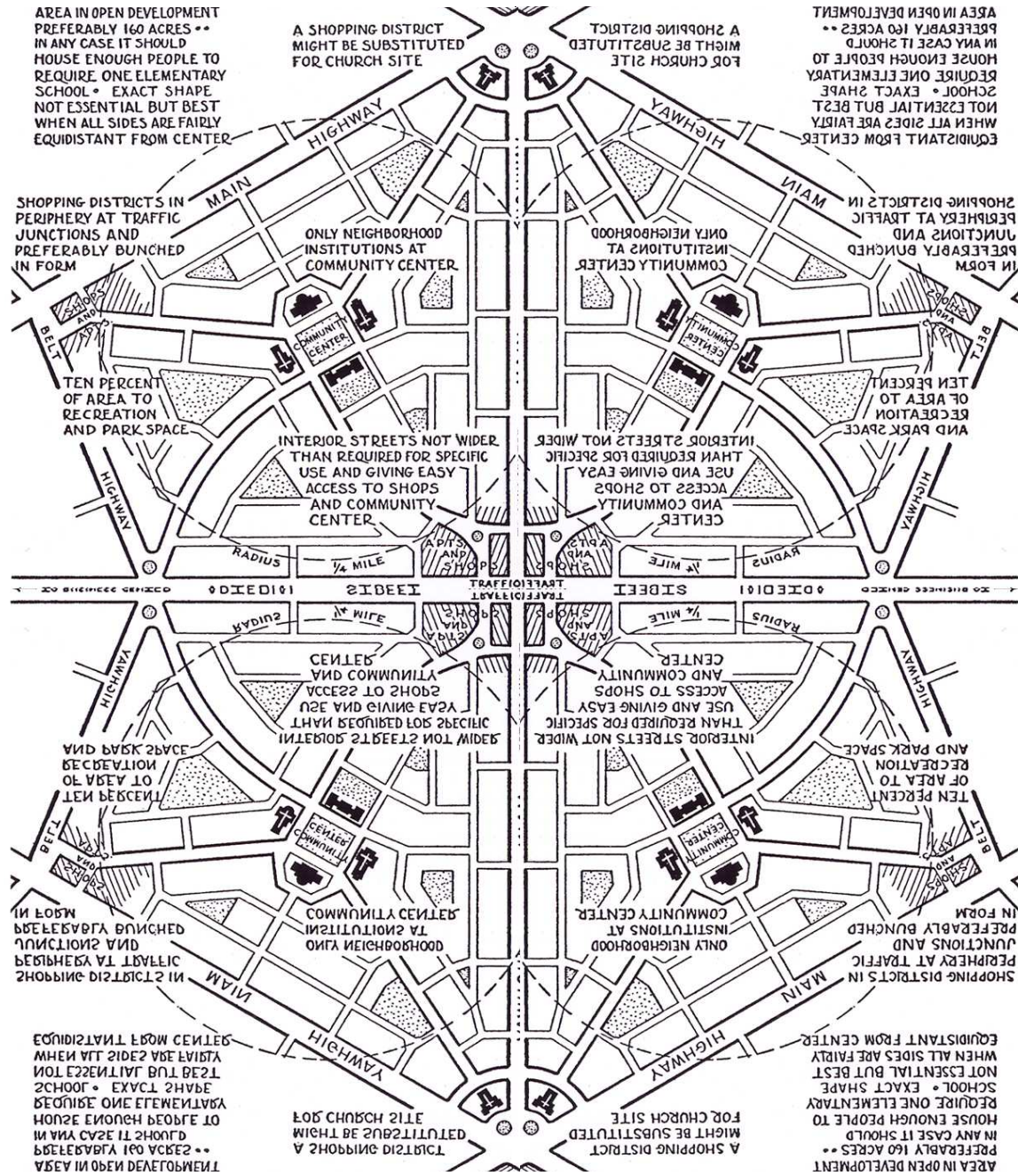




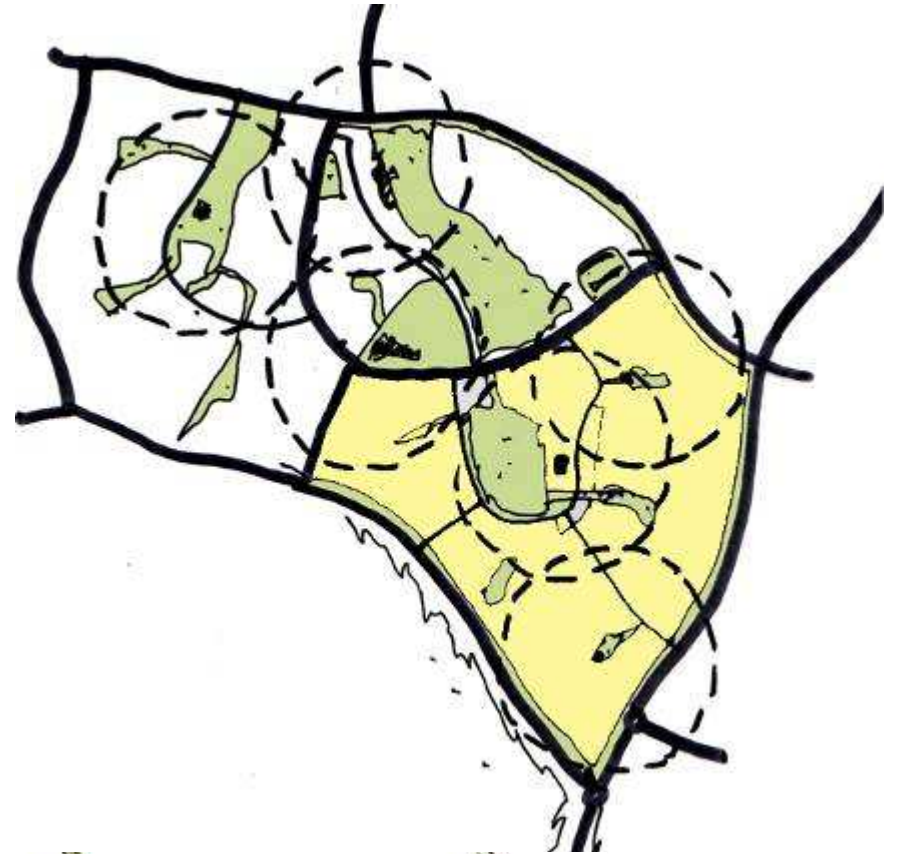
Forest Hills Gardens 1912



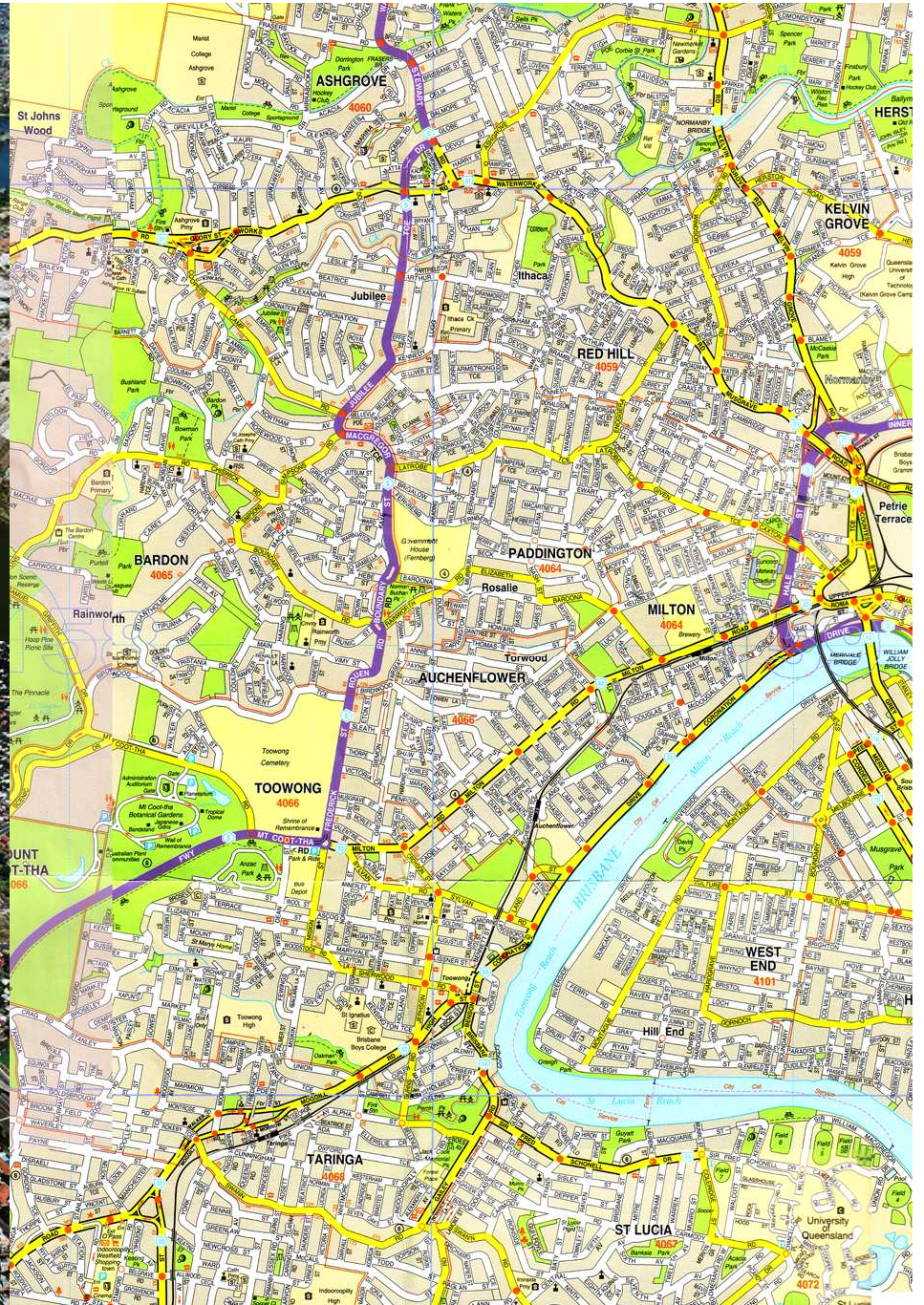
Clarence Perry Neighbourhood Unit 1927



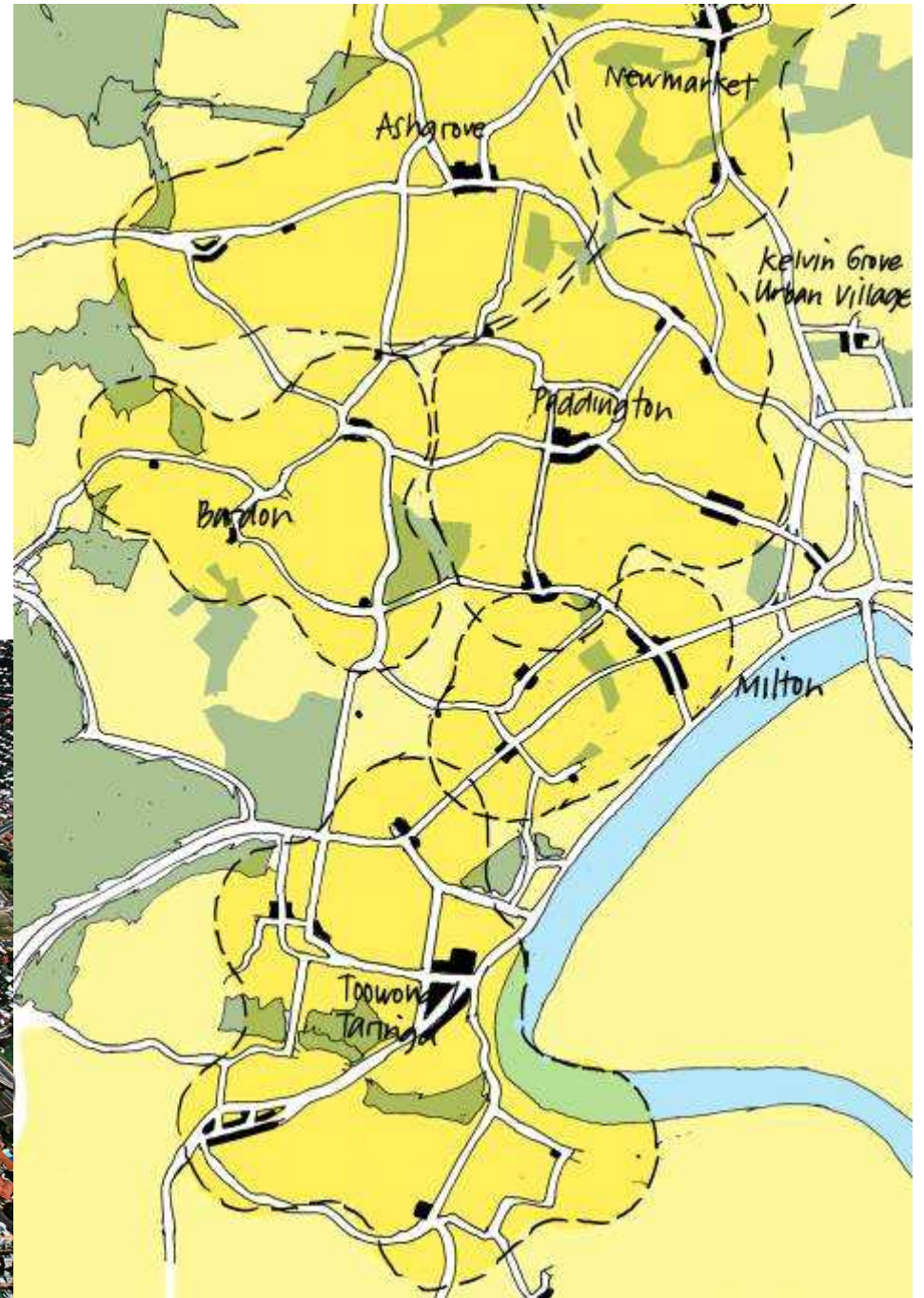




Neighbourhood Structure inner west Brisbane

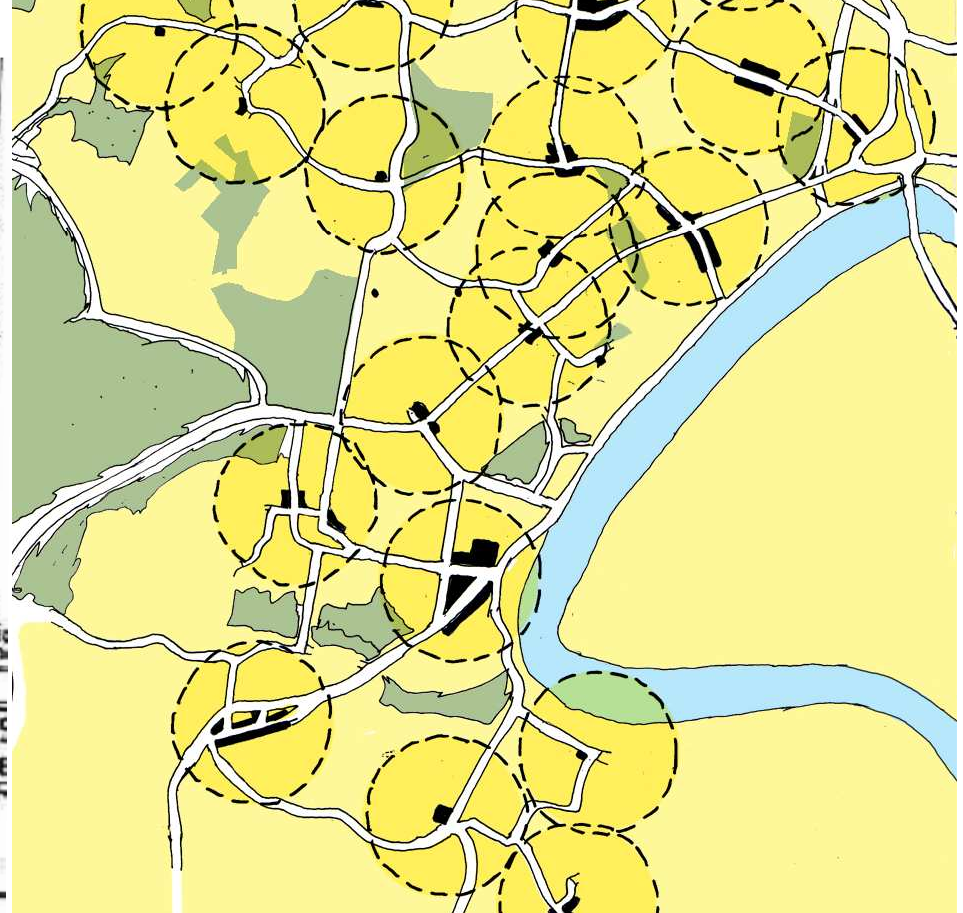
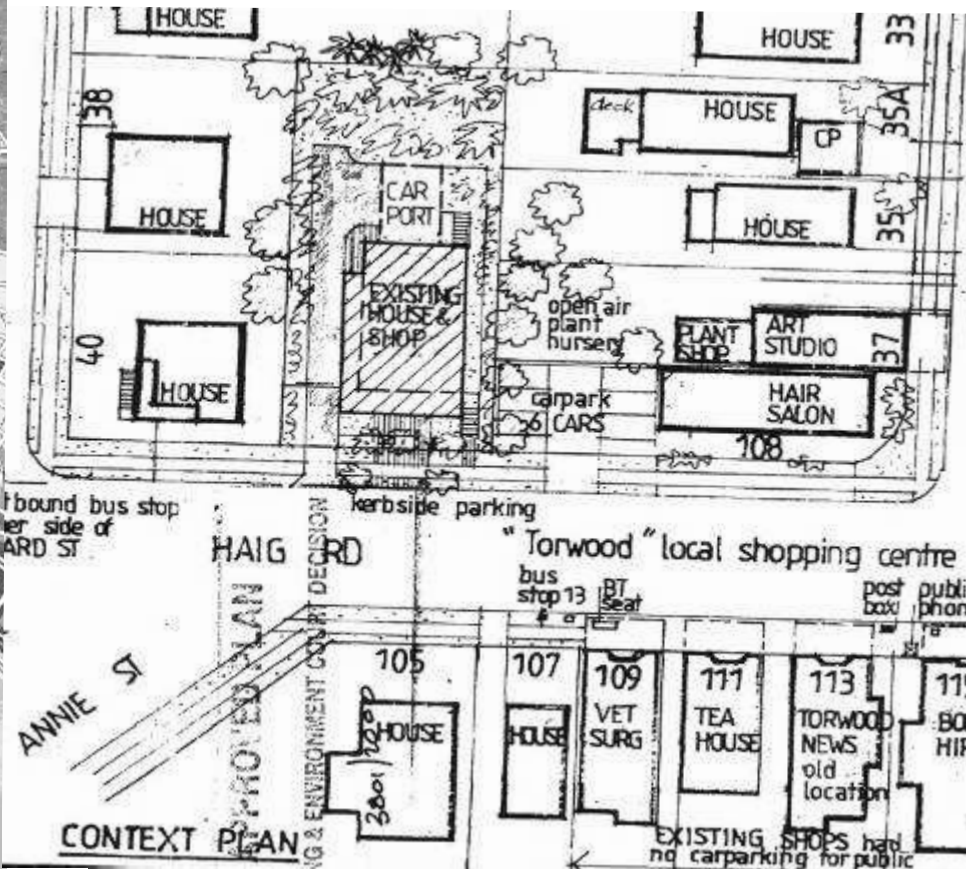
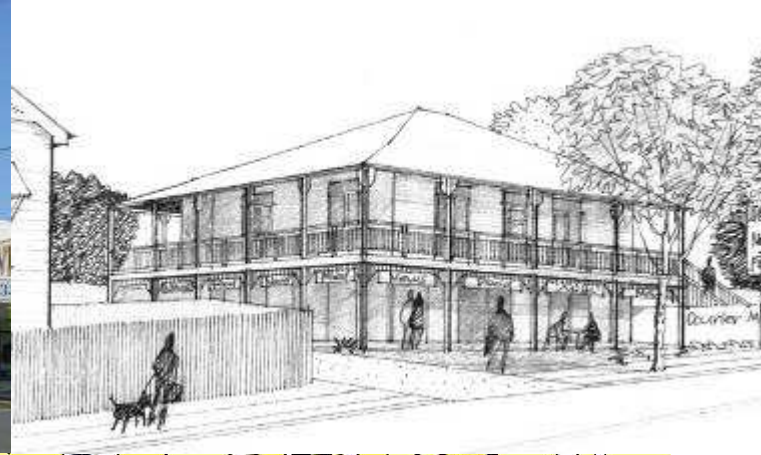


Neighbourhood Structure inner west Brisbane



Neighbourhood Structure inner west Brisbane





....advise that the Council..on September 1 2000, determined to **refuse** the application.

...incompatible with and detrimental to the amenity of both existing and future residential development in the locality.

..intrusion of a non-residential and incompatible land-use into a residential area

...modification as proposed would have a detrimental impact on the visual character of the street

...provides insufficient carparking and servicing spaces on the site

....(and as an objection) constitutes ribbon commercial development



Subtropical
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DESIGN

Edenbrooke

Edenbrooke is a high quality residential development within a sloping, treed valley on the edge of Sinnamon Park in the western suburbs of Brisbane. A small industrial area is located to the north that has been surrounded by housing in the last ten years. The new infill development is within an existing 1970's subdivision.

The small centre that services the residential area has a range of shops and a child care centre. There is some medium density housing close to the centre however generally there is little diversity in the housing with the majority of it being low density. The green corridor which is a focus for much of the housing is not integrated with the centre and there are no gathering areas.

The central sweeping and winding street creates a long and indirect route through the subdivision making access to the centre difficult. The smaller streets roughly conform to a modified north/south, east/west grid generally providing most lots with good orientation. The streets provide frontages to green corridors. While attractive, separate pedestrian and bicycle routes are provided to the local centre adjacent to this green, riparian corridor, these routes are not legible and there is no casual surveillance from the surrounding residential area. Therefore these routes are potentially unsafe. While there are other pedestrian routes to the centre along the street network, they are not direct.

The streets are well detailed and integrate stormwater infiltration and extensive planting, including trees and lower planting.

Like many new residential areas, the riparian corridor provides a green focus and considerable care has been taken with the landscaping. This high quality open space accommodates playground equipment and walking and riding tracks. Some existing trees have been retained and the space is lush and provides many cool and shaded spaces.



View to local shopping centre and child care centre



Local shopping centre



Bicycle and pedestrian path through parkland



Central drainage swale in road corridor



Back fences fronting streets create unwelcoming and potentially unsafe environments.



Small centre with a range of shops and employment integrated (childcare centre)

Pedestrian paths along rear fences: unattractive and potentially unsafe

Development from the 70s and 80s. Green areas are leftover spaces behind many rear fences

Main through street winds arbitrarily through the development going nowhere. Smaller streets conform to a north/south, east/west grid. Frontage and rear fences to through streets

Employment area (earliest development)

High quality public open space

Edenbrooke focuses on the south east section

Watercourse as a green feature through the development

Green corridors are well defined by streets

Convoluted street network that does not provide direct connection to neighbourhood centre



Green corridor of existing vegetation provides backdrop to housing



Housing generally low density detached



Industrial area adjacent to centre



Path to shops includes bridge over pond with dense vegetation

Subtropical
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DESIGN

Northlakes

Northlakes is a new residential area within a master planned community 35km of the Brisbane city centre. It could be described as a better quality subdivision rather than a neighbourhood.

There is little diversity of land use in the subdivision, which includes only housing and open space. Another weakness of the area is that public transport is limited. However the open space in the subdivision is well located. The central park acts as a focal point for the community and has therefore been considered the centre in this case study. It is prominent within the plan and terminates a long avenue that leads down to the lake. This creates a legible spine and a focus for the subdivision. The park provides shaded gathering areas for the community and some recreation facilities.

Despite a small amount of medium density housing around the park, densities within the subdivision are generally low. Given that the subdivision is close to a major regional shopping centre more diversity in density would have been appropriate.

The subdivision has an interconnected street network that allows legible paths through the area. The streets are generally in a north/south east /west simple grid. Rear lanes are provided for the medium density housing overlooking the central park which allows these dwellings to front the park and have car access via the lanes.

There is a series of parks in the subdivision with a larger parkland adjacent to the lake. Landscape of the public areas and the relationship to the topography has been well considered. Footpaths, parks and traffic calming devices are planted with native vegetation and will provide good shade in the future. Views opening to the parklands have been maintained. All parks have housing overlooking them and streets abutting them. Therefore housing does not back onto the parks which can minimise casual surveillance of these areas. Bicycle and pedestrian pathways are provided along the lakeside parklands.



Looking up street towards park. Limited shade trees but room for more.



Vegetated street. Wide verges and no fences give room for trees to establish.



Pedestrian linkages are provided to park.



Predominantly low density detached housing.



Footpath shaded by dense, medium height vegetation.

Looping street achieves connectivity adjacent to arterial

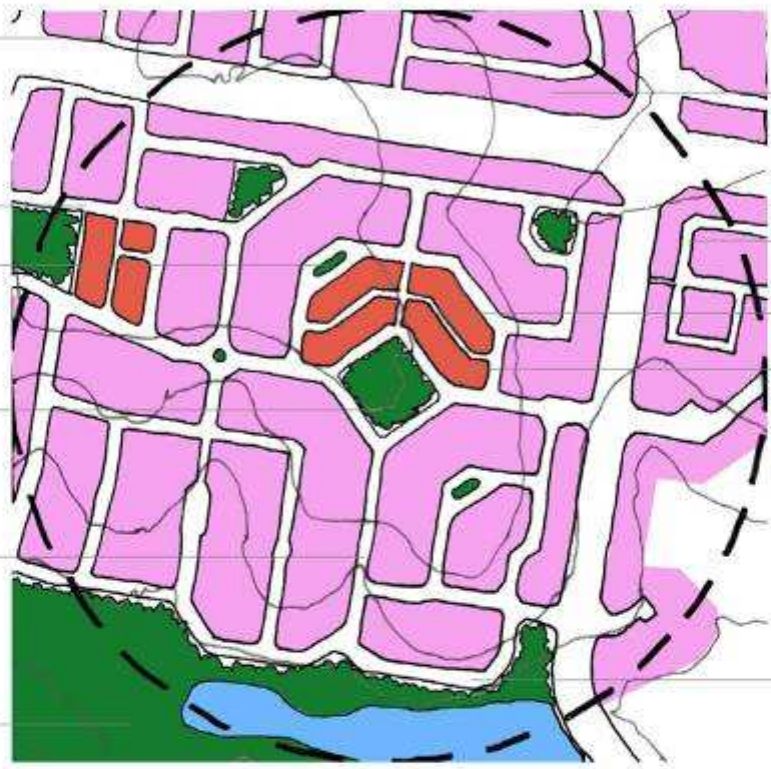
Interconnected street network

Small residential green areas

Park used as focus for neighbourhood

Street linking park to open space along drainage corridor

Wetland and water management corridor as a green edge to the neighbourhood



Development backs onto arterial road

Streets are generally north/south, east/west in a simple grid

Pedestrian walkway provides connectivity between residential areas and open space

Low-medium density housing park with rear lane access facing public park

Streets between development and green areas



Lakeside park with play equipment



Attractive shade structures and play equipment in central park



Low-medium density housing overlooking park. Rear lanes for car access keeps front streetscape free of garages



Large open park defined by street and fronted with houses, provides space for active recreation

Subtropical
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DESIGN

Windemere

Windemere is a new residential area in a strategic riverside location adjacent to an existing regional bulky goods retail centre.

The neighbourhood centre has all the ingredients for a vibrant and diverse centre. It includes local shops, a childcare centre, employment areas, a tavern and soon a supermarket. However the landuses are poorly integrated and some uses are in odd locations.

The centre does not act as a focus for the surrounding residential area. Generally the housing has been designed to turn its back on the centre. The street network provides indirect access that is generally not legible. Pedestrian street access to the local centre is along rear fences and the footpaths are narrow with minimal landscaping.

The neighbourhood incorporates a good amount of higher density housing however many of these developments are walled enclaves that turn their back on streets and surrounding uses, creating large areas of fencing along pedestrian streets.

The street network generally provides street frontages to the green corridor. The streets are within 30° of the north/south east/west grid allowing many of the lots to have good orientation. The streets generally relate to the existing streets and to the river.

The residential subdivision has a strong central green spine around the riparian corridor. This attractive environment is edged by streets that allow the housing to overlook the space. As this area was originally farmland, this corridor does require revegetation in order to provide shaded areas. The residential area is bound by the Brisbane River to the north. Parkland along the river also provides a focus for the community though again more shade is required.



Local shops provide shading over entrances, although little shade from street or in car park. High glare surface on car park.



Green corridor as focus for low density residential area, streets along the edge.



Wide streets with large front setbacks and no fences. Wide verges have opportunity for street tree planting and provision of footpaths, although not currently provided.



Large public open space adjacent to the river.



Poor access to local shops from residential area to end of shopping centre at the end of cul-de-sac.



Gated medium density residential limits choice of routes to centre and is located away from neighbourhood centre.



Variety of housing evident but medium density is not near centres.



Poor relationship between residential areas and tavern. Back fences of medium density housing line street.



Pedestrian routes are attractive but could be unsafe as they are not visible from surrounding residential uses.



Pedestrian links suffer from lack of casual surveillance from streets and houses.

The Subtropical Neighbourhood is a Neighbourhood

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN

Parks are incorporated in accessible and visible locations

Neighbourhood Centre with a mix of uses creating a vibrant community heart

Higher density and variety of housing closer to neighbourhood centre and along busier streets and open spaces

Areas of neighbourhood within a five minute walkable catchment



Idealised neighbourhood

Interconnected street network provides direct routes and choices of routes to Centre.

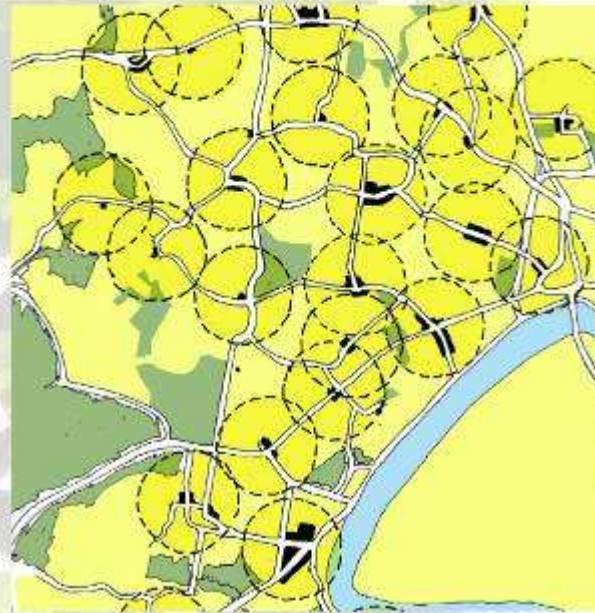
Through-streets with public transport routes linking to adjacent neighbourhoods

Green spaces and wildlife corridors are integrated

Subtropical Neighbourhoods aggregate to form a Subtropical Town and City

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN

Clustering of neighbourhoods defined by regional and local landscape features (Mt Coot-tha)



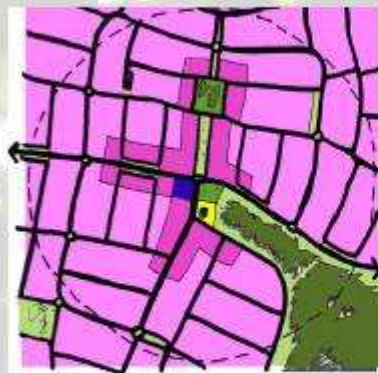
Inner western area of Brisbane shown as a cluster of neighbourhoods based on a five minute walk

Clustering of neighbourhoods are defined by regional landscape features (Brisbane River)

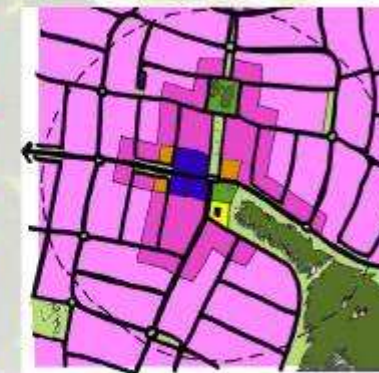
Structure of robust urban neighbourhoods within Brisbane's west



Community



Small



Medium



Large

Neighbourhoods with varying Scales of Centres with associated land-uses and densities.

The Subtropical Neighbourhood has a distinctive relationship to its Site and Landscape

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN



Main Street focusing on a ridgeline, Paddington Central, Brisbane



View over valley



Neighbourhood centre on ridgeline



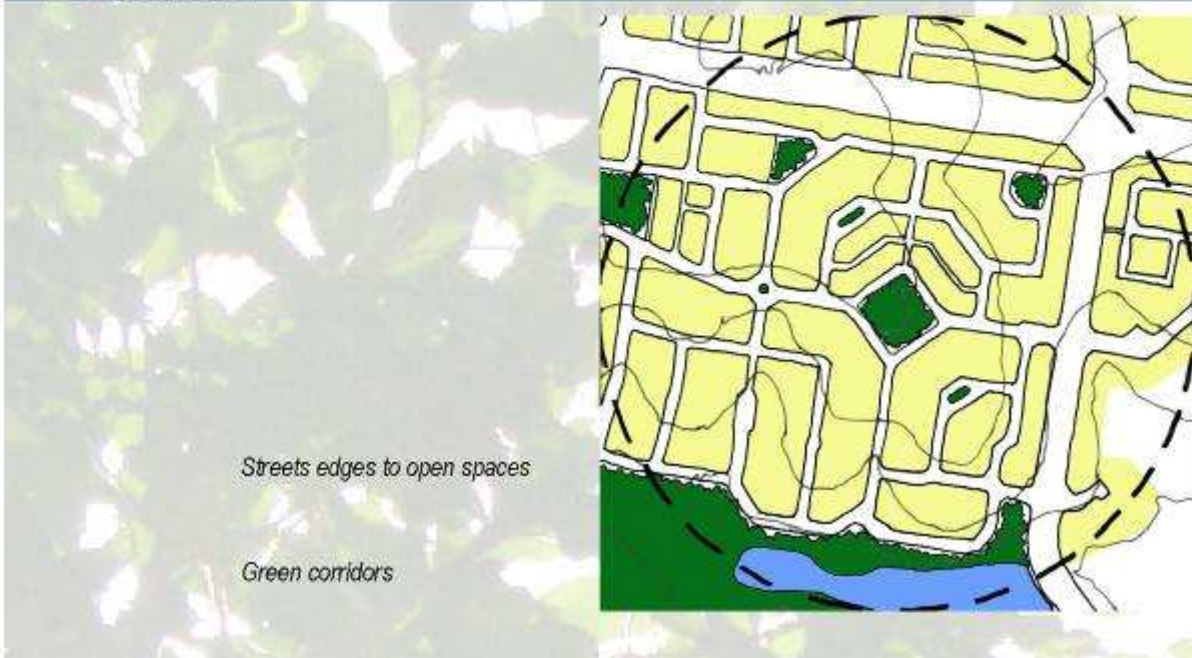
Distant views to city from ridgelines



Dwellings step with the landscape

The Subtropical Neighbourhood is characterised by its Parks and Open Spaces

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN



Streets edges to open spaces

Green corridors

Parks act as focal places within the neighbourhood in visible and accessible locations



Park as community focal point



Streets provide vistas into parks



Shade structures



Active public open spaces with mature shade trees

The Subtropical Neighbourhood has Subtropical Streetscapes

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN



Views from street between individual houses to vegetated backyards



Rich layering of entrance transition and occupied verandah areas of houses



Generous street trees and footpaths



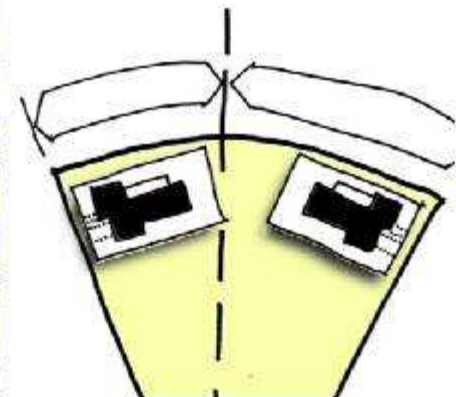
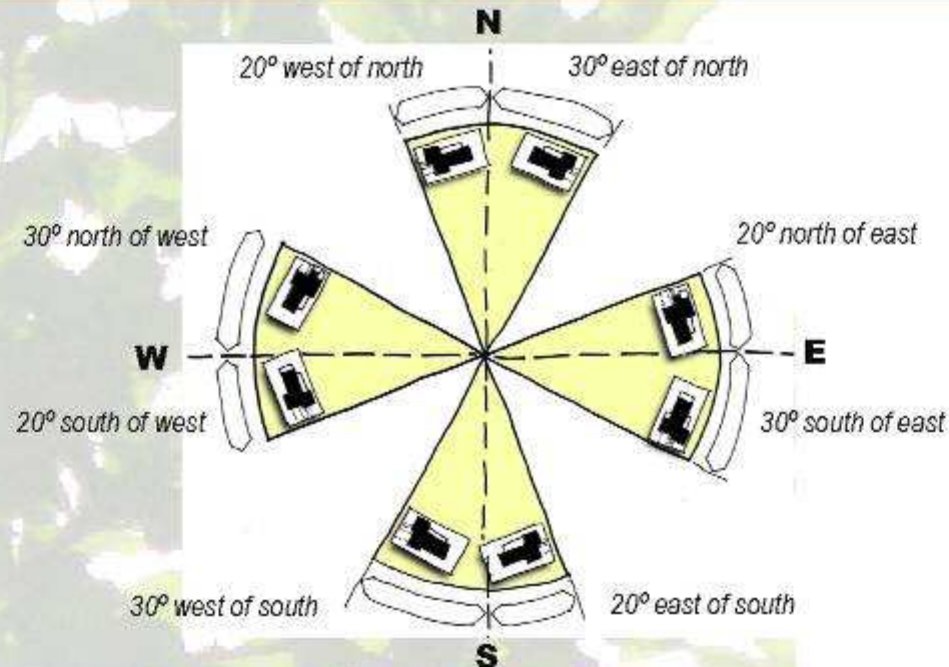
Trees within street reserves



Dwellings front onto streets

The Subtropical Neighbourhood creates sites for Subtropical Buildings

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN



Neighbourhoods with appropriate street orientations with streets generally running north-south or east-west

The Subtropical Neighbourhood has a Subtropical Landscape and allows one to grow

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN



Paddington, 1902 - Land cleared for subdivision



Paddington, present - vegetated streets and back yards



Street setbacks allow significant and diverse vegetation



Small building footprints allows a vegetated backyards



Median strips are planted



Areas of existing vegetation are preserved and integrated into parklands

The Subtropical Neighbourhood has walkable journeys that are legible, memorable and comfortable

Subtropical NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN



Streets are shaded



Trees are preserved in street reserves



Stormwater treatment integrated into parks



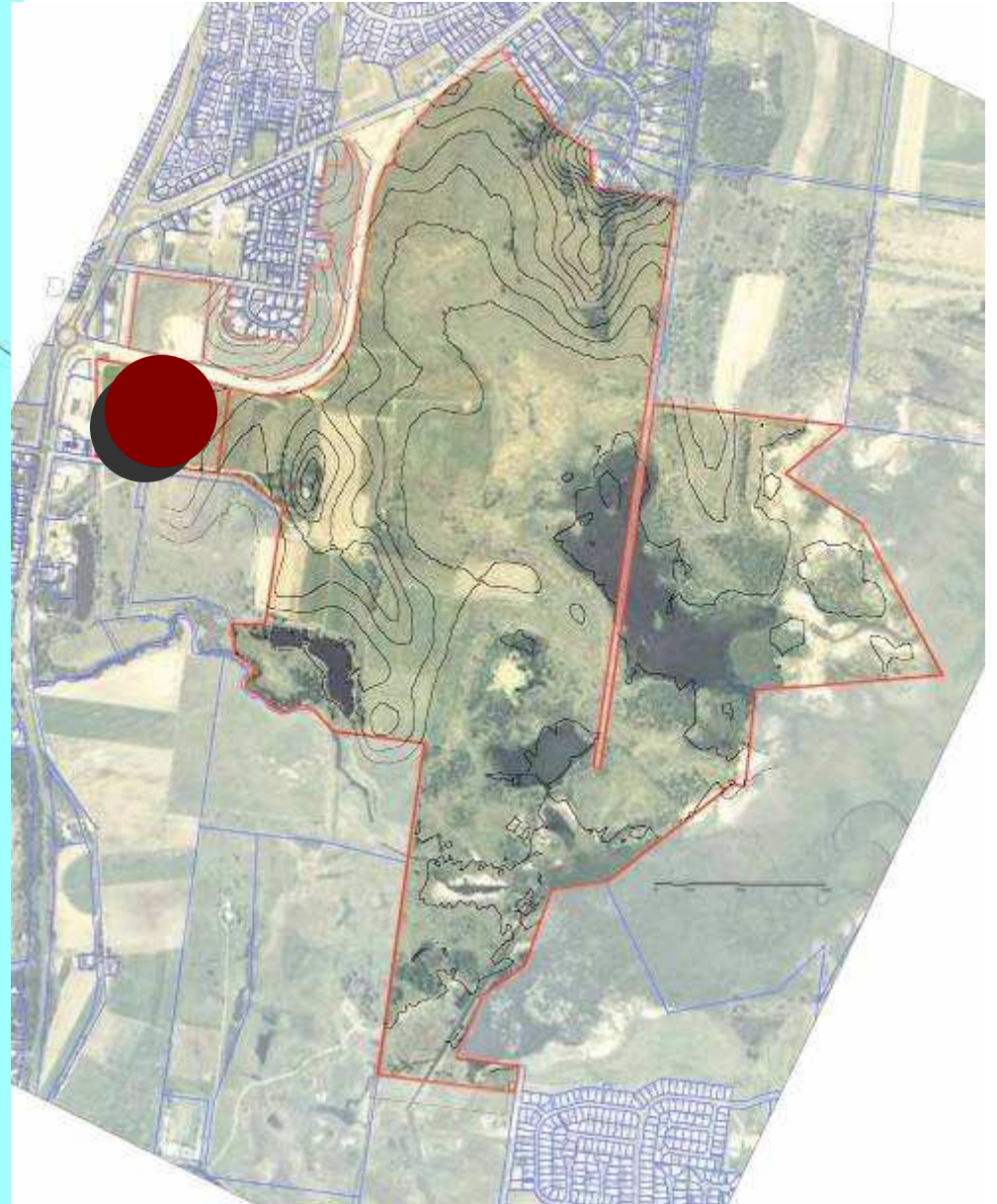
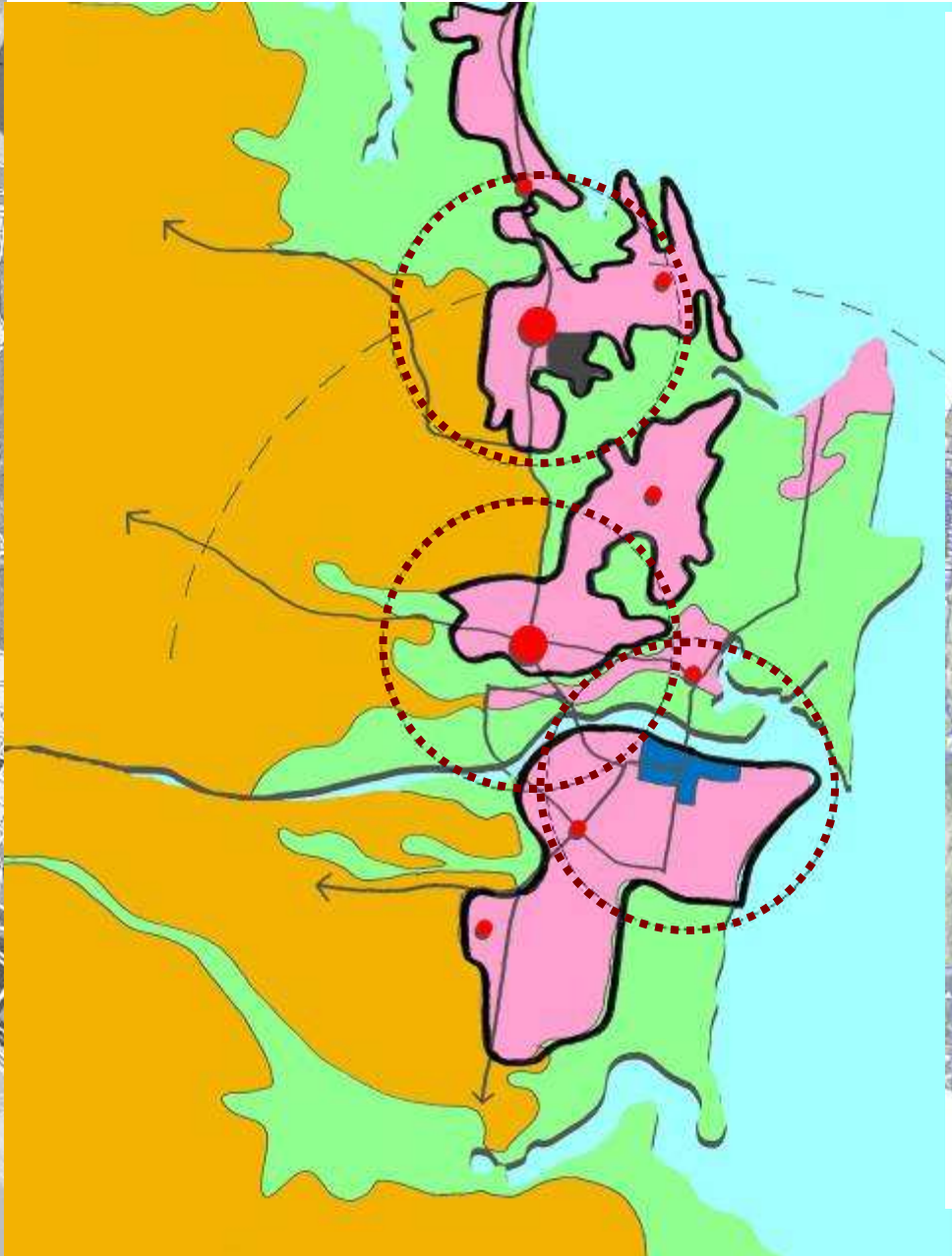
Shade structures provide comfort for journeys



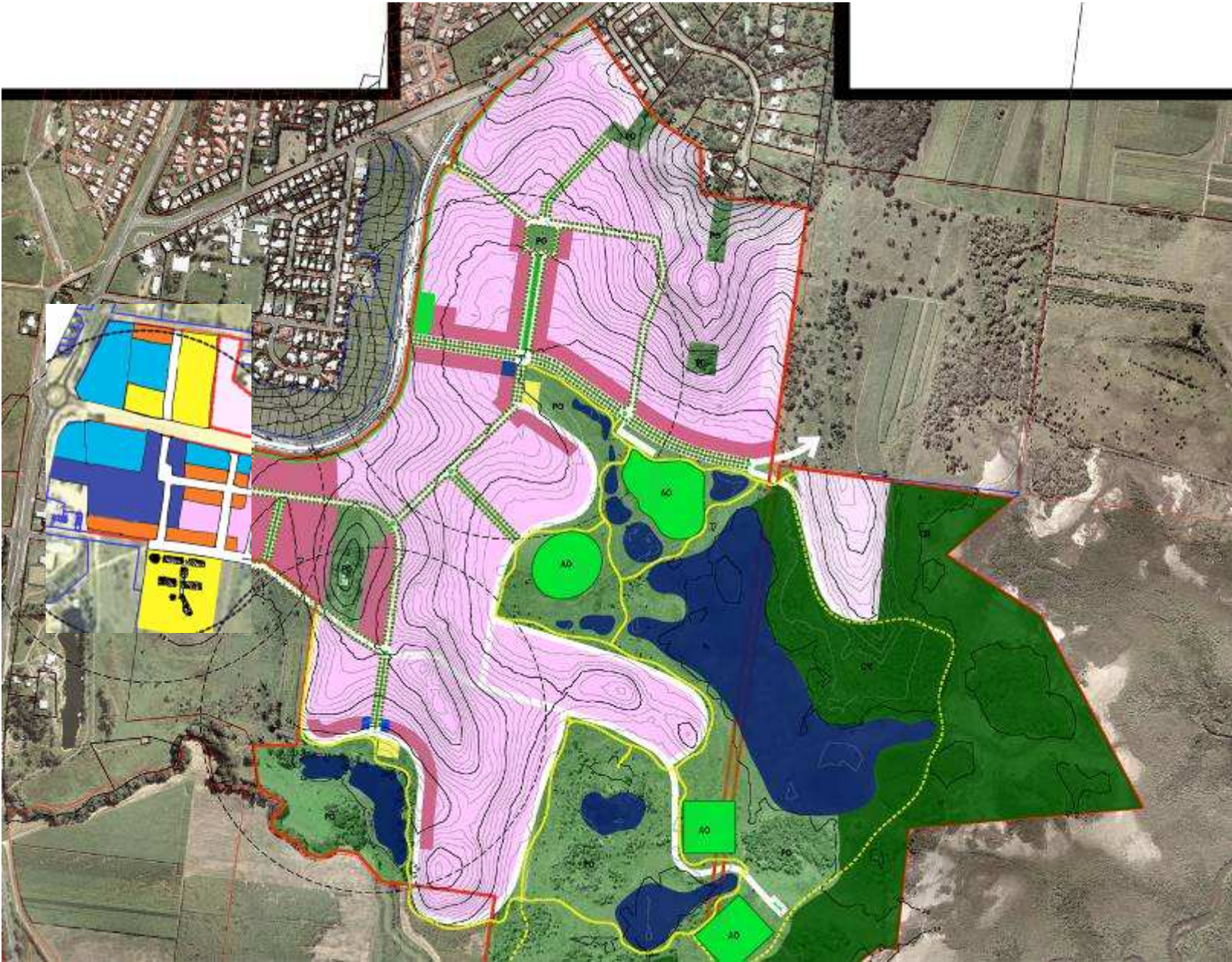
Inner Urban Neighbourhoods, Regional Queensland City



Inner Urban Neighbourhoods, Regional Queensland City



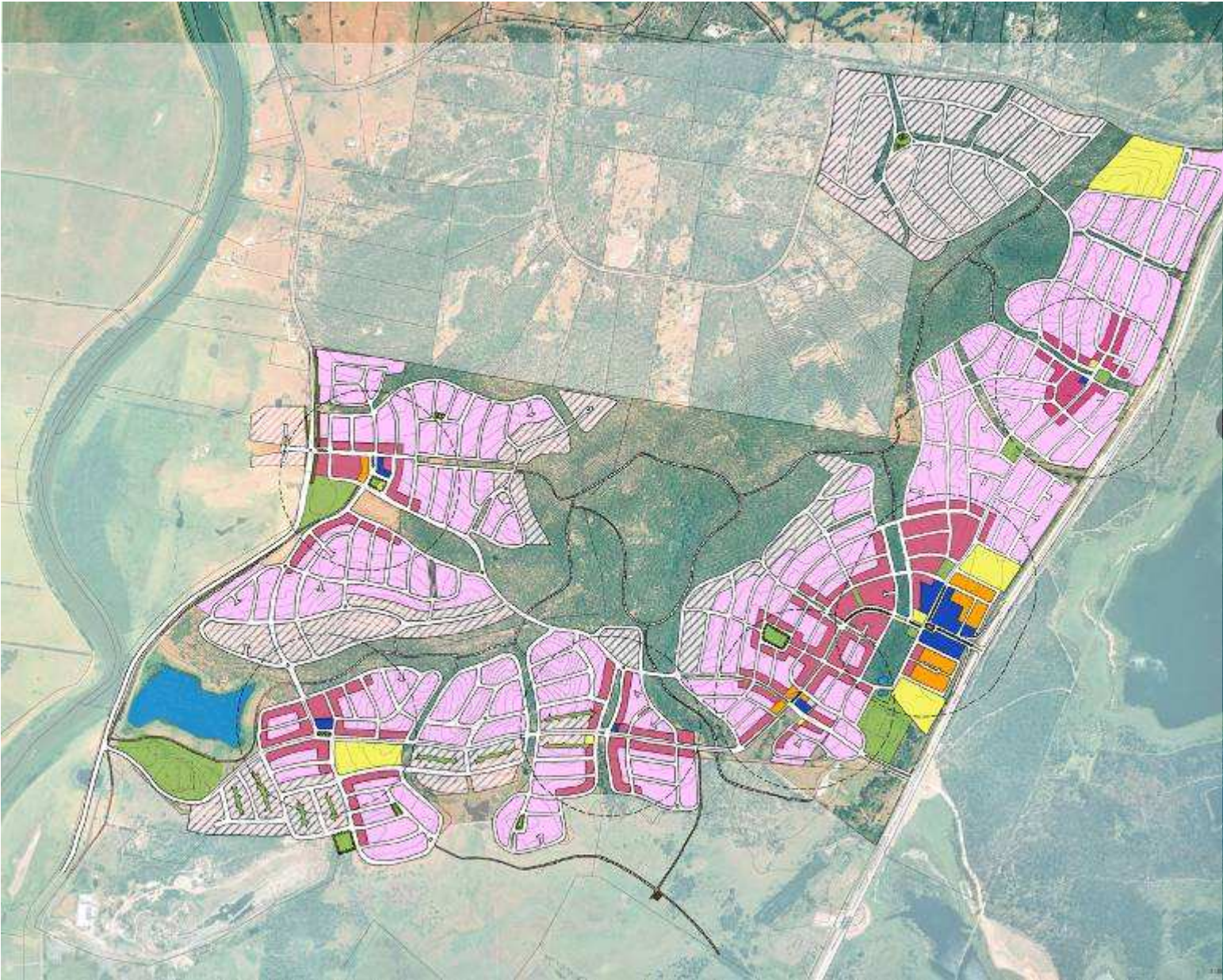
Inner Urban Neighbourhoods, Regional Queensland City



ACNU August 2005

New Regional Town NSW





Neighbourhoods are valid (If there are no neighbourhoods, what is there?)

Circles are OK (the 400m, five minute walk is pretty useful and powerful)

Be relaxed about spacing, but a max 1-1.2km,

Centres in memorable places, accessible and legible locations where reasonable catchment is possible

Work at it. It doesn't come naturally to the market

Neighbourhoods are a fundamental ingredient of robust urban environments

Make sure the aggregation of neighbourhoods forms a town