

4. West Ryde

4.1 Analysis of Existing Character

4.1.1 Introduction to the West Ryde Town Centre

The West Ryde town centre is located in the City Of Ryde local government area approximately 14 km west of Sydney. The town centre is bisected east-west by Victoria Road and north-south by the Northern railway line. Victoria Road and the railway line effectively divide the existing town centre into quadrants.

The north-west quadrant contains the main commercial precinct. The north-east quadrant contains the historically significant Ryedale Road shops and more modern medium density housing. The south-east quadrant is an industrial precinct. The south-west quadrant contains larger commercial and semi-industrial lots along Victoria Road with older medium density housing behind.

Figure 1 shows the extent of the town centre for the purposes of the Public Domain Technical Manual.

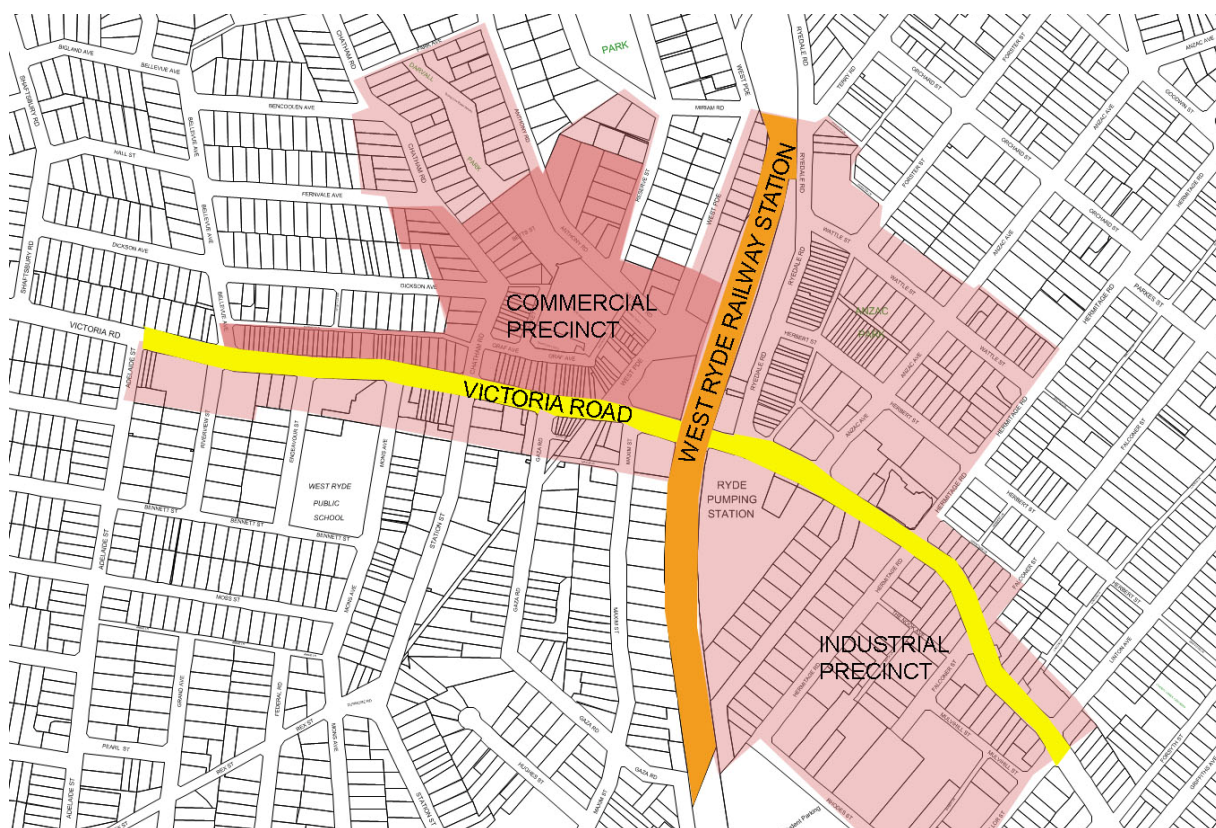


Figure 1 West Ryde Town Centre

4.1.2 Historical Overview of the West Ryde Town Centre

Originally the West Ryde area with its good rainfall and deep clay soils was occupied by Blue Gum High Forest (*Eucalyptus saligna*) from the ridgelines to the valley floors, and was home to the Wallumedde Aboriginal People. Early European settlers established farmland and orchards in the area. For much of the 19th century what is now the commercial centre of West Ryde was owned by the Darvall family. The Darvall property stretched from Shaftsbury Road to Ryedale Road and from Rowe Street to Victoria Road, a total of 360 acres (146 hectares).

A major catalyst for establishing the township of West Ryde was completion of the Northern Railway line in the late 1880s. West Ryde was also conveniently located on what would become Victoria Road. In the first quarter of the 20th century the Darvall property was progressively subdivided and residential dwellings overtook the farming acreage of the area. What became Ryedale Road shops was subdivided in 1888. Much of the village scale and built fabric developed in the first half of the 20th century has been retained in this street despite increased suburban development.

West Ryde's current commercial centre was transformed in the 1950s. In a period of three years more than 40 new shops were built, as well as six banks, two restaurants, a service station and a new post office. However with changes in shopping habits and the introduction of larger shopping malls (starting with the Ryde shopping centre), there was a gradual decline of West Ryde as a commercial centre.

The Ryde Pumping Station is a significant piece of infrastructure located in West Ryde. A pumping station was first established in 1892. By 1908 the station had switched to steam turbines, a first for Sydney and possibly for Australia. The present Ryde Pumping Station was built on adjacent land and opened in September 1921. A thriving industrial precinct has grown around the pumping station.

4.1.3 Existing Character

Built environment

North – West Commercial Precinct

The commercial/retail centre of West Ryde is located in the north-west quadrant. Historically the commercial centre faced Victoria Road. These buildings, which still dominate the commercial precinct, are generally 2 stories high and are characterised by narrow allotments along Victoria Road. Most properties have their shopfront facing onto Victoria Road.

The character of the built form reflects its function as a main street strip shopping precinct. Increasingly, growth of the commercial precinct has been negatively affected by the large volume of traffic on Victoria Road and changes in shopping habits away from this type of shopping environment.

Recently the commercial centre of West Ryde has started to move away from the 'strip shopping' model. A new West Ryde shopping centre based around the Woolworths supermarket and public car parking has developed. The laneways and streets behind Victoria Road have been upgraded with public domain improvements and traffic calming, making the

West Ryde precinct more accessible, convenient, visually pleasing and pedestrian friendly than before.

Further development is planned on the existing on-grade car park on Betts Street which will consolidate the town centre in this location away from Victoria Road. However with these positive changes to the West Ryde commercial precinct a challenge exists - to reinvigorate and maintain long-term an active streetscape along Victoria Road.

North – East Ryedale Road Precinct

East of the railway line is the historic Ryedale Road precinct which has strip shops with awnings dating from the early 1900s. It was once the main commercial strip. Today it is isolated from the main commercial precinct by the railway line and Victoria Road. Ryedale Road is located on a ridgeline and is the highest point in the town centre. Due to the location of the railway station it is not easily seen from the commercial precinct. In the heritage area the built form is generally 2 stories high and there is a consistency of materials and detail in these shops. This precinct also includes the local Leagues club which is outside but adjacent to the heritage zone. There is an approved development planned for the land adjacent to the railway line which will be up to 12 storeys high.

South – West Precinct

The south west precinct is dominated by a number of larger commercial sites along Victoria Road. A number of these businesses are servicing the car traffic using Victoria Road. The retail component is isolated from the main commercial centre by Victoria Road. There has been little renewal of the built environment to revitalise economic and social activity in this precinct.

South – East Precinct

The south east quadrant is predominantly a light industrial area. The built form is dominated by 1-2 storey factories and workshops which provide local amenity in terms of the variety of services offered by these businesses.

Destinations, Topography and Views

The primary destination for visitors and residents in West Ryde are the retail facilities found in the town centre west of the railway line. These are popular for their diversity and convenience. Other important destinations in the West Ryde town centre include:

- The local schools and churches.
- The railway station and bus interchange.
- Community services such as the local library.
- The specialised services available in the industrial area.

The West Ryde town centre is located on a low point along Victoria Road. It is surrounded by a ridgeline to the north, east and west. South of Victoria Road the land falls away towards the Parramatta River. The town centre is located in a valley between these hills and in the past has been subject to flooding. The risk of major flooding has been alleviated to some extent through major infrastructure work. The commercial centre is still affected by an overland flow path.

The topography combined with the built form restricts district views from within the centre. However, the surrounding topography makes the town centre very visible from other areas in Ryde particularly buildings that are located on the ridgeline following the railway line. There are some district views east of the railway line.

Open Spaces and Street Activation

Open spaces play an important role in creating a high quality public domain and providing opportunities for community interaction. They also provide space for recreation and relief from the urban city environment.

Street activation is often related to the success of the open space network. This has been facilitated in West Ryde through public domain improvements and encouraging development in streets and lane ways north of Victoria Road. There are a number of land uses in the town centre that encourage street activation including retail outlets, appropriate spaces for outdoor dining and community facilities. However the heavy traffic along Victoria Road does not encourage street activation, nor do the large areas of service zones and blank facades found on some of the newer buildings in West Ryde. In areas other than the commercial centre there are no compelling destinations that generate street activity.

The largest open space in West Ryde is Anzac Park, on the eastern side of the railway line. It has recently been upgraded and includes play equipment, barbecues, seats and paths. It is an old park with numerous mature trees and large areas of lawn. It is constantly used for passive recreation, mainly by residents of the surrounding apartments. The role of Anzac park as a breakout space for residents is likely to grow as the density of residential development increases.



Anzac Park

On the western side of the railway open space is dominated by a bus interchange. The interchange is an important piece of local transport infrastructure. It does not cater for other users. On the eastern side of the station much of what is currently open space or parking is approved for development.

In the commercial centre open space is limited. In Graf Ave and part of West Parade the pavement has been widened to allow more outdoor activities. The Marketplace development provides a small outdoor space at the mall entrance. There is demand for more of these spaces throughout the commercial areas either side of the railway.



West Ryde Marketplace forecourt

Overall the town centre has an absence of larger spaces that would allow for specific events such as markets and community activities. A new plaza is proposed in association with the development of the existing car park on Anthony Road which may provide a facility for some of these activities.

A number of green spaces are found just beyond the edges of the commercial precinct. They include Miriam Park, Darvall Park (the southern section with the model railway) and further north the local bowling club. Currently the green spaces are not integrated with the town centre.

There is little publicly accessible open space south of Victoria Road. This limits potential social and commercial interaction on this side of the town centre.

Paving types

The quality of paving in West Ryde varies considerably. There are sections of good quality paving in the laneways north of Victoria Road mixed with areas of poor quality paving. In the commercial precinct the footpaths in Graf Ave and parts of Chatham Road have been recently renovated and set a new benchmark for paving in West Ryde. The paving in the other precincts is generally of a lesser quality. The key paving types are as follows:

- granite paving,
- asphalt with granite banding,
- plain asphalt,
- various types of concrete and clay pavers,
- concrete pavement.



Ryedale Road – clay pavers



Asphalt with granite banding

Visually the quality of the public domain is only as good as its weakest part. In West Ryde the lack of a unified paving makes sections of the streetscape appear untidy and dated.

Street Tree Network and Street Furniture

Street trees play an important role in creating a high quality public domain. Tree lined streets are attractive, provide shade and can visually soften hard urban spaces. The West Ryde master plan proposes extensive tree planting to encourage green links into the town centre.

Generally West Ryde has a patchy, discontinuous street tree network and there is no strong boundary planting to delineate the centre. In contrast, new street trees at regular intervals have been planted in Graf Ave, Anthony Road and Market Street, in coordination with the redevelopment of the mall and library. This highlights the lack of street trees elsewhere in the centre, which is partly due to physical constraints. Victoria Road is without trees at all because narrow footpaths, awnings and overhead powerlines prevent it. In other areas such as the Ryedale Road conservation area tree planting is limited by the historic awnings and the location of services. Around the train station tree planting is very restricted because of the extensive parking and the bus interchange.



Graf Ave



Graf Ave

The same constraints do not apply to the remainder of the commercial precinct or residential areas. There is potential to restore or upgrade the street tree network in these precincts.

The availability and appearance of street furniture is mixed. East of the railway line and south of Victoria Road street furniture is limited with the exception of Anzac park where the quality and availability of street furniture is excellent. In the commercial precinct street furniture has been updated and is found at regular intervals in Graf Ave, Anthony Road and Market Street. However this is not matched in the surrounding streets.

Pedestrian Network, Safety and Amenity

A good pedestrian network can improve retail activity and encourage visitors to an area in a number of ways:

- Increases interaction with open spaces (public and private)
- Creates an attractive and vibrant shopping precinct
- Traffic calming: high pedestrian traffic can act as a traffic calming device
- Increased safety: high levels of pedestrian activity and associated street activity improve personal and property security.

The pedestrian network in West Ryde has improved in recent years with new development and public domain upgrades in the commercial precinct. Pedestrian activity is focused on Graf Ave, Chatham Road, Anthony Road and Market Street. The pedestrian traffic is serviced by the public car parks off Anthony Road and at Woolworths. The West Ryde railway station and the associated bus interchange on West Parade are also major sources of pedestrian traffic. The east side of the railway line has fewer attractions and correspondingly less pedestrian activity but is busy close to the railway station and around the Leagues club.

There are a number of instances where the safety and amenity of pedestrians could be improved:

- Victoria Road divides the town north–south. Visual and physical pedestrian links across Victoria Road are poor.
- Pedestrian amenity either side of Victoria Road is poor. A large part of this is due to the noise and pollution associated with traffic using Victoria Road. The quality of the public domain also has an impact.
- The railway line divides the town centre in an east-west direction. Both the visual and physical connection between the two sides of the railway is poor.
- The bus interchange and railway entry on West Parade create pedestrian congestion at peak times. The pedestrian pathways and links to the town centre are not well defined. There is a potential conflict between pedestrians and buses.
- Pedestrian amenity could be improved on some of the smaller laneways and arcades in the commercial precinct.

Social and Cultural Resources

- West Ryde Town Centre provides a social hub for the local community. Existing and proposed community facilities include a public library, aged care facilities, child care facilities and meeting rooms.
- There is currently no public art in the West Ryde centre.

4.2 Urban Design Concepts

4.2.1 Vision and Structure Plan

This section presents design concepts and strategies for the improvement of the public domain. The secondary purpose of this section is to provide guidance to developers on how new developments should respond to public domain requirements.

Proposals

A summary of the key opportunities for improving the public domain in West Ryde are:

1. Upgrading of the pedestrian connections to destinations around West Ryde
2. Creating publicly accessible open space in the town centre
3. Improvement of the streetscape (landscaping, furniture, and artwork) in the town centre and secondary streets and laneways.

4.2.2 Pedestrian Network, Safety and Amenity

There are a number of opportunities to extend the pedestrian network and improve the pedestrian amenity in the West Ryde town centre.

a) Create new pedestrian pathways and upgrade existing pathways

New and upgraded pedestrian pathways will give local pedestrians alternative access to shops and facilities. The pedestrian connections can take many forms depending on their purpose and whether they are publicly or privately owned. These include:

- Footpaths,
- Retail arcades,
- Covered walkways,
- Laneways,
- Parks and open spaces &
- Right of ways.

Where possible opportunities present themselves to extend the pedestrian network these should be taken.

A long term objective is to provide a second pedestrian link across the railway line. Providing better access across the railway line is an important step to improving visual and physical connections within the Town Centre.

The following upgrades to the existing pedestrian pathways are a priority:

- Improving the connection between the north and south sides of Victoria Road as identified in the West Ryde Master Plan.

- Improving the links across the railway line to each side of the town centre and making the entries to the railway station function as active public spaces.
- Providing better facilities for pedestrians in the town centre. For example improved street furniture, street trees and links to publicly accessible open space.
- Improving links between the town centre and green spaces such as Miriam Park. This includes improving visual links, signage, place marking and lighting to and from the green spaces.
- Widening of the footpaths where this can contribute to better pedestrian access and more active streets.
- Encouraging more privately owned connections from Victoria Road to the streets behind.

b) Safety

- All pathways, private or public, need sufficient width, lighting and finishes to meet public safety requirements. A minimum width of 3m is required for new pathways.
- Where appropriate pathways should be adjacent to active street fronts to improve amenity and safety.
- Public access should be available between at least 7am to 7pm.
- Where possible pathways should be located separately to vehicular traffic.



Miriam Park

4.2.3 Destinations

The new pedestrian connections should link with specific destinations. A destination can include one or more of the following:

Open spaces

Future development in West Ryde should include new publicly accessible open spaces as appropriate on private and public property. Open spaces can take many forms including urban parks, communal squares, widened footpaths, atria, retail courtyards and arcades.

A new public plaza is being built at the intersection of Betts Street and Anthony Road as part of a commercial development.

There is an opportunity to include the bus interchange and develop a more attractive and functional public space linking the railway station to the town centre.

The West Ryde master plan also proposes the following:

- A pocket park on the southern side of Victoria Road opposite West Parade.
- Improved linkages from the parks and reserves surrounding the area into the town centre.

Active Streets

Street activation occurs where land use and build forms combine to attract people to an area. As noted in Section 4.1 West Ryde has started on this path with the recent Marketplace development. It is important for the community that this continues in the future with new developments. Building form can assist in street activation if the building is attractive and provides visual interest. At street level the shopfront should make pedestrians feel safe and welcome. The public and private zones should be integrated. Buildings that have blank facades or conspicuous unscreened loading docks and service bays should be discouraged. Where these elements already exist public/private partnerships should be developed to mitigate the effects. For example, establishing a public art program to upgrade blank facades.

Views

The potential for significant vistas through the commercial precinct is limited by the topography, street network and rail infrastructure. The views are more internalised in the West Ryde town centre than other centres in Ryde. This makes it more important that significant corner sites are designed with the view in mind, and that public domain upgrades and extensions are similarly prioritised to make the most of these significant locations.

To the north east of the railway line there are possible district views to the east. There is also a potential to create vistas along Herbert and Wattle Streets, linking into Anzac Park.



View east down Herbert Street

Community facilities

Community facilities form important destinations in a town centre. These can be public institutions such as schools, libraries and community halls but equally these can be cafes, newsagents, medical practitioners, bakeries and so on that service the local community. A new community building owned by the City of Ryde is currently under construction in Anthony Road. It is likely that this will become a significant destination for a number of residents.

Landmark buildings

Landmark buildings are destination points. Landmark buildings include projects of architectural excellence, historic significance or nationally significant sustainable buildings. Refer to Section 4.2.4 for more information.

4.2.4 Semi-Public Elements

Built form

The built form has a significant impact on the public domain. The Development Control Plan (DCP) controls the built form. New developments need to address issues such as street activation, access to daylight and articulation of the façades. Occasional 'laneways' between and through the buildings to provide visual and physical links through the sites will be encouraged to break up the blocks. Semi-public areas such as arcades, courtyards and lobbies that address and are consistent with the public domain are also supported.

The building form should be developed to complement and enhance the public domain.

Landmark buildings

Landmark buildings are buildings of excellence, and as such will attract interest from the wider community. They may include examples of outstanding urban design, architectural design, heritage significance or sustainability. They can be the catalysis for commercial growth and tourism within a centre.

Landmark buildings improve the urban environment for the community. They should provide premium sought-after spaces internally and a good commercial return for the owner, which flows on to the local community. The development of landmark buildings will be supported.

Car parking

The location and accessibility of publicly available car spaces is important to improving the amenity of the public domain of West Ryde.

- The current numbers of public car spaces are to be retained in any new developments.
- Where possible, access to car parks should be off secondary streets and not from Victoria Road (this is an RTA requirement).

In addition, the entries to car parks should be located to minimise the impact on pedestrian networks. Car parking should be located to provide easy access to new open spaces, shops, community facilities, etc but should not be immediately adjacent or visible from these areas.

4.2.5 Street trees, Paving and Street Furniture

Improving the streetscape quality has a direct and immediate benefit for the public domain. Section 4.1 noted there are opportunities for improving the streetscape in the town centre. The West Ryde master plan shows:

- Additional tree planting to develop green links into and through the town centre.
- Public domain upgrades in the commercial centre.
- Integration of public and private open space.

The scope and general requirements for street trees, paving and street furniture are outlined below. All new developments are required to incorporate streetscape improvements where noted.

Refer to Council's Public Works Department for detailed specifications for these items. The detailed specifications should be considered when preparing development application documents. It is important that these elements are coordinated between the public and semi-public domains.



Street furniture Rouse Hill Town Centre



Street furniture Kissing Point Park

Street trees

Refer to the Street Tree Master Plan and Street Tree data sheets below for the location and species of future street trees.



Street Tree Master Plan

WEST RYDE STREET TREES data sheets



Plane tree in Chatham Rd (winter)



Plane tree in Chatham Rd (summer)

***Platanus digitata* – Saw-edged Plane Tree**

- Good shade tree
- Attractive cream coloured bark that is very striking in winter
- Fast growing
- Deciduous - good shade in summer, sun in winter



Crepe Myrtle in Wattle Street (winter)



Crepe Myrtle in flower (summer)

***Lagerstroemia indica* – Crepe Myrtle**

- Excellent street tree under wires
- Hardy
- Very attractive – profuse flowers
- Fast growing

***Lophostemon confertus* - Brushbox**

- Australian native, evergreen
- Excellent shade tree
- Quick growing, establishing in 3 to 5 years
- Attractive – dark leaves, cream flowers, interesting bark
- Well established at West Ryde

Brushbox in Anthony Road



Pyrus in Graf Ave (winter)



Pyrus in Graf Ave (summer)

***Pyrus ussuriensis* – Manchurian Pear**

- Attractive - dark green leaves turning bronze in winter, scented white flowers in spring
- Deciduous - good shade in summer, sun in winter
- Excellent shade tree

***Ulmus parvifolia* – Chinese Elm**

- Deciduous - good shade in summer, sun in winter
- Long lived
- Excellent shade tree
- Pollution resistant

Chinese Elm



Paving

The pavement of the commercial centre has been unified by the installation of plain dark grey granite paving, with a black and grey pattern as a feature at intersections and other locations. All new upgrades must continue this pavement treatment.

The asphalt with granite banding will be limited to that already existing, as it does not have the longevity of full granite paving. A uniform pavement will help link the east and west sides of the railway line.



Feature paving to mark corners



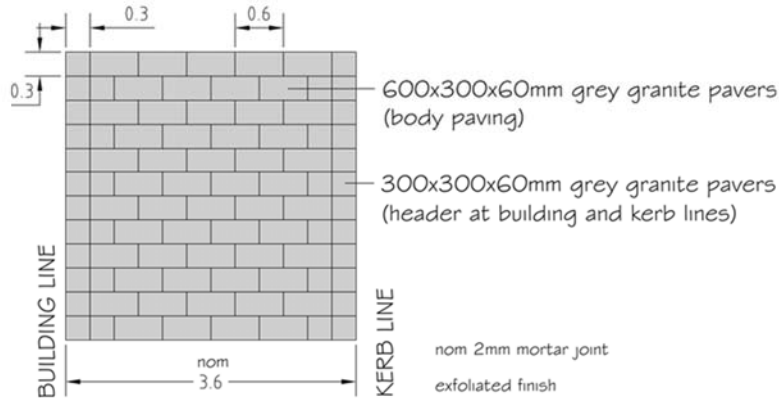
Grey granite paving

Refer to the West Ryde Paving Layout Plan below for details of the paver sizes and paver layout required.

Refer to the West Ryde Paving Plan below for details of the extent and location of the paving types required.

Paving West Ryde

Main paving

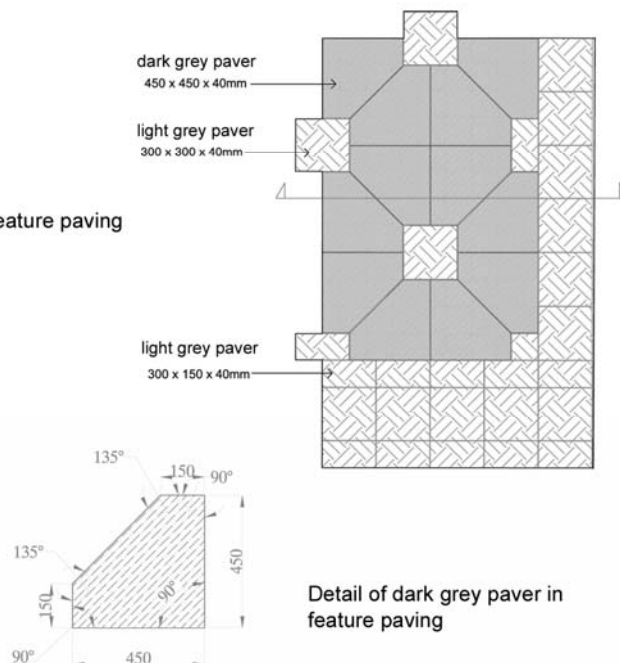


Feature paving (see West Ryde Paving Plan for locations)

Feature paving at Anthony Road



Detail of feature paving



WEST RYDE

PAVERS:

Dark grey granite
Light grey granite
Exfoliated finish

Sizes as shown

Nom 2mm paving joint

PAVING PATTERN:

Main paving

Stretcher bond with header course along kerb line and building line

Feature paving

Pattern as shown

INSTALLATION:

Pavers to be laid on 30mm wet sand cement mix, on 100mm 25MPa concrete slab, on 50-75mm compacted roadbase.

PAVER SEAL

Protective Sealant for Paving Stones and Concrete by Techni-Seal or approved equivalent.

Granite paver suppliers

The Sydney Brick Paving Company: 'Mosaïque Black'

Sam the Paving Man:

'Raven Black' and

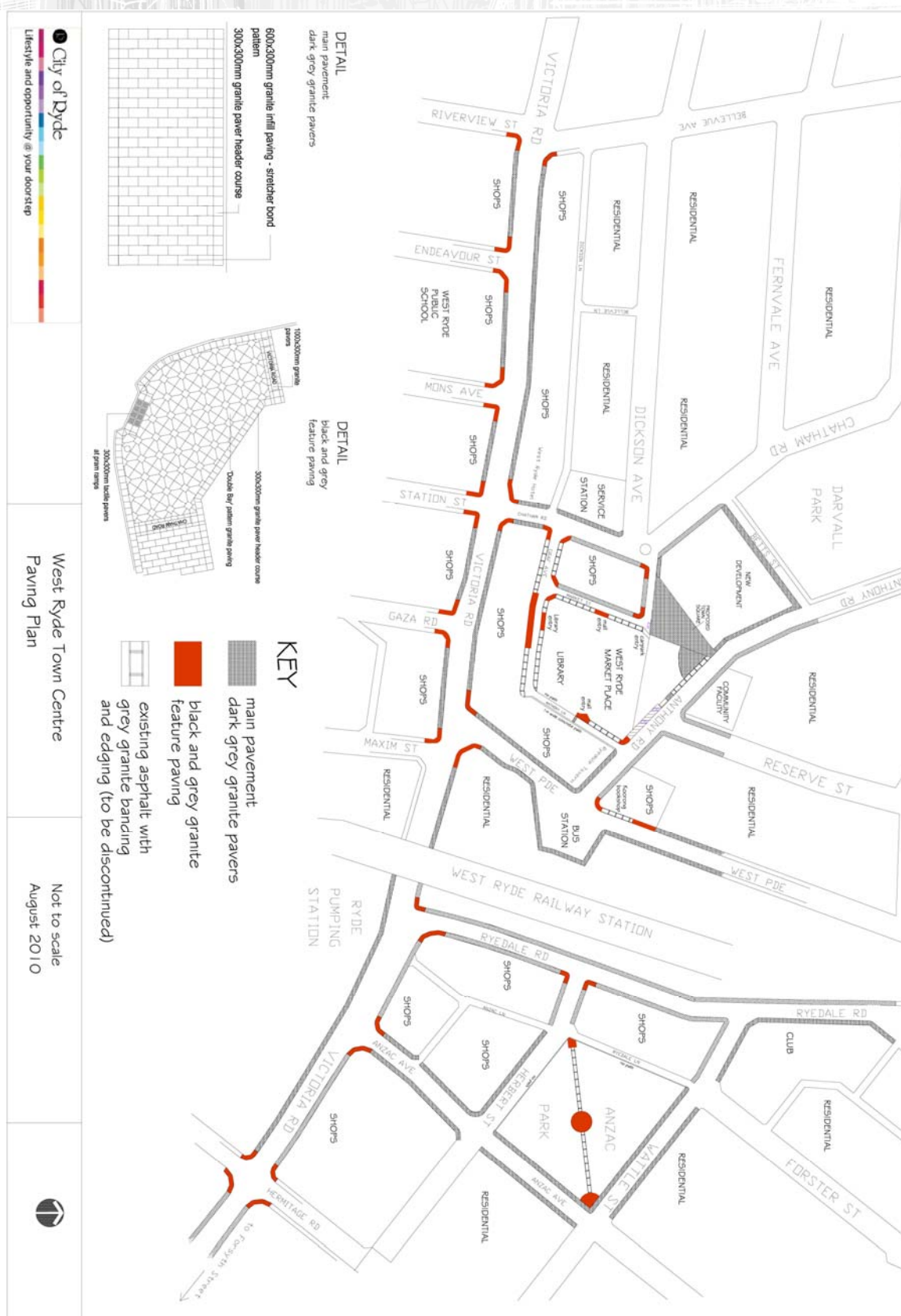
'Sesame Grey'

Morgan Stone:

'Raven Black'

or approved equivalent.

West Ryde Paving Layout Plan



West Ryde Paving Plan

Street furniture

The following street furniture shall be provided to Council's satisfaction for all new developments.

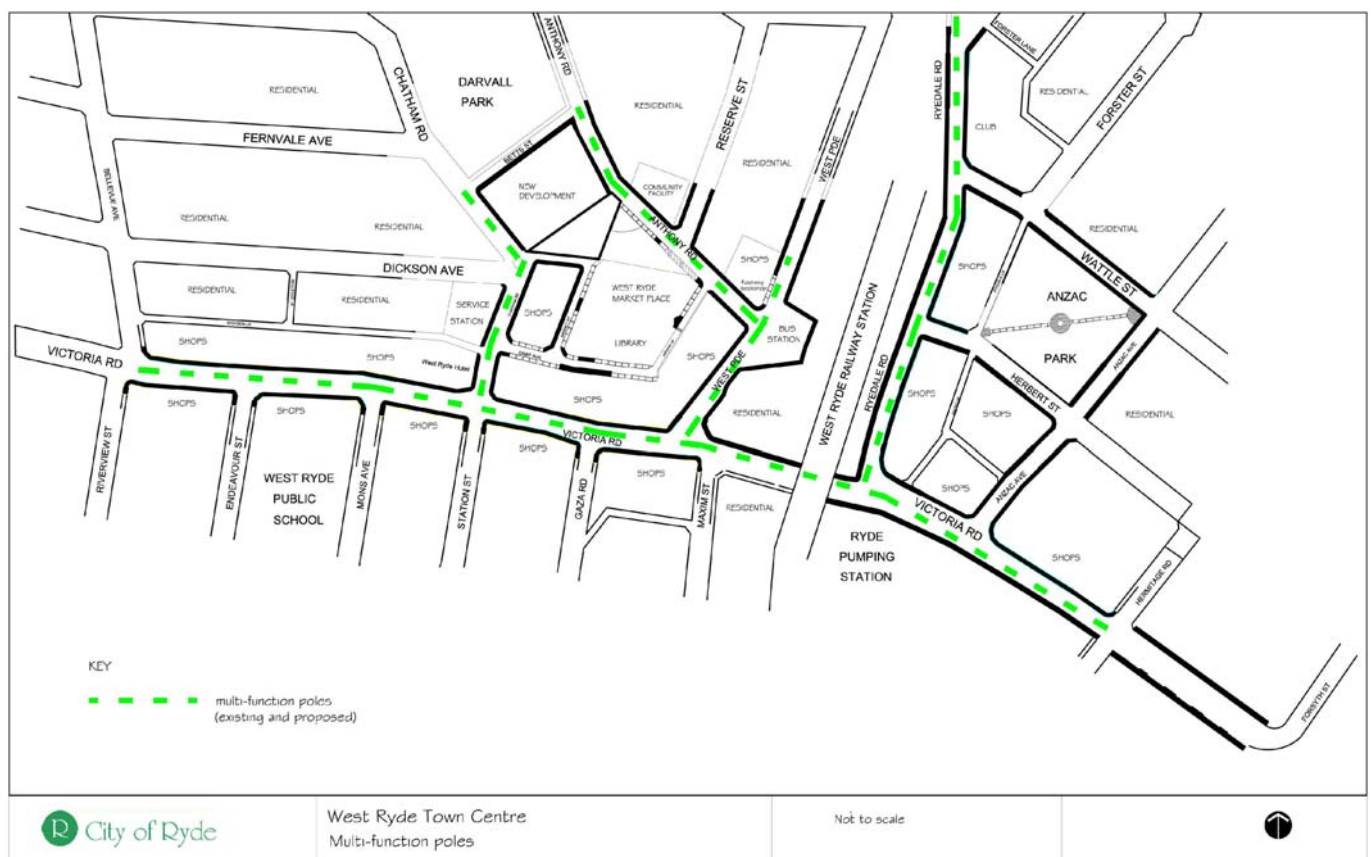
- Seating (Seat 01 and Bench 02)
- Bins (Bin 01)
- Bus shelters

Additional street furniture that may be considered for specific sites includes:

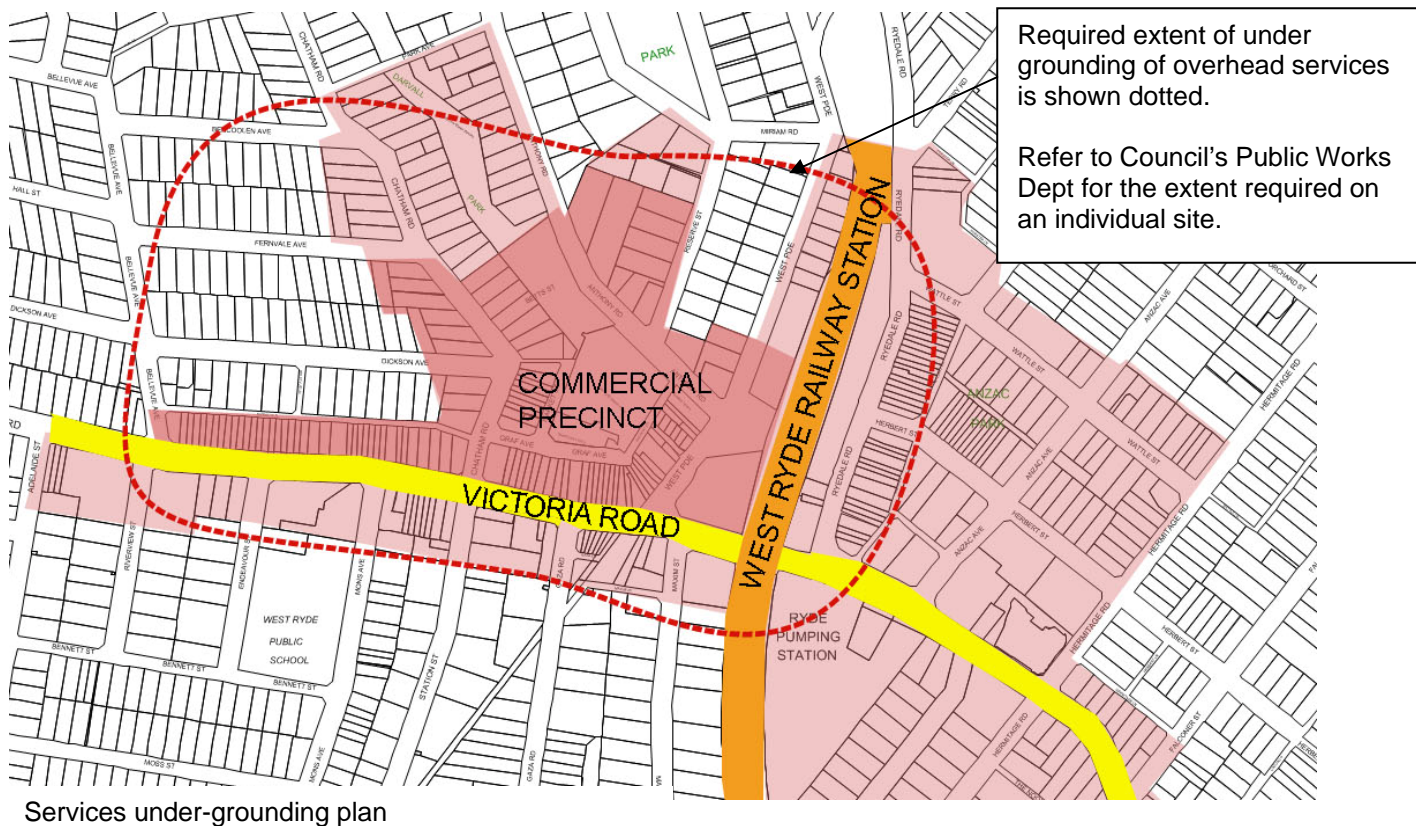
- Bollards (Bollard 02)
- Trellis (Trellis 01)
- Bike racks (Bike Rack 01)
- Picnic tables
- Pedestrian lights
- Bubblers
- Café barriers

Lighting

Multifunction poles are to be installed in Victoria Road (Hermitage Road to Bellevue Ave), Ryedale Road (Victoria Road to Forster Lane), West Pde (Victoria Road to the Koorong bookshop), Anthony Road (West Pde to Betts Street), Chatham Road (Victoria Road to Betts St). These will incorporate lighting, street signage, and banners into one element. See below:



Power lines and other services shall be re-located underground. Refer to the plan below for the general extent of under-grounding required. Refer to Council's Public Works Department for a more detailed extent.



Signage

Refer to Section 9.1 of the DCP for general signage.

Signage can enhance the prominence of the major entry points into the West Ryde town centre. The City of Ryde is implementing a program to provide 'gateway' signage in West Ryde. Precinct signage and local signage should be coordinated to improve the orientation and movement of pedestrians within the corridor. A Civic Signage Manual has been developed to create a consistently high standard of public signage in the Ryde Local Government Area.

Smaller miscellaneous signage should be located on the multifunction poles where practical.

Environmental performance

Environment performance can be enhanced by using the following when selecting and detailing materials:

- Recycled materials
- Functionally and aesthetically long lasting materials
- Materials that require minimal maintenance.

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) should be incorporated into the public domain design.

4.2.6 Public Art

Public art can make an important contribution to the local community in a number of ways. These include:

- Providing visual enjoyment and interest to everyday activities and social gatherings.
- Highlighting and enhancing the local character of an area, making it a memorable place to visit and return to.
- Marking the identity of key sites:
 - Gateways into the West Ryde town centre (eg Anthony Road, Chatham Road, West Parade, Victoria Road and Ryedale Road)
 - Historic precincts
 - Open spaces / recreation areas
 - Public facilities
 - Landmark buildings
- Creating a point of reference for the local community and visitors.

Proposed art works should be site specific and respond to the distinctive character of the local area. Artworks can be integrated with buildings and landscaping elements or be stand alone objects.

Opportunities exist to include custom made, artist designed furniture that will celebrate specific aspects of West Ryde's character. Semi-public art work associated with individual buildings is encouraged. This can be in the form of art walls, screens or other building elements which provide exposure for the particular building but also interest for the community. When an overall Arts Plan for West Ryde is prepared, then art works can be added gradually to enhance the public domain.



Public Art Rouse Hill Town Centre



Public art Camberwell Markets

4.2.7 Cycleways

Residents have highlighted the need for better facilities for cyclists in the local area. The Ryde Bicycle Strategy and Master Plan (2007) shows the proposed regional bike network linking West Ryde to surrounding suburbs. The bicycle master plan also shows there are opportunities to provide local bike routes. The completion of the proposed cycle network through the town centre is a long term project and should be considered when preparing development application documentation.

Additionally, facilities for cyclists such as convenient bike parking and change facilities are to be encouraged in the town centre. The lack of open public space in the West Ryde commercial centre limits these opportunities at present. The development of the key sites and other large projects should provide the impetus for improving facilities for cyclists.