

Meander Valley Council

# Draft Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study



Form

planning  
+ projects

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# 1. Executive Summary

The *Draft Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* identifies and describes the unique character of Westbury's historic township area and provides recommendations for enhancing and preserving this character through town planning and urban design solutions. The study was prompted by a 2023 community petition seeking stronger heritage protection around the Village Green. The study examines the historic built form, streetscapes, landscape features and cultural values that define the area.

The study finds that the precinct surrounding the Village Green, Town Common, Lonsdale Promenade, King Street, Meander Valley Road, Lyall Street and William Street contains a highly consistent and recognisable colonial character supported by 30 places listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register. This includes many intact Georgian and Victorian buildings, mature trees, and traditional streetscapes. This area is clearly distinct from the wider township, which comprises multiple, diverse precincts. The area is shown below in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Westbury Historic Town Centre Area and focus of the Character Study (Source: theLIST Mapping)

Community consultation shows strong support for protecting this historic centre, with priorities including preservation of heritage buildings and trees, sensitive infill, improved public realm design, and better activation of the area for visitors and locals. Concerns focused on unsympathetic development, loss of character through modern building forms, and incremental changes—such as streetscape works—that could erode heritage values.

Under the current Tasmanian Planning Scheme, many types of development (e.g., multiple dwellings, demolition, new buildings up to 8.5 m) can occur without any assessment of character, creating significant risk for the precinct.

The study recommends:

- Establishing a Specific Area Plan (SAP) for the historic town centre to introduce local objectives and development standards for built form, materials, roof form, larger scale development, demolition and fencing.
- Extending the Westbury Streetscape Renewal Master Plan Concept to ensure cohesive heritage-appropriate streetscape treatments.
- Creating a Significant Trees Register to protect important vegetation.
- Preparing design guidelines for fencing, buildings and streetscape elements.
- Using the description “Westbury Historic Town Centre” to reinforce place identity and support communication and tourism.

The historic centre is a strong example of Tasmania’s early colonial settlement character. Protecting and enhancing this area will support community identity, heritage values, and local economic opportunities. The study should now proceed to public exhibition to refine its recommendations and inform future planning scheme amendments.

## 2. Background

In 2023 the Meander Valley Council was presented with a petition from residents of Westbury requesting the following:

*‘that Meander Valley Council properly protect the unique amenity and history of the Village Green by declaring the Village Green and all properties directly surrounding it as a Heritage Precinct with appropriate heritage controls within the Meander Valley Planning Scheme. We further request that in the interim an immediate moratorium be placed over the proposed precinct on any development which may affect the heritage values of this precinct.’*

Whilst Council was generally supportive of the request it was decided that as a precursor to any amendments to the Planning Scheme that Council needs to undertake a character study of the historic township area surrounding the village green to better understand the character values, spatial area (boundaries) and unique identity of the area. This would then provide a basis for community consultation into developing any design guidelines for the area and get feedback on what character elements were are important to the Westbury community.

In 2025, Council engaged **Form Planning + Projects** to undertake the study and provide recommendations for any future amendment to the Meander Valley Local Provisions Schedule such as establishing a Specific Area Plan (SAP) to protect and enhance the unique character of the Westbury Town Centre (including the Village Green). The study is to:

- Define the spatial extent of Westbury’s town centre.
- Describe the key public- and private-realm features that make the area unique.
- Identify sub-areas that meaningfully contribute to community identity.
- Provide design guidelines to protect valued character attributes.
- Provide basis for community consultation and input

The study will assist Council in establishing planning controls—such as Local Area Objectives, additional development standards (e.g., SAP provisions) and potential codes like a Significant Trees Register—to ensure new development aligns with the existing or preferred future character.

This Character Study follows previous urban design and planning projects, including:

- *Westbury Outline Development Plan Final Report*, 12 December 2013, prepared by Aurecon; and
- *Meander Valley Road – Streetscape Renewal Master Plan Concept*, prepared by Playstreet and the Meander Valley Council, April 2024.

Further community and stakeholder consultation through a future Planning Scheme Amendment process will be required before any town planning standards are applied to this part of Westbury.

### 3. Methodology

In preparing Character Study, Form Planning + Projects have undertaken the following:

- Reviewed the *Request for Fee Proposal – Westbury Town Centre Character Study – Consultant Commissioning Brief, March 2025*, prepared by Meander Valley Council
- Review of the petition to Council in 2023 seeking greater protection of the heritage values of a precinct around the Westbury Village Green
- Site visit and town walkover with Council Officers on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025
- Prepared the *Westbury Town Centre Character Study Preliminary Overview*, September 2025
- Reviewed the submissions and outcomes of the consultation on the *Westbury Town Centre Character Study Preliminary Overview* as undertaken by the Meander Valley Council in late 2025
- Regard for the *Meander Valley Heritage Study, February 2006*, prepared by Paul Davies Pty Ltd
- Desktop assessment and review of current zoning and overlays under the *Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Meander* (the Planning Scheme)
- Desktop assessment of services and infrastructure, places of interest, community facilities, elevations etc
- Review of the *Subdivision Guidelines, October 2013*, a joint project of the Tasmanian Local Government Authorities
- Regard for *PPN43: Understanding neighbourhood character*, January 2018, prepared by the Victorian State Government
- *Westbury Outline Development Plan Final Report, 12 December 2013*, prepared by Aurecon for the Meander Valley Council
- *Meander Valley Road – Streetscape Renewal Master Plan Concept*, prepared by Playstreet and the Meander Valley Council, April 2024
- Review of places listed under the *Tasmanian Cultural Heritage Act 1995*
- Ongoing discussions with Council Officers

In essence, the *Westbury Town Centre Character Study Preliminary Overview*, September 2025 provided the basis of the Character Study. Much of the content from the Preliminary Overview is re-used in this Character Study together with the updates, findings and outcomes of the community consultation in late 2025.

### 4. Study Area

The Preliminary Overview began with an assessment of the overall Westbury Township (greater area) as shown in Figure 2. This was required to define the spatial extent and focus of the character study.



Figure 2: Westbury Township (greater area) (Source: theLIST Mapping)

However, subsequent to the *Preliminary Overview* and the community consultation a final recommended historic town centre area was developed and is shown in Figure 1 (shown again in Figure 10). This area has a consistent and identifiable character that warrants urban design guidelines and potential town planning controls through the Planning Scheme (i.e. a Specific Area Plan (SAP)).

A slightly smaller area was recommended in the *Preliminary Overview*, however, the community expressed a strong preference to extend the boundaries of this area to include land on the periphery including the Westbury Town Commons, the Westbury Hotel, the Willows (heritage place) and an extension to include the heritage places (and places of unique character) along William Street (southern area). This smaller area is shown in Figure 1 of Appendix A: *Westbury Character Study Overview Community Engagement Summary*, October 2025

Descriptions of the land and features within the Figure 2 greater area is provided as important context for defining the town centre and to describe the historical development of the township. This helps to demonstrate how the spatial area for the historic township area was determined and why this area is particularly unique.

Due to the land use patterns and historical development of Westbury since colonial settlement, defining a town centre in Westbury is complicated. These changes include the construction of the railway line and railway stations, flooding in the King Street/Quamby Brook area, the Westbury Bypass and more recently the opening of the new IGA supermarket at the eastern end of the town (which has consequently redirected business activity away from the old town centre).

As shown in Figure 3 below, the Council through *Westbury Outline Development Plan*, 2013 had identified a different “town centre” based on the business activity and human movement through a particular part of the town centered around William Street and the intersection of William Street and Meander Valley Road. There is no reason to ignore this strategic plan by Council to increase and encourage business and social activity in this part of town. Much of this area is still encapsulated in the historic township spatial area. The

historic township area is more the “older” part of the Westbury township and was once the centre of the Westbury township in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has been continued to through to 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The historic township area shown in Figure 1 and Figure 10 provides both a spatial area for the basis of the character study and the likely boundaries of any planning scheme amendments that may be initiated by the Council (with the community’s support).

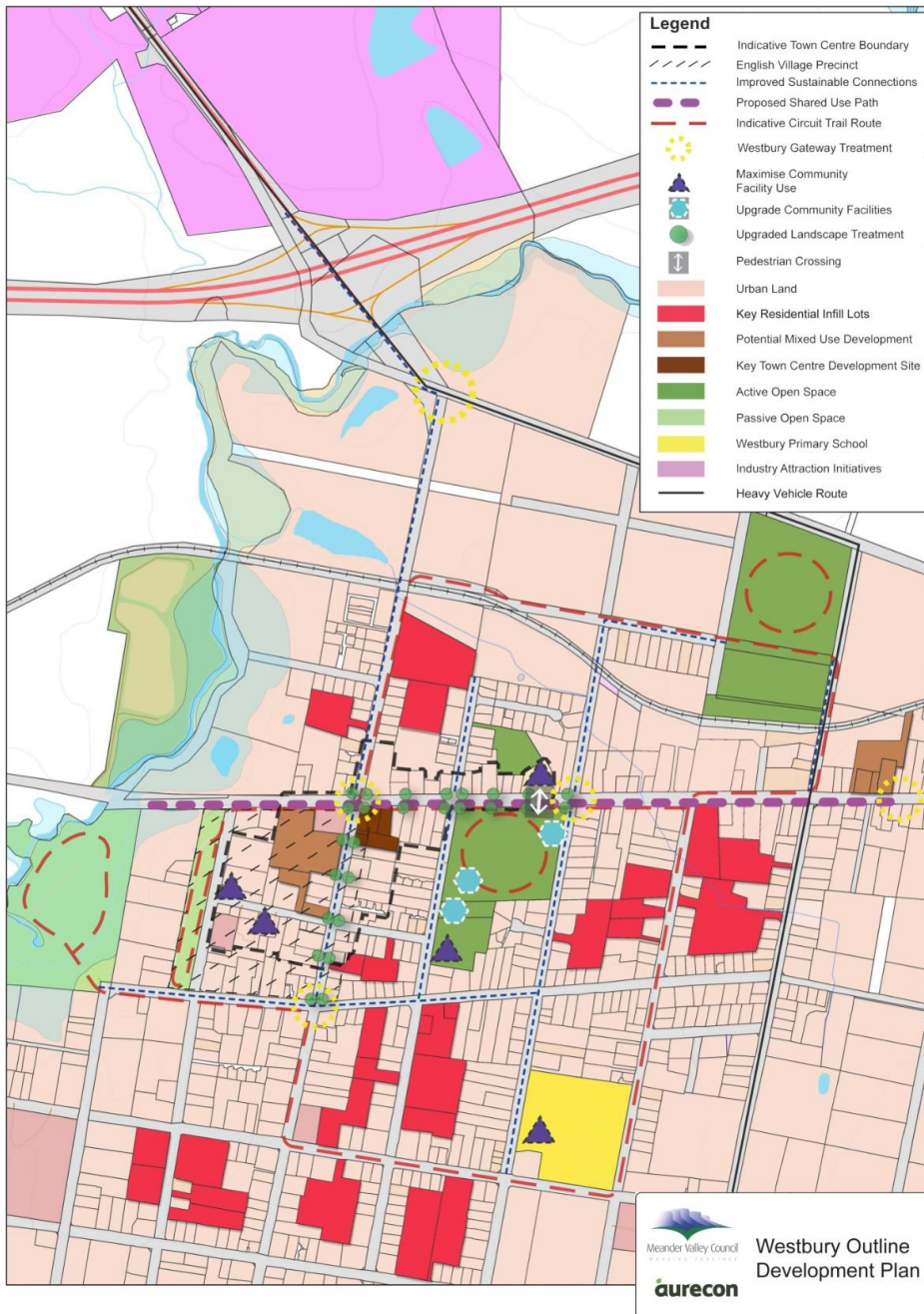


Figure 3: Westbury Town Centre area as shown in the Westbury Outline Development Plan (Source: Westbury Outline Development Plan, 2013)

## 5. Understanding Character

### 5.1. What is Local Character?

Defining the character of an area is a central feature of strategic planning, especially for existing townships such as Westbury.

Local character is what makes a neighbourhood, village or township distinctive. Per the *PPN43: Understanding neighbourhood character*, (Victoria State Government, January 2018):

*Character is essentially the combination of the public and private realms. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character.*

*The key to understanding character is being able to describe how the features of an area come together to give that area its own particular character. Breaking up character into discrete features and characteristics misses out on the relationships between these features and characteristics.*

*Understanding how these relationships physically appear on the ground is usually the most important aspect in establishing the character of the area.*

A character study may describe or have regard to a particular cultural group, historical event or place of cultural significance. However, they are intended to be a value-neutral concept. The character of a place, from a town planning perspective, is primarily shaped by the presentation of dwellings to the street, streetscaping, subdivision patterns, vegetation, public places/features and places of interest.

In identifying the character of a place, a community (including businesses, residents, Government agencies, etc) can identify those public and private realms that are important to the community and give a particular settlement or an area its local distinctiveness and unique identity.

In articulating and agreeing on the character for a township (through consultation), a Council and Community is able to encourage better planning and design appropriate for that area through design guidelines or standards in a Planning Scheme. A character study can be used by developers, planners, businesses and designers to better understand the local character and progress sensitively designed buildings, infrastructure and other works (Planning Aid England, Royal Town Planning Institute, 2015).

Furthermore, defining and then protecting or enhancing the character of a place can be beneficial for a number of other reasons. These include:

- Preservation of culture and identity of a place
- Enhance public engagement in the town planning process and encourage a cohesive/community minded approach to planning and design
- Strengthen a sense of community
- Economic and tourism benefits through preservation of character. This is particularly important to Westbury as the heritage character of the place is the greatest attraction to the township for visitors and provides significant amenity to residents. Businesses can then leverage off the attraction of the township.
- Guidance for public works such as play equipment, street trees, footpath construction, signage etc
- Policy development

With regard to Westbury. The historic township area has a particular and readily identifiable sense of character due to the preservation of the older buildings, streetscapes and landscaping. This does not mean that *only* the historic town centre area has a sense of character in Westbury as all parts of Westbury have “character” as such. A person could describe the character of any part of the town or streetscape and articulate its qualities, shapes, built form, vegetation etc and undertake a character description. But the

historic township area also has a heritage character that sets the area aside from anywhere else in the town which is defined within a particular precinct.

## 5.2. Heritage or Character?

Per above, a character study is intended to be a value-neutral concept concerned with defining the character of a place and developing guidelines for future development of the place.

However, the focus of the *Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* is the land around the old town centre and the Village Green which has the strong characteristics of a colonial village and a heritage precinct. The entire township (greater area) as shown in Figure 1 does not possess a singular definable type of character as the entire township is comprised of multiple precincts and places.

The historic town centre, however has a unique identity due to the number of heritage listed places clustered in a single part of the town. This demonstrates the colonial history of the area. Any person that enters this part of the township would immediately acknowledge the number of heritage properties (of the 19<sup>th</sup> century/colonial era) together with the associated streetscapes, tree plantings and patterns of development. These buildings, places and features exist as this area was the original town centre in the 1820s at the beginning of colonial settlement and the survey of the Westbury township<sup>1</sup>.

Meaning that the character of this particular part of town is colonial heritage character.

A description of the historic town centre cannot be given without reference to the colonial settlement and history of this area as this is the reason the character of this area exists. Arguably this character exists due to the heritage protections afforded under the National Trust, *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*, local planning scheme and through the actions of community groups and landowners.

Other reasons the heritage values and character of this area exist is that Council has deliberately enhanced the streetscapes through development that is sympathetic to the character of the area and that the area has not been subject to development pressures or demolition as new development has occurred elsewhere in Westbury such as along the Meander Valley Road.

Heritage places and precincts can be registered under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* or under the C6.0 Heritage Code of the *Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Meander Valley* (the Planning Scheme). If a precinct has the qualities of a heritage precinct and has local historic heritage significance, then a spatial area can be mapped as a local heritage precinct through a planning scheme amendment process.

Local heritage significance is defined in Table C6.3 of the C6.0 Heritage Code under the *Tasmanian Planning Scheme* as:

*... significance in relation to a local heritage place or a local heritage precinct or local historic landscape precinct, and its historic heritage values as identified in the relevant list, in the relevant Local Provisions Schedule, because of:*

- a) *its role in, representation of, or potential for contributing to the understanding of:*
  - (i) *local history;*
  - (ii) *creative or technical achievements;*
  - (iii) *a class of building or place; or*
  - (iv) *aesthetic characteristics; or*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.utas.edu.au/tasmanian-companion/biogs/E001071b.htm>, accessed 4th July 2025

(a) *its association with:*

- (i) *a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons; or*
- (ii) *the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance to the locality or region,*

*as identified in the relevant list in the relevant Local Provisions Schedule, or in a report prepared by a suitably qualified person, if not identified in the relevant list.*

A local heritage precinct is further defined in Table C6.3 of the C6.0 Heritage Code as:

*... an area that has been identified as having particular local historic heritage significance because of the collective heritage value of individual places as a group for their streetscape or townscape values, and is:*

- a) shown on an overlay map in the relevant Local Provisions Schedule; and*
- b) listed and identified in the local heritage precincts list in the relevant Local Provisions Schedule.*

As discussed in this document, there is potential for the town centre (or part of the town centre area) to be listed as a Local Heritage Precinct under the C6.0 Local Historic Heritage Code. This would require further detailed statements of heritage significance and further input from a heritage consultant or architect.

Alternatively, the town centre and surrounds could be included in the Local Provisions Schedule of the Planning Scheme as a Specific Area Plan (SAP) which describes the heritage character and other values in the area with a set of standards that would apply to the area to maintain and enhance the character. This would acknowledge that not all places, landscaping or built elements within the historic town centre area are “heritage places” and that the study area does not represent one single point in time. As described in this study there are many features and buildings which are not 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial places that do not dominate or necessarily detract from the overall character setting but actually contribute to the overall sense of character and identity.

Where there is mix of architectural styles and other built form beyond a single type of architecture or era of development then a SAP can be used to capture the different elements that are important to the community (and the identity of an area).

A SAP for these types of character precincts has been applied to other similar country towns in Tasmania. For example, in the Northern Midlands, under the Local Provisions Schedule of the *Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Northern Midlands* the Council (and the community) have applied the Longford Specific Area Plan to a particular part of Longford. The purpose of this plan is shown below:

#### **NOR-S6.1 Plan Purpose**

The purpose of the Longford Specific Area Plan is:

- NOR-S6.1.1 To protect and enhance the unique and intact history and character of the village.
- NOR-S6.1.2 To provide for development that is compatible with the existing streetscape settings, building forms and the rural village character.
- NOR-S6.1.3 To provide for the subdivision of key development sites and provide for appropriately located public open space.
- NOR-S6.1.4 To encourage subdivision that provides for large lots and minimises internal lots.
- NOR-S6.1.5 To maintain existing character and land use conflict.
- NOR-S6.1.6 That as part of any new subdivision, new trees are provided to increase the township's tree canopy cover.

Similarly a SAP has also been applied to the township over Evandale as shown below:

#### NOR-S5.1 Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Evandale Specific Area Plan is:

- NOR-S5.1.1 To protect and enhance the unique history and character of the village.
- NOR-S5.1.2 To maintain the current open space, picturesque and historic streetscapes.
- NOR-S5.1.3 To provide for community events.
- NOR-S5.1.4 To encourage the provision of appropriate tourism infrastructure whilst maintaining the scenic character of Evandale.
- NOR-S5.1.5 To provide for development that is compatible with the existing streetscape settings, building forms and the rural village character.
- NOR-S5.1.6 To provide for the subdivision of key development sites and provide for appropriately located public open space.
- NOR-S5.1.7 To encourage subdivision that provides for large lots and minimises internal lots.
- NOR-S5.1.8 That as part of any new subdivision, new trees are provided to increase the township's tree canopy cover.

The Evandale example is particularly unique as the Northern Midlands Council has applied both a SAP and also a heritage precinct to a smaller part of the Evandale township. The heritage precinct is around the smaller cluster of heritage listed places in the business centre of the township and around the older part of the township. Whilst the SAP extends beyond the boundaries of the older part of the township out into the newer subdivisions, streets and open spaces. This then provides for a set of standards (town planning objectives) to ensure that new development is compatible with the old development which is central to the identity of Evandale and an important part of the towns economy and social history.

The recommendation of this study is that Council take steps towards developing a SAP for the entire Westbury historic town centre area. As this is a mixture of buildings, landscaping, streetscaping and open space and other elements identified by the community as important to the social identity and economy of Westbury. Per Section 32 (4) of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*:

(4) An LPS may only include a provision referred to in subsection (3) in relation to an area of land if –

(a) a use or development to which the provision relates is of significant social, economic or environmental benefit to the State, a region or a municipal area, or

(b) the area of land has particular environmental, economic, social or spatial qualities that require provisions, that are unique to the area of land, to apply to the land in substitution for, or in addition to, or modification of, the provisions of the SPPs.

The historic town centre area has particular environmental, economic and social qualities that are unique to Westbury and could be captured under a SAP and recognise the different elements that make-up the entire area and recognise that some parts of this area are different in age and form. For example the Town Common does not possess the same built elements as the commercial hub around Lyall Street and William Street but clearly contributes strongly to the overall setting and sense of place.

## 6. Westbury Character

Westbury, has identifiable, unique and recognisable features scattered across the entire township. Some examples of these features, places, built elements are listed below (in no particular order):

- Holy Trinity Catholic Church on the corner of William Street and Meander Valley Road.
- “The Big Wickets” and the Westbury Recreation Ground.
- The Village Green.
- Pearn’s Steam World.

- Heritage listed places (and other 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century places) around King Street, William Street, Lyall Street and Lonsdale Promenade.
- Numerous significant trees (due to size, age, prominence in the streetscape).
- Westbury Uniting Church .
- Westbury Gingerbread Cottages.
- The White House on the corner of King Street and Lonsdale Promenade.
- St Andrews Anglican Church.
- Westbury Hotel on the Meander Valley Road.
- Fitzpatrick's Inn on the Meander Valley Road.

But it is only the town centre area around the Town Commons, William Street, King Street, intersection with Meander Valley Road (including the Westbury Hotel) Lonsdale Promenade and the Village Green where these features, have a defined and consistent sense of character. This area creates a prominent and clearly identifiable precinct.

The features, streetscapes, building designs, tree plantings, etc. that ordinarily create a character and sense of place are not consistent across the greater study area as shown in Figure 2 (the greater study area). There are scattered elements but they are not clustered together or necessarily consistent with one another. Such places, buildings, trees, particular streetscapes and other built elements contribute to a sense of place in Westbury but not as a single precinct area.

The entire township (greater study area) does not have the characteristics or values of a heritage precinct and does not have a single and definable “value-neutral characteristics” that can be readily described or linked together across the greater study area/entire township. For example the entire southern residential area shown in Figure 4 has little relationship or similarities in building style, streetscaping to the buildings and streetscapes of Lyall Street, William and King Street. The two (2) areas could be in separate townships. It would be improper to apply a Specific Area Plan over the entire southern residential area requiring new development to be consistent with the largely Georgian and Victorian characteristics of Lyall Street and William Street.



Figure 4: Southern residential areas (Source: theLIST Mapping)

The town centre area around William Street, King Street, Lonsdale Promenade and the Village Green has consistent character with unique qualities that could be preserved through a Specific Area Plan or Heritage Precinct under the Local Provisions Schedule of the Planning Scheme.

## 6.1. Historical Development of Westbury

One reason there is a lack of consistency in character across Westbury is simply that the township is comprised of various precincts which have emerged and evolved over the past 200 years. King Street in early colonial settlement was the main road through Westbury with government buildings and dwellings built around the village green and King Street in the 1820s and 1830s<sup>2</sup>. This was also the centre of activity in the town for business and gatherings.

In the 1870s the Launceston and Western Line was constructed with a train station in the vicinity of Pearn's steamworld and the Fitzpatrick Inn creating a new entry point and new centre of activity. The construction of the railway line and the train station had an impact on the original settlement as trade, business and activity migrated towards the railway station and its connection to other towns including Launceston. At some point, the bridge over the Quamby Brook and the main access to the town from the west along King Street was permanently destroyed during a flood in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This of course coincided with the railway station which had already begun to reshape the township.

The upgrades and construction of the Meander Valley Road over the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century also further reshaped the town through moving people along a new main road. This meant more businesses began to open on the main road to conveniently service people moving through the township. Arguably this created the busy intersection around William Street and Meander Valley Road around the pub, service station, bakery and other shops.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century many towns in the Northern Midlands were bypassed through the construction of the Bass Highway. This included Westbury which was bypassed in 2001<sup>3</sup>. The bypass of the township has had a major impact on the movement of people and the locations of business and trade in the township. It also further encouraged business and trade along the Meander Valley Road, particularly at the western entrance to the township around William Street and the eastern entrance near the new IGA and Pearn's Steam World. These have become the main access points to the township as they are also the access points from the Bass Highway.

## 6.2. Different Precincts of Westbury

The existence of different precincts is supported by the *Westbury Outline Development Plan Final Report*, (December 2013), the *Meander Valley Road – Streetscape Renewal Master Plan Concept*, (April 2024) and the *Meander Valley Heritage Study*, (February 2006). These three (3) documents have all described the overall township as comprised of various nodes and areas that are spread out across the township.

Some examples of these “nodes” are described in the above documents (in no particular order) as the William Street Node, Town Node, Recreation Ground Node, Mixed Use Node, IGA Node, Town Centre, Andy's Commercial Land, Residential Land, the Township, the Rural Lots to the South, and the Rural Lots to the East.

Based on the above descriptions, reports, desktop studies and the site visit undertaken on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 the following areas were observed as definable precincts with their own character. These are:

- A. Historic town centre and Village Green Area Precinct (focus of this study)
- B. Intersection with Main Road and William Street Precinct - including the pub, fire station, library, veterinarian clinic, and takeaway food businesses etc (partly within the defined historic town centre)

<sup>2</sup> Companion to Tasmanian History, Allison Alexander, 2005

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bass\\_Highway,\\_Tasmania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bass_Highway,_Tasmania), accessed 4th July 2025

- C. Tourist Precinct – including Pearn's, the distillery, Fitzpatrick Inn, Hardware/Restaurant/gifts store
- D. Recreation Precinct – Recreation Ground, Skatepark/BMX track, bowls club, health centre, sports centre area
- E. The residential areas beyond the above described precincts – though they do not have a consistent style of building or pattern of development the streets remain on a grid layout which is based on the original 1820s survey of the township. The streets are also consistently 20m wide road reserves with a narrow carriageway (with line marking only at intersections) and grassed verges and grassed swales for stormwater drainage and management. Streets are not consistently tree lined or have footpaths. But for the streets that have a footpath it is located either alongside the boundary of the dwellings or offset slightly to maintain a grassed verge between the road carriageway and the footpath. This creates a distinctive country town style. A similar example is found at nearby Carrick. This is shown below in Figure 5 and Figure 6.



*Figure 5: Grassed swales, narrow carriageway, street trees and footpath. A typical streetscape in Westbury (Source: Google Street View, September 2023)*



Figure 6: Another example of grassed swales, narrow carriageway, street trees but without a footpath. A typical streetscape in Westbury (Source: Google Street View, September 2023)

### 6.3. Defining the historic town centre

The catalyst for this study was the petition submitted to Council in May 2023 that requested the following:

*‘that Meander Valley Council properly protect the unique amenity and history of the Village Green by declaring the Village Green and all properties directly surrounding it as a Heritage Precinct with appropriate heritage controls within the Meander Valley Planning Scheme. We further request that in the interim an immediate moratorium be placed over the proposed precinct on any development which may affect the heritage values of this precinct.’*

This is useful as it demonstrates the social and cultural attachment that the community has to the Village Green and the land around the Village Green. The Village Green is shown below in Figure 7:



Figure 7: Westbury Village Green located on Lonsdale Promenade (Source: theLIST Mapping)

Figure 9 shows the heritage listed places around the Village Green and town centre area. It is very clear these places are clustered together when compared to the other parts of the town. This helps to identify the extent of the town centre precinct area.

The gateway treatments constructed by the Meander Valley Council into the town centre also help to delineate the spatial extent of the town centre for the purposes of the character study. These are shown below in Figure 8.



Figure 8: Entry to William Street and "Westbury Historic Village" (Source: Google Streetview, September 2023)



Figure 9: Heritage Listed Places in the Village Green and town centre area (Source: theLIST Mapping)

The spatial extent of the historic town centre was tested through the community consultation in 2025. The community through the surveys and written responses provided their input on the extent of the study area with many seeking the study area and historic township area be extended to include several adjoining character precincts that contribute strongly to the historic township character and identity of Westbury. The final Westbury Historic Centre Area is shown in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Westbury Historic Town Centre Area (Source: theLIST Mapping)

## 7. Community Consultation (September - October 2025)

### 7.1. Consultation Methodology (Per Appendix A)

The Council organised the consultation with input from Form Planning and Projects. The consultation involved the following:

- A **Community Forum** conducted by Council Officers was held on the 23 September 2025 at the Westbury Function Centre. The forum was attended by approximately 50 members of the community. As part of the Forum, the community were presented with the findings of the Preliminary Overview and were able to ask questions about the project and provide feedback on the character study.
- A **Survey** was provided online and at the Council Chambers for members of the community to provide answers to specific question on the character study and character of Westbury. This attracted the 71 written responses discussed in this report.
- Members of the community were able to contact Council Officers to discuss the project via phone, in person or email.
- A **Letter** was provided to all Westbury residents advising of the project and inviting residents to participate in the survey and information session.

Form Planning and Projects also spoke directly with the Westbury Historical Society as part of the Preliminary Overview.

The consultation ran between the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 and the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

A copy of the Preliminary Overview together with a detailed project description and link to the survey was provided on Council's Website.

## 7.2. Consultation Outcomes (Per Appendix A)

As outlined below, there was mixed agreement on whether residents supported the spatial extent of the historic town centre with many respondents recommending an expanded area. This is the area ultimately shown in this study.

### Town Centre Boundary

- Mixed agreement. While some supported the proposed boundary, many respondents recommended expanding the area to include Mary Ann Street (Toe Rag Lane), the Town Common, and additional heritage properties along Meander Valley Road and side streets adjacent to the historic town business area.
- A few suggested excluding areas that have lost historic integrity due to modern development.

### Character and Values

- The historic centre is regarded as charming and distinctive, with strong colonial and Georgian/Victorian influences defined by heritage buildings, the Village Green, mature trees, hedgerows, and traditional streetscapes.

### Community Priorities

- Preservation of character: Protect historic buildings, mature trees, and hedges; limit inappropriate infill and subdivision.
- Enhancement of aesthetics: Improve signage, walking maps, and interpretation boards; replace modern infrastructure with heritage-appropriate designs.
- Activation and tourism: Encourage small businesses, cafés, and cultural activities; develop heritage walking tours and themed street furniture.

### Concerns

- Loss of character through development: Strong opposition to high-density housing and unsympathetic design.
- Vacant and neglected buildings. The community call for revitalisation of William Street and reuse of the old IGA site and other former businesses.
- Infrastructure and safety. The Community seek better pedestrian facilities and traffic calming near the Village Green to slow down traffic and acknowledge the many pedestrians (including families) that use this area.

Nearly all respondents agreed that the historic town centre is defined by its heritage values which are described in this study. All agreed that these places, that create the sense of place, ought to be retained into the future and otherwise enhanced to encourage further activity and building use and re-use. Strong concern for demolition of buildings or removal of trees and landscaping was expressed in the public consultation.

Some had called for the inclusion of the land around Pearn's Steam world and Fitzpatrick's Inn. This is not recommended as part of the historic town centre. As much of the land, streetscape, built form between the historic town centre area and this part of the township differs and does not maintain a clear and particular identity.

There was no desire from the respondents to change the historic town centre or modernise through new buildings or modern streetscaping. Respondents however wanted to see the area better used by the public and businesses to better activate the area and encourage visitors and community gathering and

interaction. It was noted during the site visit in May 2023 and in discussion with the Meander Valley Council that the historic town centre was “very quiet” with relatively low foot traffic.

## 8. Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Description

### 8.1. Character Description

The Westbury Historic Town Centre area is spatially defined as the land between the western boundary of the Town Common extending to the northern side of the Meander Valley Road (to include The Willows heritage property) to the corner of William Street and Meander Valley Road (including the Westbury Hotel and the service station) and all properties fronting William Street to Dexter Street and all properties fronting King Street between William Street and the boundary of the Town Common). This is shown in Figure 10.

The area is unique as a particularly good example of early colonial settlement in Tasmania characterised by significant trees in the streetscape and gardens. The Village Green is a prominent feature of the character setting owing to its landscaping, particularly the large exotic trees, that are surrounded by heritage listed buildings and places.

The historic township area has 30 heritage listed places on the Tasmanian Heritage Register. Most of which are identified as either Georgian or Victorian era buildings (and places) which display intact examples of the architectural style of the era. These places have potential to yield important information concerning life in a developing regional town in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These places are shown in Figure 9.

The area provides a number of commercial and public buildings which were all integral to life in the township in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most remain in use and are examples of continuous use. This includes the many dwellings in the area but also some of the businesses such as the post office on the corner of Lyall Street and William Street. Buildings and places that were former businesses such as those along Lyall Street and William Street still have the potential to be re-opened and repurposed for business use in a small business precinct. The Village Green is also a place that displays continuous public use for events and recreation since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with traditions such as the St Patrick’s festival held each year which demonstrates continuous tradition and cultural association with the land.

The Lyall Street and William Street business and community area is strongly linked to the Lonsdale Promenade and Village Green area. The streetscaping, connectivity through footpaths and the consistent style and type of buildings create a true sense of place and create a destination for visitors to the township. This is exemplified through the walking tours (maps) provided by the Westbury and Districts Historical Society and their plans to further show case places and buildings of interest through publications and signage. The area is also a flat in topography, with a minor slope towards the Town Common and Quamby Brook. This enables easy walking along the footpaths and through the Village Green area.

### 8.2. Streetscape and Road Design

Within the William Street and Lyall Street commercial area, the Meander Valley Council have deliberately used a type of dolerite stone in the street plantings, kerb outstands and entry treatments at intersections. An example is shown in Figure 8 and in Figure 15. This stone material corresponds well with the paving used at the intersections of Lyall Street and William Street and at the entrance to this part of the town on William Street (visible in Figure 8). Stone paving is also for footpath construction outside the Council Chambers in Lyall Street and at the intersection of Lyall and William Street. A red brick kerb edging is also used between the back of the concrete kerb and sections of asphalt footpath along the length of Lyall Street. This creates

a sense of place and recognition that this area is different to the surrounding streets. It helps to delineate the central business area of the historic township and acknowledges the traditional building materials used in the area.

A mix of concrete kerb, gutter and footpath is used in the side streets and southern end of William Street where the area becomes more residential than business. Beyond William Street and Lyall Street the streets, within the study area, are a mixture of kerb, gutter and footpath and grassed nature strips, swale drains and footpath with street tree plantings. Notably, the grassed swales, tree plantings with a narrow road carriageway and footpath typifies the residential areas of Westbury. This is both within the study area and beyond. This is a tradition of road design that has continued for decades and creates a heritage village feel across the residential areas of Westbury.

The width of the road reserves in the study area are similar to modern road reserves created under modern planning schemes and engineering standards. Road reserves are typically around 18-20m in width which allows for a carriageway, landscaping, parking, services and footpath.

### 8.3. Built Form

Within the recommended historic township area shown in Figure 10, there are very few buildings and structures that are intrusive or otherwise detract from the colonial character of the area. This assessment and observation is supported by the *Meander Valley Heritage Study*, (February 2006).

The pattern of housing and lot arrangements are similar to that which existed in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most buildings are single storey buildings on small lots or larger lots with well established gardens. Two (2) storey and larger buildings are mostly commercial or former commercial buildings located on William Street.

Other prominent buildings in the area is the former commercial bank on Lyall Street, the St Andrews Anglican Church on Lonsdale Promenade, the Holy Trinity Catholic Church on the Corner of William Street and Meander Valley Road, the old Inn on the corner of William Street and King Street, the former barrack and now Westbury RSL on Lonsdale Promenade and the Town Hall on Lyall Street. These prominent buildings strongly contribute to the sense of place and character of the area. They are made all the more prominent due to their larger size and overall footprint. Some examples of these places are shown below in Figure 11.

Buildings are a mix of dwellings, commercial and public buildings. Roof types are a mix of hip and gable roofs with some of the most prominent buildings, shown in Figure 11 having a mixture of hipped and gabled roofs with parapet walls. Most buildings are single storey buildings. There are very few large or bulky buildings in the study area. The dominant type of building is a single storey dwelling.

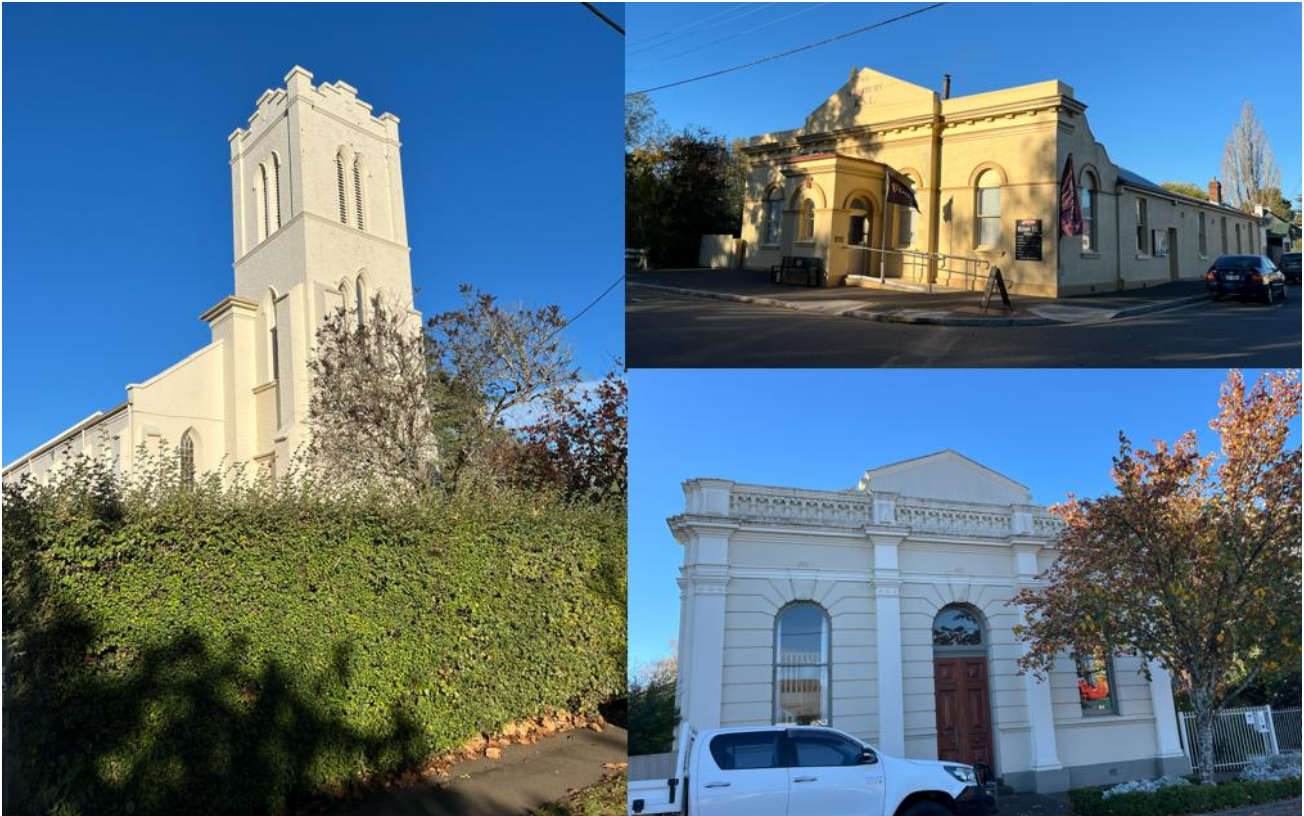


Figure 11: Examples of prominent buildings in the historic township area including the Westbury RSL, Former Commercial Bank and St. Andrews Anglican Church (Source: David Cundall, May 2025)

### Setbacks

Buildings within the business area of William Street and Lyall Street are mostly built to the edge of the footpath and provide a clear and un-obstructed view lines and pedestrian access via design features such as signage, verandas, porticos, stairs or short sections of footpath to direct people into the business (or former place of business). Buildings are closer together in this commercial area which creates an urbanised and clustered environment.

Beyond the William Street and Lyall Street business area, buildings have an inconsistent setback. Notably older, 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings are built to the front boundary or very close to the frontage, with the exception of the buildings along Lonsdale Promenade opposite the Village Green which range from 0m to around 15m. Generally 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings are setback from the frontage at around 5m. A good example of the different setback and style between 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings is along the southern end of William Street.

### Materials

Building materials used in the study area is a mixture of painted timber, painted brick and exposed brick. There are clearly the materials of choice and define the study area. Similarly colours used in the study area are creams, off-white, muted tones (dulled by greys, blacks or browns), greys or other heritage type colours used through out the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are very few exceptions. But buildings that have used brighter colours or colours and textures outside the typical palette used do not fit in with the overall character.

There are very few colorbond or other types of cladding used in the study area (or otherwise prominent in the study area). Colorbond has been used on backyard sheds which are generally recessive in the

streetscape and does not detract from the overall character. However, where colorbond or other cladding has been used on prominent facades, such as buildings with minimal or no setback from a road in the business areas, then there is a contrast and visible departure from the more dominant cladding materials.

### Fencing

Fencing styles and materials are not consistent within the study area. Most are 1.2m or less in height with materials or spacing to create transparency. This allows buildings, landscaping or other elements to remain prominent in the streetscape. Materials and styles include timber picket fences, wrought iron, colorbond, hedging and palings. There is no fencing type that is unique to this area.

## 8.4. Vegetation and Landscaping

The land on the western side of the Village Green (also on Lonsdale Promenade) and the Town Common has been deliberately included in the recommended historic township area shown in Figure 10. The reason is that the trees lining Lonsdale Promenade on this side together with the dwellings and their established gardens contribute strongly to the character of this area. The entire area is then read in conjunction with the Town Common to create a large green space area.

If the vegetation, including the hedges, was to be removed by the Council or landowners this would have a significant impact on the character of the Village Green and Town Common area.

An example of the relationship between the street and boundary plantings on Lonsdale Promenade is shown in Figure 12.



Figure 12: Lonsdale Promenade Streetscaping and relationship to the Village Green (Source: Google Streetview, May 2025)

The land adjoining the built town centre area, such as the Westbury Town Common, the paddocks on Mary Ann Street and the landscaped gardens of properties on the Meander Valley Road contribute to the town centre setting and sense of place. These adjoining areas, or part thereof, were considered by the community as places that are important to the heritage values of the area. Street trees are made all the more prominent due to their height, insofar as they are much taller than most of the buildings in the study area.

Hedging, trees and shrubs are used to delineate boundaries and create separation between buildings. Trees act a placemaking feature particularly around the Village Green and entry to the town on Meander Valley Road at the Quamby Brook bridge crossing. The trees represent an immediate change from the open paddocks and hedging and farmland on the outskirts of the of town. The large exotic trees provide a strong sense of place.

## 9. Key Risks to Character

### 9.1. Subdivision and multiple dwellings

Within the historic town centre area there are many vacant lots and single dwellings on larger lots that could be developed by multiple dwellings or further subdivided. These lots are located in either the Village Zone or the General Residential Zone. Both zones encourage residential development as either “permitted” or “no permit required” development. This is significant for places that are not on the Tasmanian Heritage Register as such places are not subject to any particular design standards other than non-specific (not unique to Westbury) performance criteria.



Figure 13: This area of land has the potential to be developed for multiple dwellings or subdivision subject to design and Council approvals (Source: theLIST Mapping)

Figure 14 shows an example of a property with a large garden areas, that may developed for further residential development. . This land has the potential to allow for up-to six (6) additional dwellings in the General Residential Zone at the Acceptable Solution of one (1) dwelling per 325m<sup>2</sup> of land. Meaning, the zone deliberately encourages a higher density of dwellings without regard for the character of the area. Similarly for places that are not on the heritage register, a person is able to demolish or remove vegetation to allow for new development to occur without due regard to the heritage value or character of the area where associated with a proposed development i.e. demolition and construction of a building.

As another example, the Council and the community, in determining if design guidelines or town planning standards ought to be applied to the study area should also contemplate the character of the land between Lonsdale Promenade and the Town Common as shown in Figure 13. This area of land could provide for largescale residential development such as multiple dwellings or subdivision (subject to design and planning approval). This would more than likely require vegetation removal and potentially major drainage and/or earthworks including retaining walls due to the flood potential from the Quamby Brook. The result would be a significant change to the local area through earthworks, roads, housing and vegetation changes. This example is not to dissuade any development from occurring. It is purely demonstrating that development may occur without proper regard for the character values of the area as there are currently no specific standards related to maintaining the character of the historic township area. Potentially additional landscaping (or revegetation) and other specific design solutions could minimise impacts together with a linear design of any housing and roads. A visual impact assessment from key vantage points such as the Town Commons, Meander Valley Road and the local road network would be valuable in preparing any such designs.

Subdivision potential closer to the Lyall Street and William Street business area is confined to mostly small 1-2 lot subdivisions or 1 lot plus balance battle-axe style subdivision. Given that lot sizes and lot arrangements are not consistent in the town centre area, subdivision is not necessarily a high risk to eroding the character of the area. The larger area identified in Figure 13 and also the Holy Trinity Catholic Church on the corner of William Street and Meander Valley Road may allow for a more substantial subdivision with road access which has the potential to alter the character of the area through inconsistent housing design but also inconsistent street layout and design.

Particular design solutions, as presented in the recommendations of this report would work to ensure new buildings and landscaping are in keeping with historic town centre character.

## 9.2. New Buildings and Incremental Change

A new bulky or tall building in the study area would strongly affect local character. The General Residential Zone and Village Zone both allow buildings up to 8.5 m under the Acceptable Solutions, meaning a structure of this scale could be built without a planning permit if it fits the building envelope. At this height—roughly three storeys—it would be among the largest buildings in the precinct and comparable to the major heritage places shown in Figure 11.

Because the Tasmanian Planning Scheme does not require consideration of character or streetscape for buildings under 8.5 m that meet the Acceptable Solutions, a large structure made from concrete panels or stacked shipping containers could theoretically be constructed without any assessment of its suitability for a heritage setting. While such a building is not expected, the example illustrates that the Scheme does not safeguard local character.

It is therefore up to Council and the community to define desired character and guide built form through design standards and guidelines. There remains scope for larger buildings where they respond

appropriately to context—such as being consistent with other substantial buildings or recessive in the streetscape through design, landscaping, or increased setbacks.

Smaller infill development such as new outbuildings, a second dwelling or minor subdivision are possible on many other properties within the historic township area. Many of which could be achieved with minimal impact on the character of the area. For example, a new dwelling or shed located at the rear of an existing dwelling is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the overall character of the area through a considered design response to the streetscape character. However, demolition of existing buildings or construction of buildings that are prominent in the streetscape would contribute to the gradual erosion of the character of this area. A possible design response and recommendation is that new out buildings are located behind the existing building line or behind existing buildings. Demolition of existing buildings, particularly 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings that are highly visible in the streetscape should be avoided as far as practicable.



Figure 14: King Street Property, an example of potential unit development (Source: David Cundall, May 2025)

### 9.3. Streetscape works

Other small, but incremental changes, can occur through streetscaping, street furniture, lighting design and footpath or stormwater projects. If Council needed to replace/resurface the intersection of William Street and Lyall Street as shown in Figure 15 then there is no requirement under the Planning Scheme or any other design guideline for Council to replace “like for like” with a brick paved surface. Whereas, the brick paved surface used in this intersection has contributed to the sense of place and acknowledges the heritage values of the area using traditional form and materials.

Future streetscape plans should have regard to the heritage character of the area through the use of traditional materials wherever possible and a streetscape style consistent with existing streetscapes in the area.



Figure 15: Intersection of Lyall Street and William Street showing patterned brick paving (Source: David Cundall, May 2025)



Figure 16: Example of stonework in Lyall Street (Source: David Cundall, May 2025)

## 10. Retention of heritage character

As discussed in this document, it is the heritage character of the historic town centre through its buildings, places, streetscaping and landscaping that creates a sense of place and unique identity. This is also what creates the amenity and sense of pleasantness in this part of the town. The land around the Village Green, including the William Street and Lyall Street business area and Town Common are part of Westbury's identity and a drawcard for visitors to the area and should be leverage by the Council and the community for increased visitation and economic growth.

There are 30 places listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register within the study area. It is only these places, within the study area, that are subject to specific town planning standards and design guidelines for works and development and restriction on demolition and vegetation removal. There are otherwise no other places or precincts that are afforded any management protections under *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* or Planning Scheme. Westbury does not have any mapped local heritage precincts, places of local heritage significance or significant trees under the Meander Valley Local Provisions Schedule. Meaning places that are not listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* can be modified or demolished either with or without a permit under the current Planning Scheme.

Per the recommendations of this study, the Council and community ought to consider, the preparation of a Planning Scheme amendment to introduce a Significant Trees Register. Council may also want to consider either a Specific Area Plan (SAP) for the area. This could be the "Westbury Historic Township Specific Area Plan".

## 11. Enhance the character and identity of Westbury

A similar character study was undertaken in 2024-2025 for the township of Carrick. Very similar techniques and tools can be used to enhance and preserve the character of the Westbury Historic Town Centre. These are simple town planning solutions and urban design solutions that can be implemented to enhance the identity of this unique part of Westbury and improve access, moveability and liveability. These are dot pointed below:

- Further town entry / gateway treatment through landscaping, signage or outstands to provide visual cue of entering a specific town centre. This can also slow down traffic, improve pedestrian safety at road crossings and reduce traffic noise. These entry treatments help to delineate and identify the historic town centre.
- Extend existing streetscape design plans for the William Street and Lyall street community and business areas.
- Develop Local Area Objectives and a Planning Scheme amendment for a Specific Area Plan for the historic township area (study area) to preserve the character and encourage / enhance the character and identity of the place. This would allow further input from the community input through further consultation under a planning scheme amendment.
- Require a visual impact assessment for largescale housing development for three (3) or more additional dwellings or where a new road is needed to facilitate subdivision. The visual impact assessment needs to include design solutions for landscaping treatment and streetscaping that is consistent with the immediate area.

- Prepare a Planning Scheme amendment to introduce a list of Significant Trees
- Design guidelines for fencing which owners/residents and developers can use to work towards a more consistent type of front fencing in the township. This can be very beneficial to not only enhancing the character of the township but also provides people with some direction/guidance on fencing types. Questions, from residents about acceptable fencing heights, materials and types are common. Council can provide guidelines at their Council Offices or on the Meander Valley Council Website.
- Basic design guidelines or standards through a SAP for building design to encourage the following:
  - o Use of material consistent with the style already used in the historic town centre. Which is mostly painted timber, painted brick or exposed brick.
  - o Use of muted tones in paint colours or heritage colours for new buildings
  - o Buildings to be built parallel with the street and address the street. Multiple dwellings should be built in a linear straight line and not scattered or angled across as site.
  - o Roofs should be either hip or gabled roof where clearly visible from a road or public place

## 12. Recommendations and Actions

The following recommendations are made based on the consultation and findings of this study and the *Preliminary Overview*:

### 12.1. Identify area as Westbury Historic Town Centre

Maintain the description “Westbury Historic Town Centre” to describe this part of Westbury. This particular description is useful in communications with the public and stakeholders and future branding and design guidelines for this part of the township. The description helps to give this area its unique identity. It is based on current descriptions already applied to the area by the Council and the community anecdotally and existing visitor information.

### 12.2. *Westbury Streetscape Renewal Master Plan Concept*

Build upon and extend the *Westbury Streetscape Renewal Master Plan Concept*, prepared by Playstreet and the Meander Valley Council, April 2024 to include the William Street and Lyall Street business areas. Design should bring the two (2) areas together through similar design and retain traditional pavement materials including brick and stone wherever possible. This should create a cohesive town centre business district that links Lyall Street and southern William Street to the Meander Valley Road business areas.

### 12.3. Specific Area Plan for the township

Council to prepare a Specific Area Plan (SAP) for the Westbury Historic Town Centre Area based on the area shown in Figure 10 (the study area) under the Local Provisions Schedule of the Planning Scheme. This would require defining a precise boundary for the area through further consultation. This would ideally follow cadastral boundaries.

In addition to the Purpose Statements and Local Area Objectives the SAP should provide, at a minimum, the following standards:

### 12.3.1. Development Standards for Multiple Dwellings

Prepare additional Development Standards to encourage a tidy linear pattern for multiple dwellings at densities that reflect the character, as shown below in Figure 17:



Figure 17: Multiple Dwelling Layout Diagram (Supplied by the Meander Valley Council)

This would reduce the perceived scale of multiple dwellings as buildings would be located behind the dwelling closest to the street.

### 12.3.2. Development Standards for Dwelling Parallel with Front Boundary

Prepare an additional Development Standard to require developers to design/construct dwellings to be parallel with the front boundary and provide a strong edge between the street and the dwelling. The intent is to discourage the angled construction of dwellings which disrupts the pattern of development in a street. Below is a diagram (Figure 18) which illustrates the intent of the standard:

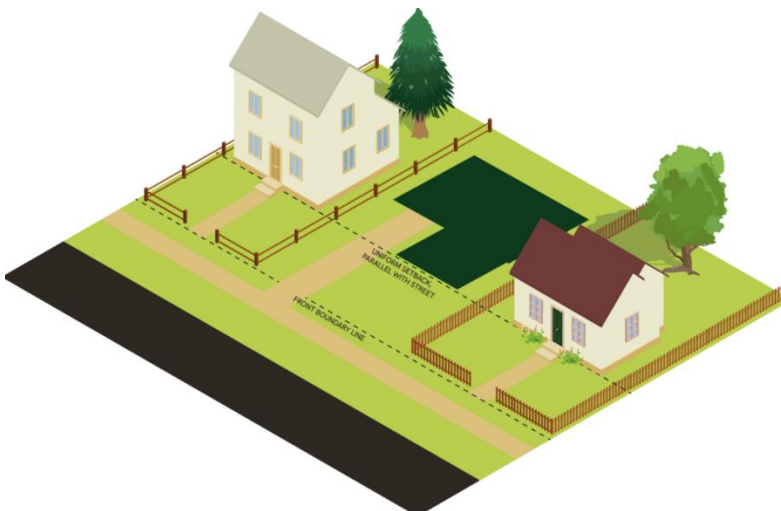


Figure 18: Building setback and parallel with street diagram (Supplied by the Meander Valley Council)

### 12.3.3. Roof Form/Pitch

Prepare a Development Standard to require developers to design/construct new buildings with a hipped or gable roof if a major part of the building and that part of the roof is a minimum 22.5 degrees. This should apply to new buildings or additions that would be visible from the road or other public place.

This will continue to replicate and foster the colonial character of the historic township through a very simple design standard that has largely been adopted by “newer” 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century dwelling and buildings in the township. The standard would apply to all proposed buildings that require a permit (i.e. it is not intended to apply to buildings that can be constructed under the exemption clauses of the Planning Scheme).

### 12.3.4. Building Materials

As outlined in this study the predominant cladding materials used in the historic township area (that contribute strongly to its character) are:

- Brick
- Painted brick
- Painted weatherboard timber (horizontal profile)
- Corrugated iron (colorbond roofs)
- Muted or heritage paint colours such as creams, off-white, muted tones (such as dulled greys, blacks or browns), greys or other heritage type colours

A standard requiring new buildings to be constructed in these materials and colours is highly recommended.

However, a standard requiring the re-cladding or painting of existing buildings in like for like materials or use of those materials and colours listed above is not recommended as it would conflict with the exemption clause shown below:

4.3.4	minor alterations	If for minor alterations of buildings, such as re-cladding, re-roofing and replacing windows and doors without enlargement or extension, unless the Local Historic Heritage Code applies and requires a <a href="#">permit</a> for the <a href="#">use</a> or <a href="#">development</a> .
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It is further acknowledged this can be very difficult to implement through the Planning Scheme and to be enforced by the Council.

### 12.3.5. Visual Impact/Streetscape Assessment for largescale development

Prepare a standard that requires a visual impact assessment for largescale housing development for three (3) or more additional dwellings and where a new road is needed to facilitate subdivision of land. The visual impact assessment needs to include design solutions for landscaping treatment and streetscaping that is consistent with the immediate area. The assessment is to consider the visual impact of larger scale development from key vantage points such as public places, public roads and entry points to the historic

township area. The assessment would consider the purpose statements of the SAP and any Local Area Objectives.

### 12.3.6. Demolition

Demolition of buildings that are not exempt buildings per the Exemption Clause 4.3.10 below ought to be subject to assessment by the Council through a Development Standard within a future SAP.

4.3.10	<u>demolition of exempt buildings</u>	<p><u>Demolition</u></p> <p>means the destruction or removal of any building or works in whole or in part other than by accident of buildings for which the construction would be exempt under Tables 4.2 – 4.6, unless the Local Historic Heritage Code applies and requires a <u>permit</u> for the <u>use</u></p>
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The standard could include an Acceptable Solution for buildings constructed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century or for the restoration and reconstruction of a building and introduce Performance Criteria for demolition of buildings constructed within the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Performance Criteria would be based on the purpose statements of the SAP and any Local Area Objectives. The standard would aim to prohibit the demolition of existing buildings that contribute to the streetscape character (i.e. visible from the road or public place) through avoidance or preservation and restoration of the front façade of the building. Meaning the rear section of a building could potentially be demolished and a new building constructed if the street presence (front façade) of the building is retained (and ideally restored as part of the works).

## 12.4. Significant Trees Register

Consider identifying significant trees in the township and preparing a Significant Trees Register for inclusion in the Local Provisions Schedule under the MEA-Table C6.5 Significant Trees.

Trees that are already a part of a heritage listing i.e. a tree in the garden of a heritage listed place may already be protected under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*.

However, trees that contribute to the Westbury historic township character are not all listed as part of a heritage listing. Also, not all trees that are located within the boundary of a heritage listed place are necessarily included in the description of the listing.

It is further recommended based on the site visit that the Council extend the register to include significant trees outside of the historic town centre. This may include some of the larger trees along the Meander Valley Road and on the Westbury Showground and other public spaces.

It is recommended that the Meander Valley Council implement a project to prepare a policy and set of criteria for determining significant trees in the township. A suggested set of criteria for what may be considered a significant tree is provided as follows. One (1) or more of this criteria would need to be met:

**Categories of significance**

Trees may be nominated if they are significant under one or more of the following. Please tick which criteria you think the tree meets (you may tick more than one):

1. Aesthetic significance	Trees whose form, seasonal beauty and/or placement are such that they are a significant aesthetic component of the streetscape, park, garden or natural landscape in which they grow.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Size (height, circumference, canopy)	Trees of outstanding dimensions in height, trunk circumference or canopy spread for their species or for the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Age	Trees which are particularly old either for their species or for the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Landscape significance	Trees which occur in a unique location or context and so provide a key contribution to the environmental, cultural and/or historical landscape.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Historical significance (European, Aboriginal or other)	Trees commemorating a particular occasion of broader community interest associated with an historical event or associated with historical activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Rarity of species, variety or genome	Trees of a species or variety that is rare or of very localised distribution or has known genetic values.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Unusual physical features	Trees which exhibit a curious growth form or physical feature such as abnormal outgrowths, natural fusion of branches, severe lightning damage or unusually pruned forms.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 22: Example of Criteria for Significant Trees (Source: Kingborough Council, 2021)

A Council policy, and development of criteria such as that shown in Figure 22, would ensure that the Council and the community are generally in agreement with creating a list of significant trees and the process for nominating significant trees.

It is noted that the Kingborough Council have completed a recent project to:

- Prepare a policy on significant trees
- Prepare guidelines and descriptions on the importance of significant trees (mostly for landowners)
- Prepare criteria for nominating and assessing significant trees (as shown in figure 22)
- Prepared a register of listed trees with their descriptions

Details on the project can be found here <https://www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/services/20844-2/significant-trees/> (accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025).

The follow up to consultation on a significant trees register, through a separate project is to prepare a list of trees through nomination by the public and then to prepare a Planning Scheme Amendment. The Planning Scheme Amendment would provide a list of trees for the MEA-Table C6.5 Significant Trees as shown below:

**MEA-Table C6.5 Significant Trees**

Reference Number	Town/Locality	Folio of the Register	Description / Specific Extent	Botanical Name	Common Name	No. of trees
This table is not used in this Local Provisions Schedule.						

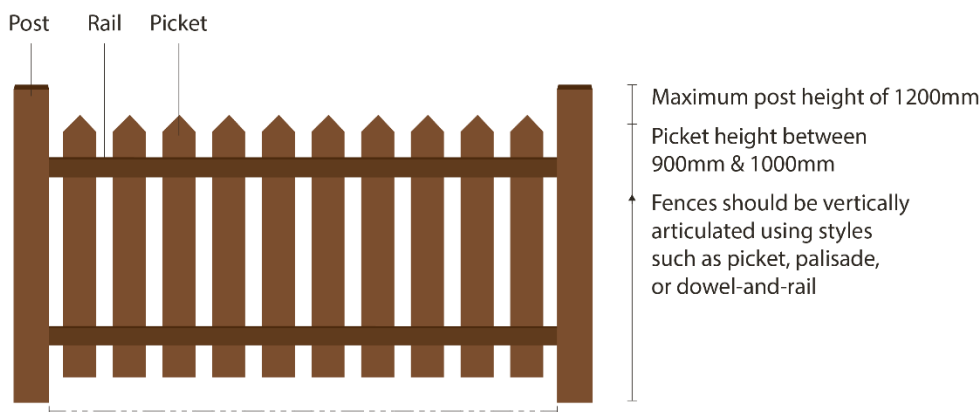
The listing of trees in Table C6.5 above would then apply the Heritage Code to the management of these trees. The relevant Standard is C6.9.1 Significant Trees which is shown below:

C6.9.1 Significant Trees

<b>Objective:</b>	That significant trees are not unnecessarily destroyed and are managed in a way that maintains their health, structural stability and appearance.	
<b>Acceptable Solutions</b>	<b>Performance Criteria</b>	
<b>A1</b> No Acceptable Solution.	<b>P1</b> Works involving construction, soil disturbance or soil compaction within the tree protection zone of a significant tree must not impact the health and appearance of the tree, and be supported by a written statement to that effect prepared by a suitably qualified person.	
<b>A2</b> No Acceptable Solution.	<b>P2</b> Works requiring the removal of a listed tree or which may impact on the health, structural stability or appearance of a listed tree must demonstrate:  (a) that there are no feasible alternatives which could be implemented to avoid impacting on the tree and the proposed methodology of the works incorporates measures to minimise and mitigate any damage to the tree; and  (b) there are environmental, economic or safety reasons of greater value to the community than the cultural significance of the tree; or  (c) the tree is determined to be dead or dying based on a written statement to that effect prepared by a suitably qualified person.	

### 12.1. Fencing Design Guidelines

It is recommended that Council prepare a simple set of guidelines for front fencing in the Village Zone and Residential Zone in the township. The guidelines are not intended to be enforceable through the Planning Scheme but offer a design solution to residents and developers to construct fences that are consistent with one another and contribute to the Westbury village character. A diagram for an acceptable design, that is based on standards for fencing in heritage places, is provided below in Figure 19.



Fences should not appear solid, rather, styles should be open or 'transparent' in appearance, with distance placed between pickets or dowels.

Figure 19: Fencing design diagram (Source: Meander Valley Council)

Fences that are not exempt fences under the exemption clauses of the Planning Scheme (which are limited to a particular height and transparency) can be managed through a standard within a Specific Area Plan that overrides the fencing standards of the Village Zone and the General Residential Zone.

A proposed fence, that is not a fence considered compliant with the exemptions, would then be subject to performance criteria which should refer back to the fence design guidelines. This would ensure that although a fence may not achieve the exact details in the fencing guidelines (i.e. per that shown in Figure 23) it should still be consistent or compatible with those guidelines. Meaning if a resident wants to construct a fence that does not comply with the fencing exemption for a fence within 4.5m of the frontage which per Clause 4.6.3 of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme requires the fence to be:

- i. 1.2m above existing ground level if the fence is solid; or
- ii. 1.8m above existing ground level, if the fence has openings above the height of 1.2m which provide a uniform transparency of at least 30% (excluding any posts or uprights);

Then Council and the applicant can then try to ensure the fence is still compatible with the desired streetscape character.

## 12.2. Exhibit this Draft Study for Consultation

The *Draft Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* is to be exhibited for public consultation.

## 13. Conclusion

The retention and enhancement of the Westbury historic town centre is important. The features, places, layout, buildings, and landscaping have been created by the people that live and have lived in the area.

Understanding and further defining the local character of a place is critical to developing any further objectives for this important part of Westbury as it underpins elements of design and provides clear direction for the Council, landowners and developers. This can be particularly useful in expediting the scoping, planning and design process for new developments.

The *Draft Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* ought to be subject to further community and stakeholder consultation by the Council for feedback on the study details and the recommended actions and solutions. The consultation will test some of the statements made in this document and allow such statements to be further refined and developed if needed.

Council and the community should then proceed to preparing a planning scheme amendment to prepare a Specific Area Plan that will preserve and enhance the character of the area.

**Report Disclaimers**

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*The services undertaken by Form Planning and Projects in connection with preparing this report were limited to those specifically detailed in the report and are subject to the scope limitations set out in the report.*

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# Appendix A –

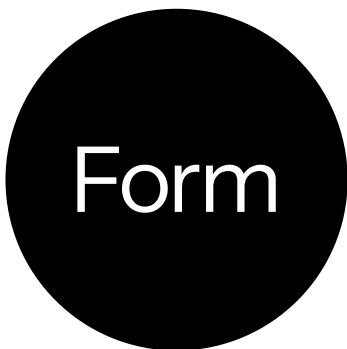
*Westbury Character Study Overview Community Engagement Summary, October 2025*

# Westbury Character Study Overview

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Prepared for Meander Valley Council

Prepared By:



planning  
+ projects

# 1. Overview

The Meander Valley Council (the Council) has engaged Form Planning and Projects to prepare a character study for the township of Westbury with a focus on the historic town centre. This will be known as the *Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* (Character Study).

As a precursor to this study Form Planning and Projects prepared a preliminary overview which was workshopped with the Council and was exhibited to the public and key stakeholders for consultation in September 2025. The preliminary overview is available on Council's Website.

The intention of the stakeholder and community engagement was to test the descriptions provided in the preliminary overview report and seek feedback on matters such as the extent of the precinct and better understand the community values and interest in the historic character of Westbury.

The consultation attracted strong interest from the community, mainly Westbury residents, with 71 people participating in the survey. This provided considerable feedback which will be used to develop the Character Study.

## 1.1. The key themes and findings from the consultation were:

### **Town Centre Boundary**

- Mixed agreement. While some supported the proposed boundary, many respondents recommended expanding the area to include Mary Ann Street (Toe Rag Lane), the Town Common, and additional heritage properties along Meander Valley Road and side streets adjacent to the historic town business area.
- A few suggested excluding areas that have lost historic integrity due to modern development.

### **Character and Values**

- The historic centre is regarded as charming and distinctive, with strong colonial and Georgian/Victorian influences defined by heritage buildings, the Village Green, mature trees, hedgerows, and traditional streetscapes.

### **Community Priorities**

- Preservation of character: Protect historic buildings, mature trees, and hedges; limit inappropriate infill and subdivision.
- Enhancement of aesthetics: Improve signage, walking maps, and interpretation boards; replace modern infrastructure with heritage-appropriate designs.
- Activation and tourism: Encourage small businesses, cafés, and cultural activities; develop heritage walking tours and themed street furniture.

### **Concerns**

- Loss of character through development: Strong opposition to high-density housing and unsympathetic design.
- Vacant and neglected buildings. The community call for revitalisation of William Street and reuse of the old IGA site and other former businesses.
- Infrastructure and safety. The Community seek better pedestrian facilities and traffic calming near the Village Green.

## 2. Preliminary Overview Character Study (Brief Summary)

The project commenced with an analysis of the township character with a focus on historic centre around the Village Green and business area. This stems from a petition to the Council in May 2023 that requested the following:

*'that Meander Valley Council properly protect the unique amenity and history of the Village Green by declaring the Village Green and all properties directly surrounding it as a Heritage Precinct with appropriate heritage controls within the Meander Valley Planning Scheme. We further request that in the interim an immediate moratorium be placed over the proposed precinct on any development which may affect the heritage values of this precinct.'*

### The key findings of the Preliminary Overview were:

- **Defining the Historic Town Centre:** The area around William Street, King Street, Lonsdale Promenade, and the Village Green exhibits a consistent colonial heritage character, with 25 heritage-listed places and intact Georgian and Victorian-era architecture.
- **Distinct Sense of Place:** Streetscapes, significant trees, historic churches, public buildings, and the Village Green contribute to a strong identity and cultural continuity, including long-standing traditions such as the St Patrick's Festival.
- **Risks to Character:** Vacant lots and zoning provisions allow for infill and subdivision without specific design standards, posing a risk of gradual character erosion. Larger parcels near the Village Green and Town Common could enable higher-density development if not managed sensitively.
- **Precinct Diversity:** The broader township comprises multiple precincts with varied character. However, only the historic town centre area warrants a unified approach to heritage and design controls.



*Figure 1 Westbury historic town centre character area recommendation (Source: Form Planning and Projects)*

The Preliminary Overview did not include a list of recommendations other than a proposed historic town centre area shown in Figure 1. This was open to discussion and feedback from the community. The report did however highlight means to preserving identity and character through design guidelines and the Planning Scheme. A suggested additional character study area was also provided in the report as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Adjoining areas that contribute to the historic town centre setting (Source: Meander Valley Council)

### 3. Consultation Methodology

The Council organised the consultation with input from Form Planning and Projects. The consultation involved the following:

- A **Community Forum** conducted by Council Officers was held on the 23 September 2025 at the Westbury Function Centre. The forum was attended by approximately 50 members of the community. As part of the Forum, the community were presented with the findings of the Preliminary Overview and were able to ask questions about the project and provide feedback on the character study.
- A **Survey** was provided online and at the Council Chambers for members of the community to provide answers to specific question on the character study and character of Westbury. This attracted the 71 written responses discussed in this report.
- Members of the community were able to contact Council Officers to discuss the project via phone, in person or email.
- A **Letter** was provided to all Westbury residents advising of the project and inviting residents to participate in the survey and information session.

Form Planning and Projects also spoke directly with the Westbury Historical Society as part of the Preliminary Overview.

The consultation ran between the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 and the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

A copy of the Preliminary Overview together with a detailed project description and link to the survey was provided on Council's Website.

## 4. Consultation Feedback Summary

The following section of the report describes and addresses the detailed feedback received through the survey which included detailed written responses. The total participants in the survey was 71 people.

### 4.1. Age distribution

Most of the respondents were in the age group 50-64 as shown below in Table 1.

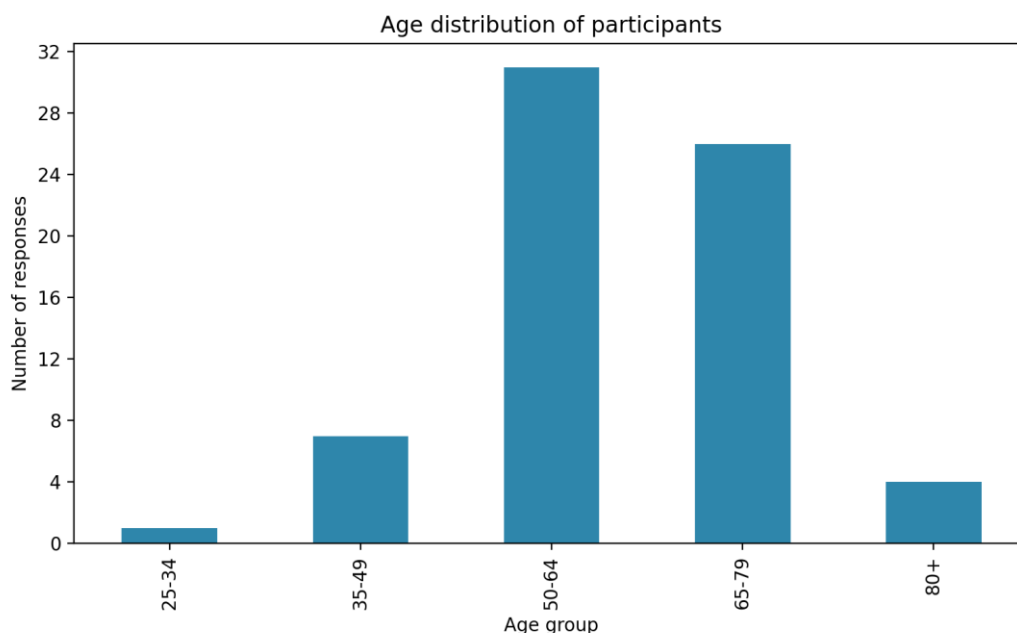


Table 1 Age distribution of survey participants (Source: Meander Valley Council)

## 5. Response to Survey Questions (Yes or No)

Participants in the survey were asked a series of questions that required a Yes or No answer. These are shown below in Table 1.

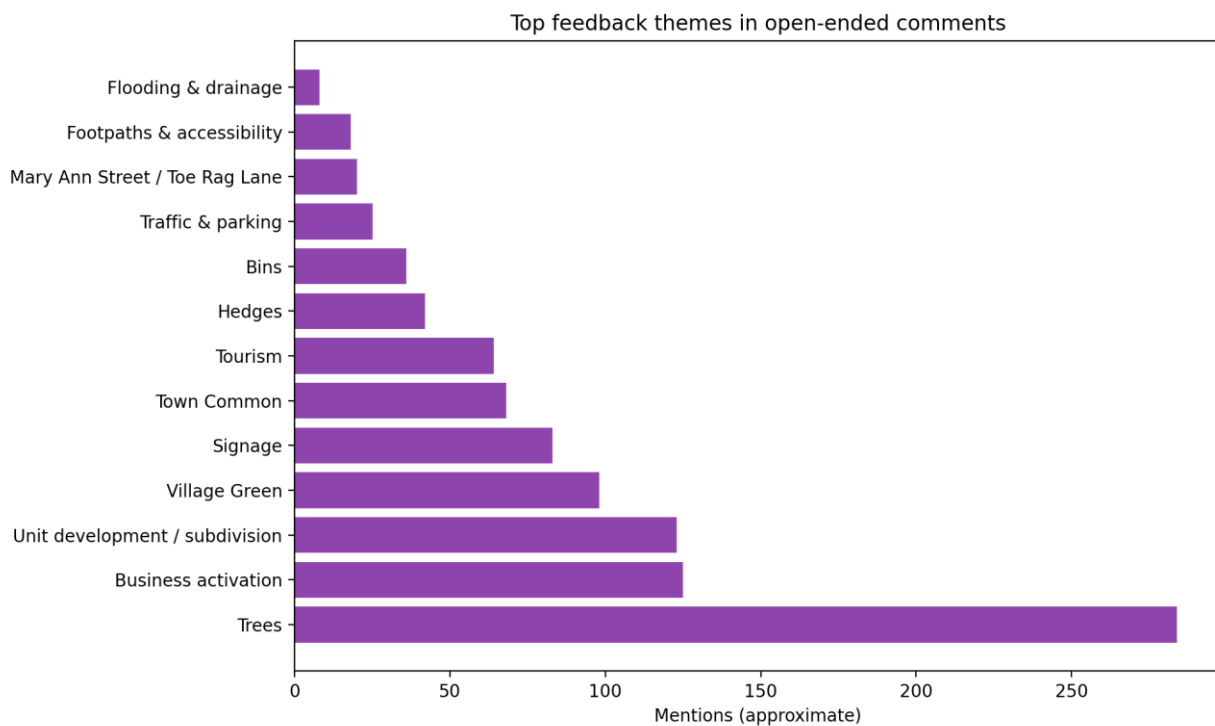
Survey Statement	Yes	No
<i>The retention and enhancement of the Westbury historic town centre is important. The features, places, layout, buildings, landscaping have been created by the people that live and have lived in the area. New development should respect the character of the township and help to preserve the towns unique character.</i>	70	1
<i>Land around the Village Green should be prioritised for residential infill</i>	6	65
<i>Land within the Historic Town Centre, other than around the Village Green, should be prioritised for further development</i>	19	52

<i>Streets should be designed to respect the historic character of the township.</i>	69	2
<i>Trees that contribute to the character of the township should be protected.</i>	68	3
<i>Landscaping that contributes to the character of the township, such as the hedges surrounding the Village Green, should be protected.</i>	69	2
<i>Demolition of buildings that contribute to the character of the town centre should be limited.</i>	71	0

Table 2 Response to Yes or No Questions (Source: Meander Valley Council)

## 6. Key Feedback

The Graph 2 below provides a summary of the key themes from the descriptions provided in the community feedback. Overwhelmingly, most residents were concerned with tree preservation in the township and mentioned this over 250 times.



Graph 1 Key themes from the feedback (Source: Meander Valley Council)

## 6.1. Feedback summary

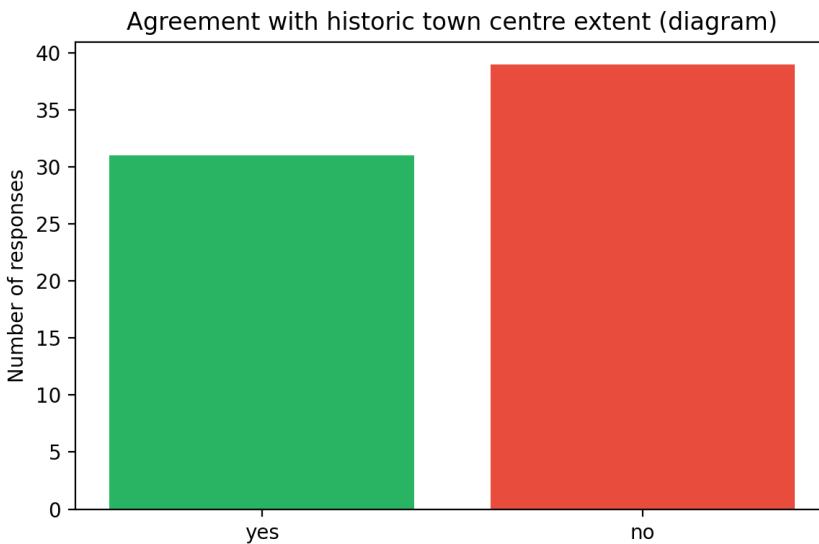
### 6.1.1. “Do you agree with the extent of the historic town centre as shown in the diagram?”

The diagram shown in Figure 1 of this report was provided to the community for discussion as part of the survey. Most people requested that the boundary be extended further to include the Town Commons, parts of Meander Valley Road, Lonsdale Promenade, the cottages (including the former barracks) in Mary Ann Street and south of William Street and Dexter Street.

#### The Results:

- **No:** 38 responses (55%)
- **Yes:** 30 responses (43%)
- **Not answered:** 1 response (1%)

The Graph 2 below shows the split between those that accepted the Figure 1 extent of the boundary and those that put forward suggested alterations to the boundary.



Graph 2 Split between those that wanted an extended heritage character area (Source: Meander Valley Council)

#### Top reasons/additions suggested (from those who answered ‘No’):

Respondents most frequently proposed including the following places within the historic town centre or study area:

- Town Common (15 mentions) and Mary Ann Street / Toe Rag Lane, including Dexter’s Cottage and the Military Barracks (13; 8 specifically name Dexter/Barracks).
- Meander Valley Road corridor and key heritage properties (e.g., Fitzpatrick’s Inn, Pearn’s Steam World, The Willows) (combined 11 mentions).

- Elements around William Street, Lyall Street, King Street, churches, and the Rectory/Shadforth Street (smaller but recurring mentions).
- A smaller number of respondents argued for excluding recently subdivided land lacking historic features (e.g., land adjacent to the White House), noting loss of mature trees.

### 6.1.2. “How would you describe the character of the Westbury historic town centre?”

#### Summary of descriptors:

Respondents most often described Westbury as an historic/colonial ‘village’ centred on the Village Green, with heritage buildings, mature trees, gardens, and a calm, community feel—“quaint”, “beautiful”, “unique”, “walkable”, “green”, and “peaceful” were common. Several noted tired/run-down pockets and a loss of cohesive character where modern infill has occurred.

*(Word frequency highlights from the “character” question include: “historic”, “village”, “green”, “trees”, “beautiful”, “community”, “unique”, “colonial”.)*

### 6.1.3. “What do you like about the Westbury historic town centre?”

#### Top likes:

- Village Green and its mature trees, hedges, and open space.
- Historic streetscapes and buildings (William/King/Lyall/Lonsdale), architecture, gardens, and the ‘old world’ feel.
- Community vibe and events (e.g., markets, food vans, Irish festival, RSL activity).

### 6.1.4. “What do you think could be improved in the Westbury historic town centre?”

#### Recurring improvement themes:

- Interpretive signage and wayfinding: update/reinstate the historic building signs and walking maps (many cited faded or missing plaques; desire for QR-linked stories).
- William Street activation and business mix: address vacant/boarded shops and the old IGA site; encourage cafés, galleries, small retail, longer opening hours, and “quirky” offerings to create a vibrant hub that fits the historic setting.
- Street furniture and utilities sympathetic to heritage: concern about stainless steel bins and exposed pump cages; calls to screen or redesign elements in a period-appropriate manner. [1](#)
- Green infrastructure: plant more street trees, protect hedges, improve landscaping, and maintain large, older trees with appropriate arboriculture and care.
- Access and amenity: improve footpaths, seating, lighting, and parking; ensure accessibility; address traffic speeds around the Green.
- Environmental concerns: stormwater/flooding near the Town Common, noise (engine brakes) on Meander Valley Road, and odours (sewerage) impacting amenity—respondents seek council advocacy and mitigation.

### 6.1.5. “What is your vision for the future of the Westbury historic town centre?”

#### Core vision elements:

- Protect and deepen heritage character: maintain the Village Green, streetscapes, and historic buildings; avoid faux or mimic heritage and ensuring sympathetic upgrades.
- Sensitive development and controls: strong opposition to high-density unit infill within/around the Green; calls for heritage precinct guidelines (setbacks, height, fencing, hedges, materials) so new buildings complement the town's character.
- Livelier, year-round centre: more small businesses, cafés and eateries, arts/crafts spaces, interpretive trails, and regular events—creating a vibrant yet historic destination for locals and visitors.
- Green and accessible: continuous footpaths, safe walking/cycling routes, and well-kept presentation (renewed signs, markings).

## 7. Recommendations and Actions

The responses provided by the community were detailed and show a high interest in preserving the character of the historic town centre area. The majority of participants in the consultation suggested an extension to the study area and future design guidelines to encourage and preserve the character and identity of this part of the township.

Some had called for the inclusion of the land around Pearn's Steam world and Fitzpatrick's Inn. This is not recommended as part of the historic town centre. As much of the land, streetscape, built form between the historic town centre area and this part of the township differs and does not maintain a clear and particular identity.

The following recommendations are made in regard to the preparation of the *Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* based on the consultation:

- A. Maintain the description *Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study*. This particular description is useful in communications with the public and stakeholders and also in future branding and design guidelines for this part of the township. The description helps to give this area its unique identity and is based on current descriptions already applied to the area by the Council and the community.
- B. Provide a detailed summary of the community consultation in the *Study* describing the recommended inclusions for the extended study area.
- C. Refine the character study area and boundaries of the historic town centre as shown below in Figure 3 (noting most of this area was identified as possible inclusions in the Preliminary Overview Report). The extended study area includes corner lots, and lots fronting streets to maintain key view lines and enhance the overall strength of the town centre area. Council will note the inclusion of the William Street and Meander Valley Road intersection in the study area. This is to include the heritage listed pub and to encourage a streetscape and style of development that acknowledges and welcome visitors to the historic town centre. This may also help in linking the older town centre to the busier Meander Valley Road. This will be discussed in the Character Study.



Figure 3 Recommended Extended Historic Town Centre and Character Area (Source: thelist Mapping Services)

- D. Prepare the following as part of the *Draft Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* in consultation with Council Officers and Council:
  - a. Build upon the Westbury Streetscape Renewal Master Plan Concept, prepared by Playstreet and the Meander Valley Council, April 2024 to include the area shown in Figure 3 and investigate further streetscape upgrades that recognise and enhance the unique character of the historic area.
  - b. Prepare design guidelines in the form of written descriptions to determine suitable layout, setbacks and for new dwelling and multiple dwellings.
  - c. Prepare guidelines for fencing of residential properties to encourage a consistent style and enhance the historic character of the town centre.
  - d. Prepare guidelines or written descriptions to encourage development of buildings that are consistent with the heritage values and character of the town centre area. This would include the bulk, form, size, scale and materials to be similar or sympathetic to the predominant 19<sup>th</sup> century style of the area.
- E. Design and install additional gateway/entrances to the main entry points of the town centre similar to that already constructed on William Street.
- F. Consider either a Specific Area Plan under the Local Provisions Schedule of the Planning Scheme or a Heritage Precinct Area around the places identified in Figure 3 (the historic town centre) to implement the diagrams and guidelines and prepare specific local area objectives. This would be subject to further studies and public and stakeholder consultation.
- G. Consider identifying significant trees in the entire township (for beyond the character study area) and preparing a Significant Trees Register for inclusion in the Local Provisions Schedule under the MEA-Table C6.5 Significant Trees. The town centre area should be the priority in this study.
- H. The *Draft Westbury Historic Town Centre Character Study* is to be exhibited for public consultation.

## **8. Conclusion**

This feedback clearly shows the community's desire for a vibrant historic town centre. The community seek that the adjoining areas such as the Town Common, the barracks and cottage on Mary Anne Street and side streets are included in the character study and that Council works towards preparing further guidelines for preserving and enhancing the historic identity of this part of the town.