

ASHBURTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Tuesday, 13 August 2024

URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT FOR A PROPOSED DENTAL ORTHODONTIC AND MEDICAL FACILITY

2 HARRISON STREET, ALLENTON, ASHBURTON (LOT 2 DP 4420 CT 417-163)

Dear Lauren,

The following report is an Urban Design Assessment (UDA) of the architectural drawings prepared for a proposed dental orthodontic and medical facility at the above address. The review is based on the following documents:

- Architectural Drawings prepared by +MAP Architects Ltd dated 23 November 2023
- Assessment of Environmental Effects prepared by David Harford Consulting Ltd dated 10 May 2024

THE PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to expand their existing Ashburton dental facility, "The Big Grin Orthodontist," into a larger medical facility. This new facility will continue to offer specialist orthodontic treatment and general dental care while incorporating space for up to four additional medical or health-related professionals. These professionals will share reception and administration facilities within the same building.

The existing building will be modified according to the proposed site layout plan (Annexure C) to accommodate this expansion, including landscaping and on-site parking. The total gross floor area will increase by approximately 75m², bringing it to 304.7m². The facility will include a reception and waiting area, a staff room with a kitchenette, separate toilet facilities for patients and staff, five orthodontic rooms, and a sterilisation room.

The proposed centre is strategically located for both dental and medical professionals. The location is ideal due to its proximity to Ashburton College and nearby primary schools, making it convenient for school-aged children and their families.

The site will feature eleven on-site parking spaces, including one accessible space. Nine spaces will be accessed via Belt Road and will comply with necessary car park dimensions and aisle widths. Staff-only parking will be accessed from Harrison Street to minimise regular movements and enhance safety. Pedestrian access will remain via Harrison Street.

Existing signage will be retained, with additional non-illuminated signage proposed as per the elevation plans in Annexure C. Planting will be managed to ensure visibility for neighbouring vehicles joining Belt Road. A trellis fence, at least 2m in height, will be maintained along the boundary shared with Number 5 Belt Road.

A pre-application meeting with Ashburton District Council highlighted key construction details:

- The architects have extended the existing building's character where feasible.
- A contemporary extension will connect to the existing building using a 'link' to avoid waterproofing issues.
- A courtyard was included to enhance landscaped space and align the extension's scale and density with the surrounding context.
- White timber cladding will be used to match the surrounding buildings.'

URBAN DESIGN, APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ASSESSMENT MATTERS

The proposal is situated within the Residential C Zone under the Ashburton District Plan (statutory) and is subject to the relevant objectives and policies outlined in this plan. The provisions and rules relating to residential zoning are contained in Chapter 4 – Residential Zones of the Ashburton District Plan. For a full assessment of the District Plan rules please see the AEE.

The proposal has also been assessed against the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (non-statutory), which outlines effective urban environments based on seven key principles: Context, Choice, Connections, Creativity, Custodianship, and Collaboration.

The proposal is on 2 Harrison Street (LOT 3 DP 4420 CT 417-163), Allenton, Ashburton, and is 0.1Ha in area. To determine the potential urban design effects resulting from this application, the following urban design assessment criteria have been analysed:

- Site and Context
- Connectivity, access and carparking
- Relationship with the street
- Building form and articulation
- Building Orientation
- Landscaping and service areas



Figure 1. Aerial View of the receiving environment (From Canterbury Maps) showing the existing built form.

SITE AND CONTEXT

The proposal site is located in central Ashburton at the intersection of Harrison Street and Belt Road, both classified as Primary Collector Roads. This strategic location sees these roads converging at a roundabout with Oak Grove,

a Secondary Collector Road, and Walnut Avenue, an Arterial Road. Oak Grove provides direct access to New Zealand State Highway 77 (SH77), approximately 850 meters from the site, while Walnut Avenue connects to New Zealand State Highway 1 (SH1), about 980 meters away. Due to its proximity to these major roads, the site experiences a consistently high volume of vehicular traffic, making it highly accessible and visible.

The area around the site integrates residential and non-residential surroundings, featuring community facilities such as Grace Vineyard Church, Ashburton College, Ashburton Domain, Ashburton Trust Tennis Centre, and Ashburton Hospital, all within 200 meters. The combination of high traffic and these key amenities creates a vibrant environment that supports both residential and community activities. The site's prominent location at a roundabout further enhances its accessibility and visibility, making it well-suited for a development that serves community needs while maintaining the area's established character.

The orthodontic services proposed target school children and young adults, with the following nearby schools within walking distance:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| • Ashburton College | minute walk | 200m |
| • Allenton Kindergarten | Minute walk | 670m |
| • Allenton School | minute walk | 750m |
| • Ashburton Intermediate School | Minute walk | 1320m |

This proximity ensures the facility is conveniently located for the local school community, reinforcing its role as a valuable addition to the area. Surrounding residential dwellings exhibit a diverse but cohesive architectural style. Typical materials include brick and weatherboard cladding, with roof types predominantly hipped or gabled. The area does not adhere to a single dominant architectural style, but there is a general consistency in the use of traditional materials and residential scale. The existing street frontage reflects a suburban context with varied setbacks, different heights and materials for fencing, and an eclectic mix of planting. Many homes have limited interaction with the street, featuring low fences and dense landscaping that provide privacy and reduce visual engagement with the road.

The proposed architectural design is similar to the scale and materials typical of nearby residences, using horizontal timber cladding and other traditional elements to ensure consistency with the surrounding neighbourhood aesthetic. The design integrates modern features while respecting the established residential character. Landscaping will be used to mitigate visual impacts and enhance the street frontage, aligning with the eclectic and landscaped nature of the area.

The existing building will be modified according to the proposed site layout plan (Annexure C) to accommodate the expansion, including landscaping and on-site parking. The total gross floor area will increase by approximately 75m², reaching a new total of 304.7m². This increase in site coverage to 29.9% remains within the maximum permitted coverage for the Residential C zone and is consistent with surrounding dwellings.

The proposal adheres to requirements for building coverage (29.9% of the 1022m² site, below the 35% limit), building height (within the 6-meter limit), recession lines, setbacks from neighbours, exterior lighting (directed away and below 3 lux spill), operational hours, accessible parking (one space provided), parking space dimensions, cycle parking (one space provided), all-weather surfaces for parking and loading areas, sight distances from vehicle crossings, tree planting (low-height trees and hedging), and general sign standards (height, setback, and illumination).

However, the proposal does not fully comply with certain regulatory requirements, including setbacks from streets, on-site manoeuvring, vehicle crossing distances, and illumination of signs. Despite these minor non-compliance issues, the location at a high-traffic roundabout enhances visibility and accessibility. The development addresses a critical shortage of dental services, integrates well with the area's residential character, and optimises space within the site's constraints. These benefits outweigh the minor non-compliance issues, making the proposal a positive addition to the urban environment.

CONNECTIVITY, ACCESS AND CARPARKING

The site's location at the intersection of Harrison Street and Belt Road, classified as Primary Collector Roads, along with its proximity to Oak Grove (a Secondary Collector Road) and Walnut Avenue (an Arterial Road), provides excellent connectivity to local and regional transport networks. This high-traffic roundabout facilitates smooth traffic flow and offers multiple entry and exit points, enhancing accessibility. Its connection to major roads such as New Zealand State Highway 77 (SH77) and State Highway 1 (SH1) further ensures broad regional connectivity, making the site easily accessible for both local and regional users.

Access to the site is efficiently managed through a primary entry from Belt Road and a secondary entrance from Harrison Street. This configuration reduces potential congestion and supports effective traffic management, ensuring convenient vehicle and pedestrian navigation. The design promotes smooth traffic flow and integrates seamlessly with the surrounding road network.

The development includes a well-considered car parking arrangement with a total of eleven spaces—nine accessible from Belt Road and two from Harrison Street. This off-street parking provision helps to alleviate on-street congestion and integrates well with the existing infrastructure. The parking area is designed to ensure safety and clear visibility, with dedicated spaces for vehicles and bicycles. The minimal expansion of the parking area addresses the need for additional spaces while maintaining environmental considerations.

The site's location and parking strategy foster diversity and provide choices in terms of accessibility and transport options. By expanding the current facility to accommodate additional medical and health professionals, the development will offer a broader range of essential services, improving access to health care for the community. This expansion not only enhances service availability but also creates additional job opportunities, benefiting the local Ashburton community.

The site's strong connections to high-traffic roads and nearby community facilities support its functionality and contribute to a vibrant neighbourhood dynamic. The location promotes easy navigation, reduces travel times, and integrates effectively with the existing road network, contributing to reduced environmental impact and ensuring that the site remains accessible and functional for all users.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STREET

The proposed "The Big Grin Orthodontist" development at the corner of Harrison Street and Belt Road in Ashburton integrates seamlessly with its residential surroundings while providing essential community services. The expansion aligns with the residential character by using materials and architectural styles consistent with neighbouring homes, minimising visual impact. Landscaping will further soften the building's appearance and integrate it into the residential environment. Despite expanding the building's footprint, the design remains proportionate to surrounding structures, preserving the neighbourhood's aesthetic.

The site's strategic location at a busy roundabout enhances accessibility and visibility, creating an active-positive relationship with the street. It is well-positioned near key community facilities like Ashburton College and primary schools, making it ideally suited for providing dental services to school-aged children. The layout includes a primary entrance from Belt Road and a secondary entrance from Harrison Street, with ample off-street parking to reduce congestion. The parking design includes nine spaces from Belt Road and two from Harrison Street, supporting efficient use and connectivity.

The development improves legibility and visibility from the public realm, enhancing its presence and accessibility. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles are incorporated to ensure safety. The design maintains clear sightlines, uses low planting to enhance visibility, and includes adequate lighting to foster a secure environment. This approach supports both functionality and safety, making the development a valuable addition to the community. Overall, the proposal effectively balances new design elements with the existing residential character, providing essential services while enhancing the local streetscape and community safety.

BUILDING FORM AND ARTICULATION

There is an appropriate level of modulation and material changes for a development of this scale and character. The design features a contemporary extension that integrates seamlessly with the existing building, utilizing timber cladding to ensure visual cohesion with neighbouring properties. The roof forms are simple and proportionate, contributing to a balanced and unobtrusive profile. This approach effectively avoids large, blank facades and adds visual interest, with the building's articulation and material variation providing a clear sense of identity for each section.

Strategically placed windows offer views from key areas, such as the reception and staff room, over the street, which is beneficial in a high-activity zone. This design fosters interaction with the public realm and enhances the building's presence in its surroundings. The proposal includes sufficient material and colour variation to maintain human scale and visual appeal, while the building's orientation maximizes access to sunlight, supporting both aesthetic and functional aspects.

The proposal complies with several building-related regulations. The site coverage increases to 29.9%, which is within the 35% maximum limit for the Residential C zone. The building height remains under the 6-meter limit, and the design adheres to required recession planes and setbacks from neighbouring properties. Additionally, the exterior lighting complies with standards, being directed away and below 3 lux spills.

However, the proposal does not fully comply with certain regulatory requirements, such as setbacks from streets and signage illumination standards. Despite these minor non-compliance issues, the proposal integrates well with the residential character of the area and effectively utilizes the available space. Overall, the building form and articulation are thoughtfully designed to complement the existing residential context while introducing modern elements that enhance the development's visual interest and functionality.

BUILDING ORIENTATION

The proposed development includes windows on the north, east, and west sides, ensuring ample natural light and visibility throughout the day. The planned alterations will add south-facing windows, further enhancing light intake and overall functionality. These are all considered positive attributes.

Should the dwelling revert to residential use in the future, the proposed alterations will allow for an outdoor living area oriented towards the north, east, and west, providing optimal access to sunlight. This orientation supports a desirable living environment with ample daylight exposure.

LANDSCAPING

The proposed development incorporates landscaping that enhances the facility's visual aesthetics and functionality. Low-height planting and a trellis fence are used to complement the expanded building while maintaining a cohesive appearance with the residential context. The plans also highlight fence locations with a view to creating an open street character with a high level of passive surveillance provided.

From a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) perspective, the landscaping is strategically planned to enhance safety and security. By using low-height planting, the design ensures clear sightlines around the building, facilitating natural surveillance and reducing potential hiding spots. The open and well-lit landscaping contributes to a safer environment, supporting passive surveillance and deterring crime. These design elements help create a secure, aesthetically pleasing environment while integrating well with the surrounding area.

SECTION 4: RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Objective 4.1: Residential Amenity Values and Character

To protect and enhance the amenity values and character of residential areas, recognising the potential for some growth, whilst considering the particular characteristics of each residential area, the need to provide for a diversity of residential lifestyles, and making provision for non-residential services and activities that meet community needs.

Response – The design of the proposed "The Big Grin Orthodontist," development, considers the residential amenity values and character of the area, while providing essential services to the community. The design and choice of materials are similar to those used in existing dwellings, ensuring a cohesive appearance with the surrounding properties. While the building's footprint will expand, this extension is scaled to be proportionate with surrounding structures, aiming to minimise any visual bulk, adverse effects and preserve the residential character.

Located at a prominent roundabout with high traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, and near key community facilities like the Ashburton Hospital, Ashburton College, and local primary schools, the development addresses a critical community need for accessible dental services for school-aged children and their families. This location provides access to essential services and the overall functionality and convenience of the area.

The development maintains the residential character by retaining much of the existing structure and design. This approach not only supports the growing population of Ashburton but also helps in retaining the local character and aesthetic qualities of the residential area. Moreover, the development will create small-scale employment opportunities and meet community needs. To address potential visual impacts from the building expansion and increased vehicle activity in the internal car park, landscaping will be implemented. These measures will soften the building's appearance and integrate the development into the residential setting, preserving the area's visual amenities.

The site faces a fencing structure approximately 1.8 meters high and established vegetation from adjacent properties on both sides. Notably, the opposite properties do not have open views of the roundabout or the proposal site, which helps to mitigate potential visual impacts. This setting further supports the proposal's appropriateness, as it integrates well with the existing environment while ensuring minimal disruption to the surrounding visual amenities.

Overall, the proposal aligns with the objective of protecting and enhancing residential amenity values, balancing new design elements with the existing character of the area, and contributing positively to the local context.

Objective 4.2: Residential Growth

To provide areas of growth and expansion of different forms of residential development, in a range of areas around the district that meet the needs of the community and promote the efficient use of energy and services, whilst also protecting the productive potential of the rural area.

Response – The proposal introduces a new medical facility that will include specialised orthodontic and general dental care, addressing the needs of Ashburton's growing population. While this development will replace one existing housing unit, it makes efficient use of the existing dwelling by repurposing it to deliver essential services. This approach not only fosters residential growth but also ensures the efficient use of resources and services. Additionally, it helps preserve the productive potential of rural areas by steering development away from these zones.

Objective 4.3: Natural Hazards

To avoid or mitigate potential effects of natural hazards on residential areas and development.

Response – There are no hazards that have been identified within the site or the surrounding area.

NEW ZEALAND URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOL (NON-STATUTORY)

- **Context:** Effective urban design integrates buildings, spaces, and activities within their broader urban context, optimising their spatial relationships and enhancing accessibility and visibility. The proposal integrates with its residential surroundings, offers essential services, and maintains consistency with local design elements.
- **Character:** Urban design should reflect and enhance the unique character of a place, adapting to its evolving nature. The proposal complements Ashburton's character by blending modern and traditional design elements and improving the streetscape while preserving residential characteristics.
- **Choice:** Good urban design provides diverse options in form, density, and use, fostering adaptability and resilience. The proposal improves access to health services, expands beyond current facility limits, and maximises the site's potential, offering a broader range of essential services.
- **Connections:** Effective urban design enhances connectivity and accessibility, supporting social cohesion and reducing travel times. The site's strategic location and design facilitate easy navigation and access, with well-integrated parking and pedestrian paths to support its function.
- **Creativity:** The proposal uses high-quality materials, varied design elements, and landscaping to enhance both functionality and aesthetic appeal, contributing positively to the urban environment.
- **Custodianship:** Sustainable urban design minimises environmental impact and maintains quality for future generations. The proposal repurposes an existing building, incorporates sustainable practices, and enhances the local environment through thoughtful landscaping and design.

- **Collaboration:** Successful urban design requires coordinated efforts and communication among all stakeholders. The project benefits from interdisciplinary collaboration, ensuring a well-rounded approach to design and functionality.

CONCLUSIONS

Having reviewed the architectural drawings prepared by +MAP Architects Ltd and the Assessment of Environmental Effects prepared by David Harford Consulting Ltd for the proposed expansion of "The Big Grin Orthodontist" into a larger medical facility at 2 Harrison Street, Ashburton, I find that the proposal is well-supported from an urban design perspective. The development aligns with both statutory and non-statutory guidelines and presents no adverse effects on the urban design values or character of the area. I can support the proposal for the following reasons:

- The site is ideally located to serve local medical and dental needs, being in close proximity to both residential areas and schools, which enhances accessibility and convenience for the community.
- The design maintains residential cohesion by integrating modern alterations that complement existing structures, while the extension optimally utilises space to accommodate additional medical professionals and preserve the residential character of the area.
- The proposed landscaping and architectural design elements minimise visual bulk and integrate the facility into its residential setting.
- The development aligns with the Ashburton District Plan and New Zealand Urban Design Protocol principles, supporting residential growth and enhancing local services.

In summary, the proposal meets urban design principles and statutory requirements, contributing positively to the local community while preserving the residential character of the receiving environment. I recommend no further changes. I consider this commercial development appropriate to the site and its residential context.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Angelu Suerte Felipe

Graduate Landscape Architect and Urban Planner

Reviewed by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Kirton', written over a horizontal line.

Nadine Kirton

Senior Landscape Architect

DCM Urban Design Limited