

**CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT PLAN**  
**SHELLEY/FORBES STREETS**  
**RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE AREA RECORD FORM**

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**Location**



The Shelley/Forbes Streets Residential Heritage Area (RHA) encompasses properties in Shelley Street (excluding # 16), the northern section of Forbes Street (excluding 17B) and part of the north side of Beaumont Street.

**Summary of Current Heritage Protection and Recognition**

Houses at 5 and 6 Shelley Street are scheduled heritage items in the Christchurch District Plan (HID 495 & 496) and listed as historic places by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Toanga (list nos. 3701 & 3702).

There are no significant trees scheduled on the district plan located within the Residential Heritage Area.

**Christchurch District Plan Zoning**

The properties within the RHA are zoned Residential Medium Density.

**Summary of Heritage Values:**

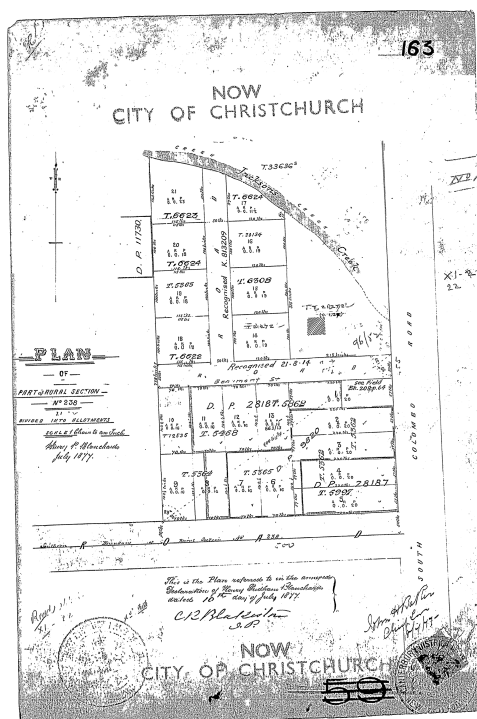
This Residential Heritage Area is comprised of 36 residential properties that provide a snapshot of working-class residential development within the suburb of Sydenham in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The area embodies historic, architectural and contextual values relating to its historic demographic profile, cottage and villa typologies and styles, and its city-fringe location.

The area is located to the south of the inner city and north of the Ōpāwaho-Heathcote River, which was 'part of the interconnected network of ara tawhito (traditional travel routes) that crossed the once-widespread wetland system of greater Christchurch.'<sup>1</sup> Directly south of the area, at the base of the Cashmere Hills, is Te Iringa-o-Kahukura, the site of a sacred figure that would be uplifted by tohunga for karakia.

Two subdivisions of parts of Rural Section 238 in 1877 and 1881 created 44 small-scale residential properties within the block bounded by Jacksons Creek, Colombo and Devon Streets and Bradford Park. The 1877 development by Henry Pridham Blanchard (1829-85), a draughtsman, created Shelley and Beaumont Streets, while the 1881 subdivision of Anderson's Paddock created sites with frontages to Devon Road, Forbes, Beaumont, Shelley and Bent Streets. Advertising for the later subdivision was pitched at 'mechanics and artisans, who may obtain a Suburban Freehold at a Small Outlay' in close proximity to the tramway terminus in Colombo Street.<sup>2</sup> The historic development of modest housing for manual workers in Sydenham, 'Christchurch's working-class suburb par excellence' according to historian John Wilson, is embodied in this heritage area.<sup>3</sup>

The dwellings within the area are predominantly single-family homes. They address the street, typically occupy narrow rectangular (Forbes) or square (Shelley) lots and represent the development of owner/occupier and rental housing for labourers and those involved in the trades, railways and local manufacturing. A number of households in the area were also headed by women, especially by the 1940s. One townhouse development in Forbes Street dates to the mid-1970s and the only vacant site in the area (7 Beaumont Street) has been largely undeveloped since c.1980.

Although some houses sustained damage from the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes, and four were subsequently demolished, the area retains a good level of integrity and authenticity. The intimate scale and character of Shelley Street is particularly notable; as is the relationship between the built environment and the natural form of Jacksons Creek.



DP 163 showing subdivision of Part Rural Section 238 for Henry Pridham Blanchard in July 1877. QuickMap.

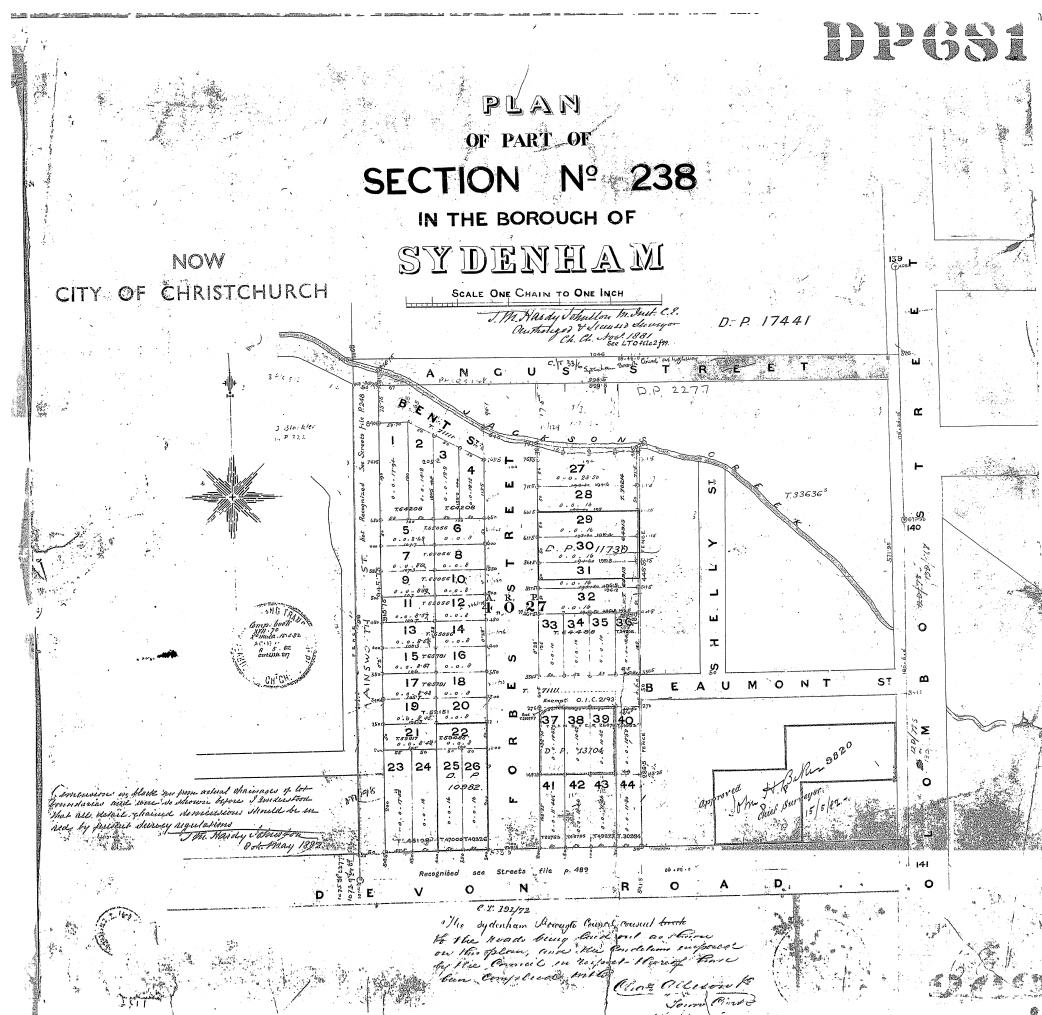
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas>

<sup>2</sup> Press 3 May 1882, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> John Wilson 'Christchurch Contextual Historical Overview' (2013), p. 154.

## History of Subdivision and Development:

The area is located to the north of the Ōpāwaho-Heathcote River. The waterway was 'part of the interconnected network of traditional travel routes that crossed the once-widespread wetland system of greater Christchurch. The river, and its immediate area, was an important kāinga mahinga kai (food-gathering place) where native fish such as tuna (eels), inaka (whitebait), mata (juvenile whitebait), kōkopu (native trout), koukoupāra (giant kōkopu), and kanakana (lampreys) were gathered. Ducks such as pārerā (grey duck), pūtakitaki (paradise duck), raipo (New Zealand scaup), tataa (brown duck), and pāteke (brown teal) were also harvested from the river. Taura, pora ('Māori turnip'), tutu, and aruhe (bracken fernroot) were all gathered from the river banks.<sup>4</sup>



DP 681 showing the subdivision of Part Rural Section 238 in 1881. QuickMap.

Following colonial settlement Rural Section 238 was initially granted to Alfred Creyke; it was in possession of a number of parties by the early 1860s. HP Blanchard and WD Meares undertook the subdivisions that created Shelley, Beaumont and Forbes Streets. Initially the properties on the west side of Forbes Street were to have been bounded to the west by a street (Ainsworth), as can be seen on Deposit Plan 681. Instead, the small lots surveyed on this side of Forbes Street were combined. The land to the west was developed by Christchurch City Council as Bradford Park in 1930; the parkland had formerly been the site of gravel pits associated with Samuel Smart's asphalt business in Milton Street.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas>

**Excellent Cottage  
BUILDING SITES.**

**TO ARTISANS, MECHANICS,  
AND OTHERS.**

**44** CHOICE BUILDING SECTIONS  
IN THE  
BOROUGH OF SYDENHAM,  
BEING  
THE SUBDIVISION  
OF  
ANDERSON'S PADDOCK.

**M**ESSRS H. MATSON & CO. have received instructions from the Freeholder to

SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION,  
AT THE  
LAND AND ESTATE SALE ROOMS,  
Cashel street,  
ON

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29TH, 1881,**  
At Two o'clock,

**44** SECTIONS, situated in the best  
part of Sydenham, having FRONT-  
AGES on

DEVON ROAD  
FORBES STREET  
BEAUMONT STREET  
SHELLY STREET

And  
BENT STREET

The property is close to the Tramway Terminus in Colombo road, connecting it to Christchurch and the Railway Station. The neighborhood is largely populated, and it also has the advantage of being near to the South Christchurch Schools. It also affords peculiar advantages to Mechanics and Artisans, who may obtain a Suburban Freehold at a Small Outlay, and by Tramway transit be carried from the city workshops to the thresholds of their homes in a few minutes.

Sydenham being a borough of considerable importance and constantly progressing, must eventually become the counterpart of the Cathedral City itself, and

**RISEING ENORMOUSLY IN VALUE.**

**TERMS.**

Press 15 October 1881, p. 4. PapersPast.

The early owner/occupiers of the cottages and villas that were built within the area appear to have been the very mechanics and artisans, that is people who worked with their hands, to whom Meare's subdivision was marketed. Charles Harding, a bricklayer, was issued with the first title to 5 Shelley Street in 1877; he sold the cottage to Thomas Ferguson (c.1864-1928), a local farm labourer, in 1901. It is notable that this dwelling was later home (1975-95) to three Christchurch artists: Michael Reed, Julia Morrison and Rena Jarosewitch.

14 Shelley Street was in possession of Thomas Chambers, a bootmaker, between 1878 and 1882. It may have been a rental property before being owned successively by father and son George and Charles Dowding, the latter a local labourer, between c.1890 and 1918. By the mid-1940s the house was rented by Mary Cuncliffe, whose husband Albert had died in 1942. A 'good tenant' was in residence when 6 Shelley Street was offered for sale by Peter Grenfell's estate in 1903.



Although it was subdivided before Shelley Street, it would appear that Forbes Street was not built on until after 1900. Title was issued for the two lots comprising 11 Forbes Street to James Allison, a Sydenham carpenter, in September 1900. Allison sold the property to JCE Yates, also a builder, in 1916. Widows Emily Glen and Elsie Champion then owned the house between 1957 and 1973.

Pastrycook Hugh McClelland the younger acquired the four lots comprising 29 Forbes Street in 1904; his father, who was a carpenter, was in residence by 1910. McClelland junior held the property until 1920, when it was transferred to Arthur Robertson. Alfred Smith, a furniture polisher, acquired several plots at the north end of Forbes Street (east side) in 1906; it appears he lived in the house at 28 Forbes Street. After Smith died the lots were sold individually; Samuel Harrison, a [boot?] clicker, acquired 24 Forbes Street in May 1920, although he had been in residence since c.1901.

Meanwhile, a tramline between Sydenham and Papanui had opened in 1880 and in 1903 the borough of Sydenham (est. 1877) was amalgamated with Christchurch, Linwood and St Albans. The suburb retained its industrial and working-class identity through the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the only major development to occur in the RHA before the Canterbury earthquakes was the removal of a square-plan villa at 13 Forbes Street and the construction of nine flats, including one two-storey maisonette, in its place. The flats were designed by architect John Phillips and engineer Paul Kaye in 1973 and represent a later 20<sup>th</sup> century approach to intensification and increasing rental housing supply.

Damage caused by the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquake resulted in a handful of houses being demolished in the area. The cottage at 5 Shelley Street is still awaiting conservation and duplex townhouses at 1 and 3 Shelley Street were erected in 2012 in place of a square-plan villa.



5 Shelley Street after seismic strengthening and conservation. T Ussher, CCC Heritage Files, 14 July 2021.

## Historic names and uses

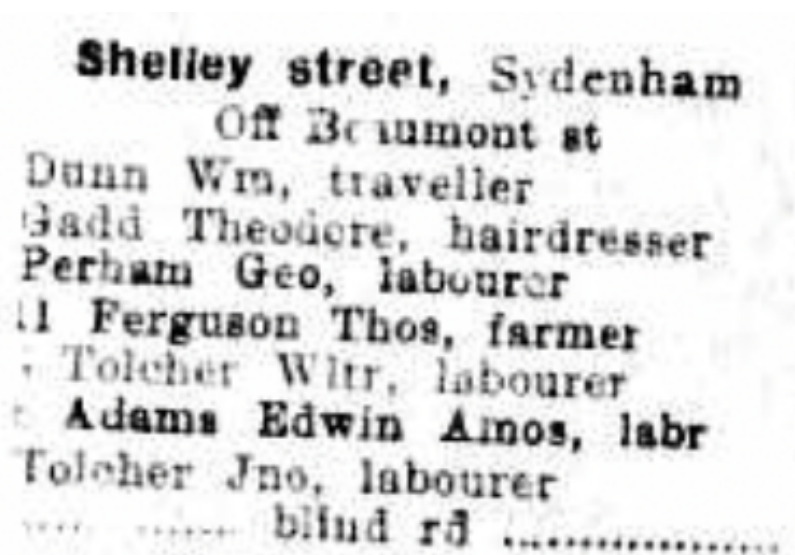
Forbes Street was likely named for British naturalist Edward Forbes (1815-54) (CCL Street Names Index). Sir James Hector was an assistant to Forbes at the University of Edinburgh before he immigrated to New Zealand and established his illustrious geological career.

Shelley Street, one of a number of Sydenham streets named in honour of British literary figures, was named in 1880 after the early 19<sup>th</sup> century English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) (CCL Street Names Index).

Beaumont Street was named after Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) who was an early 17<sup>th</sup> century English poet and playwright (CCL Street Names Index).

Bent Street is not included in the CCL Street Names Index but was presumably named in reference to the shape of the roadway.

Jacksons Creek was named after Thomas Jackson who had been granted some of the land through which the stream passed by the Canterbury Association. Jackson (1812-86) was a clergyman who spent just six weeks in Christchurch in early 1851, having failed in his mission to become the first Anglican Bishop of Canterbury. As mapped on SO 805 (dated August 1880), the creek arises near the intersection of Lincoln Road and Barrington Street. It is underground for much of its length and drains into the Heathcote River to the south of Opawa School. Jacksons Creek Park is to the north-east of the RHA between Huxley and Cameron Streets.



Residents of Shelley Street in 1910: *Wises's New Zealand Post Office Directory*.

## Distinctive Physical Characteristics:

- The streets depart slightly, in their width and arrangement, from the standard dimensions of the city's colonial grid pattern; this reflects the subdivision history of the site and responds to the curvilinear form of Jacksons Creek.
- The style of dwellings is typically vernacular, crafted by builders into colonial cottages or modest villas.
- The houses within the area are one storey in height; with the exception of the c.1973 flats in Forbes Street and the duplex townhouses at the corner of Beaumont and Shelley Streets (2012).

- Timber and corrugated metal are the predominant building materials; although masonry dwellings are also present.
- Standard footpaths and berms extend along both sides of Forbes Street; Shelley and Beaumont Street lacks berms and have narrow footpaths. Street trees and plantings are present, the latter concentrated at intersections.
- Access to Jacksons Creek, Bent Street, Bradford Park and Angus Street is provided from the north end of Forbes Street.



An aerial view of the area in 1940-44. Canterbury Maps.

### The Significance of the Area to the Heritage of Christchurch:

The historic heritage significance of this area lies in its **historical and social** value as a place of working-class residence that dates from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. **Cultural** values are associated with the proximity of the area to the city's river network, which is valued by Ngāi Tahu, as well as the demonstration of the way of life of its former residents. The area's **architectural and aesthetic** value resides in the overall integrity and authenticity of its housing designs and typologies, which date predominantly from late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The **craftsmanship** value of the houses is generally typical of the period in which they were built. **Contextual** values relate to the area's city fringe location, its intimate scale and character and relationship to Jacksons Creek. **Archaeological** values may arise from the area's location within the wetland system of pre-colonial Ōtatauhi, its proximity to Jacksons Creek and to the residential development that has occurred within the area since the late 1870s.



## Historical/Social

The historical and social value of this area arises from its demonstration of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century settlement of Sydenham, the 'mechanics and artisans' who contributed to the development of the city, and the ongoing social patterns associated with the occupation and use of small-scale residential typologies.

The early owner/occupiers of the cottages and villas erected in the area exemplify the working-class history and identity of Sydenham. The association of 5 Shelley Street with a number of Christchurch artists is also notable as it reflects both continuity and change in the profile of local residents.



Former Webb/McFarlane house; 21 Forbes Street. Google Maps.

## Cultural/Spiritual

The cultural value of the area is derived from its location within what was once a large wetland system, which was a place of food-gathering and occupation for mana whenua, and for its demonstration of the way of life of the people who have lived in the area since the later-19<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of two scheduled items within Shelley Street signals the esteem in which these modest cottages are held for their heritage value.

## Architectural/Aesthetic

The houses within this area have architectural and aesthetic values related to their style typology and overall level of integrity and authenticity, which creates a snapshot of the city's working-class residential development in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The houses within the area are vernacular dwellings that generally conform to the colonial cottage and villa styles of the period. A comparison can be made between the small-scale vernacular cottages of Shelley Street and the larger and slightly more decorative villas of Forbes Street; one which showcases changing design preferences as well as suggesting a higher level of investment in the second stage of development within the area.

## Technological / Craftsmanship

The craftsmanship of the houses in this area is generally typical of the period in which they were built. The majority of the houses in the area are constructed from timber, for framing and weatherboard cladding, and corrugated metal; these being the conventional materials of New Zealand vernacular housing since the beginning of colonial settlement. Some brick masonry construction is also present and can, in some instances, be linked to the occupations of early owner/occupiers. (The masonry houses suffered the greatest extent of damage in the Canterbury earthquakes and some were subsequently demolished.)

## Contextual

The contextual value of the Heritage Area arises from the scale of the streets and their relationship to the curvilinear form of Jacksons Creek. The housing in Shelley and Forbes Streets conveys an overall consistency in type, scale, form and material while at the same time providing a snapshot of two phases of housing development in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Braford Park provides the backdrop to the properties on the west side of Forbes Street and the intimate scale of Shelley Street makes a distinctive contribution to visual character of the area and, more generally, the central city.

## Archaeological

Multiple archaeological values, pertaining to Maori use and occupation and colonial residential development since the late 1870s, may be revealed within this area.

## Principal References

'Christchurch Street and Place Names', available at <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Heritage/PlaceNames/>

John Cookson & Graeme Dunstall (eds) *Southern Capital Christchurch – Towards a City Biography 1850-2000* (CUP, 2000)

John Wilson 'Christchurch Contextual Historical Overview' (CCC, 2005/2013)

Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu *Kā Huru Manu* available at <https://www.kahurumanu.co.nz/atlas>

<https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3701>

<https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3702>

## REPORT COMPLETED

17 March 2022 / updated 9 May 2025

## AUTHOR

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Shelley Street houses. Google Maps.



## Schedule of Individual Items Included in the HA

<i>Name of Building / Structure / Site</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>HNZPT List Entry</i>	<i>Contribution to Heritage Area</i>
Townhouse	1 Shelley Street		Neutral
Townhouse	3 Shelley Street		Neutral
House	5 Shelley Street	List entry # 3701	Defining [Scheduled item # 495]
House	6 Shelley Street	List entry # 3702	Defining [Scheduled item # 496]
House	9 Shelley Street		Defining
House	10 Shelley Street		Contributory
House	11 Shelley Street		Defining
House	14 Shelley Street		Contributory
House	11 Forbes Street		Defining
Flat	1/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	2/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	3/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	4/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	5/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	6/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	7/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	8/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
Flat	9/13 Forbes Street		Neutral
House	17A Forbes Street		Neutral
Townhouse	18A Forbes Street		Intrusive
Townhouse	18B Forbes Street		Intrusive
Townhouse	18C Forbes Street		Intrusive
Townhouse	18D Forbes Street		Intrusive
House	19 Forbes Street		Intrusive
House	20 Forbes Street		Defining
House	21 Forbes Street		Defining
House	22 Forbes Street		Contributory
House	24 Forbes Street		Defining
House	25 Forbes Street		Neutral
House	27 Forbes Street		Defining
House	28 Forbes Street		Defining
House	29 Forbes Street		Defining

House	1 Beaumont Street		Contributory
House	5 Beaumont Street		Contributory
House	7 Beaumont Street		Neutral
House	13 Beaumont Street		Contributory

## Key for Contribution to HA

### *Defining*

Buildings, structures and other features that establish the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Defining buildings, structures and features embody the heritage values of the area and retain a level of authenticity and integrity sufficient to demonstrate these values.

\* Any building or structure that is individually scheduled within Appendix 9.3.7.2 of the Christchurch District Plan is deemed, regardless of its group ranking, to be making a defining contribution to the historic heritage values of the area.

### *Contributory*

Buildings, structures and other features that support the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Contributory buildings, structures and features are consistent with the heritage values of the area and may be either modified or modern buildings, structures and features in sympathy with the design and typology of their neighbours.

### *Neutral*

Buildings, structures and other features that neither establish, support nor detract from the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Neutral buildings, structures and features may be modern buildings that introduce a new typology (for example a cluster of flats or townhouses) or a new pattern of land development (such as cross-leasing); they generally respect the overall scale and density of the area.

### *Intrusive*

Buildings, structures and other features that detract from the historic heritage values of the Heritage Area. Intrusive buildings, structures and features are developments and typologies that are inconsistent with the historic heritage values of the area, including, but not limited to, non-residential uses and/or high-rise buildings. Vacant lots, from which buildings have been demolished or removed, are also considered intrusive within the streetscape of the Heritage Area.

## Context Record Form

Shelley, Forbes & Beaumont Streets

### *Area/Element Description*

Forbes and Shelley Streets are parallel to one another and run on a north-south axis. Beaumont Street, which connects the two at right angles, runs on an east-west axis and the curving form of Jacksons Creek establishes the northern boundary of the area and terminates both Forbes and Shelley Streets.

### *Contributing landscapes*

Jacksons Creek

### *Street and block pattern*

Grid

### *Section layouts*

Small-scale rectangular and square lots



*Key Long views*  
Port Hills to the south






*Key Short views*  
Jacksons Creek & Bradford Park





*Contextual Significance*

The interface between the built form and Jacksons Creek is notable, as is the intimate scale and overall integrity of the streetscape that has been maintained within this part of the city.

## Inventory of Public Realm Features

Feature	Description	
<b>Open space</b>	N/A  [Bradford Park borders RHA to the west]	
<b>Streams</b>	Jacksons Creek (Rating: Contributory)	
<b>Cemetery</b>	N/A	
<b>Landmarks</b>	N/A	
<b>Memorials</b>	N/A	
<b>Plaques</b>	N/A	
<b>Gates/pillars</b>	Small number domestic gates and pillars (Rating: Neutral)	
<b>Paths</b>	N/A	
<b>Structures</b>	N/A	

<b>Fences</b>	Variety of fences (Rating: Neutral)	
<b>Walls</b>	Brick and masonry walls (Rating: Neutral)	
<b>Wharfs/piers</b>	N/A	
<b>Steps</b>	N/A	
<b>Seats</b>	N/A	
<b>Signs</b>	N/A	
<b>Lighting</b>	Combined wooden power pole/lighting (Rating: Neutral)	
<b>Materials</b>	N/A	
<b>Colours</b>	N/A	
<b>Street</b>	<p>Shelley Street – narrow, unmarked roadway with paved threshold and asphalt footpaths (Rating: Defining)</p> <p>Forbes Street – unmarked roadway with speed bump, street plantings, trees and berms (Rating: Contributory)</p> <p>Beaumont Street – narrow roadway with speed bump, street plantings and asphalt footpath (Rating: Contributory)</p>	 

		
<b>Street trees</b>	Planted along Forbes and Beaumont Streets (Rating: Neutral)	
<b>Building setback</b>	Generally close to road boundary (Rating: Defining)	
<b>Ancillary buildings</b>	Garages at side or rear of sites where present (Rating: Neutral)	



<b>Trees</b>	Variety of exotic and native trees (Rating: Neutral)	
<b>Vegetation</b>	Mixed vegetation (Rating: Neutral)	
<b>Views</b>	To Port Hills along Forbes Street (Rating: Neutral)	

## Appendix 1

Individual site record forms