

Remuera Precinct - Plan Change

Landscape Effects Assessment
Prepared for Fletcher Residential Ltd



17 December 2023





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Cover photograph: Ellerslie Racecourse. Site Photo towards Maungakiekie ©BML, 2021

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Graphic Supplement (bound separately)

1.0 Introduction

Boffa Miskell Limited ('BML') has been requested by Fletcher Residential Ltd ('Fletchers') to prepare an assessment of landscape effects in respect of a proposed plan change. This plan change (the site) pertains to a 6.2-hectare area located at 72 Ladies Mile, Remuera, adjacent the Racecourse in Ellerslie. Physical address Lot 8 Deposited Plan 515118.

The site comprises part of the Auckland Thoroughbred Racing Incorporated ('ATR') (previously known as the Auckland Racing Club), Ellerslie Racecourse but is surplus to the racing club's requirements. has therefore decided to divest approximately 6.2 hectares of lands from the eastern corner of the Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct.

Fletchers has purchased this area of land and has obtained resource consent (through the fast-track process) to construct approximately 357 residential dwellings. The proposed 357 dwellings comprise a mix of detached, duplex and terrace houses, market apartments, and an apartment building for active retirement use. Building heights range from 1 to 7 storeys (above any basement levels).

The Precinct is located on elevated land at the western end of the racecourse site and is bound by Ladies Mile and Derby Downs Place. The area of land subject to this plan change is currently part of a Special Purpose – Major Recreation Facility Zone and a plan change is now proposed to recognise the consented residential development. The precinct is to be referenced as the Remuera Precinct.

The Precinct enables housing choice including both medium to high density living opportunities with development up to 25m in height provided within the THAB zones. Development of the Precinct is defined by identified publicly accessible open spaces, areas of private open space, existing mature Pohutukawa trees (combined with a 6m setback in their vicinity) and garden streets.

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the likely landscape effects which would be enabled by the plan change and precinct. This report will provide an overview of the existing environment and any relevant statutory and non-statutory considerations. It will then provide a description of the change proposed and identify how such change could affect the landscape or visual amenity values of the site.

Boffa Miskell landscape architects have formed part of the project masterplanning team and have inputted to the development of the proposed precinct provisions. The wider project team includes Brewer Davison (Urban Design / Masterplanning / Architecture), Tattico (Planning) and Crang Civil (Civil Engineers).

Project Background

Boffa Miskell has a longstanding history and involvement with the ATR at the Ellerslie Racecourse. Over the years, we have provided assistance in earlier approved plan changes and broader master planning initiatives. Our involvement in the current master planning project began in early 2021, representing ATR, where we collaborated with Ignite architects, Harrison Grierson, and Tattico to contribute to the essential development outcomes of the preliminary site master planning.

In 2021, ATR initiated an expression of interest process for developing the 6.2-hectare 'Remuera Precinct' site. In this process Fletchers emerged as the preferred tenderer and began refining the Indicative Concept Plan (ICP) with Brewer Davison and Boffa Miskell. Resource consent was gained in 2023 through Covid-19 Fast Track legislation. During this

process the Auckland Urban Design Panel (AUDP) reviewed the proposal twice. Overall, the AUDP strongly supported the project and were particularly supportive of the site layout, massing, and suitability of the location for intensive housing development. The panel also commended the overall contextual integration, commitment to preserving the Pohutukawa trees along Ladies Mile, and the comprehensive landscape strategy.

1.1 Assessment Methodology

In July 2022, Tuia Pito Ora / The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects endorsed new guidance for the assessment of landscapes within the framework of the Resource Management Act (RMA) in Aotearoa / New Zealand. This updated guidance supersedes previous guidelines and reduces the reliance of landscape architects on other international best practices or external guidance. The guidelines, titled 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines' [July 2022], have informed the approach taken in this assessment.

To assess the scale of landscape effects, a seven-point scale of effects, as recommended in Te Tangi a te Manu, has been applied. The scale consists of the following: very low, low, low moderate, moderate, moderate high, high, and very high. Effects have been assessed in terms of the values of the landscape having first understood its characteristics in terms of the physical, associative, and perceptual realms. Importantly, change in a landscape and the introduction of new elements or features into the landscape does not of itself necessarily generate adverse effects.

Landscape, and consequent visual, impacts result from natural or induced change in the components, character, or quality of the landscape. Usually these are the result of landform or vegetation modification or the introduction of new structures, facilities, or activities into the landscape. Landscape effects arise when such change affects the values of that landscape either in beneficial or adverse ways.

The landscape effects generated by any proposal can, therefore, be perceived as:

- positive (beneficial), contributing to the visual character and quality of the environment.
- negative (adverse), detracting from existing character and quality of environment; or
- neutral (benign), with essentially no effect on existing character or quality of environment.

The degree to which landscape effects are generated by a development depends on several factors, these include:

- The degree to which the proposal contrasts, or is consistent, with the qualities of the surrounding landscape.
- The proportion of the proposal that is visible, determined by the observer's position relative to the objects viewed.
- The distance and foreground context within which the proposal is viewed.
- The area or extent of visual catchment from which the proposal is visible.
- The number of viewers, their location and situation (static, or moving) in relation to the view.
- The backdrop and context within which the proposal is viewed.

- The predictable and likely known future character of the locality.
- The quality of the resultant landscape, its aesthetic values and contribution to the wider landscape character to the area.

Change in a landscape and ‘visibility’ of a proposal does not of itself, constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. A site visit was undertaken on 02 June 2023 where the plan change site and potentially affected viewing audiences were identified.

1.2 Visual Simulations

The project team prepared a series of visual simulations and 3D renders as part of the 2021 fast-track resource consent process. These simulations were from a number of viewpoints that provided a representative range of views from a variety of viewing audiences, located at a range of viewing distances.

These simulations have been used for this assessment and are included in the **Graphic Supplement** of this report, as well as within the Brewer Davison Urban Design Assessment for the proposed plan change. Despite providing a level of detail that exceeds the typical expectations for a plan change, these simulations are deemed accurate in illustrating a development scenario that maximises the allowable massing and height under the provisions of this plan change. It is noted the detailed design of each development will require the certification by Council prior to final approval.

It should be noted that visual simulations do not depict “real life views”. Instead, they serve as a tool to illustrate a view of a proposed activity from a designated viewpoint as depicted in a photograph, rather than replicating how it would appear to the human eye in the field.

2.0 The Existing Environment

The subject site, with an approximate area of 6.2 hectares, is large in the context of the urban residential grain of the surrounding area (refer Figure 1 below). It is situated at the eastern end of the existing Ellerslie Racecourse track. The site shares boundaries with the expansive openness of the racecourse to the west and south, while to the north, east, and southeast, it is bordered by an urban residential context with street frontage. The elevated portions of the site offer wide-ranging views that encompass several of Auckland’s volcanic maunga. In terms of shape, the site is roughly triangular, with a lengthy frontage along Ladies Mile to the north. The southern and western boundaries of the site adjoin the Ellerslie Racetrack, delineated by a white post and rail track boundary fence.



Figure 1: Aerial photograph showing the Site and context. (Source: BDA Urban Design Report).

On the eastern boundary, the site interfaces with a pocket of residential development accessed through Hunterville Court and Derby Downs Place. These properties predominately consist of one and two-storey residential dwellings. Towards the north-western boundary, there is another smaller pocket of residential properties accessed from a Right of Way off Ladies Mile. These dwellings are elevated and typically two-storey, affording views towards the south that overlook the Ellerslie Racecourse.

To the north of the site, across Ladies Mile, there are several large standalone houses, mostly one and two stories in height. These dwellings are typically set back from Ladies Mile, featuring tall boundary fencing or walls adorned with well-established garden vegetation. The principal living areas and outdoor spaces of these properties face northward, offering expansive views over Remuera/Meadowbank, away from the site.

South of the site lies Derby Downs Domain, located at the end of Derby Downs Place and Lonsdale Street. This domain encompasses a flat grassed area of approximately 0.2 hectares, with several mature and substantial specimen trees, including palm trees. A footpath connects to the south between Derby Downs Place and Lonsdale Street.

Toward the southwest of the site, the land is mostly vacant, aside from two large storage sheds and mature landscaping. This area is zoned for THAB and falls under the Ellerslie 1 sub-precinct C provisions under the AUP(OP). The planning regulations envision residential development ranging from 4 to 8 levels as a restricted discretionary activity. Furthermore, private road and pedestrian connections through this site to Morrin Street and Mitchelson Street are identified in the planning provisions.

Earthworks have commenced on the site (as part of the approved resource consent), all landscaping trees have been removed, except for the Pohutukawa trees to Ladies Mile that have been retained. The existing track managers house is currently being converted into a display suite adjacent Ladies Mile. Vehicular access is available from the end of Derby Downs through an underpass beneath the racetrack, this has been recently upgraded. This access is primarily used for service purposes, and on race days, it serves as parking in the centre of the

track. The public access to the Golf Driving Range, situated in the centre of the track, is from Ascot Ave in the west.

To the northern Ladies Mile boundary there are several mature Pohutukawa trees, that have been retained and protected during earthworks. While these Pohutukawa trees are not listed as notable or protected in the AUP(OP) they hold significance as important specimen trees within this frontage. An arborist's report conducted by Stuart Barton of Arbor Connect (during the resource consent process) identifies four of the Pohutukawa trees as significant, with eleven deemed suitable and worthy of retention.

In the broader context (refer to Figure 2 below), Ladies Mile traverses the ridgeline and highest point of the local area, with the land sloping downwards to the south and north from the ridge. The site itself is positioned on the ridge and slopes towards the west and southwest, benefiting from ample sunlight exposure and offering expansive views overlooking the Ellerslie Racecourse, as well as the surrounding suburbs of Ellerslie and Greenlane.

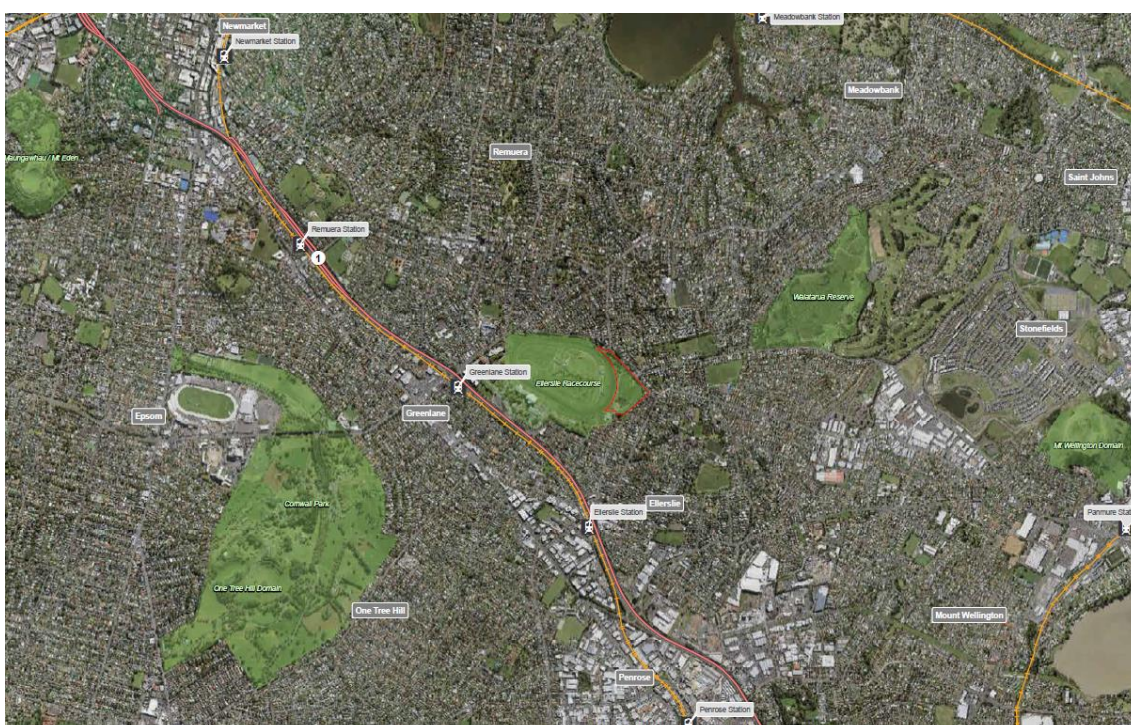


Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing the Site and wider context. (Source: BML)

The site offers scenic views towards prominent maunga that define the Auckland isthmus. These include Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), situated 2km to the southwest, and Te Kōpuke (Mount St John), located 4km to the northwest. Additionally, Ōhinerau (Mount Hobson) is found 2km to the northwest, while distant views extend to Te Pane o Matacho / Te Ara Pueru / Māngere Mountain, approximately 7km to the southwest (refer to Figure 3 and Figure 4 for visual reference).



Figure 3: Site Photo looking west with views towards Maungakiekie, Te Kōpuke and Ōhinerau. Note photo taken 2021, earthworks have since commenced and vegetation has been removed.



Figure 4: Site Photo looking south with views towards Te Pane o Mataoho / Te Ara Pueru / Māngere Mountain. Note Photo taken 2021, Irrigation pond has since been removed.

The southern boundary of the site lies within 900m of the nearest shop in Ellerslie village. This bustling retail main street offers a range of amenities, including supermarkets, cafés, a dairy, butcher, chemist, greengrocer, and takeaways.

The site enjoys good connectivity to various transportation options. It provides walkable access to multiple bus stops, with frequent bus services available at the outer perimeter of Ellerslie and Greenlane train stations. The train ride to the central city takes approximately 15 minutes. Moreover, the site is conveniently located near the Greenlane major motorway interchange. Along Ladies Mile, there are several bus routes with designated bus stop locations.

Within the Ellerslie area and the neighbouring suburb of Remuera, there are notable instances of larger-scale residential developments taking place. These include projects such as 'Element on Ellerslie'¹, 'Wairua'² and '308'³ in Remuera.

In summary, the site occupies a sizable sloping land area with a frontage along Ladies Mile and access from the Derby Downs cul-de-sac. It adjoins one and two-story residential developments along its eastern and north-eastern boundaries, featuring a lengthy northern

¹ 20 Pukerangi Crescent, Ellerslie

² 475 Remuera Road, Remuera

³ 308 Remuera Road, Remuera

frontage along Ladies Mile. Notably, there are some impressive specimen Pohutukawa trees lining the Ladies Mile frontage. The site falls within the Special Purpose - Major Recreation Facility Zone according to the AUP(OP). It shares close proximity to the neighbourhood shops in Ellerslie Village and enjoys convenient connections to Ellerslie and Green Lane train stations, bus routes, and the broader transport network.

3.0 Relevant Statutory Provisions

3.1 The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

Part 2 of the RMA sets out the purpose and principles of the Act. Section 5 states that the purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

Section 6 sets out the matters of importance that must be recognised and provided for in achieving the purpose of the RMA. The protection of outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is identified as a matter of national importance in section 6(b). There are no outstanding natural features or landscapes within the site.

Another matter of national importance is the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development as identified in section 6(a). The site is not located in the coastal environment, nor is it located near any wetland, river or stream.

Section 7 identifies a range of matters that shall be given particular regard to in achieving the purpose of the RMA. Section 7(c) in relation to the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values is particularly relevant to this project. This is considered in this report in relation to potential effects on views and visual amenity.

3.2 The Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part)

The site is zoned Special Purpose - Major Recreation Facility Zone and the Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct (I312.) under the AUP(OP) (Refer Figure 5 below). The zone covers the majority of the Ellerslie Racecourse, with a small area to the south of the Racecourse zoned THAB. In the immediate vicinity of the site, the surrounding zoning includes Residential - both Single House Zone and Mixed Housing Suburban Zone.

The Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct provisions within the AUP(OP) apply to the site and allow for a range of buildings up to 25m in height as a permitted activity, as long as they are situated outside the 20m interface control area along the external boundary of the site and comply with the 2.5m + 45-degree height in relation to boundary control, which applies to adjoining residential zone boundaries. Compliance with the interface control will also ensure compliance with the height in relation to boundary standard. These provisions would potentially permit the construction of a 25m high grandstand or function centre, potentially encircling the entire perimeter of the racecourse track.

The Special Purpose - Major Recreation Facility Zone is specifically linked to Auckland events and facilities, with Ellerslie Racecourse serving as the primary venue for racing and events. While not technically applicable, the standards and assessment criteria outlined in the Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct, including the interface control (I313.6.8) and the effects of buildings, can be helpful for assessment purposes.

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) suggests that apartment style development, up to and above six storeys, will increasingly be seen as appropriate and desirable close to established centres and transport corridors such as Ladies Mile and transport nodes such as rail stations (Ellerslie and Greenlane). Plan Change 78, responds to the NPS-UD. It proposes a change in zoning to the neighbouring sites adjacent the subject site that largely includes Residential – Mixed Housing Urban⁴.

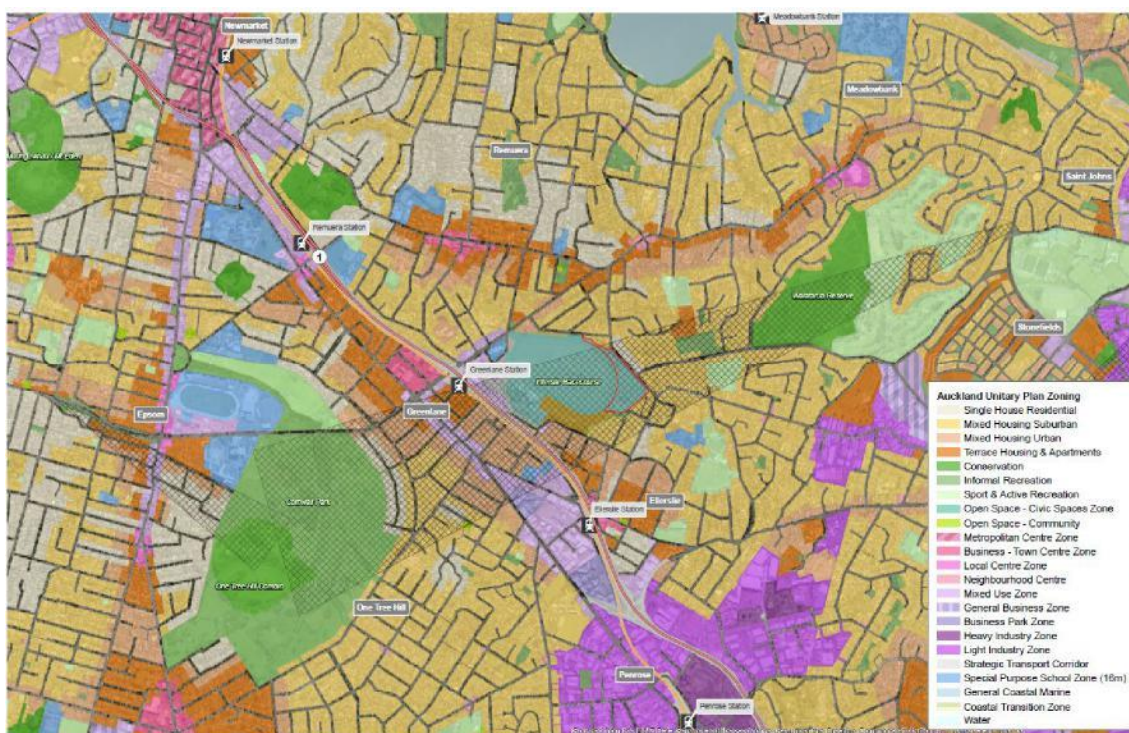


Figure 5: Statutory Context, Auckland Unitary Plan Overlay. Site is Special Purpose – Major recreation Facility Zone with O10 Locally significant Volcanic Viewshaft overlay. (Source: Auckland Unitary Plan)

The site is encompassed by several volcanic viewshaft overlays, primarily situated along the western perimeter of the racecourse. However, only the Locally Significant Viewshaft from O10 (One Tree Hill) impacts the proposed site. This local viewshaft originates from the intersection of College and Merton Roads, approximately 2.8km away from the site. According to the viewshaft requirements, the height limit for the proposed development is set at 24m along Ladies Mile and 36-38m towards the lower sections of the site (refer to Figure 6 for details). These height limitations have dictated the proposed height of the plan change, ensuring compliance with the viewshaft overlays.

⁴ Acknowledging the existing uncertainty surrounding the MDRS and the National Government's potential plans for its removal, this application has incorporated an alternative strategy (refer to PLAN 4 - Alternative Zoning) to address the possibility of the MDRS being discontinued. This alternative plan includes provisions for the Mixed Housing Suburban Zone.

L1 Viewshaft Maximum Heights
Maximum Building Height Range Above Ground (Appx.)



Figure 6: Diagram that indicates the maximum Building Height Range above ground (approx.) due to Volcanic Viewshaft

The Site is not subject to any Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape overlays (ONFL) nor is it subject to a special character overlay.

When requesting a plan change to modify the zoning of a particular site, it is crucial to assess whether the proposed zoning aligns with the purpose of the Resource Management Act (RMA). One essential aspect of this evaluation involves determining if the land's intended use maximizes its potential while avoiding adverse effects, especially on neighbouring areas. This is particularly important for a sizable site under single ownership, located within the Rural Urban Boundary (RUB), and in proximity to a town centre like Ellerslie, which holds the potential for urban regeneration.

To achieve the desired outcomes of quality compact urban development and optimized growth within the RUB, the most suitable zoning options would be Terrace Housing and Apartment Building Zone (THAB) and Mixed Housing Urban (M-HU). These zoning designations are in line with the AUP(OP)'s key aspirations and the overarching vision of the Auckland Plan. By adopting THAB and M-HU zoning, the opportunity for creating a well-designed and efficiently utilised urban area can be realised, contributing to the overall vision of sustainable and vibrant development in the region.

4.0 The Proposal

The proposal is seeking a plan change from Special Purpose - Major Recreation Facility zone to MH-U and THAB zoning, in addition to specific precinct provisions and Precinct plans (listed below), which recognise the key site features of the site.

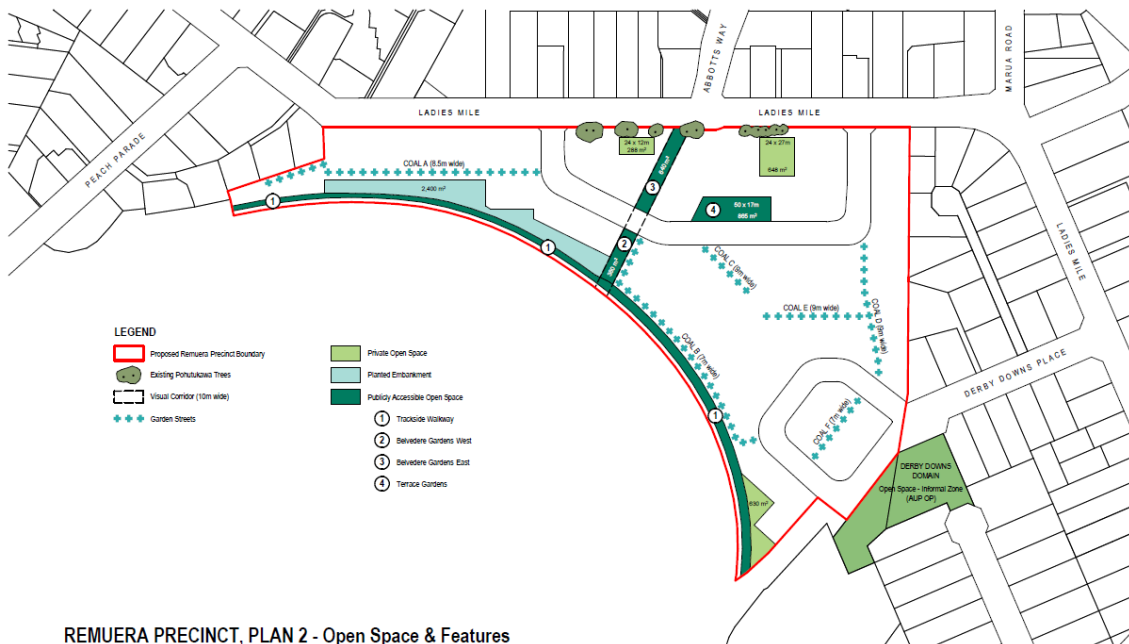
Development of this precinct will be guided by the following precinct plans in addition to specific precinct provisions:

- Precinct Plan 1 – Remuera Precinct, Zoning and Building Controls
- Precinct Plan 2 – Remuera Precinct, Open Space and Features
- Precinct Plan 3 – Movement Plan

The main objective of the proposed plan change is to facilitate increased density and diversity of development within the site, encompassing various scales and forms of built structures and a mix of activities. The introduction of planning provisions, along with a set of Precinct Plans supporting these goals, aims to transform the current low-density recreation facility into a vibrant, higher-density urban residential community.

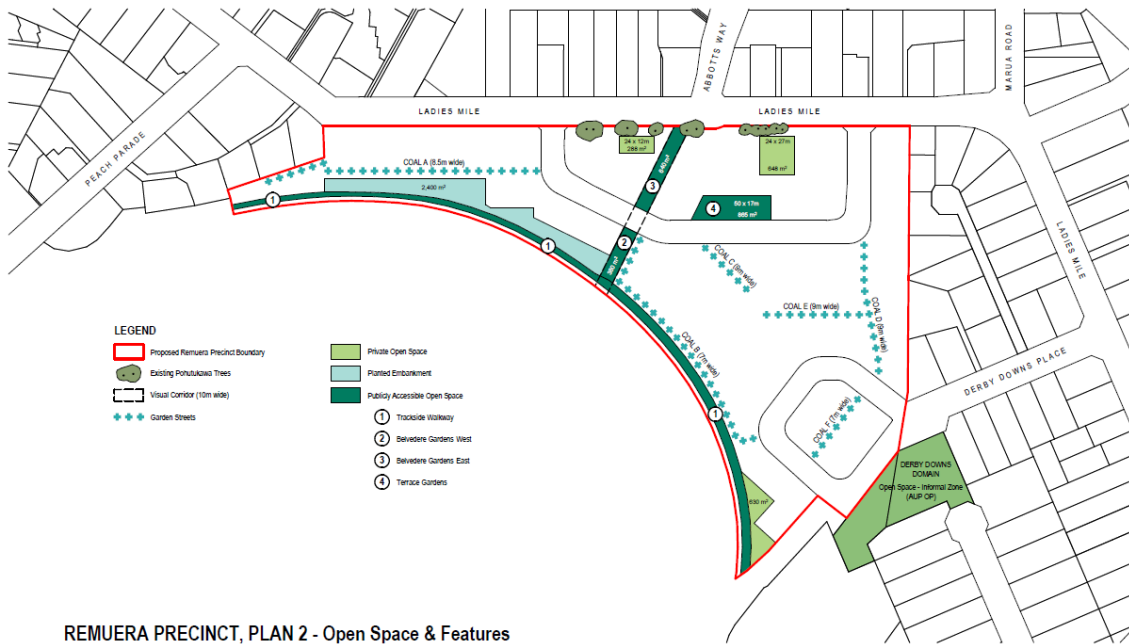
The precinct's purpose is to facilitate a comprehensive and integrated redevelopment of a section of the Ellerslie Racecourse. This redevelopment will give rise to a new residential community, featuring a diverse range of housing types, including terrace housing, low and mid-rise apartment buildings, and integrated residential development such as a retirement village. All these elements will come together within a distinctive urban environment.

The precinct's diverse housing typologies will play a crucial role in accommodating Auckland's projected growth, ensuring a seamless integration with the existing urban landscape. Additionally, the plan emphasises the importance of preserving the visual connections to the surrounding maunga while enhancing the overall landscape and open space amenity values in the area. Publicly-accessible open spaces, private open areas for apartment residents, and the protection and retention of the established Pohutukawa trees along Ladies Mile are essential features highlighted in the Precinct Plan 2 – Open Space & Features (illustrated in



REMUERA PRECINCT, PLAN 2 - Open Space & Features

Figure 7 below).



REMUERA PRECINCT, PLAN 2 - Open Space & Features

Figure 7: Remuera Precinct, Plan 2 – Open Space and Features

The Precinct Plan 1, depicted in Figure 8 below, incorporates Zoning and Height control areas strategically designed to accommodate a diverse range of building heights, taking into account the favourable size, location, and topography of the precinct. The permitted building heights are carefully determined, considering their potential impact on neighbouring properties. Taller structures are strategically positioned in areas where any potential negative effects can be effectively managed within the precinct. Moreover, these designated areas possess the capacity to support taller buildings.

Specifically, taller buildings are situated in the central, low-lying 'basin,' as well as the northern section of the site facing Ladies Mile. As the buildings extend towards the more sensitive

residential boundaries adjacent to the precinct, they progressively step down in both height and scale, as shown in Precinct Plan 1 – the sensitive MHU areas have a lower height variation control of 9m and the Hunterville Court adjacent sites have a setback control. This thoughtful arrangement ensures a harmonious transition from taller structures to lower ones, minimizing any potential adverse effects on privacy and shading.

By adhering to the height in relation to boundary controls at the precinct's boundaries, any potential issues related to privacy and shading can be mitigated, promoting a balanced and harmonious urban environment within the precinct.

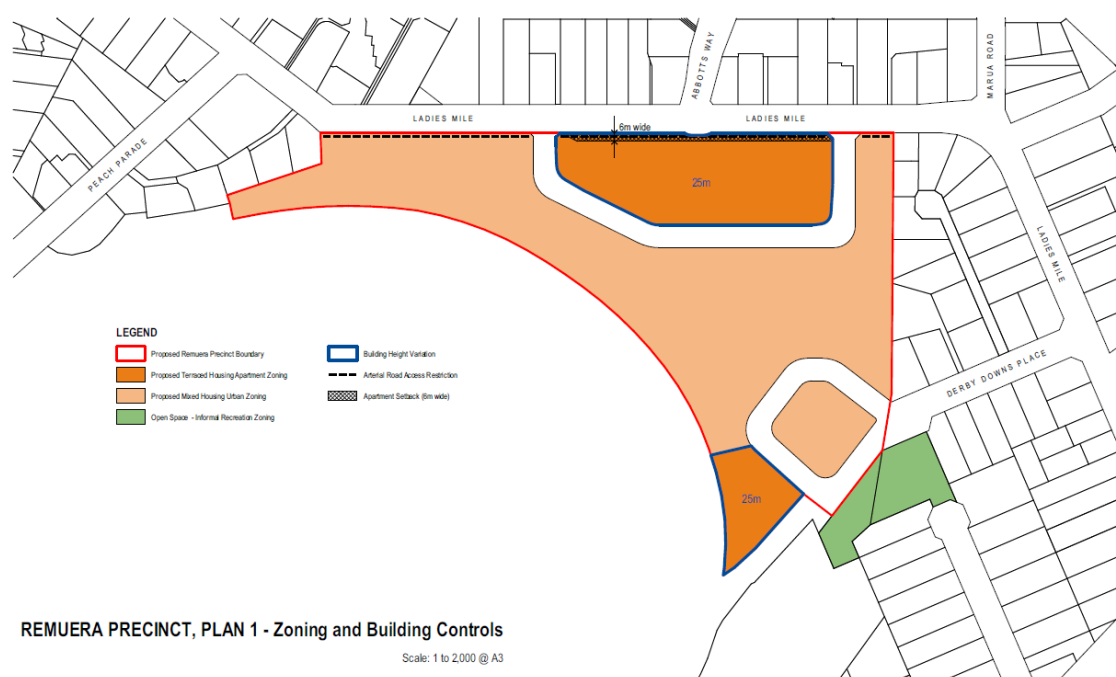


Figure 8: Remuera Precinct, Plan 1 – Zoning and Building Controls.

In addition to the proposed precinct provisions, there are several existing provisions outlined in the THAB Objectives and Policies that will remain applicable. These provisions play a significant role in addressing landscape considerations and ensuring the protection and enhancement of landscape characteristics and attributes. Alongside these established provisions, the following new provisions have been introduced to ensure clarity and certainty regarding the anticipated development outcomes concerning potential landscape effects. These newly added provisions include:

Relevant Objectives:

- i. An objective that ensures the Precinct is a well-functioning urban environment which recognises the importance of intensification of this locality in proximity to the Ellerslie Rail Station. **(Objective IXXX.2 (1))**
- ii. An objective to ensure the development is based around an integrated and connected series of public streets, publicly accessible open spaces, garden streets and pedestrian routes. **(Objective IXXX.2 (2))**

Relevant Policies

- i. A new policy that ensures a high-quality open space and landscape outcome as set out on Precinct Plan 2. Specifically detailing and achieving; publicly accessible open spaces, a 10m wide visual corridor, private open spaces within the northern 25m building height variation control area, retention of identified mature Pohutukawa trees along the Ladies Mile frontage, two public roads and garden streets. **(IXXX.3 Policy (1))**
- ii. A new policy that ensures the development considers and positively responds to the natural and physical features of the area (including viewshafts and boundary setbacks), while concurrently providing for the planned built outcomes of the Precinct. **(IXXX.3 Policy (2))**
- iii. A new policy that ensures development will be of a variety of forms and heights which will provide sufficient built diversity across the site. Provide for varying building heights through the application of the Height Variation Control. **(IXXX.3 Policy (3))**

The above objectives and policies will encourage high amenity residential living which appropriately responds to the existing built and natural environment and deliver on the opportunity for quality compact urban form and optimisation of growth within the RUB.

To ensure the achievement of high-quality interfaces between buildings and street edges, particularly along Ladies Mile, specific measures have been proposed. These measures include special frontage guidelines, height controls, and limitations on vehicle access **(IXXX.3 Policy (7))**. By implementing these frontage controls, there will be a guarantee of providing high-quality and aesthetically pleasing interfaces, enhancing the overall amenity of the area.

5.0 Visual Catchment and Viewing Audiences

The proposal will be visible within its immediate urban context from locations such as Ladies Mile, the end of Derby Downs, Green Lane East, the Auckland Southern Motorway, and nearby suburban streets like Morrin Road. The eastern boundary of the site adjoins fourteen properties, while five properties are adjacent to the immediate northern western boundary. In the immediate north of the site, across Ladies Mile, there are several single and two-storey houses.

The visual catchment extends further to elevated properties in neighbouring suburbs such as Remuera, Greenlane, and Ellerslie. Additionally, views can be obtained from the surrounding maunga, including Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill) to the southeast, Ōhinerau (Mount Hobson) to the northeast, and Te Kōpuke (Mount Saint John) to the northwest. However, views from other areas are limited by landforms, vegetation, and built structures.

The primary public and private viewing audiences can therefore be identified as:

- Pedestrians and motorists using adjacent streets within approximately 800m of the site, including Ladies Mile, Green Lane East, the Southern Motorway, and immediate surrounding streets like Morrin Road and Derby Downs Place.
- Visitors to Derby Downs Domain, a small open space located to the south of the site.

- Residents in properties within the adjacent area, including those closest to Ladies Mile, Hunterville Crescent, and Derby Downs Place.
- Individuals in more distant locations with views towards the site, including slopes within Ellerslie and Remuera, as well as elevated positions on the surrounding maunga.

6.0 Assessment of Landscape Effects

6.1 Landscape Effects

The Remuera Precinct is sited in proximity to Ellerslie village on the eastern slopes of the Ellerslie Racecourse. This area can be expected to transition over time to a more intensive, urban residential character and amenity. The conversion of the expansive 6.2-hectare low-density greenfield site into a predominantly higher density residential community will significantly alter the existing urbanised landscape, marking a substantial shift in its overall character. The proposed change in land use should not come as a surprise, as it is aligned with the goals of the AUP(OP) regarding intensification. Furthermore, it is consistent with the continuous development activities occurring on larger sites within the vicinity, including the immediate Ellerslie and Remuera suburbs, as well as across the wider Auckland region.

The efficient use of land with greater building height and density enabled within the centre, lower and northern section of the site fronting Ladies transitioning to lesser height / lower density and open space areas along the sites margins will respond to the sites topography and ensure that these more sensitive edges will protect adjoining and adjacent residential neighbours and retain a high level of amenity. The stepping down to two and three storey development along the southern boundary in particular is intended to maintain a compatible residential interface with adjoining lower density neighbours. Compliance with height in relation to boundary controls at the boundaries will assist in avoiding potential adverse privacy and shading effects as a result of the proposal.

Whilst this change is an inevitable result in the proposed zone regime the site does not contain areas of significant landscape value. Presently, the site is undergoing substantial earthworks. There is a former track managers house that is in the process of being converted into a display suite. Currently, the site is securely enclosed by solid fencing, effectively shielding it from the view of passers-by and the public. The proposed provisions (such as Policy IXXX.3 (1) and (2)), will however enhance the features of the site through an open space network and visual corridors that both relate to the site and the wider landscape context, in particular the views to the wider landscape.

Earthworks are currently underway within the site. These earthworks will establish a suitable ground surface, construct underground basements, and create access points whilst retaining the overall topography of the site, characterised by a gentle slope. The established reference levels (RLs) along the Ladies Mile frontage and the racecourse to the southwest have been maintained and overall the earthworks will achieve a balanced internal excavation and filling process.

The comprehensive redevelopment and urban residential intensification of the site has involved the removal of the existing vegetation. Nevertheless, except for the trees located along Ladies Mile, the site does not encompass any vegetation of notable significance in terms of ecological values (SEA) or as notable trees. As per the provisions outlined in Precinct Plan 2 - Open

Spaces & Features Plan, and part of the precinct guidelines, specific measures have been put in place to ensure the preservation and protection of the eleven well-established Pohutukawa trees that are situated adjacent to the boundary of Ladies Mile. These trees contribute to the overall visual impact, providing a sense of scale, and aiding in the harmonious integration of taller buildings along the street frontage of Ladies Mile.

In addition to this Precinct Plan 2 identifies the green networks and corridors, in the form of Garden Streets that connect throughout the site as well as a series of publicly accessible open space features.

In a wider landscape context, the site is appropriately located for urban intensification, in that it is not highly visible and will relate to the existing urban amenities in the local context such as the Ellerslie Village.

The proposal is located with good separation distance from the surrounding maunga including Te Kopuke (Mount Saint John), Ōhinerau (Mt Hobson) Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill) and will not compromise their presence as natural landforms with cultural significance comprising open space in the urban landscape. In fact, the proposal seeks to substantially improve public views of these maunga from both the site and its surrounding area.

To achieve this the design of the development has incorporated view corridors, specifically aimed at enhancing opportunities for the public to admire and connect with these maunga. This approach strengthens the visual connections between the site and the broader Auckland landscape, providing newly created public vistas that enrich the overall amenity of the locality, particularly for pedestrians.

The Site is subject to a locally significant Volcanic viewshaft (O10). The proposed height of the development is well below the height of the viewshaft and the development will not obscure any protected, significant or memorable views of the maunga. The proposed development will enjoy views of the maunga as part of the amenity for the residents and people accessing the development.

In summary, the Proposal aims to increase housing density in the Ellerslie/Remuera area. The scale of the development will give rise to a new, additional community seamlessly integrated into the existing fabric of the generally suburban neighbourhood. This transformation of surplus land, much like the recent development at Alexander Park, will lead to a more intensified residential environment, utilising the available land to offer diverse housing choices while maintaining a strong connection to the racecourse's open space amenity.

The successful history of previous surplus land sales related to the Ellerslie racecourse, such as the Ascot medical precinct and Novotel on Green Lane East, demonstrates how larger scaled developments have been well-incorporated into the urban environment. Similarly, the current Proposal seeks to leverage surplus land to create a vibrant and well-connected residential community that complements the existing neighbourhood and enhances the overall liveability of the area.

The proposed high-quality development is designed to complement the character of the locality and positively address the Site's Street frontages. The buildings will be thoughtfully integrated into the landscape, seamlessly becoming part of the adjoining streetscape and visible from wider perspectives. However, the development's scale is carefully considered to ensure it does not overly stand out or appear incongruous within the current or future anticipated built form, character, and amenity of the neighbourhood.

Although the proposal introduces a change to the area, its overall impact will be positive, making a valuable contribution to the evolving urban landscape of this part of Auckland. The

development is envisioned to blend into the surroundings, adding to the aesthetic appeal and enhancing the overall urban fabric while preserving the unique identity of the locality.

6.2 Visual Effects

The visual amenity effects of the proposal are influenced by various factors, including the proposal's nature, the landscape's ability to absorb visual changes, and the overall character of the site and its surroundings. These effects are also contingent upon the distance between viewers and the proposal, the complexity of the intervening landscape, and the nature of the views themselves.

Visual effects are closely tied to the amenity values of the landscape, encompassing the natural and physical qualities that contribute to people's enjoyment of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.

Given the site's proximity to existing residential areas and landscape features, careful consideration of public amenity values has been crucial. To minimise potential adverse visual effects, specific design measures secured through the proposed plan provisions have been put in place. These measures include building height variation and setback variations (Precinct Plan 1).

It is essential to recognise that the final nature of visual effects, especially for identified viewing audiences, will depend on the detailed design of specific development proposals. The detailed design of each development will require certification by Council prior to final approval.

6.2.1 Views from wider context

Views from elevated locations, such as Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), the south of Ōhinerau (Mount Hobson), and Te Kōpuke (Mount Saint John), will provide the greatest public opportunity to view down onto the development. From these distant elevated viewpoints, the development, comprising its taller buildings, will stand out as clearly taller than some of the surrounding one and two-storey houses in the established residential environment. Nevertheless, it's important to consider that the Proposal needs to be viewed in the broader context of urban intensification in Auckland, key transport corridors, and other newer infill developments, with which it will be aligned in terms of height and scale.

To mitigate the visual impact, the proposed landscape design and earthworks strategy have been thoughtfully developed, incorporating vegetation and open space to soften the scale of the development. Over time, extensive mature planting will contribute to the development's visual character, balancing the larger-scaled apartments and various attached and detached dwellings.

Considering a wider viewing audience, the height and location of the buildings within the landscape mean that parts of the development can be seen from various locations within a wider area. However, existing vegetation and built structures will partially screen some components of the development from view. Moreover, these views will include an urban foreground and middle ground context within their vistas.

On the whole, views of the proposed development from a distance, within an increasingly intensified urban context, will not result in adverse visual effects. The strategic landscaping, building placement, and alignment with the surrounding urban fabric contribute to a cohesive and visually harmonious integration of the development into its environment.

Volcanic Viewshaft

Despite being located within a volcanic view protection area, the proposed height of the development is significantly lower than what is permitted under the viewshaft regulations. As a result, the proposed development is not expected to result on any loss of important public views towards the surrounding maunga. The development also introduces a new public viewshaft through its built form, creating a direct line of sight across the Site to Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill).

This viewshaft, aligned with Abbotts Way, is seen as a valuable addition as it enhances public views of Maungakiekie and reintegrates the surrounding urban area with the volcanic landscape that plays a significant role in defining the amenity of urban Auckland. By preserving and strengthening such views, the proposed development effectively maintains the connection between the community and the distinctive volcanic features that contribute to the city's unique character and appeal.

6.2.2 Effects from Immediate Vicinity

Views from the immediate vicinity include residents (such as those to the immediate east and north), visitors to the area and road users along local roads (particularly Ladies Mile).

The proposed plan change will facilitate buildings taller than typical suburban development, with some areas in the proposed precinct accommodating buildings up to 7 storeys (25m) in height. To better understand the visual impact of the development in the urban landscape, a series of four visual simulations were prepared⁵ (refer Graphic Supplement) as well as a number of bulk and massing visuals montages within the Brewer Davison Urban Design Assessment.

The proposed plan provisions have been thoughtfully crafted to ensure that future development will be mindful and respectful of the site's interface with road frontages, neighbouring residential areas, adjacent reserves, and landscape features. Additionally, these provisions provide clarity regarding the variation in urban form across the site, with the tallest buildings, up to a maximum of 7 storeys (25m), primarily concentrated within the lower part of the site and fronting Ladies Mile. This approach creates a well-balanced and harmonious development that complements the surrounding area and ensures a thoughtful urban design.

Ladies Mile

Ladies Mile provides separation between the site and the existing residential land to the east. Viewpoint 1A – 1C (BML Graphic Supplement) (Figure 15a – 15c Brewer Davison Urban Design Report) is positioned on Ladies Mile near the intersection of Peach Parade, offering a southward view toward the site. In this view, the site takes up the central position, with the single and two-storey residential properties along Ladies Mile visible to the left of the image. Additionally, there are significant trees and vegetation along the northern boundary of the site, which are clearly evident in the centre of the image.

This shows the proposed bulk and massing resulting from the plan change. This perspective predominantly highlights the 11-metre area zoned as MHU (Mixed Housing Urban) that fronts Ladies Mile. Due to intervening built structures, vegetation, and changes in topography, the taller THAB (with 25m height variation) zone located to the east of the site is not visible in this particular view.

⁵ Note prepared to accompany the 2021 Fast track RC Consent so show a typically higher level of detail than usually required at Plan Change.

Overall, the proposed buildings create a strong and seamless frontage to Ladies Mile, blending harmoniously with the height profile of the surrounding residential context. This design approach ensures a cohesive integration of the new development into the existing urban landscape, preserving a consistent and attractive streetscape appearance.

Abbotts Way

Viewpoint 2A is situated on Abbotts Way, offering a southwest view towards the proposed site, which is located directly at the centre of the view. The northern boundary of the site is marked by the existing Ellerslie Raceway sign, green corrugated iron fencing, and well-established vegetation⁶, including prominent Pohutukawa trees that add character to this frontage. In the centre of the view is the signalised intersection with Ladies Mile, while single and two-storey dwellings with access from Ladies Mile can be seen to the left and right of the image.

In the 'proposed view' (VS2A – 2C), the 25m height variation THAB zone that front Ladies Mile is clearly visible at the centre of the view. Due to the topography rising up from Abbotts Way in this area, the visual prominence of this height is slightly heightened. However, the retention of the large-scale Pohutukawa trees helps integrate the scale of the proposal. The deliberate establishment of a viewshaft from Abbotts Way ensure clear connecting views out to Maungakiekie when approaching the Abbotts Way intersection.

In closer proximity views, both from Ladies Mile and within the site itself, the visual corridor established in Precinct Plan 1 - Features Plan strengthens the visual connection to the surrounding Maunga, enhancing the focus on the amenity and natural beauty of this valuable landscape feature. Overall, the proposed design fosters a harmonious coexistence with the existing environment while emphasising the importance of visual amenity and appreciation of the surrounding natural features.

Umere Crescent

Viewpoint 3A is positioned on Umere Crescent, a residential street, offering a north-westward view towards the site. At the centre of the view are the two-storey residential houses located at 9 - 14 Hunterville Crescent. Ladies Mile is situated to the right of the view, while it extends down the hill to the left. The area primarily consists of residential dwellings, including single and two-storey standalone buildings with well-established gardens and vegetation.

In the 'proposed view' (VS3A and 3C), the proposed development is mostly concealed by the intervening, closer proximity residential buildings. Despite this, some of the THAB (25m) zone, fronting onto Ladies Mile, and a portion of the THAB (25m zone) to the lower portion of the site can be seen to the left of the view, partially hidden behind an existing brick house in the images. The scale of the proposed development is slightly larger, but it remains well-integrated with the surrounding residential environment, maintaining contextual harmony. The existing residential properties on Hunterville Crescent, along with the intervening vegetation, effectively screen the proposed development from this viewpoint.

Derby Downs

Viewpoint 4A (Brewer Davison Report figure 21a, 22b) is positioned on Derby Downs, a residential dead-end street, offering a north-westward view towards the site. The central part of the view comprises vegetation situated on the edge of the subject site, with Derby Downs reserve located to the left. The built form in this area mainly consists of single to two-storey residential developments, accompanied by established gardens and vegetation.

⁶ It is noted that a large proportion of this vegetation has now been removed following resource consent approval. The specimen Pohutukawa trees have been retrained.

In the 'proposed view' (VS4C), the proposed development will be a noticeable element within the view. Specifically, the proposed THAB 25m zone will be visible in the distance, positioned behind the two-storey residential buildings. To ensure a smooth transition in scale and prevent any adverse dominance effects in these views, generous offset distances and the inclusion of a MHU zone have been incorporated.

Conclusion

Considering the above factors, it is concluded that the plan change / proposed development may result in **low** adverse visual effects on viewing audiences in the immediate vicinity.

Residential Viewing Audience

The residential catchment to the north and north-east primarily comprises houses oriented towards the north, with their main outdoor areas facing north and/or in rear gardens. Although the proposed development will be visible to the south of these properties, it will not cause adverse shading or other significant effects. The scale of the Ladies Mile Road reserve, coupled with the retention of up to eleven mature Pohutukawa trees along this frontage, will help mitigate the scale of the development and preserve some of the established street front amenity. Additionally, the opening up of the Ladies Mile frontage will introduce new wider-scaled views to Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), thereby enhancing the overall amenity of the locality.

In the residential catchment to the south and south-east, the area is well-treed, which limits long-distance views from the predominantly one and two-storey houses. While the proposed development will be taller than its existing suburban residential neighbours, its visibility in the everyday surroundings of this housing will be limited, and it will have little impact on the established residential character or amenity of the neighbourhood.

Certain houses in close proximity, including those directly adjacent or obliquely opposite on Hunterville Crescent and Ladies Mile, will have clearer views of the proposal. The proposed MHU zone along the eastern boundary has been thoughtfully designed to create a smooth transition to the scale of the neighbouring established houses at the south-eastern boundary of the Site.

Taking these factors into account, it is believed that the Plan Change will result in up to **low** adverse visual effects on viewing audiences in its immediate vicinity. While some existing residents may perceive these effects, it is also important to consider that the proposed Precinct Plan 2 - Remuera Features Plan will enhance the overall amenity and public visual accessibility of the site and its surrounding landscape features. These measures contribute to a balanced integration of the development into its environment, ensuring a positive contribution to the overall urban landscape.

7.0 Conclusions

In conclusion, the site's strategic location makes it an ideal candidate to accommodate increased density and a diverse range of developments. To ensure the realisation of this vision and achieve desired outcomes, a plan change to THAB and MHU zoning has been developed, incorporating specific provisions and Precinct Plans. These measures will pave the way for establishing a high-quality residential community, offering various housing typologies within a

unique and accommodating setting to meet Auckland's projected growth. Moreover, the plan change thoughtfully integrates with the existing urban characteristics and landscape attributes.

From a landscape perspective, while the site itself may have limited significant features, the plan change acknowledges and incorporates important elements such as mature specimen Pohutukawa trees and topographical characteristics through precinct-specific provisions and Precinct Plans. This ensures that these elements remain integral to the future community's outcomes. Furthermore, the plan change takes into account locally prominent features beyond the precinct boundary, such as the surrounding maunga, and incorporates them into the site design through measures like the visual corridor.

Views from the wider context will observe an alternative yet inherently urban residential development. The increased height and density proposed in the plan change will introduce a visually distinct landmark community that will be noticeable within the developed environment. This plan change will enable future development of greater height and density compared to typical suburban developments, which will affect the views for audiences in the immediate vicinity. The proposed plan provisions have been thoughtfully designed to consider adjacent residential interfaces and local viewing audiences. They ensure variation, varied height, and architectural interest throughout the precinct. Visual corridors have been established to protect important local views, and appropriate measures regarding height and setbacks have been implemented to ensure a high visual amenity of the site while making a positive contribution to the wider area.

The introduction of pedestrian through site connection over the private ATR land will enhance the overall amenity of the locality for both residents and the wider local area, fostering a walkable neighbourhood that aligns well with the intensified urban nature of the surrounding area. Importantly, this proposal will not compromise the character or amenity of the wider landscape or maunga.

Thus, the future urban form of the precinct will be responsive to and maintain a connection with the natural landscape attributes of the site and the wider context. It will result in the creation of a high-quality intensified node of residential development that is appropriately located within the surrounding area, aligning with the aspirations of the Auckland Plan for a quality compact city. From a landscape perspective the plan change provisions are considered to be the most appropriate and that these provisions in combination with the existing AUP provisions will result in a suite of provisions that will deliver a high-quality landscape outcome for the site.

About Boffa Miskell

Boffa Miskell is a leading New Zealand professional services consultancy with offices in Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Queenstown. We work with a wide range of local and international private and public sector clients in the areas of planning, urban design, landscape architecture, landscape planning, ecology, biosecurity, cultural heritage, graphics and mapping. Over the past four decades we have built a reputation for professionalism, innovation and excellence. During this time we have been associated with a significant number of projects that have shaped New Zealand's environment.

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