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Fletcher Living Limited
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Attention: Hinsan Li

Ecological Assessment for the Remuera Precinct Plan Change

Introduction

This letter provides an ecological assessment for the proposed Remuera Precinct plan change. Auckland Thoroughbred Racing divested approximately 6.2 ha of land from the eastern corner of the Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct (the site). Fletcher Living purchased this land and obtained resource consent to construct approximately 357 residential dwellings through the COVID-19 Recovery (fast-track consenting) Act 2020 process. Ecological Solutions (2022) (formerly Freshwater Solutions) prepared the ecological effects assessment for the fast-track consent application with information in this report providing the basis of the following ecological assessment for the plan change.

The site is currently part of a 'Special Purpose – Major Recreation Facility Zone' and a plan change is proposed to recognise the consented residential development. The proposed 357 dwellings comprise a mix of detached, duplex and terrace houses, market apartments and an apartment building for active retirement use.

The proposed precinct is referred to as the Remuera Precinct and located at the eastern end of the racecourse and bound by Ladies Mile and Derby Downs Place (see plan in Attachment 1). Proposed zoning of land within the Remuera Precinct comprises 'Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings and Residential – Mixed Housing Urban'.

Ecological Assessment

Terrestrial Ecology

Earthworks and vegetation clearance have commenced on site in accordance with conditions in the resource consent granted through the fast-track consenting process. There were no Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) or vegetation within the site that would qualify as Significant Natural Area (SNA) when applying the criteria in Appendix 1 of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS:IB) (MfE 2023a).

The only vegetation worthy of protection and to be retained were 11 pōhutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) along the boundary with Ladies Mile. Pōhutukawa are 'Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable', but the presence of a single threatened species of flora in an area would not qualify it as an SNA based on qualifiers in Appendix 1 of the NPS:IB (MfE 2023a).

Ecological effects on lizards and birds were managed by RMA Ecology in 2023 during consented vegetation clearance and earthworks.

Freshwater Ecology

There were no natural gullies, watercourses, wetlands or lakes within the site. The only freshwater habitat was an artificial irrigation pond used to hold water for irrigating the race track. The irrigation pond was classified as artificial as it was not constructed over a natural drainage system, replaced a natural freshwater environment or connected with a natural downstream drainage system.

The artificial irrigation pond held shortfin eel, which have a 'Non Threatened' status (Dunn et al. 2018). Fish relocations were carried out by RMA Ecology in 2023 prior to and during the consented removal of the artificial irrigation pond to minimise effects on shortfin eel.

A change in land use to residential development has the potential to increase impervious surfaces and the rate and quality of stormwater runoff that requires management to minimise effects on the downstream aquatic environment. The Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) prepared by Woods (2023) for the site was approved by Healthy Waters to be adopted into Schedule 10 of the Regionwide Network Discharge Consent (DIS60069613) (NDC) for the diversion and discharge of stormwater from the public stormwater network.

A new artificial irrigation pond has been established in the in-field of the race track and stormwater from the Remuera Precinct will be directed to the pond and used to irrigate the race track. The use of this water for irrigating the race track will avoid a large volume of stormwater being discharged downstream and minimises the potential effect of stormwater on the receiving environment.

There were no relevant matters to address in relation to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS:FM, MfE 2023b) as part of the resource consent process and this remains the case for this plan change.

Conclusion

With the exception of the pōhutukawa along the boundary with Ladies Mile, which are to be retained, there will be no remaining terrestrial or freshwater habitats within the site after consented earthworks. Stormwater related effects on the downstream environment will be managed by implementing stormwater management options in the SMP and irrigating the race track with water in the new artificial irrigation pond. The plan change gives effect to and is consistent with objectives and policies in the NPS:FM and NPS:IB and there are no relevant matters to address. No ecology related provisions are recommended for the plan change.

Ngā mihi mahana



Nick Carter

Ecological Solutions

References

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Ecological Solutions 2022: The Hill – Ellerslie Racecourse: Ecological effects assessment. Report prepared for Fletcher Living Limited, August 2022.

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Ministry for the Environment 2023b: National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020, February 2023.

Woods 2023. Stormwater Management Plan – The Hill, 100 Ascot Avenue, Greenlane, Fletcher Residential Living, Final, Version 8. Prepared by Wood & Partners Consultants Ltd, 7 June 2023

