EARL DESIGN
URBAN DESIGN + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Memorandum

To: Horsham Downs Estate Ltd

From: Jack Earl – Landscape Architect, Earl Design Ltd

Date: 4 June 2026

Title: Horsham Downs Estate Fast Track Referral Application – Landscape (Memo)

1.0 Introduction

Earl Design Ltd (EDL) has been requested by Horsham Downs Estate Ltd (the applicant) to provide a high-level landscape review for the purposes of a referral application to the Fast Track Application Act (FTAA) for the Horsham Downs Estate Project (project).

I have been involved in the project from a high-level masterplanning process, of which the design process involved landscape analysis to frame urban design and landscape principles, and key moves to inform the spatial arrangements of the high-level masterplan (proposal).

The following documents have been relied upon in the preparation of these landscape comments:

- Horsham Downs Estate Masterplan (high-level);
- Horsham Downs Estate Fast Track Referral Application – Ecology by Ecological Solutions Environmental Consultants; and,
- Technical landscape analytical mapping for the application site (refer to Appendix A for mapping examples).

Should the project be successful in referring to the Fast-track EPA process, a full Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment and Landscape Architecture Drawing Package will be prepared and lodged as part of the substantive application.

2.0 Qualifications, experience and Code of Conduct

I hold qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (First Class Hons) from Lincoln University and a postgraduate Master's in Urban Design from The University of Auckland.

I am a registered Landscape Architect of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA). I have practised as a Landscape Architect in New Zealand for 15 years.

I have been involved in a range of work in expert landscape evaluation, assessment, and advice throughout New Zealand, including:

- Preparation of structure plans for rural and urban developments;

- Conceptual design and landscape assessment of infrastructure, rural, coastal and urban development; and,
- Detailed design and implementation supervision of infrastructure, rural, coastal and urban projects.

I am also currently providing landscape planning, urban design, and landscape design specialist services for the Fast Track Application referral for the Harlow Lifestyle Village at 2025 Ohaupo Road, Te Awamutu, Waikato.

I am currently a panel member of the Auckland Urban Design Panel (2024 - 2026), on behalf of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).

Although this report is not for a hearing before the Environment Court, the author records that they have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and agree to comply with it.

The authors confirm that the issues addressed in this report are within the authors' area of expertise, except where the authors state they have relied on the information of other persons. The authors have not omitted to consider material facts known to them that might alter or detract from the opinions the author has expressed.

3.0 Landscape Assessment Methodology

In keeping with landscape assessment best practice, I confirm that the following landscape comments have been prepared applying the landscape assessment methodology outlined in Te Tangi a te Manu (TTatM) Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines.

I can confirm that I have also visited the site and the surrounding area.

4.0 Existing Landscape Characteristics and Values

4.1 Site Context Description

The site is approximately 54ha in size and located at 319 Gordonton Road, northwest of and adjacent to Hamilton City, north of State Highway 1 and within the Waikato District Council (WDC) boundary. Refer to Figure 1 below for a site location and context plan.



Figure 1 – Site location plan. Site outline shown in red.

West of the site, also located east of State Highway 1 but within the Hamilton City boundary, is a developing residential community of Rototuna North, located off Horsham Downs Road.

The site's local area character is heavily influenced by the area's proximity to Hamilton City, and State Highway 1. Specifically, a mixed range of uses comprises this character description, including:

a) a dozen or more residential lifestyle lots, typically 0.65ha in size, located off Broadley Downs and Gordonton Road east of the site;

b) Northgate Community Church is located south of and adjacent to the site;

c) Morning Calm Lodge is located south of and adjacent to the site;

d) a couple of residential lifestyle lots, approximately 2ha in size, located off Gordonton Road north of and adjacent to the site;

e) Zealong Tea Estate comprising commercial, rural and industrial activities;

f) Modified land drainage network;

g) Gordonton Road (Arterial); and,

h) rural farmland adjacent to the site's north and western boundaries.

The site itself is also farmland, and collectively, the local area is characteristic of an urban fringe, semi-rural environment.

4.2 Site Description

The site is a single lot with an irregular shape and is zoned as General Rural Zone (GRUZ) under the Waikato District Plan – Operative in Part (WDPOP). There are no Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Outstanding Natural Features that overlay the site under either the district or regional planning frameworks.

The landform forms a wide, open gully that slopes north away from the ridgeline of Gordonton Road traverses. The landform slopes from flat to moderately steep from Gordonton Road, flattening to a gentle to flat slope halfway into the site, then extending west to a drainage ditch on the western boundary.

The slope faces north to north west, capturing good levels of sunlight and providing views north out over the wider Waikato region towards the Hakarimata and Taupiri Ranges.

The site currently operates as a dairy farm, and comprises paddocks, dairy and ancillary sheds, a mix of exotic trees and hedgerows, two residential dwellings, a network of farm tracks and modified land drainage systems. An overhead transmission powerline bisects the eastern portion of the site. Refer to Figure 2 below for a Site Plan.



Figure 2 – Site plan. Site outline shown in red. Contours (white) are shown at 1m intervals.

5.0 Landscape Capacity to Absorb Urban Development on the Site

In my opinion, the site has the capacity to absorb urban development from a landscape perspective, assuming the following key landscape principles underpin such urban development:

a) Across the eastern and northern part of the site, incorporating landscape buffers along site edges (including road frontages) to assist the integration of development into its broader rural landscape setting;

b) Consolidating infrastructure where practicable, such as stormwater and integrating it into a wider landscape and open space strategy to provide for a range of co-benefits including ecology, cultural values, recreation and landscape values;

c) Using a cohesive landscape framework that integrates with the overall urban design and provides a considered approach to sensitive boundary interfaces;

d) Requiring the restoration planting of any steep slopes, gullies and streams, wetlands or drains;

e) Designing earthworks strategies to align with street blocks and the natural landform contours where practical, to potentially reduce the need for significant earthworks and prominent retaining walls;

f) Aligning public open space networks and walkway/cycleway routes alongside or throughout the landscape framework; and,

g) Ensuring good connectivity to the established developed area of Hamilton City.

The absence of 'landscape' or 'viewshaft' overlays, along with the close proximity to an established urban area and transport links, makes this area well-suited to urban development from a landscape perspective.

6.0 Proposed Masterplan

In my opinion, the proposed high-level masterplan is supportable from a landscape perspective as long as the detailed design integrates the following aspects:

a) The integration of a cohesive open space and walkway/cycleway strategy throughout the landscape framework;

b) A native planting buffer along the northern and eastern edges of the site;

c) The restoration planting of any steep slopes, gullies and streams, wetlands or drains;

d) Retaining wall design is integrated at subdivision stage with built form, public spaces and planting to manage potential landscape-related effects;

e) A planting buffer along the eastern Gordonton Road frontage of the Residential lots (where not accessed off Gordonton Road), targeting the establishment of hedge planting with groupings of residential-scale exotic and native specimen trees; and

f) A comprehensive street tree planting strategy.

7.0 Conclusion

Assuming the detailed design recommendations are implemented, I consider the proposal supportable from a landscape perspective and that it does not generate significant landscape effects.

The proposal will support good accessibility to a range of public open spaces and local neighbourhood amenities and services. And it will provide a high level of amenity, including safe, vibrant, and aesthetic neighbourhood environments for the community, locals, and visitors alike.

Overall, the intended masterplan is considered to provide a quality neighbourhood environment, while appropriately minimising off-site effects.

A detailed Landscape and Visual Assessment and Landscape Design Drawing Package will be prepared and lodged as part of the substantive application.

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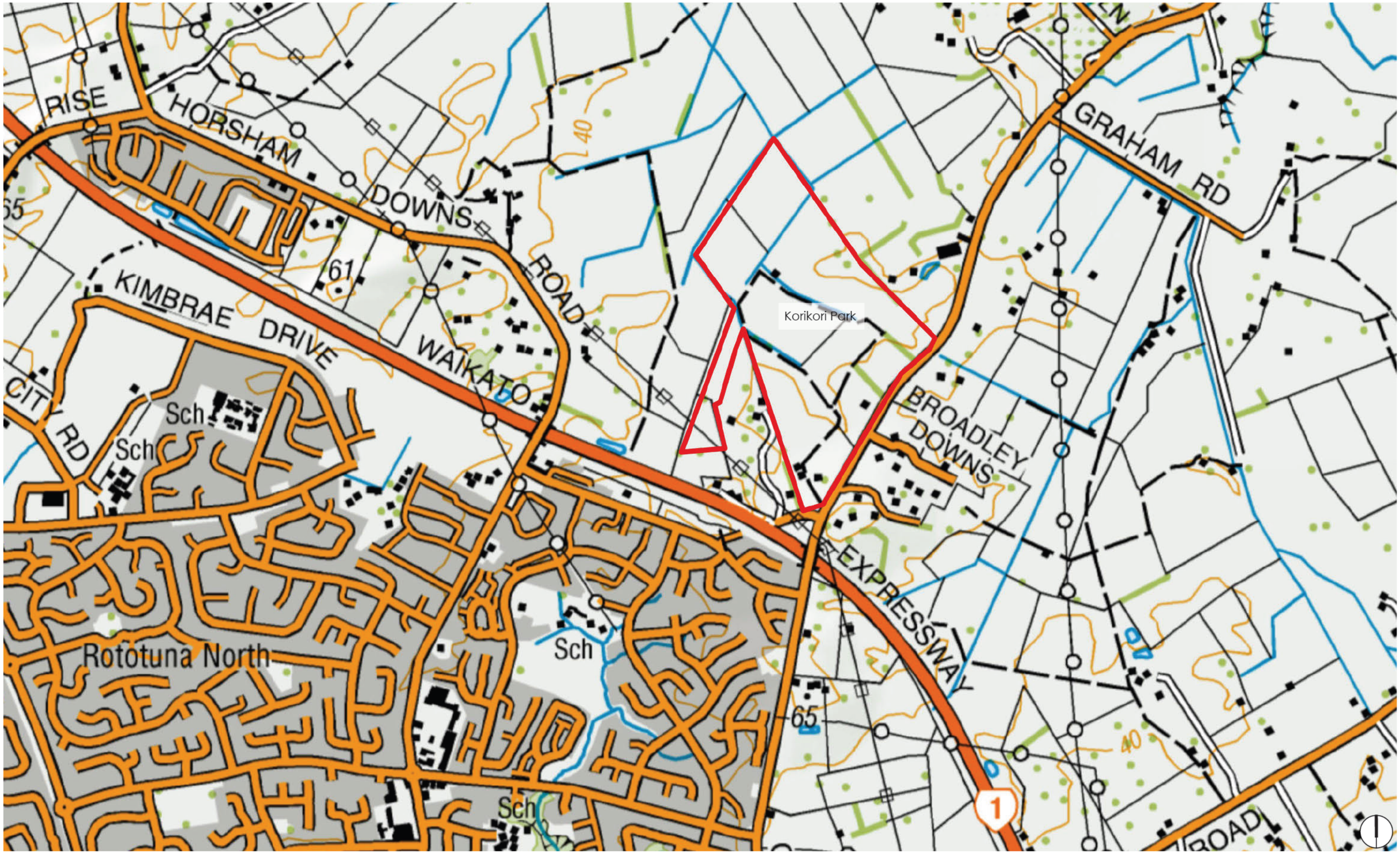
Appendix A – Graphic Supplement



EARL DESIGN
URBAN DESIGN + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Date.	07.05.2026
Scale.	1:12,500 at A3
Sheet.	1/5
Drawn by.	J.Earl
Revision.	1

Horsham Downs Estate
Graphic Supplement
Context Map - Wide



EARL DESIGN
URBAN DESIGN + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Date.	07.05.2026
Scale.	1:12,500 at A3
Sheet.	2/5
Drawn by.	J.Earl
Revision.	1

Horsham Downs Estate
Graphic Supplement
Topographical Map - Wide



Legend.

Site outline

1m contours

Horsham Downs Estate

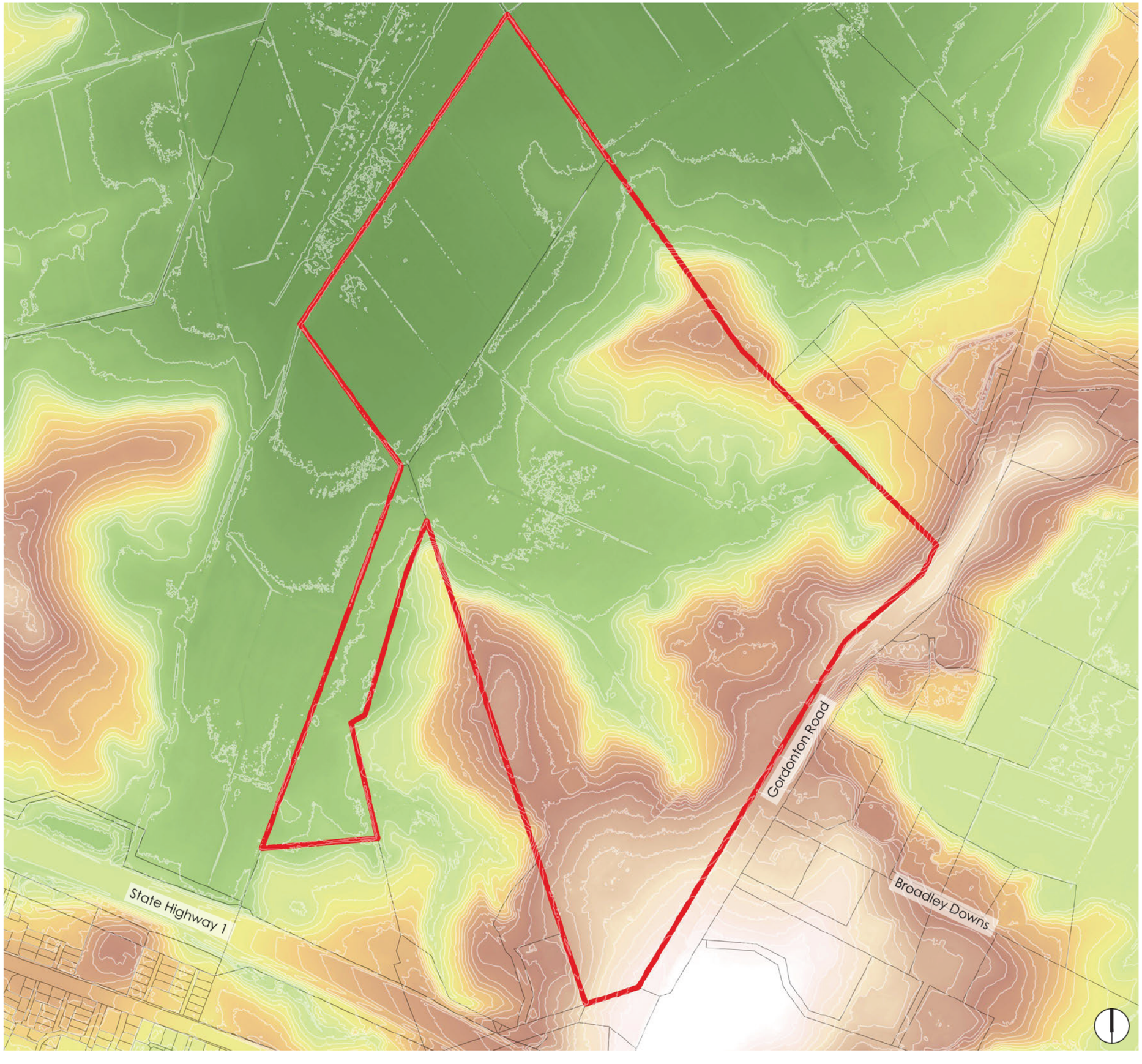
Graphic Supplement

Site Map

Date.	07.05.2026
Scale.	1:5,000 at A3
Sheet.	3/5
Drawn by.	J.Earl
Revision.	1

EARL DESIGN

URBAN DESIGN + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



Legend.

- Site outline
- 1m contours
- Greater elevation
- Lesser elevation

Horsham Downs Estate

Graphic Supplement

Elevation Map

Date.	07.05.2026
Scale.	1:5,000 at A3
Sheet.	4/5
Drawn by.	J.Earl
Revision.	1

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Legend

- Site boundary
- Indicative roundabout
- Indicative SW wetland and open space
- Indicative Neighbourhood Park
- Indicative Neighbourhood Centre
- Indicative pedestrian connections
- Indicative streetscape plantings
- Indicative location for infrastructure
- Indicative residential buildings

Horsham Downs Estate

Graphic Supplement

Masterplan

Date.	07.05.2026
Scale.	1:5,000 at A3
Sheet.	5/5
Drawn by.	J.Earl
Revision.	Rev 4

Notes:

1. Streetscape layouts, building outlines, Haynes Place and the Gordonton Road layout are shown indicatively.

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