Memorandum

To: Horsham Downs Estate Ltd

From: Jack Earl – Urban Designer, Earl Design Ltd

Date: 4 June 2026

Title: Horsham Downs Estate Fast Track Referral Application – Urban Design (Memorandum)

1.0 Introduction

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

As part of this request, Earl Design Ltd was also asked to produce a high-level masterplan of the site. The design process for developing the high-level masterplan included:

- a site visit;
- desktop -based site studies;
- urban design review of previous schemes;
- establishment of urban design and landscape principles; and,
- establishment of key moves relative to the site's opportunities and constraints.

To support the referral application, this memorandum provides a high-level assessment and relevant descriptions of the urban design aspects of the proposal, including:

- a summary of the Site's key characteristics and context;
- a summary of the proposal;
- a summary of key urban design opportunities and design response;
- potential urban design effects;
- preliminary urban design recommendations; and,
- a conclusion.

Should the project be successful in referring to the Fast-track EPA process, a full Urban Design Assessment and Urban Design 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 have practised as an urban designer in New Zealand for over 12 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 Site and Context Description

3.1 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. The site is zoned as General Rural Zone (GRUZ) under the Waikato District Plan – Operative in Part (WDPOP). Refer to Figure 1 below for a site location and context plan.



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

The site is located approximately 1.4km from the Horsham Village Commercial Centre, 2.4km from the Rototuna Suburban Centre area, 1.3km from Waikato Waldorf School (year 1 - 13) and 2.8km to Rototuna Junior and Senior High School via an existing footpath from the Haynes Place / Gordonton Road intersection adjacent to the site, that forms across Te Ara Ki Karamu overpass over State Highway 1 and into Hamilton City on the other side.

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 surrounding context is characterised by a mixed range of uses, including:

- a dozen or more residential lifestyle lots, typically 0.65ha in size, located off Broadley Downs and Gordonton Road east of the site;
- Northgate Community Church is located south of and adjacent to the site;
- Morning Calm Lodge is located south of and adjacent to the site;
- a couple of residential lifestyle lots, approximately 2ha in size, located off Gordonton Road north of and adjacent to the site;
- Zealong Tea Estate comprising commercial, rural and industrial activities; and,
- 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, given its immediate access over State Highway 1 to Hamilton City's urban area.

3.2 Site Description

The site is a single lot with an irregular shape. The landform initially slopes flat to moderately downhill from the Gordonton Road ridgeline and site boundary interface on the east, flattening to a gentle to flat slope halfway into the site, then extending west to a drainage ditch on the western boundary interface.

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.

4.0 The Proposal

The proposal is illustrated as a high-level master plan (shown in Figure 3 below), which builds on fundamental urban design principles to ensure an urban design-appropriate development approach.

The urban design principles are underpinned by the site's opportunities and constraints. The principles are well informed by adherence to the guidelines set out in the Waikato District Council's Residential Subdivision Urban Design Guidelines, 2018, and to the NZ Urban Design Protocol.



Figure 3 – High-level Masterplan. Site outline shown in red.

The high-level masterplan seeks to enable the following interventions:

- Residential development and subdivision to provide for approximately 850-950 lots, delivering a mix of housing typologies to support a range of household types, life stages, and affordability outcomes;
- The lots range in size from approximately 200m2 through to 650m2 and 800m2, to align with the site's opportunities and constraints, including, but not limited to, what locations and their level of accessibility might support medium density living, and what locations might not, where sensitive interfaces exist, and where landform features might be site constraints on lot sizes;
- It is intended that most dwellings/lots will contain stand-alone, duplex or terrace dwelling typologies and the level of density will be consolidated within a reasonable level of proximity to a neighbourhood centre, a neighbourhood park, the wider open space provision and the main access road;
- The orientation of blocks to provide reasonable access to sunlight, wider views of the Waikato region and to respond to the site's landform by potentially reducing excessive retaining walls;
- A neighbourhood centre (approximately 3,000m2) located and designed to provide everyday services and other complementary uses that reduce travel demand and support local living;
- A neighbourhood park (approximately 3,500m2) to provide kick-around space, play activities and more passive forms of recreation. Co-located adjacent to the neighbourhood centre along the main

access road to support local identity, accessibility, activity and an appropriate level of residential density;

- An integrated and well-connected street network connecting to Gordonton Road and Haynes Place as the primary access points to the proposal, with the internal network supported by pedestrian/cycle accessways, a legible layout and appropriately sized blocks;
- Provision for future access to adjoining blocks through the alignment of internal road and lots; and,
- An open space and green-blue network, incorporating low-lying areas, infrastructure, landscape buffers that enhance amenity and ecological outcomes, and help integrate and soften the proposal at the rural boundary.

The following urban design principles underpin the proposal's interventions and key moves, listed above:

- Create a legible, safe and connected movement network.
- Support density through increased accessibility.
- Integrate drainage, recreation, ecology, and cultural values.
- Provide diverse housing for varied needs.
- Respond positively to the site's opportunities and constraints.
- Deliver responsive transitions at sensitive interfaces.

5.0 Potential Urban Design Effects

The following list of potential urban design effects has been assessed, and it should be noted that, based on my experience, specific detailed design solutions should mitigate such effects.

- The transition from the larger rural / rural residential lots adjoining the site to the smaller residential blocks proposed will create a visual change beyond what might be anticipated in the area. A visual change does not necessarily comprise an adverse effect; in some cases, such visual changes may be positive;
- The overhead transmission lines constrain development beneath and detract from neighbourhood amenity, however, there are well-understood controls identifying the appropriate separation distances between development and transmission lines, and the project can be designed to comply with these;
- The irregular shape of the south-western corner of the site results in limited connectivity in comparison to the remainder of the site;
- A neighbourhood centre must be well designed to avoid potential CPTED and visual amenity effects, however there are well-known and understood best practise urban design interventions to achieve positive outcomes;
- Similarly, other design features will be required to address potential CPTED risks within large open spaces;
- A change in streetscape character to Gordonton Road (from peri-rural / rural fringe to urban) for those who use the connection, resulting from the site's change in character, and from the potential change in use of Gordonton Road relating to the site's proposed access points; and,

- Potential for the neighbourhood centre to generate visual and amenity effects, including from noise, signage and lighting to nearby residential lots. Again, these can be appropriately controlled through best practise urban design interventions and consent conditions.

6.0 Preliminary Urban Design Recommendations

This section assesses the potential positive and adverse urban design effects arising from the proposal. For any identified effects, this section outlines potential design and/or planning-based mitigation strategies required to ensure a high-quality urban design outcome and consistency with best practices and local standards.

- To address the visual change beyond what might be anticipated in the area, a 5m planted buffer could be established at sensitive boundary interfaces;
- The visual impact and amenity detraction associated with overhead transmission lines can be managed through site-specific building setbacks and the integration of open space and landscaping / vegetation choices in accordance with the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Activities) Regulations 2009;
- To overcome the limited connectivity inherent in the site's irregular shape, additional safe and accessible pedestrian accessways could be provided;
- Potential CPTED and visual amenity effects arising from the neighbourhood centre can be appropriately avoided or mitigated through the implementation of active frontages, quality material palettes, well-defined routes, sightlines, lighting, and design controls, where practical.
- The change in streetscape character along Gordonton Road can be managed by applying quality streetscape landscape treatments, legible and safe access points and quality front yard landscape treatments, and/or a landscape buffer to the more sensitive interfaces, where rear yards and fencing may occur adjacent to Gordonton Road;
- Potential amenity effects from the neighbourhood centre, including noise, signage, and lighting, could be minimised through acoustic and visual screening, including design and consent conditions, relative to nearby residential lots. The existing district plan controls relating to noise and odour, as well as bylaws will also apply, assisting to achieve appropriate levels of amenity;
- To address potentially adverse visual effects regarding urbanisation, earthworks strategies should align with street blocks to potentially reduce the need for large retaining walls, which may impact the visual amenity of streetscapes, the neighbourhood and public open spaces;
- Neighbourhood quality and character could be further managed through the application of design guidance that governs building form, scale, front yards and architectural quality. It is anticipated that the detailed design will achieve such outcomes either through design planning documents, consent conditions, private covenants or a combination of all three; and,
- Well-considered urban design strategies for the public realm will require positive CPTED outcomes, provide for visual amenity, ecological, cultural and recreational values, while enabling well-functioning infrastructure, such as drainage solutions.

7.0 Conclusion

Assuming the preliminary urban design recommendations are implemented, I consider that the proposal illustrated in the high-level masterplan aligns with the urban design principles set out under 4.0, the Proposal and will achieve a well-functioning urban environment for the following reasons:

- Cohesive and well-designed blocks of dwellings to provide a clear legible network of streets that provide for safe, connected and attractive streetscapes;
- Efficient layout of blocks, open spaces and streets to maximise the efficient use of land while providing a variety of housing choices in an area of the Waikato that would benefit from increased choice and housing competition;
- The orientation of streets and blocks allows reasonable sunlight access and on-site amenity
- The housing choices provided have good accessibility to jobs, local amenities and services and open spaces; and,
- The areas identified for housing are not subject to material risks of flooding or other natural hazards, improving the overall resilience of the housing stock to natural hazards.

In conclusion, this design-led proposal represents a good urban design response to the site's opportunities and constraints and meets the urban design guidance set out for residential subdivision at national and local scales, resulting in a quality urban environment that does not generate significant urban design effects.

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

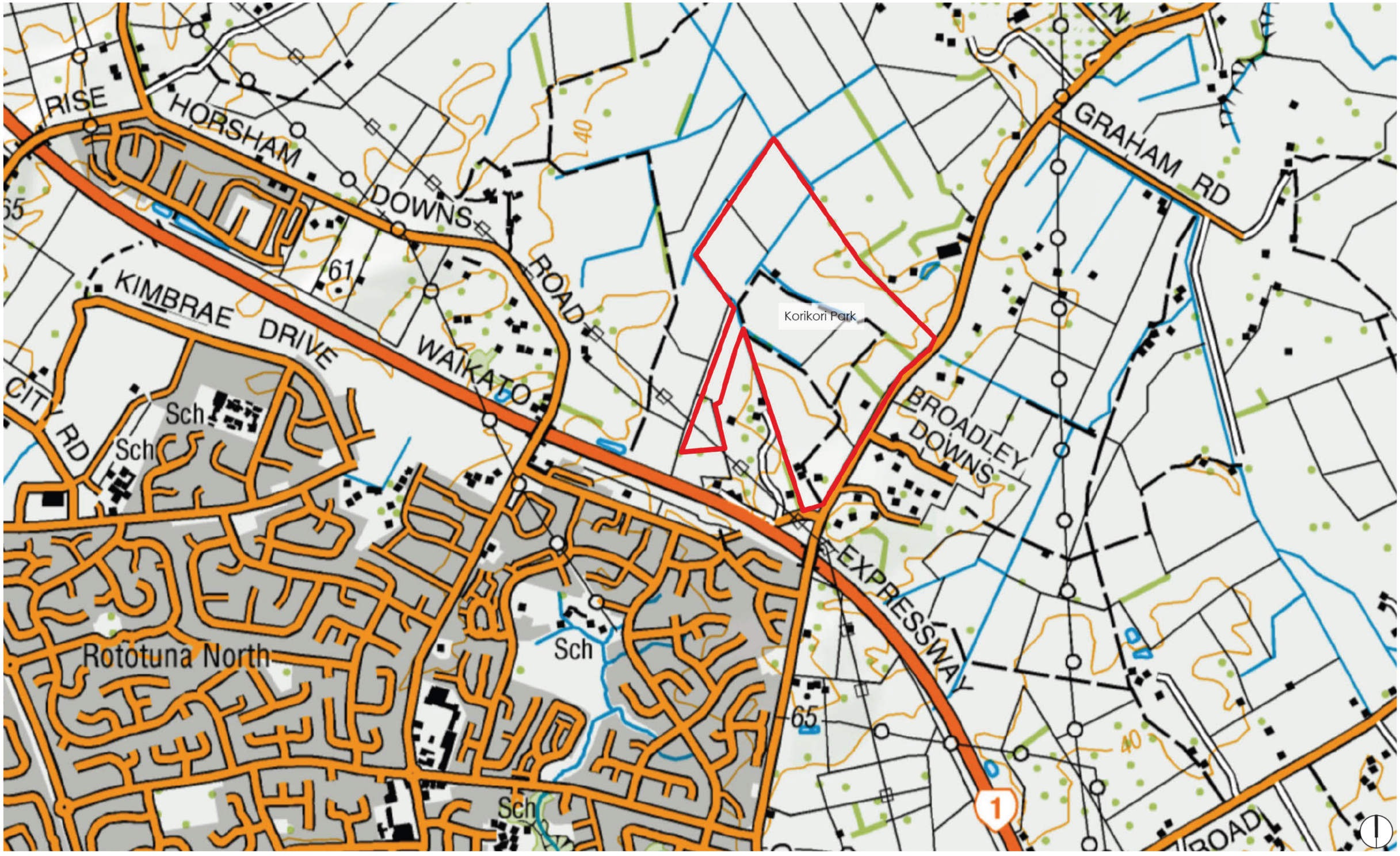
Appendix A



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

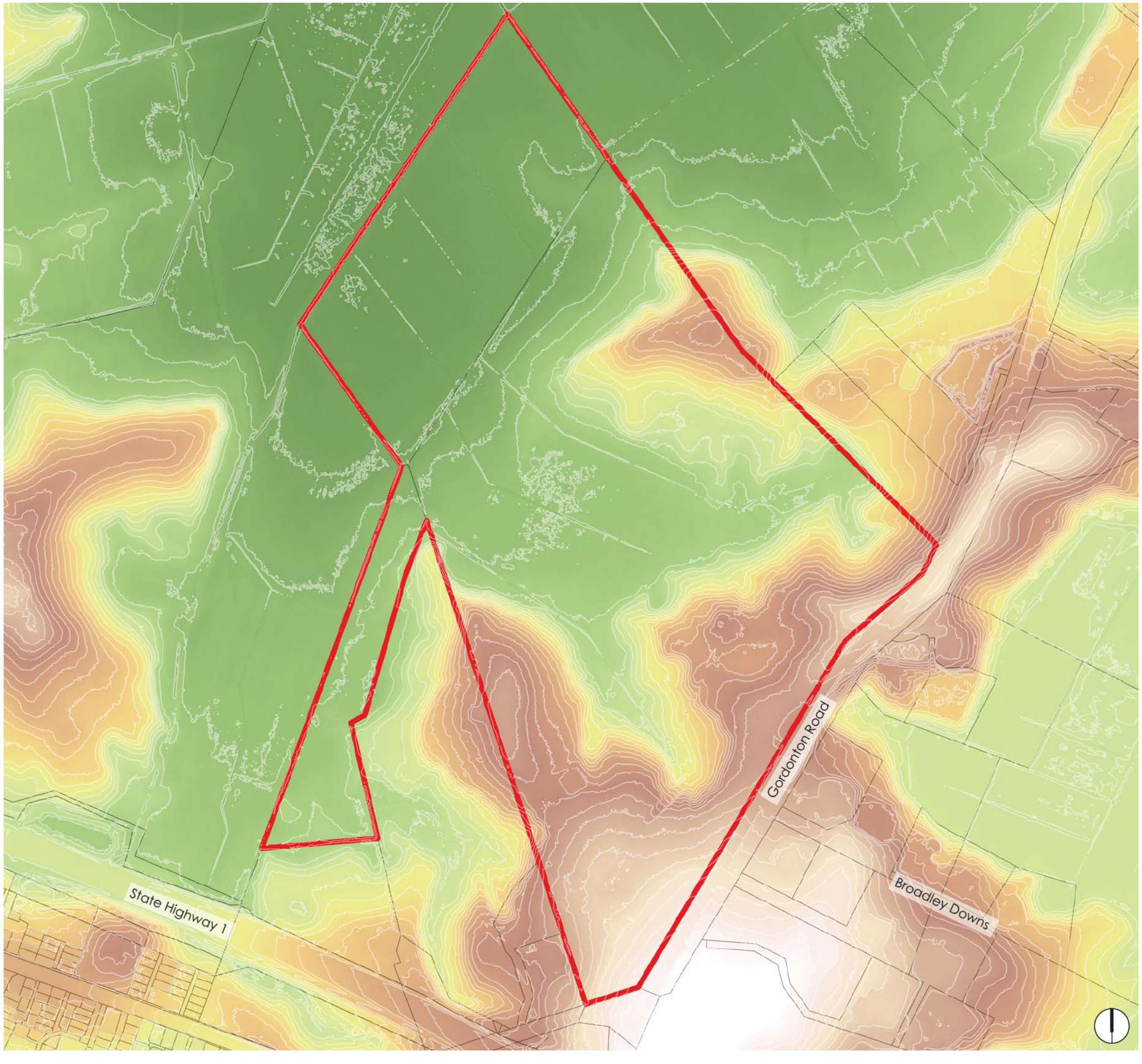
Graphic Supplement

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

EARL DESIGN

URBAN DESIGN + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



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.

EARL DESIGN

URBAN DESIGN + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE