



Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

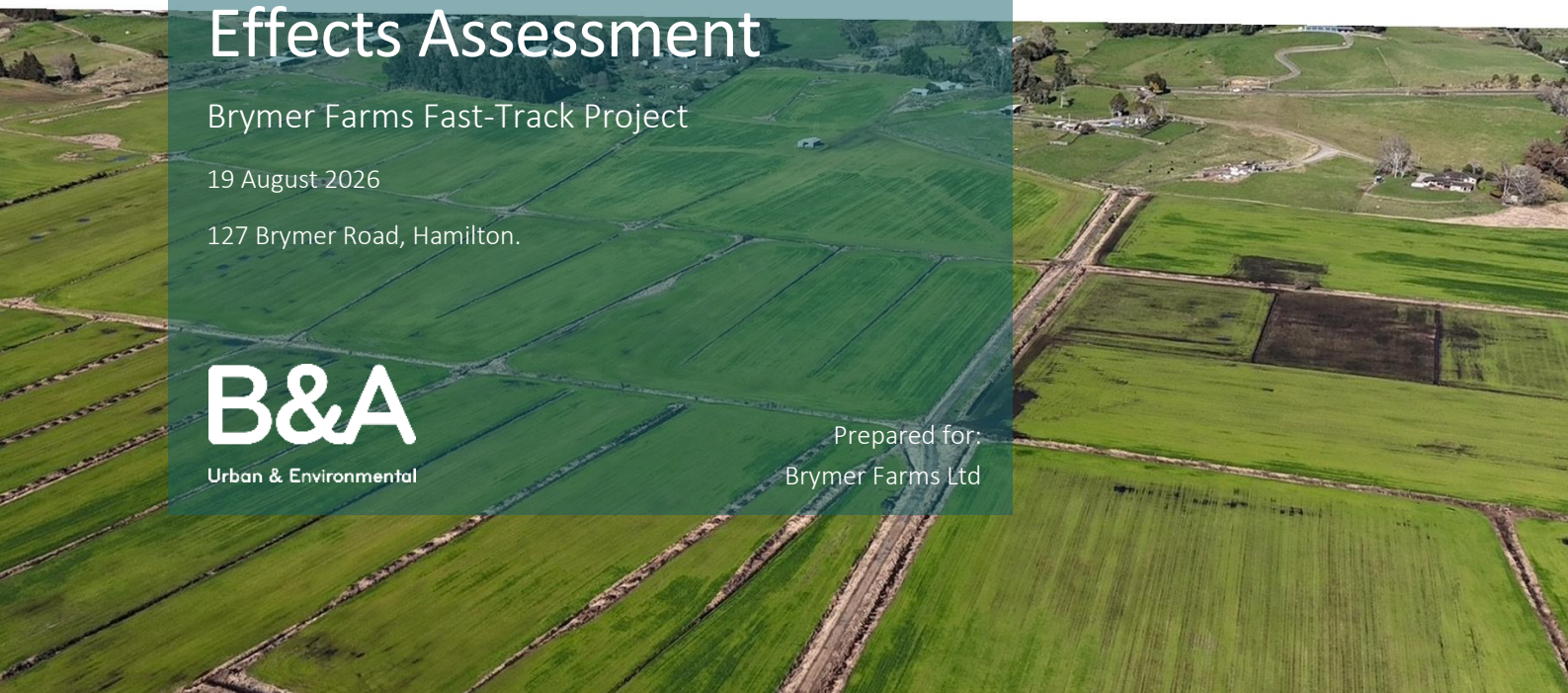
Brymer Farms Fast-Track Project

19 August 2026

127 Brymer Road, Hamilton.

B&A
Urban & Environmental

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Brymer Farms Ltd



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1.0 Introduction

Barker & Associates (B&A) has been engaged by Brymer Farms Ltd (Client) to prepare a Landscape & Visual Assessment (LVA) to support a Fast Track application for a housing development at 127 Brymer Road. The assessment addresses effects on landscape character, visual amenity and natural character within the Site and the surrounding environment.

1.1 Methodology

This LVA has been undertaken by a Registered Landscape Architect in accordance with Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2022). It recognises landscape as an integrated system of biophysical attributes, perceptual experience, and associative meanings and values, which together shape landscape character and identity and provide the basis for this assessment - refer to Appendix 1.

Before fieldwork, a desktop study was undertaken. This included a review of the Operative District Plan - Waikato Section, Waikato District Plan (Operative in Part), Waikato Regional Policy Statement and Waikato Regional Plan, specialist reports including ecology, proposed precinct plans and aerial imagery and Google Street View. Fieldwork was undertaken in October 2025.

1.1.1 Assessment Process

Landscape and visual effects were evaluated by considering 'Sensitivity,' which reflects the value and susceptibility of the landscape or view to change; and 'Magnitude of change,' which considers the scale, extent, and duration of that change. The overall level of effect is determined by combining these two factors, as outlined in Appendix 1 and effects are described as positive, neutral, or adverse. The following scale has been adopted to describe the overall level of effect:

Effect	Planning Term	Description
Very High	Significant	A complete or near total alteration of key landscape characteristics or values, amounting to a fundamental change in character.
High	Significant	A major change that significantly alters the coherence or perceived amenity of the landscape or view.
Moderate – High	More than minor	A clearly perceptible change that influences the legibility or integrity of the landscape or view.
Moderate	More than minor	A distinct but not overwhelming change where key features remain evident and the overall landscape pattern remains coherent.
Moderate – Low	Minor	A limited or localised change that is noticeable but not dominant in the broader context.
Low	Less than minor	A minor alteration discernible under specific conditions with little influence on landscape character or viewer perception.
Very Low	Less than minor	A negligible or imperceptible change approximating a no change situation.

Table 1. Landscape Assessment Ratings Summary

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 Key Landscape Elements

The key landscape related components shown on the masterplan include:

- **Commercial and neighbourhood centre areas:** Two commercial lots are identified to provide for neighbourhood centre activities and support the surrounding residential community.
- **Blue-green network:** Existing wetlands are retained with 10m offsets and integrated with proposed wetland offsetting areas, stormwater devices, treatment swales, rain gardens, stormwater channels and watercourses.
- **Public open space:** The proposal includes two public parks, two recreation reserves and 14 stormwater reserves. These spaces form part of the wider open space and stormwater network across the Site.
- **Movement and connections:** A hierarchy of collector, commercial and local roads provide the main movement structure. This is supported by 31 JOALs or rights of way, 10 pedestrian accessways and public footpaths connecting residential areas with parks, reserves and adjoining roads.
- **Landform and retaining:** The proposed landform include areas of cut and fill retaining, together with designed contours that accommodate the road network, residential development and stormwater infrastructure.
- **Staging:** Residential development is divided into 12 main stages, with a separate Stage 1A containing the rural residential lots.

2.2 Housing Outcomes

The proposal provides a range of residential typologies and lot sizes:

- **Apartment lots:** Two lots, with the final unit yield subject to detailed design.
- **Rear loaded terrace dwellings:** 68 dwellings on 4.5m wide lots.
- **Front loaded terrace dwellings:** 50 dwellings on 7.5m wide lots.
- **10m to 11m lots:** 175 lots capable of accommodating detached or duplex dwellings.
- **12m to 12m plus lots:** 164 lots capable of accommodating detached or duplex dwellings.
- **14m to 14m plus lots:** 222 lots intended for detached dwellings.
- **Irregular shaped lots:** 95 lots intended for detached dwellings.
- **Rural residential lots:** Eight lots intended for detached dwellings.

The masterplan provides 782 residential units excluding the apartment lots. The total development yield is estimated at approximately 1,000 residential units, with the final number dependent on the detailed design of the apartment and neighbourhood centre areas.



Figure 1. The Proposed Masterplan (B&A).

3.0 Planning Context

3.1 Relevant Planning Authorities

The Site is within Waikato District and immediately adjoins Hamilton City's western urban edge. Waikato District Council is the territorial authority, and the Waikato District Plan, which is operative in part, provides the primary district planning framework.

The Site is zoned GRUZ General Rural Zone and is subject to the Waikato River Catchment Area A control and the NZTA 15 State Highway noise control boundary. These provisions are relevant to the integration of residential development, infrastructure and sensitive activities along the Site's southern interface.

Hamilton City Council has no statutory jurisdiction over the Site. However, its planning context is relevant because the proposal adjoins and will connect with Hamilton's neighbourhoods, roads, reserves, open spaces and movement networks. Hamilton's residential zones are therefore used later as contextual benchmarks for describing anticipated character and intensity, not as applying zones or statutory tests.

The Waikato Regional Policy Statement and operative Waikato Regional Plan provide the principal regional framework for earthworks, stormwater, discharges, wetlands, watercourses and works within or near water bodies. Relevant provisions address water quality, land disturbance, wetlands, discharges and river and lake bed activities.

Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato, the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater are also relevant. The proposed blue green network includes retained and enhanced wetlands, wetland loss, onsite and offsite offsetting, watercourse culverting and loss, new stream channels and stormwater treatment. These provisions reinforce the need to protect freshwater values, maintain hydrological and ecological connectivity, provide fish passage where relevant, and integrate water management with the Site's landscape structure.

3.1.1 Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Features

The Site is not subject to a mapped Outstanding Natural Landscape, Outstanding Natural Feature, Outstanding or High Natural Character Area, or Significant Natural Area overlay. The assessment is therefore not governed by the protection of an identified outstanding landscape or natural feature. However, the Site retains landscape values associated with its landform, pastoral openness, wetlands, watercourses, mature vegetation, rural edge character and relationship with Hamilton's established urban boundary. These are considered through the Site's biophysical, perceptual and sensory, and associative dimensions.

The principal landscape issue is the transformation of this modified rural edge into a residential neighbourhood. Relevant effects include changes to landscape character, visual amenity, rural openness, settlement pattern and the legibility of the new urban edge, including how built form, earthworks, retaining, roads and infrastructure integrate with the Site's landform and blue green and open space networks.

Section 6(a) of the RMA remains relevant to wetlands, watercourses and their margins. Although their natural character varies due to past modification, their retention, enhancement and integration within the blue green network provide opportunities to strengthen natural character, ecological connectivity and the visibility of water within the future neighbourhood.

3.1.2 Underlying Rural Zone and Strategic Planning Context

The Site is located within the GRUZ General Rural Zone under the Waikato District Plan Operative in Part. The planning maps also identify the Waikato River Catchment Area A control and the NZTA 15 State highway noise control boundary as applying to the Site.

The General Rural Zone is intended to provide primarily for farming and other rural activities within a landscape characterised by openness, vegetation, limited built development and separation between buildings. Waterways, wetlands, indigenous vegetation and natural landforms are also recognised as contributors to rural character and amenity. This zoning is relevant to establishing the existing landscape baseline. The Site currently displays an open pastoral pattern, a relatively low level of built development and a clear relationship with remaining rural land to the west and south.

However, the proposal is not a rural activity intended to maintain the Site as part of an enduring rural production landscape. It is a comprehensively planned urban edge extension being advanced through the fast-track process. The Site immediately adjoins Hamilton's established urban area and is already influenced by residential development, roads, reserves and other urban edge activities.

The landscape assessment must therefore recognise both the existing rural zoning and the Site's physical and perceptual relationship with Hamilton. The relevant landscape question is not simply whether the proposal retains the existing rural character. It is whether the proposed urbanisation forms a coherent, legible and well-

integrated extension of the existing settlement pattern, while appropriately managing adverse effects on landscape character, visual amenity, natural character, landform and surrounding interfaces.

The proposal will result in a substantial and permanent change from rural land to an urban residential neighbourhood. The appropriateness of this change depends on the quality of the masterplan, the distribution and scale of built form, the treatment of the Site's boundaries, the integration of wetlands and watercourses, the quality of streets and public open spaces, and the establishment of a strong landscape framework.

3.1.3 Strategic Landscape Planning Rationale

The Site has a clear landscape planning rationale for comprehensively planned residential development because it adjoins Hamilton's existing western urban edge rather than being isolated within the wider rural landscape. Established residential neighbourhoods, Te Kootii Park, Brymer Road, Whatawhata Road, watercourses, wetlands and adjoining rural land provide a defined receiving environment within which the proposal can be understood.

A comprehensive masterplan allows the settlement edge, movement network, housing pattern, open space and infrastructure to be planned together. This provides greater opportunity to create a coherent urban form than would result from fragmented or piecemeal development.

The current masterplan uses existing and modified landscape features to structure the proposed neighbourhood. The blue green network includes retained and enhanced wetlands, wetland loss, onsite offset wetland creation, offsite wetland offsetting, new stream channels, modified watercourses and stormwater treatment. Two public parks, two recreation reserves and 14 stormwater reserves provide a distributed open space structure, while pedestrian accessways and public footpaths connect residential areas with these spaces and the surrounding movement network.

The proposed housing pattern also supports variation in character and intensity across the Site. The masterplan provides two apartment lots, rear loaded and front-loaded terrace dwellings, detached and duplex capable lots of varying dimensions, detached dwellings on larger/ irregular lots, and eight rural residential lots.

This range allows more intensive housing to be located in association with the commercial lots, movement routes and public open space, while lower intensity housing can assist with transitions towards rural boundaries and other sensitive interfaces. The approach avoids applying a single uniform residential pattern across the Site and provides a basis for responding to landform, access, outlook, open space and edge conditions. The effectiveness of this landscape structure will depend on the detailed design of buildings, streets, retaining, fencing, stormwater devices and planting. In particular, street trees, reserve planting, riparian restoration and boundary planting will be important in establishing landscape coherence, moderating the prominence of built form and creating a legible and attractive residential environment over time.

3.2 Proposed Typologies and Equivalent Hamilton City Council Zoning

The Hamilton City Council residential zone framework provides a useful contextual benchmark for describing the anticipated character of the Brymer proposal. These zones do not apply to the Site and the comparison is not a statutory equivalence exercise.

The comparison is used because the Site has an immediate physical and perceptual relationship with Hamilton's western residential edge. It helps explain how the different housing areas may appear and function in practice, including their likely intensity, built form presence, streetscape character, garden character and relationship with public open space.

The current masterplan provides 782 residential units excluding the two apartment lots, with an overall estimated yield of approximately 1,000 residential units.

The principal residential typologies are:

- Two apartment lots, with the final unit yield and built form subject to detailed design.
- 68 rear loaded terrace dwellings on 4.5m lots.
- 50 front loaded terrace dwellings on 7.5m lots.
- 175 lots within the 10m to 11m category, capable of accommodating detached or duplex dwellings.
- 164 lots within the 12m and greater category, capable of accommodating detached or duplex dwellings.
- 222 lots within the 14m and greater category, intended for detached dwellings.
- 95 irregular shaped lots intended for detached dwellings.
- Eight rural residential lots intended for detached dwellings.

These typologies create a graduated pattern of residential intensity. The apartment lots represent the most intensive residential component, followed by the terrace housing. The detached and duplex capable lots provide the principal suburban residential pattern, while the rural residential lots provide the lowest intensity form and have a particular role in managing the Site's outer edge.

3.2.1 Apartment Lots and Neighbourhood Centre Interface Compared with the HDRZ

The two apartment lots are most closely comparable with the Hamilton City Council High Density Residential Zone (HDRZ) in terms of their anticipated urban expression. They will form the most intensive residential components of the proposal and are likely to have the strongest built form presence.

The two commercial lots will support neighbourhood centre activities and contribute to an identifiable local focal point. The commercial lots are not themselves comparable with a residential zone, but their relationship with the apartment lots, public open space and movement network will reinforce the more urban character of this part of the Site.

Key similarities include:

- A more compact and urban residential character than conventional suburban housing.
- A greater concentration of residential activity and stronger built form presence.
- A close relationship with local services, public open space, pedestrian movement and principal streets.
- The potential to create an identifiable neighbourhood focal point and support activity within the surrounding public realm.

Key differences include:

- Hamilton's High Density Residential Zone forms part of an established urban planning framework, while the Brymer apartment lots are located within a new urban edge neighbourhood.
- The apartment lots must respond to the Site's landform, open space network, wetlands, watercourses and views from surrounding roads, reserves and residential areas.

- The masterplan does not determine the final height, massing, architectural expression or unit yield of the apartment development.

The principal landscape and visual matters are the apparent height, bulk and massing of future apartment buildings, their prominence in surrounding views, their relationship with streets and open space, the quality of their ground level interfaces and their integration through planting and landform design.

3.2.2 Terrace Dwellings Compared with the MDRZ

The 68 rear loaded terrace dwellings and 50 front loaded terrace dwellings are most closely comparable with the Hamilton City Council Medium Density Residential Zone (MDRZ). These areas occupy the middle to upper part of the proposed intensity spectrum and will provide a more compact residential pattern than the detached and duplex capable lots.

Key similarities include:

- A compact residential form that provides greater housing choice and makes efficient use of land.
- A stronger relationship between buildings, streets, pedestrian routes and public open space.
- Reduced building separation and a greater collective built form presence than conventional detached housing.
- The potential to support walkability and activity around parks, commercial areas and principal movement routes.

The rear loaded terraces have the potential to provide strong and continuous street frontages because vehicle access, garages and servicing are located away from the principal street. This can support better dwelling address, safer pedestrian movement and more consistent frontage planting.

The front-loaded terraces provide a more familiar access arrangement but require careful design to prevent garages, driveways and vehicle crossings from dominating the streetscape. The narrower lot pattern also places greater reliance on coordinated street tree and reserve planting because opportunities for substantial vegetation within individual lots will be more limited.

The principal landscape matters are building repetition, garage and driveway dominance, the quality of rear lanes, space for tree establishment, privacy and outlook, boundary treatment and the relationship between terraces and adjoining streets or open spaces.

3.2.3 Detached and Duplex Lots Compared with the GRZ

The 10 m to 11 m and 12 m and greater lots capable of accommodating detached or duplex dwellings, together with the 14 m and greater and irregular shaped detached lots, are most closely comparable with the Hamilton City Council General Residential Zone.

These typologies will form the principal suburban residential character of the Brymer proposal. The range of lot dimensions will create some variation in building separation, garden area, dwelling type and streetscape character, while retaining an overall domestic scale.

Key similarities include:

- A suburban residential pattern comprising predominantly detached and duplex dwellings.
- Greater building separation and more visible private open space than the apartment and terrace areas.

- Greater opportunity for front yard and private garden planting.
- A scale and form that will be familiar within the adjoining Hamilton residential environment.

The Brymer typologies differ from a conventional residential zone because they form part of a coordinated masterplan that deliberately distributes housing types in response to access, landform, open space and edge conditions. The narrower detached and duplex capable lots can provide a transition between the terrace areas and wider detached lots, while the larger and irregular lots can respond to corners, level changes, open space margins and other site-specific conditions.

The main landscape and visual matters are the collective visibility of roofs and upper levels, the treatment of retaining and level changes, garage and driveway dominance, fencing, private garden planting and the ability of streets and open spaces to provide a coherent landscape structure. Building platforms and retaining should respond to the Site's landform so that development does not create unnecessarily prominent or engineered edges.

3.2.4 Rural Residential Lots Compared with the LLRZ

The eight rural residential lots are most closely comparable with the Hamilton City Council Large Lot Residential Zone. They represent the lowest intensity residential component of the current masterplan and have a specific role in managing the transition between the urban neighbourhood and adjoining rural land.

Key similarities include:

- A more spacious residential pattern than the apartment, terrace and conventional detached housing areas.
- Greater separation between buildings.
- More space for private gardens, specimen trees and boundary planting.
- A softer built character and greater sense of openness.

The Brymer rural residential lots will not form a separate large lot residential enclave. They remain part of the wider comprehensively planned neighbourhood and will be connected with its streets, open spaces, infrastructure and landscape framework.

The principal landscape and visual matters are building setbacks and prominence, retention of a relatively open edge condition, generous planting, management of earthworks and retaining, and avoidance of visually dominant fencing or accessory structures. Planting within these lots should contribute to a gradual and coherent transition between the more urban parts of the proposal and adjoining rural land.

Brymer typology	Closest HCC reference	Principal similarities	Principal differences and landscape considerations
Two apartment lots	High Density Residential Zone	Most intensive residential component, stronger built form presence and close relationship with commercial activity, public open space and pedestrian movement.	Located within a new urban edge neighbourhood. Final height, massing and yield remain subject to detailed design.
68 rear loaded terrace dwellings	Medium Density Residential Zone	Compact housing with strong street address and reduced garage presence on principal frontages.	Rear lanes require careful treatment of fencing, servicing, lighting, planting and residential amenity.

50 front loaded terrace dwellings	Medium Density Residential Zone	Compact residential form with a familiar street access arrangement.	Garages, driveways and vehicle crossings may reduce frontage planting and streetscape amenity if not carefully coordinated.
175 lots within the 10 m to 11 m category	General Residential Zone	Detached or duplex housing with a suburban scale and domestic character.	Narrower lots may increase built form continuity and place greater reliance on coordinated street planting.
164 lots within the 12 m and greater category	General Residential Zone	Detached or duplex housing with private open space and greater building separation than terrace housing.	Forms part of a masterplanned intensity transition rather than a uniformly zoned residential area.
222 lots within the 14 m and greater category	General Residential Zone	Conventional detached housing with greater opportunity for gardens and frontage planting.	Development will still result in a clear change from rural openness to suburban occupation.
95 irregular shaped detached lots	General Residential Zone	Detached suburban housing with private gardens and domestic scale.	Lot specific design will be required to respond to corners, landform, retaining and open space interfaces.
Eight rural residential lots	Large Lot Residential Zone	Lowest intensity housing, greater building separation and more space for planting.	These lots form part of the wider neighbourhood and have a specific role in managing the transition to adjoining rural land.

Table 2. Brymer Typology/HCC Zone Comparison Summary Table

4.0 The Site

4.1 Broader Context

The project is located in the Waikato District, on Hamilton's western edge, within a transitional peri urban landscape where pastoral land uses meet the city's expanding residential footprint. The broader landscape has a relatively simple and legible structure, with gently undulating landform, open paddocks, shelterbelts, rural dwellings, local roads and a long-established drainage network forming the dominant physical pattern. Coherence and legibility arise from this combination of open rural land and visible hydrological structure. In distant views, the landscape is also read against Pirongia Maunga and the Hakarimata Ranges. These broader landforms act as regional anchors, reinforce orientation and contribute to the wider sense of place experienced from roads, reserves and elevated parts of the surrounding urban edge.

The rohe is that of Waikato Tainui, with values associated with whenua and wai present across the wider cultural landscape. Engagement with Ngāti Mahanga is important to guide how natural characteristics and qualities are recognised in design, management and future landscape outcomes. In this context, the existing wetlands, drainage corridors, low-lying areas and overland flow paths are not simply physical constraints. They are part of the wider landscape structure and provide opportunities for recognising water, ecological function and cultural values within the proposed urban form.

The trajectory of change is toward urbanisation, given the Site's position beside Hamilton's western residential edge and the broader pressure for growth around the city. Maintaining integrity and connectivity through a clear blue green structure and a street network that responds to underlying landscape processes

will therefore be essential. The assessment focuses on the mapped landscape pattern, the relationship between rural and urban edges, and the view shafts that contribute to orientation and visual amenity.

Brymer Road to the north and Whatawhata Road / State Highway 23 to the south organise movement and establish clear edges to the wider context. Established residential areas at Grandview Heights and Western Heights to the east form a distinct urban threshold, where the existing suburban pattern meets the more open rural land of the Site. Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park and Hamilton Zoo sit nearby and experience the Site as part of the rural backdrop to the western side of Hamilton. The openness of the foreground paddocks, together with the limited extent of tall vegetation and built structures, means distant landscape features remain legible in glimpsed sequences from local roads and public spaces.

Condition and integrity are presently characterised by simple pasture, shelterbelts, fence lines, drains and low-lying wet areas. The Site has moderate exposure from Brymer Road and more filtered, fleeting views from Whatawhata Road / State Highway 23, where movement speed, roadside vegetation and landform influence visibility. Resilience and connectivity will depend on how future green corridors, riparian structure, stormwater areas and street alignments stitch the Site into its surroundings while sustaining tranquillity where appropriate. Hydrology is expressed through local drainage corridors, remnant wetlands and water management patterns.



Figure 2. The Site and Broader Landscape (AC GeoMaps).

4.2 The Subject Site

The approximately 81 ha Site comprises gently undulating ground with a central east to west drainage corridor, a wider network of drains and low-lying areas, and remnant wetlands concentrated toward the eastern extent. Vegetation is limited to scattered shelterbelts, fence line trees and small areas of wetland or riparian influence. This produces a high degree of openness and clear sightlines across much of the Site, allowing landform, drainage patterns and rural land use processes to remain visually legible.

The present landscape character is strongly influenced by pastoral use, open paddock structure and the absence of substantial built form. This gives the Site a spacious rural quality, although that quality is already tempered by its close relationship with Hamilton's existing urban edge, nearby public open spaces, local roads and the movement corridor of Whatawhata Road / State Highway 23. The Site is therefore experienced as part of a rural edge landscape rather than as a remote or intact rural environment.

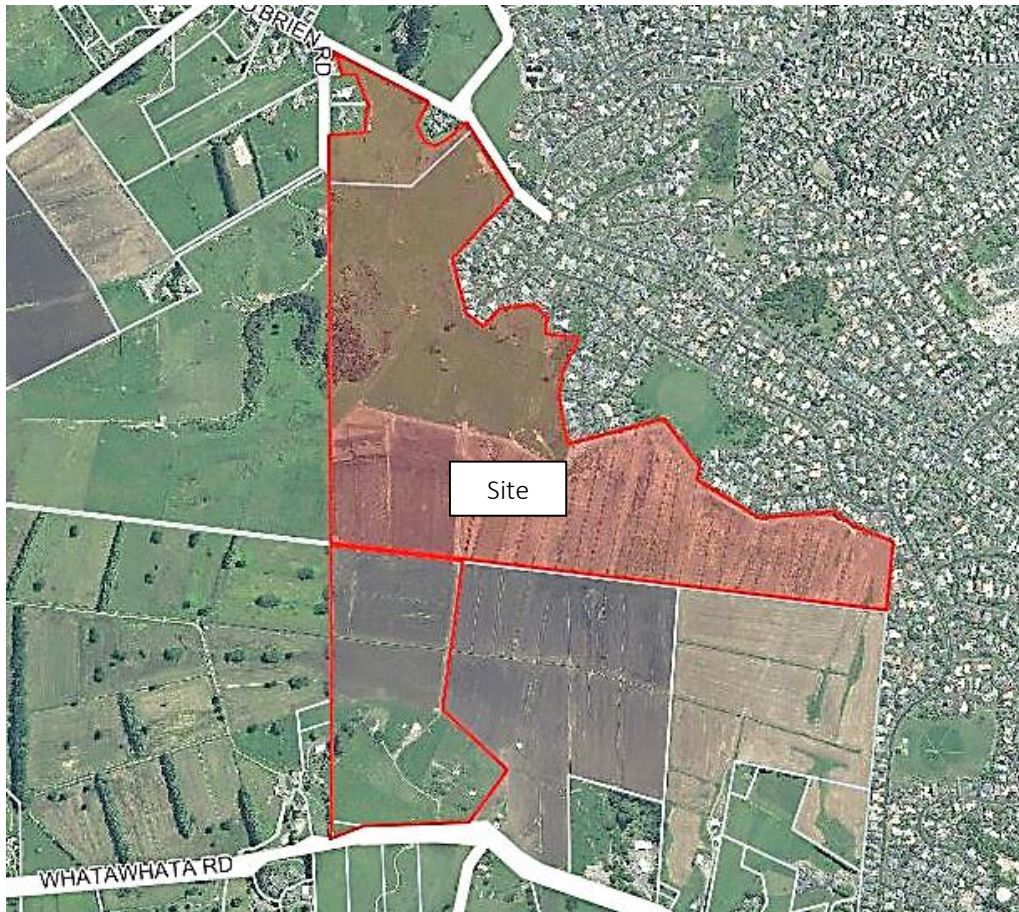


Figure 3. The Site and Immediate Surrounds (AC GeoMaps).

5.0 Landscape Values Assessment

5.1 Existing Values

5.1.1 Natural Character

The Site forms part of a modified rural landscape where historic drainage and pastoral use have simplified the wetland and stream network. However, the underlying pattern of whenua and wai remains legible through riparian margins, low lying ground, farm drains and wetland pockets. These features contain much of the remaining natural character, support indigenous vegetation, seasonal ponding and wetland functions, and influence local hydrology and water quality.

Rural roads and accessways form open paddock edges characterised by wide grassed verges, post and wire fencing, shelter planting and scattered farm buildings. The landscape transitions from public roads to open farmland and more enclosed water margins. Its spatial coherence is therefore expressed primarily through landform, vegetation and drainage patterns rather than built form.

Existing and former wetland areas remain important to the mauri of wai and the integrity of the wider water system. Although fragmented and degraded by past land management, these features contribute to landscape resilience and provide a strong basis for restoration and enhancement.

5.1.2 Biophysical Values

The Site comprises gently undulating pastoral land crossed by farm drains and a mapped waterway that express the pattern of surface water movement. Low lying areas and wetland pockets, including wetlands identified for enhancement or loss and areas proposed for offset wetland creation, show that the former wetland system has been modified but remains partly legible. These areas retain wet soils and seasonal ponding, store and release water, and contribute to the mauri of wai and functioning of the taiao.



Figure 4. Existing Wetlands, Drains and Streams Plan (Ecological Solutions).

Vegetation is dominated by improved pasture, with shelterbelts, riparian vegetation and informal planting around drains and wet areas providing the main woody cover and habitat. Although fragmented and modified, these features form an informal blue green network that reinforces the drainage pattern. They provide limited but important habitat and ecological connections, shade waterways, filter runoff and soften the pastoral landscape.

Water bores, drains, wetlands and the defined waterway indicate connections between surface water and groundwater. Consequently, earthworks, land management and rural servicing influence water quality and the receiving environment. While long term pastoral use has modified and degraded the Site, the remaining

pattern of whenua and wai, wetland character and vegetated drainage network retains ecological function and provides a basis for restoration and enhancement.

5.1.3 Perceptual and Sensory Values

B Brymer Road, local driveways and farm tracks create a simple movement pattern in which bends, gateways and entrances mark transitions between properties. Open grassed verges and consistent fence lines provide visual continuity, while shelterbelts, farm buildings and stands of trees act as informal landmarks.

The experience of openness and enclosure reflects the relationship between paddocks, vegetated water margins and built elements. Grazed fields, drainage swales and wetland margins provide long views towards distant tree lines and ridges. Shelter planting, hedgerows, buildings and local landform create greater enclosure and refuge. Drains, wetlands and low-lying areas provide quieter and visually softer spaces, where seasonal ponding, bird calls and subtle water movement contrast with the exposed road corridor.

Gateways, culverts, cattle stops, letterboxes and changes in fencing mark transitions between public roads, private farmland and water margins. Together with the landform, vegetation and drainage network, these features provide coherence and support wayfinding. Overall, the Site is experienced as an evolving rural edge landscape whose paddocks, watercourses and vegetation make the relationship between whenua and wai legible despite extensive modification.



Figure 5. Photograph from Whatawhata Road (B&A).

5.1.4 Associative Values

Drains, wetlands, low lying paddocks and the mapped waterway provide a strong expression of wai despite modification by pastoral use. Wet areas, saturated soils and vegetated margins contain much of the remaining natural character and express the mauri of wai. They also provide a focus for kaitiakitanga through the management and care of water.

This informal blue green network provides the main setting in which people experience the Site's more natural qualities, including bird life, seasonal changes in water and vegetation, and quieter soundscapes. Although these areas are not formal public spaces, they contribute to the everyday experience of residents, workers and people travelling along Brymer Road. Wetland remnants and drains also reflect longstanding relationships between mana whenua, local communities, whenua and wai.

Social connection and manaakitanga are expressed modestly through Brymer Road, farm entrances and the visual accessibility of the landscape. Paddocks, stock, shelterbelts, farm buildings, gateways and letterboxes create legible transitions between public and private space. Fences, culverts, tracks and other farm infrastructure convey local narratives of drainage, settlement and productive use. Together, these elements define an evolving rural edge landscape shaped by wai, wetland modification and ongoing land management, providing a foundation for future enhancement.

5.2 Landscape Effects

5.2.1 Natural Character Effects

The proposal would transform a modified rural landscape of rolling hillocks, shallow gullies, wetlands, drains and low-lying ground into an intensive neighbourhood structured by earthworks, roads, JOALs, pedestrian routes and a planned blue green network. Existing natural character has been reduced by pastoral use, wetland drainage, straightened watercourses, culverts and limited riparian vegetation. Nevertheless, whenua and wai remain legible through the relationship between landform, hollows, drainage paths, wetlands and wet pasture.

Earthworks and freshwater modifications would remove or alter some of these features. Hillocks would be excavated to create broad platforms, wetlands would be lost or modified, and perennial, ephemeral and artificial watercourses would be culverted, removed or reconfigured. The designed contours, 34 cut retaining walls and 64 fill retaining walls confirm the extent of landform modification. This represents a significant intervention in the whakapapa and authenticity of the landform, as its existing fine grain would be simplified and regularised.



Figure 6. Photograph from Te Kootiii Park (B&A).

The proposed blue green network would produce mixed outcomes. Wetland enhancement and creation, new stream channels, riparian and buffer planting, and off-site wetland offsetting would provide beneficial and compensatory responses to wai. The 14 stormwater reserves, two public parks and two recreation reserves would also integrate water management with open space. However, these measures would not avoid the initial loss of wetlands and watercourse sections. These direct effects would reduce the integrity, connectivity and legibility of existing freshwater features, while engineered platforms would further reduce landform naturalness and authenticity.

5.2.2 Effects on Biophysical Values

The proposal involves substantial intervention in soils, hydrology and vegetation. Existing waterways are already highly modified, with straightened, artificial, piped or culverted reaches and limited riparian vegetation. Pasture commonly extends to exposed banks, with wetland and shrub cover confined to some low lying and steeper areas. Habitat, shading, bank stability and waterway legibility are therefore limited, while historic drainage and rural land use have diminished the mauri of wai.



Figure 7. Overall Proposed Cut/fill Plan – Red Areas Show Cut Landform (Maven).

Large scale earthworks would infill hollows and regrade slopes to create regular platforms and roads. Designed contours, 34 cut retaining walls and 64 fill retaining walls, including level changes of up to approximately 13.5 metres, would alter soil profiles, microtopography and surface water flows. Roads ranging from 16.8 to 25.8 metres wide and 31 JOALs or rights of way would add substantial impervious area and increase reliance on engineered stormwater infrastructure. Works to waterways and wetlands would include new channels, pipes, culverts, wetland enhancement and creation, planting, and the loss or modification of existing freshwater features. This would adversely affect their integrity, connectivity, natural character, soil structure and habitat. Construction could also affect downstream environments if erosion and sediment controls are not carefully managed.

Over time, wetland enhancement and creation, off site offsetting, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, and riparian and buffer planting across 14 stormwater reserves could improve habitat diversity, resilience, water quality and the legibility of land and water relationships. However, these systems would remain largely engineered waterways within an urban catchment. Further naturalisation should include gentler meanders, varied channel widths, low benches, natural bank profiles, pockets of wetland habitat and planting responsive to geomorphology. Even with these refinements, created wetlands and waterways would not fully replace the ecological integrity, soil structure, authenticity or mauri of long-established wetlands and existing watercourses. The significance of the affected features and adequacy of the proposed enhancement and offsetting remain matters for ecological assessment.

5.2.3 Effects on Sensory and Perceptual Values Effects

The Site would change from an open rural landscape outside the rural urban boundary to an intensive neighbourhood shaped by substantial recontouring and an extensive street network. Its present character is defined by broad paddocks, gentle undulations, rural accessways, simple fence lines, shelterbelts, distant views and sparsely vegetated drains. Wai is present but often reads as functional drainage rather than natural waterways. Wind, birds, stock and farm activity currently dominate the soundscape, with limited road traffic and urban movement.

Proposed earthworks would remove hillocks, regrade wetland margins and form terraces, platforms, batters and 98 cut and fill retaining walls. Movement and spatial structure would become defined by roads and urban blocks rather than natural contours. Roads, vehicles, hard surfaces, kerbs, lighting, signage, street furniture and domestic activity would increase visual complexity, enclosure, noise, luminance and human presence, creating a continuous urban edge.

The blue green and open space network would provide the main setting for experiencing wai and the softer qualities of the taiao. Enhanced and created wetlands, new stream channels, stormwater areas, and riparian and buffer planting could create connected spaces offering shade, filtered light, seasonal colour and natural sounds. Two public parks, two recreation reserves, 14 stormwater reserves and 10 pedestrian accessways would provide a legible and accessible open space network. Planting would help transform bare drains into greener and more legible water landscapes, although the loss and culverting of existing sections would remove or conceal some expressions of wai.

Views from Te Kootii Park and neighbouring residential areas would change from open paddocks and scattered vegetation to houses, apartment development, roads, street trees and lighting, supported by a stronger planted water network.

5.2.4 Effects on Associative Values

Associative values connecting people, whenua and wai would change as the Site shifts from a working rural landscape outside the rural urban boundary to an urban community structured around water focused open spaces and streets. Paddocks, drains, wetlands and farm infrastructure convey histories of farming, wetland clearance and drainage, and the whakapapa of whenua and wai west of Kirikiriroa. These features express the mauri of the place and contribute to its meaning for mana whenua and local communities.

The proposal would create new associations through an urban neighbourhood containing commercial and apartment lots, streets, parks, reserves and a distributed blue green network. However, extensive roads and recontouring would weaken visible evidence of former repo, hillocks, hollows, drainage paths and the existing paddock pattern. Deep cuts, retaining walls and broad platforms could further reduce the physical memory of the landscape where relationships between landform and water become less legible.

Wetland enhancement and creation, new stream channels, planting, footpaths and 10 pedestrian accessways provide opportunities for kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga and local identity to develop around the care of wai, vegetation and shared spaces. The strength and authenticity of these values will depend on detailed design, cultural input, consistent implementation and long-term management.

5.3 Contributing factors

Refer to Appendix 1 for the assessment methodology. The following assessment considers the Site's modified rural edge character, open paddocks, gently undulating landform, wetland remnants, drains, modified watercourses, limited riparian vegetation and relationship with western Hamilton.

The Site is not identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape, Outstanding Natural Feature or Significant Ecological Area. While relevant to landscape value and sensitivity, this does not mean the Site is without value. Local values arise from its rural openness, legible landform and drainage patterns, wetland remnants, mauri of wai and the whakapapa of whenua and wai within a landscape modified by farming, drainage and adjoining urban development.

5.3.1 Sensitivity

Susceptibility to Change – Lower

The Site has lower susceptibility to the proposed change because of its modified pastoral character, historic drainage, artificial and highly modified waterways, culverts, wetland remnants and limited riparian and woody vegetation. It is not subject to an Outstanding Natural Landscape, Outstanding Natural Feature or Significant Ecological Area overlay and adjoins Hamilton's existing urban edge.

However, the Site remains outside the rural urban boundary and is experienced as rural edge land. It retains broad paddock openness, gently undulating landform, drainage paths, wetlands and legible relationships between whenua and wai. These values would be affected by extensive earthworks, excavation of hillocks, altered ground levels, wetland and watercourse modification or loss, new channels, retaining walls and an extensive road network. The lower rating therefore reflects the modified baseline and absence of outstanding status, rather than an absence of sensitivity.

The Value of the Landscape – Lower

Landscape value is assessed as lower because the Site is of local rather than regional or national importance. It is not subject to a statutory landscape overlay and its naturalness and distinctiveness have been reduced by pastoral use, drainage, modified waterways, culverts, farm infrastructure, limited riparian vegetation and adjoining urban influence.

Nevertheless, the Site contributes to Hamilton's western rural edge and retains local physical, perceptual and associative values through its pasture, landform, wetlands, drainage network and relationship with wai. These values remain relevant to the assessment, although they do not justify a higher rating.

5.3.2 Magnitude of Change

Size and Scale – Higher

The size and scale of change is assessed as higher. The masterplan provides for approximately 1,000 residential units, including 782 units excluding apartments, two apartment lots and two commercial lots. The residential mix includes 118 terrace dwellings and detached, duplex capable, irregular and rural residential lots.

The proposal would replace a modified rural landscape with an urban neighbourhood containing roads, buildings, services, lighting, open spaces and stormwater infrastructure. It would remove or reconfigure the paddock pattern, wetlands and watercourses, and substantially modify landform through excavation, fill and retaining walls. Excavating hillocks and forming flatter platforms would alter the physical expression of the whenua and reduce the legibility of relationships between landform, drainage, wetlands and pasture.

Wetland enhancement and creation, off site offsetting, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, planting, two public parks and two recreation reserves would provide beneficial and compensatory outcomes. However, these measures would not avoid the loss of wetlands and watercourse sections or the fundamental change to urban land use. The size and scale of effects on rural character, landform legibility, openness and relationships between whenua and wai would therefore remain higher.

Geographical extent – Higher

The geographical extent is assessed as higher at the local landscape character area scale. Effects would be concentrated within the Site but would also influence the adjoining rural urban edge and views from Brymer Road, Whatawhata Road, Te Kootii Park and neighbouring residential areas.

The proposal would not affect the wider Waikato rural landscape at a regional scale. However, it would materially alter the local landscape by extending urban development into land that remains outside the rural urban boundary and is experienced as part of Hamilton's rural edge.

Duration and Reversibility - Higher

Duration and reversibility are assessed as higher. Development would proceed through 12 residential stages and a separate Stage 1A for rural residential lots, resulting in progressive construction and establishment effects. However, the change in land use, built form, roads, platforms, stormwater infrastructure and open space would be permanent. Excavation, recontouring, wetland and watercourse loss, culverting and the construction of roads and retaining walls would not be readily reversible.

Planting, stream restoration and wetland creation would mature and could improve some biophysical and perceptual values. However, these benefits would not reverse the conversion from rural land to an urban neighbourhood.

5.4 Nature of Effect

The overall effect is assessed as adverse, with beneficial components. Adverse effects would arise from urbanisation outside the rural urban boundary and the conversion of a rural edge landscape into a neighbourhood of approximately 1,000 residential units. The loss of rural openness, excavation of hillocks, landform modification, extensive roads and retaining walls, and the loss or reconfiguration of wetlands and watercourses would reduce rural character, landform legibility, wetland authenticity and the mauri of wai.

Beneficial and compensatory components include the blue green network, wetland enhancement and creation, off site offsetting, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, and riparian and buffer planting. Two public parks, two recreation reserves, 14 stormwater reserves and pedestrian connections would integrate water systems with public open space. These measures could improve the condition, coherence and resilience of waterways that are currently modified, straightened and sparsely vegetated.

However, these outcomes represent mitigation and enhancement rather than full replacement of existing landform, soil structure, natural wetland values or established hydrological patterns. Their effectiveness would be strengthened by naturalising stream geometry and planting character, rather than treating the corridors primarily as engineered drainage infrastructure.

5.5 Overall Landscape Values Effects Rating

Using the scale in Appendix 1, the overall landscape values effect is assessed as **adverse and Moderate High**, likely equating to a more than minor adverse effect in planning terms.

The Site has lower landscape value and susceptibility, but the proposal would result in higher magnitude and permanent change. Approximately 1,000 residential units, two apartment lots, two commercial lots, an extensive road network and 98 cut and fill retaining walls are proposed. Excavation of hillocks, flattened contours, wetland and watercourse loss or modification, culverting and extensive urban development outside the rural urban boundary would materially alter local character, rural openness and the legibility of whenua and wai.

Sensitivity is moderated by the absence of Outstanding Natural Landscape, Outstanding Natural Feature and Significant Ecological Area overlays, together with existing pastoral use, drainage, limited riparian vegetation and adjoining urban influence. Wetland enhancement and creation, off site offsetting, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, parks, reserves, pedestrian connections and planting would provide beneficial and compensatory outcomes for water quality, habitat, shading, amenity, access and the visibility of wai.

However, these benefits would not fully address the permanent effects of urbanisation, engineered landform change, freshwater losses and the removal of rural edge character. An adverse Moderate High rating is therefore considered supportable. The updated masterplan refines the urban form, open space structure and mitigation package but does not materially change the Site's sensitivity, magnitude of change or overall effects rating.

6.0 Landscape Visual Assessment

6.1 Existing Visual Amenity, Viewing Audiences

To describe the Site clearly and assess effects more accurately, it is divided into four viewing audiences using the shape and extent of the Site and natural breaks in built form associated with watercourses and wetlands. This enables each viewing audience to be considered in relation to its immediate landscape context and the people most directly associated with it. The experience of the proposal will vary across the Site depending on proximity, elevation, orientation and the nature of available views. Some audiences may experience change arising from more than one part of the Site. This approach supports a more nuanced and location specific assessment of potential landscape and visual effects. Refer to Appendix 2 for analysis maps.

6.2 Key Visually Influential Components of the Proposal

The principal visual change will be the transformation of the Site from an open rural edge landscape to a planned residential neighbourhood. The proposal provides approximately 1,000 residential units, including 782 units excluding apartments, with the final yield dependent on two apartment lots. Two commercial lots and terrace, detached, duplex capable, irregular and rural residential lots are also proposed. Open paddocks, wetlands, drains, shelterbelts and limited built form will be replaced by streets, dwellings, open spaces, planting and water management areas.

The most visually influential built components will be the two apartment lots, two commercial lots, 68 rear loaded terrace dwellings, 50 front loaded terrace dwellings, and the wider pattern of detached and duplex capable lots. The apartment and commercial areas will have the strongest urban presence, although their height, massing, appearance and yield remain subject to detailed design.

Terrace housing may reach 11 m or three storeys, with a further 1 m allowance for roofs pitched at least 15 degrees. Detached, duplex and sloping lot housing may reach 10 m or two storeys, with the same roof allowance. Rear loaded terraces have minimum frontage widths of 4.5 m for middle dwellings and 5.5 m for end dwellings. Front loaded terraces require 7.5 m and 8.5 m respectively. Terrace buildings are limited to six continuous units. These controls will help manage building length, repetition, articulation and roofline variation.

Maximum Site coverage is 60 percent for rear loaded terraces, 50 percent for front loaded terraces and 45 percent for detached and duplex lots. Impermeable surfaces are limited to 70 percent and at least 20 percent of each Site must be landscaped. Frontage landscaping requirements are 30 percent for rear loaded terraces with frontages below 7.5 m, 40 percent for wider rear loaded and front-loaded terraces, and 50 percent for detached and duplex lots. These controls will help soften built form, retain visual relief and reduce the dominance of garages, driveways and other hard surfaces.

Collector, commercial and local roads, 31 JOALs or rights of way, 10 pedestrian accessways and public footpaths will replace the existing sparse rural access pattern. Rear loaded housing will take vehicle access from rear lanes, with a 0 m rear lane setback and a 1 m setback from local and collector roads. Front loaded terraces, detached dwellings and duplexes will generally have a 1.5 m road setback. Street facing garage doors must be recessed 0.5 m behind the front façade. Identified lots beside SH23 and Whatawhata Road require a 5 m setback. These controls will influence building proximity, garage prominence and opportunities for planting and pedestrian access.

The blue green network will be central to integrating the development. It includes retained and enhanced wetlands, wetland loss, wetland creation and off-site offsetting, watercourse culverting and loss, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, and riparian and buffer planting. Two public parks, two recreation reserves and 14 stormwater reserves will provide separation, depth and visual relief between built areas. Although these measures will not avoid the loss or concealment of some existing freshwater features, they will progressively soften built edges and strengthen the coherence and legibility of the future landscape.

Landform modification will also be visually influential. Designed contours, 34 cut retaining walls and 64 fill retaining walls confirm substantial regrading. Retaining walls, batters and platforms may appear prominent and engineered, particularly before planting establishes. Split level dwellings, stepped building forms, parking beneath dwellings where appropriate, planted batters and carefully positioned retaining walls will help reduce this effect. Poorly resolved platforming and retaining would increase the visual hardness of some Site edges.

Building mass, roof form, façade articulation, materials, colours, garages, services and front yard planting will determine whether development appears cohesive or visually dominant. Varied rooflines, clear entrances, recesses, projections, balconies, verandas, coordinated materials, recessive colours and integrated services will be particularly important within apartment, commercial and terrace areas, where larger or repeated forms could otherwise appear visually hard or monotonous.

Private amenity controls will also influence visual openness and crowding. Terraces require at least 12 m² of outdoor living space with a minimum dimension of 1.8 m. Duplex and single dwellings require 20 m² with a 3 m minimum dimension. Outlook spaces comprise 4 m by 4 m from principal living rooms and 1 m by 1 m from other habitable rooms. Each unit also requires a screened service area of at least 5 m². These provisions will help protect outlook and reduce visible service clutter.

Site edges require particular attention. Along Brymer Road, landform, wetlands, reserves and planting will moderate predominantly short duration and oblique views. Eastern residents will experience more direct and sustained change, making setbacks, planting depth, freshwater treatment, frontage design and built form transition important. Along Whatawhata Road and SH23, the broad corridor, roadside vegetation, lower

intensity housing and 5 m setbacks will moderate visibility. However, earthworks and retaining walls may initially increase the prominence and engineered character of the southern edge.

Overall, visual effects will be principally influenced by building height and density, apartment and commercial development, terrace housing, roads, landform modification, 98 retaining walls, frontage design and edge treatment. Parks, recreation and stormwater reserves, wetlands, stream channels and planting will provide the primary landscape structure for integrating the neighbourhood with surrounding roads, residential areas and public open spaces.

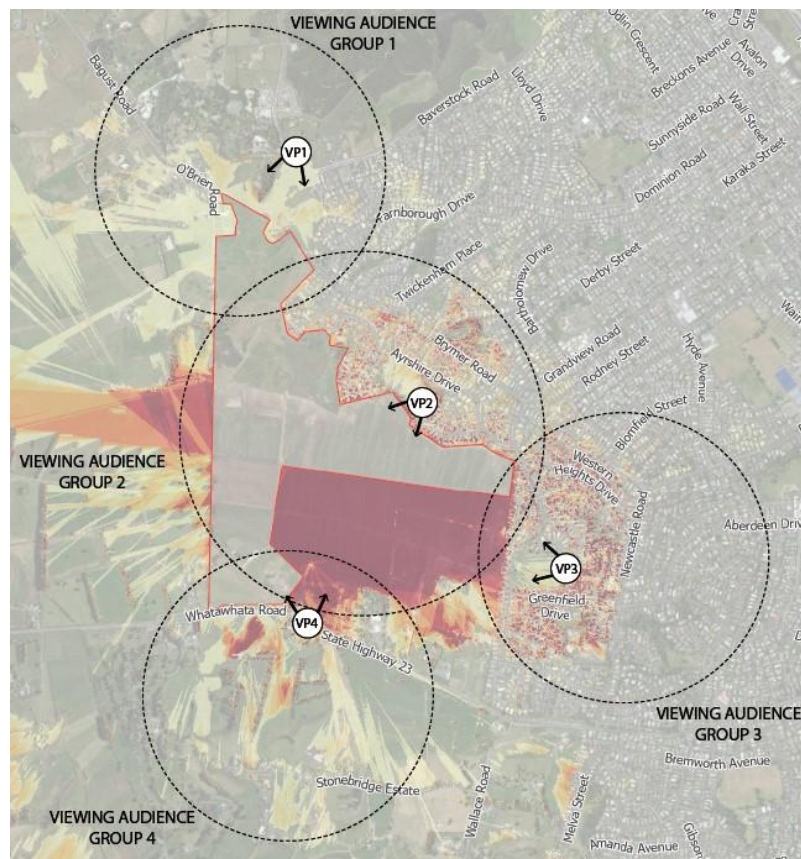


Figure 8. Viewpoints & Viewing Audiences (B&A).

6.3 Viewing Audience 1 (VA1) Description

Viewing Audience 1 in the northern part of the Brymer Road development sits close to Hamilton Zoo, but it is not expected to be a noticeable part of Zoo views. This is because the landform rises and falls and the layout places buildings back behind green corridors and folds in the ground, so views are broken into shorter, more contained sequences. The northern area contains the eight rural residential lots and other generally lower intensity detached housing. The main viewers are residents on lifestyle blocks along O'Brien Road and homes along Southworth Place, where higher ground and open foregrounds allow longer views, while people travelling along Brymer Road tend to see the area only briefly and at an angle.

The northern area includes wetland enhancement, offset wetland creation, new stream channels, stormwater areas, and riparian and buffer planting. Local wetland loss and watercourse culverting and loss are also identified, so not all existing freshwater features will be retained. Together with the topography, the proposed open space and planting structure will provide physical and visual separation between the northern housing area and the main development, allowing built form to be distributed more lightly around its edges.

Along the eastern edge, this part of the proposal is likely to read as an extension of the existing nearby residential area, rather than a new and isolated edge. Three existing properties within the area also help provide a built context. Enhanced and offset wetland areas, new stream channels and riparian and buffer planting will soften views of buildings and provide screening in key sightlines. The large open space and wetland areas to the south will create a strong break between built areas and provide shared amenity for the community. Because the housing here is generally lower intensity and separated from the main development by wetlands, stormwater areas and open space, it is likely to read as a distinct part of the wider project and reduce the sense of one continuous spread of development.

6.3.1 Viewpoint 1 – Brymer Road Shared Path

The view is across rolling pasture with shallow gullies and small ridges stepping away from the road, with a dark block of conifers to one side and scattered farm buildings in the middle distance. Road markings and kerb form a crisp foreground threshold before the eye moves to soft grassed slopes, making a clear shift from engineered surface to open countryside. Openness dominates, tempered by pockets of enclosure where trees gather in hollows and along fences, adding depth and helping to track the sequence of edges across the valley. Long sightlines are set by ridge crests, power lines and the foot of the distant hills, and the mainly green and grey palette keeps the scene calm. For passing traffic, the view resolves as ordered layers that follow the grain of the land.

6.3.2 Visual Effects Viewpoint 1 – Brymer Road Shared Path

From the Brymer Road shared path viewpoint the outlook resolves as a shallow bowl that falls away to the south west, with a clear sequence of verge, park edge street and planted water margin in the foreground and built form set behind. The broad openness of the existing pasture will be reduced by housing and roads. Future openness will instead be concentrated within the wetland, stormwater and open space corridors.

Wetland enhancement and offset creation areas sit within the blue green network and, with riparian and buffer planting, visual screening and additional amenity planting including trees of scale, will break up and soften the proposed lower intensity detached and rural residential built form. Local wetland and watercourse loss will nevertheless reduce some existing expressions of wai before the compensatory landscape structure establishes.

Viewing audiences at this edge are mostly road users and other transient observers with lower susceptibility, while nearby dwellings obtain oblique or partial views. As the land falls away and street, wetland and riparian planting establish, the combined effect of topography, open space and vegetation will reduce the prominence of development. Retaining walls, rooflines and parts of the northern housing area may remain visible, particularly during establishment and from elevated residential outlooks.

In the wider context, O'Brien Road includes local topographical features and grades that may require engineered solutions. The proposal identifies extensive cut and fill retaining across the Site, which would introduce visual amenity considerations for houses and lifestyle properties along O'Brien Road. Conversely, viewers using the elevated road network, including Brymer Road to the east, and those in surrounding residential areas are likely to look across or over parts of the lower intensity northern housing, so the local landform assists in containing some views but does not remove visibility altogether.

No material visual effect is expected from the west or from Hamilton Zoo given distance, screening and orientation. Wetland enhancement, offset creation, new channels and planting will strengthen the coherence, legibility and connectivity of the future green structure as planting matures. However, the loss and culverting of some existing freshwater features means that the beneficial trajectory for the taiao and the mauri of wai is qualified rather than wholly positive.



Figure 9. VP1 Brymer Road (north) (B&A).

6.4 Viewing Audience 2 (VA2) Description

In this part of the proposal, the two apartment lots, two commercial lots and terrace housing are concentrated internally so that the strongest built form presence is held away from the most sensitive outer edges. This arrangement improves how the development is read from outside the Site because height and density are experienced behind intervening open space, lower intensity housing and planting rather than as an immediate edge condition. To the east, wetland, watercourse and stormwater areas provide a substantial open space foreground that maintains visual relief and helps the northern road connection read as a greener, more spacious threshold. The two public parks, two recreation reserves and 14 stormwater reserves establish a repeated open space structure around and through the built footprint, while extensive street tree, riparian and buffer planting will reduce the apparent bulk of buildings over short and medium viewing distances. The connection between Te Kootii Park and the wetland and stormwater areas reinforces the wider open space network. Direct wetland and watercourse loss and culverting will reduce the legibility of some existing freshwater features, but the enhancement, offset creation, new channels and planting will provide increasing visual depth and separation as they establish.

6.4.1 Viewpoint 2 – Te Kootii Park

From this gentle rise the outlook spreads across roofs to broad, low farmland, a belt of trees and far off ranges that make a soft, even skyline. Openness is the defining quality, supported by the depth of view and wide sky. The scene reads as horizontal layers: neat lawn and gardens in the foreground, then cultivated fields, then the distant tree line, which makes the composition coherent and easy to read. Textures move from smooth turf to rougher paddocks and mixed shelter planting, adding interest without clutter. Colours stay natural and muted, mostly greens and earth tones, which gives a tranquil feel and clear distant view across the land.

6.4.2 Visual Effects Viewpoint 2 – Te Kootii Park

At this junction the internal grid meets the water and stormwater spine as a clear threshold. From Te Kootii Park, the scene is ordered by continuous street frontage, path connections and planted setbacks that retain long sightlines toward vegetation and water and present a readable public and private interface.

Compared with the generally lower intensity northern area seen from Viewpoint 1, this part of the development has a denser residential pattern and a more extensive road network. It includes the two apartment lots, two commercial lots and terrace housing and will therefore have the strongest built form presence within the proposal.

The setting is framed by wetland, watercourse, stormwater and open space areas, so wai remains an important organising element. Wetland enhancement, offset wetland creation, new stream channels, and extensive riparian, buffer, street tree and screen planting will soften building edges, moderate contrast and strengthen coherence and legibility as views step from openness along water margins to greater enclosure within residential fronts. These beneficial and compensatory measures do not avoid the initial wetland and watercourse loss or culverting, which will reduce or conceal some existing expressions of wai.

The wider context includes large residential catchments on rising contours with many properties addressing this part of the area, and the relatively flat Site allows broad, sustained views toward the central development. Within that exposure, modulation of form, separation by park edge streets, setbacks and planting depth will help keep thresholds and junctions readable and maintain a clear sequence of edges. Overall, this area will be more visually prominent than the lower intensity northern area. The blue green network and enclosing planting will temper, but not remove, the prominence of the apartment, commercial and terrace builtform.



Figure 10. VP2 Te Kootii Park (B&A).

6.5 Viewing Audience 3 (VA3) Description

Te Kootii Park to the north provides a substantial open space buffer that reduces the level of change experienced by nearby residents, so the proposal is read with a foreground of open green space rather than as an immediate new edge. Stormwater reserves, wetland enhancement and offset areas, new stream channels, and riparian and buffer planting provide additional depth along the eastern interface and will soften views and reduce contrast between the new neighbourhood and its neighbours. Direct wetland and watercourse loss and culverting elsewhere within the network qualify these beneficial and compensatory outcomes. The current lot pattern along the eastern edge is generally detached or duplex capable and is not markedly different in scale from the adjacent residential area, supporting continuity and helping the new housing read as a logical extension rather than an isolated change in character. Along the southern edge, the planted drainage and stormwater corridor will form a strong linear green edge once planting establishes,

providing separation and visually distinguishing the southern part of the development from adjoining land. The two public parks, two recreation reserves and wider stormwater reserve network will maintain visual relief and provide a coherent open space structure through the proposed neighbourhood.

6.5.1 Viewpoint 3 – Derek Heather Park

This is a tight, human scale space where a straight concrete path drops between timber fences and small garden trees, so the edges are close and the view is contained. Enclosure is strongest nearby, created by the fences and planting, while prospect opens slowly toward the street network and distant hills beyond the houses. The sequence is simple and easy to follow: near textures of timber and mown grass, then a middle band of small trees and roofs, then a soft distant skyline. The colour range is mostly greens with warm timber tones, which keeps the outlook calm for people walking. The clear path line, low planting, and open grass on either side help with wayfinding and give small spots of refuge in shade and fence recesses.

6.5.2 Visual Effects Viewpoint 3 – Derek Heather Park

From Derek Heather Park, close fencing, existing housing and garden vegetation contain most direct views, with only limited or framed outlooks extending toward the Site. Where longer views open to the west, the proposal will be seen beyond an existing urban foreground as new rooflines, treed streets and outer edge housing. The proposal generally places lower intensity detached and duplex capable lots, stormwater reserves and planted water corridors toward this interface, with the apartment, commercial and terrace areas set further internally. Designed contours and proposed cut and fill retaining may be apparent from elevated outlooks, particularly before planting has matured. Boundary, riparian and buffer planting will soften contrast and reduce the prominence of built form over time. The magnitude of change will therefore be low for the more contained views within Derek Heather Park and moderate for more elevated or open residential outlooks, resulting in a Moderate Low visual effect overall once planting establishes.



Figure 11. VP3 Derek Heather Park (B&A).

6.6 Viewing Audience 4 (VA4) Description

Along Whatawhata Road and SH23, the road corridor and broad verge create a strong, legible foreground, so the proposal will generally be read beyond a wide transport edge rather than as an immediate back fence condition. Existing roadside vegetation already introduces filtering and layering at the margin, and this can be reinforced through a continuous planted interface of street trees, shrubs and lower wetland or swale planting.

The outer edge contains lower intensity detached and duplex capable lots, while the apartment, commercial and terrace areas are drawn further into the Site. This will support a more comfortable transition from the current pastoral outlook and moderate apparent bulk. However, cut and fill retaining, earthworks and new building platforms may increase the engineered character and prominence of parts of the southern edge before planting establishes. Because viewers are predominantly transient road users, the experience is short duration and movement based. A clear green edge, setbacks, stormwater reserves and a coherent planting structure will therefore be important in ensuring the development reads as a softened extension of Hamilton's western urban area.



Figure 12. VP4 Whatawhata Road (south) (B&A).

6.6.1 Viewpoint 4 – Whatawhata Road / SH23

The scene starts with the sealed carriageway in the foreground, which makes a clear straight edge before the view runs over low shrubs to wide open paddocks and a distant low hill line. Openness is the main quality, supported by the large sky and long horizon, with only limited enclosure from verge vegetation. Colours are simple and calm: grey road, green pasture and brown cultivated ground. The view reads in clear layers from road to fields to skyline, with textures shifting from smooth asphalt to rough grass and worked soil. For people driving past, the outlook is experienced as short glimpses, but the broad landform and continuous open space still provide a steady sense of prospect.

6.6.2 Visual Effects Viewpoint 4 – Whatawhata Road / SH23

From Whatawhata Road and SH23 the broader outlook is across the middle distance toward a planted edge where stormwater reserves, swales and drainage corridors form part of the foreground and middle ground, with buildings forming a more consistent backdrop. Open farmland on both sides of the corridor places the new urban edge in contrast with the adjoining rural landscape. The outer part of the proposal contains lower intensity detached and duplex capable lots rather than apartment, commercial or terrace development, which moderates apparent bulk. However, proposed cut and fill retaining and earthworks may be visible and add an engineered quality, particularly at completion. Riparian, buffer and boundary planting will soften views and help connect the edge with the wider green structure, but will not obscure all built form. The short duration of views for passing traffic further moderates the effect. Overall, the magnitude of change and level of visual effect from this vantage point is Moderate Low, reducing towards Low as planting establishes.

6.7 Contributing Factors

6.7.1 Sensitivity

Susceptibility to change – Higher

The susceptibility of visual audiences varies across the receiving environment. Residents in adjoining and nearby residential areas, including elevated dwellings with outlooks toward the Site, have a higher susceptibility to change because views from dwellings are typically longer duration and are often associated with residential amenity. Users of Te Kootii Park, Derek Heather Park and other nearby public open spaces also have a higher susceptibility where attention may be focused on outlook, openness, movement through green space and the wider landscape setting. By contrast, road users on Brymer Road, Whatawhata Road and State Highway 23 generally have lower susceptibility because views are experienced in motion, are often oblique or filtered, and are of short duration.

Value attached to views – Lower

The value attached to the available views is assessed as lower. The views contribute to local visual amenity and to the rural edge character experienced by nearby residents, road users and open space users, but they are not identified in the assessment material as protected, regionally recognised or landscape wide views. The Site is not identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Outstanding Natural Feature, and the existing visual character is that of a modified rural edge landscape adjoining Hamilton's established western residential area. The views are therefore valued locally, but they do not carry a higher recognised landscape status.

Overall, visual sensitivity is mixed. It is higher for nearby residential and recreation audiences with sustained views, and lower for transient road users. For the purpose of an overall visual assessment, sensitivity is best described as Moderate High, reflecting the presence of sensitive residential and recreation viewers while also recognising that the views themselves are local in value and that several key audiences experience the Site briefly or obliquely.

6.7.2 Magnitude of Change

Size and scale – Higher

The size and scale of visual change will be high at the Site scale. The proposal will change the Site from an open rural edge landscape of pasture, drains, low lying wet areas, shelterbelts and limited built form to a comprehensive residential neighbourhood with an estimated total yield of approximately 1,000 residential units. This comprises 782 units excluding the apartment units, two apartment lots, two commercial lots, 118 terrace dwellings and a range of detached, duplex capable, irregular and rural residential lots. A hierarchy of collector, commercial and local roads, 31 JOALs or rights of way, 10 pedestrian accessways, two public parks, two recreation reserves and 14 stormwater reserves will create a substantially more urban visual pattern. Designed contours and 98 proposed cut and fill retaining walls, together with wetland loss and enhancement, offset wetland creation, watercourse culverting and loss, new stream channels and riparian and buffer planting, will further alter landform and the visible relationship between whenua and wai. This will introduce a high degree of contrast in form, scale, mass, line, height, colour, texture and activity when compared with the existing rural visual pattern.

Geographical extent – Higher

The degree of contrast will not be uniform across all views. It will be greatest for elevated and nearby residential viewers who have sustained views toward the eastern and central parts of the Site, particularly where the two apartment lots, two commercial lots, terrace housing and continuous rooflines will be visible.

It will be lower where landform, lower intensity edge housing, wetland and stormwater areas, open space, riparian and buffer planting and distance filter or break up the view, including parts of Brymer Road, Whatawhata Road and State Highway 23. Wetland enhancement, offset wetland creation, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, and riparian and buffer planting will be important in reducing the apparent scale of built form and preventing the development from reading as one continuous spread of urban development. However, wetland and watercourse loss, culverting, designed contours and extensive retaining will remain apparent in some locations, particularly during establishment.

The geographical extent of visual change is Moderate High. The proposal will be visible from a range of local vantage points, including nearby residential areas, Brymer Road, Te Kootii Park, Derek Heather Park and Whatawhata Road and State Highway 23. Some front on or near distance views will be possible, particularly from adjoining residential and open space interfaces. However, the extent of visible change will vary because the Site is shaped by landform, open space corridors, wetland areas, road corridors and planting, and because some views are oblique, filtered or experienced over short durations. The ZTV analysis is useful in identifying the potential extent of visibility, but the actual magnitude of visual effect should still be moderated by distance, orientation, viewer type, foreground screening and the proportion of the proposal visible in each view.

Duration and reversibility – Higher

The duration and reversibility of the change will be higher because the proposed residential development, roads, infrastructure, earthworked platforms and settlement pattern will be permanent. Construction and establishment effects will occur progressively across 12 residential stages and a separate Stage 1A for the rural residential lots. Effects are likely to be greatest at completion of each stage, when built form, retaining, earthworks, roads and hard surfaces are most apparent and planting has not yet established. Over time, ecological planting, street trees, enhanced and offset wetland planting, riparian and buffer planting, boundary planting and amenity planting will soften built edges, increase visual depth, strengthen coherence and reduce the prominence of some built elements in local views. The change will remain permanent, and wetland or watercourse loss and culverting will not be visually reversible, but the apparent intensity of the wider development is expected to reduce as the landscape framework establishes.

Overall, the magnitude of visual change is High at the Site scale and for some nearby residential audiences. For transient road users and more distant or filtered views, the magnitude is more appropriately assessed as Moderate Low or Moderate, depending on location. An overall magnitude of Moderate High is therefore more robust than a single High rating applied to all audiences.

6.8 Visual Effects Rating

The overall visual effect is assessed as adverse Moderate High before planting establishes. The proposal will substantially change the Site and nearby outlooks, particularly for residential and recreation audiences with sustained views. However, the Site is not within an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Outstanding Natural Feature, views are locally rather than regionally valued, and many road views are transient or oblique.

Embedded mitigation includes two public parks, two recreation reserves, 14 stormwater reserves, retained and enhanced wetlands, offset wetland creation, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, street trees, and riparian, buffer, reserve, boundary and edge planting. Once established, this framework will filter and layer views, break up rooflines, soften buildings, retaining walls, roads and infrastructure, and increase separation from adjoining properties. Off-site wetland offsetting will contribute to broader compensatory landscape and freshwater outcomes. However, these measures will not avoid the visual effects of wetland and watercourse loss, culverting, extensive earthworks and 98 cut and fill retaining walls.

The highest effects will occur for elevated residents and nearby viewers with open or sustained views towards denser development. Effects may be locally High at completion, before planting establishes. Planting will reduce effects over time, although elevated audiences may continue to see development above or beyond it.

Effects from Brymer Road, Whatawhata Road and SH23 will generally be lower because views are shorter, oblique and experienced by moving viewers, with further moderation from road width, verges, landform, existing vegetation, lower intensity edge housing and proposed planting. Effects from Te Kootii Park and Derek Heather Park will vary with orientation and proximity. Development, retaining walls and rooflines will remain visible, but wetlands, stream channels, stormwater reserves and planting will retain visual relief and a coherent green setting.

Effects will range from Moderate Low for transient or filtered views to Moderate High for nearby and elevated residential or recreation audiences, with localised High effects where sustained views of denser development occur. Overall effects will reduce from adverse Moderate High before planting establishes towards adverse Moderate as the blue green and open space network matures. The updated proposal refines the location and nature of effects but does not alter the overall rating.

7.0 Conclusion

The overall landscape and visual effects before the establishment of proposed planting and embedded mitigation are summarised as follows:

- Visual effects are assessed as **adverse** and **Moderate High** overall, with localised High effects possible for some nearby and elevated residential audiences with sustained views toward the denser parts of the proposal.
- Landscape effects are assessed as **adverse** and **Moderate High**, reflecting the permanent change from modified rural edge land to a comprehensively planned residential neighbourhood.
- **The overall effect before mitigation establishment is assessed as adverse and Moderate High. In planning terms, this is more than minor.**

This rating recognises that the proposal will substantially change the Site's existing open rural character, landform, drainage pattern and visual openness. It will introduce an estimated yield of approximately 1,000 residential units, comprising 782 units excluding the apartment units, with the final total dependent on the detailed design of the two apartment lots. The masterplan also includes two commercial lots, 118 terrace dwellings, detached and duplex capable lots, irregular detached lots, eight rural residential lots, collector, commercial and local roads, 31 JOALs or rights of way, 10 pedestrian accessways, two public parks, two recreation reserves, 14 stormwater reserves and a planned blue green network.

The rating also recognises that the Site is already modified, is not identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape, Outstanding Natural Feature or Significant Natural Area, and sits beside Hamilton's existing western urban edge. Visual effects will not be uniform. They will be greatest for nearby and elevated residential viewers, and lower for transient viewers on Brymer Road, Whatawhata Road and State Highway 23 where views are shorter, oblique, filtered or seen in movement.

The current masterplan and freshwater effects plan reinforce the adverse rating. The proposed designed contours, 34 cut retaining walls and 64 fill retaining walls confirm substantial reworking of the existing landform. The freshwater works include the retention and enhancement of some wetlands, wetland loss, offset wetland creation, offsite wetland offsetting, watercourse culverting and loss, new stream channels and

works affecting modified perennial, modified ephemeral and artificial watercourses. Wetland enhancement, offsetting, new channels, stormwater treatment and riparian and buffer planting provide beneficial and compensatory outcomes, but do not avoid the initial loss or modification of existing freshwater features.

7.1 Mitigation Incorporated into the Proposal

A substantial amount of mitigation is already built into the proposal through the masterplan and design approach. Key embedded mitigation includes:

- A blue-green network comprising the retention and enhancement of some wetlands, offset wetland creation, offsite wetland offsetting, new stream channels, stormwater treatment, and riparian and buffer planting. These measures provide beneficial and compensatory outcomes, but do not avoid direct wetland loss or watercourse culverting and loss.
- Two public parks, two recreation reserves, 14 stormwater reserves, 10 pedestrian accessways, public footpaths and open space corridors that break up the extent of built form and provide visual relief.
- A varied residential structure comprising two apartment lots, rear loaded and front-loaded terrace dwellings, detached and duplex capable lots, irregular detached lots and eight rural residential lots.
- The generally internal location of the apartment, commercial and terrace areas, with lower intensity detached, duplex capable and rural residential housing towards parts of the outer Site edges.
- Lower intensity housing and larger setbacks at some sensitive edges, including the eight rural residential lots in the northern area and the 5 m setback identified for lots along Whatawhata Road and State Highway 23.
- Design guide controls for building height and storeys, terrace building length, Site coverage, impermeable surfaces, landscaped area, frontage planting, garage dominance, lane and JOAL design, fencing, service screening, façade articulation, roof form, colours, materials and lighting.

With this mitigation delivered and maintained, **the overall landscape and visual effect is expected to reduce towards adverse Moderate** as planting establishes.

Some road based and filtered views may trend towards adverse Moderate Low over time, but the Site will remain substantially changed because the proposal involves permanent urbanisation of a modified rural edge landscape, extensive landform modification and retaining, and direct wetland and watercourse effects. The beneficial and compensatory measures will soften and structure the development, but will not remove those permanent adverse effects.

7.2 Further Mitigation Recommendations

7.2.1 Materials, Colour and Reflectivity Controls

For later design and/or consenting stages, to ensure recessive and coordinated built form outcomes, particularly for the two apartment lots, two commercial lots, terrace housing and buildings on exposed Site edges, a material and finishes schedule should confirm:

- Roof cladding should have a reflectivity of 40 percent or less, and wall cladding should generally have a reflectivity of 60 percent or less.

- Glazing and other reflective façade materials should have a reflectivity of 20 percent or less, unless an equivalent low reflectivity outcome is achieved through recessing or other façade treatment.
- Matte or low gloss finishes where practicable. No mirror finish metals, highly reflective roofing or highly reflective wall panels.
- The detailed design of the apartment and commercial lots should demonstrate how building height, massing, façade articulation, roof form and material variation limit apparent bulk in surrounding views.
- Visible retaining walls should use recessive colours, low reflectivity finishes and materials suited to their landscape context. Where practical, planting should also be carried-out to obscure and soften retaining walls over 1.5m in height.

7.2.2 Planting, Wetland and Edge Treatment

Planting and water related landscape measures should be delivered early where practicable, particularly along sensitive interfaces and in advance of adjoining building stages. This should include:

- Where construction staging allows, early establishment of wetland, riparian, buffer, street tree and boundary planting, with priority given to edges and corridors that will be visible during the first development stages.
- Strong planting along Brymer Road, Whatawhata Road, State Highway 23, Te Kootiii Park, Derek Heather Park, public parks, recreation reserves, stormwater reserves and main watercourse corridors.
- Naturalised edges to retained, enhanced and created wetlands, new stream channels, stormwater reserves and modified watercourses. Planting should be of sufficient scale and density to provide meaningful visual softening and ecological structure, not only decorative amenity.
- Boundary planting integrated with landform, paths, swales, reserves and street trees, rather than treated as a narrow screen.
- Detailed planting plans identifying species, grades, spacing, quantities, planting zones, establishment sequence, maintenance and replacement requirements for each development stage.
- The ecological significance of the affected wetlands and watercourses, and the adequacy and performance of the proposed enhancement and offsetting response, should be confirmed through the ecological assessment and associated conditions.

7.2.3 Landform, Retaining and Sloping Lots

The proposed retaining walls range from minor level changes to substantial walls approaching 6 metres in height. The taller and longer walls have the potential to increase the apparent scale and engineered character of the development, particularly where visible from neighbouring properties, Te Kootii Park, Derek Heather Park, pedestrian routes, roads, reserves and watercourse corridors.

The following measures should be incorporated at the detailed design stage:

- Review road levels, finished floor levels and lot grading to reduce the height and length of retaining walls wherever practicable.

- Use split level dwellings, stepped building forms and planted batters to respond more closely to the existing landform.
- Avoid single, uninterrupted wall faces where walls are visible from public or neighbouring locations. Taller walls should be divided into stepped tiers with plantable terraces between them.
- Provide adequate planting space at the toe and, where practicable, the top of visible walls. Planting should include trees, shrubs, groundcovers and trailing species to break up wall faces and soften their upper edges.
- Coordinate planting with structural requirements, drainage, services and future maintenance so that sufficient soil depth and growing space are provided.
- Articulate long wall runs through changes in alignment, level, material or planting. Repetitive wall sections should be avoided where they would create visually dominant engineered edges.
- Use durable, textured and low reflectivity finishes in recessive earth based colours. Large areas of untreated or brightly finished concrete should be avoided.
- Avoid visually solid fencing immediately above tall retaining walls. Where fencing is required, the combined apparent height of the wall and fence should be reduced through setbacks, visually permeable fencing and intervening planting.
- Avoid unnecessary lighting of retaining wall faces. Lighting should be shielded and directed downwards.
- Give priority to walls visible from O'Brien Road, Southworth Place, Te Kootiii Park, Derek Heather Park, adjoining dwellings, public open spaces and the external rural edges.
- Retaining beside wetlands, streams and stormwater reserves should be minimised. Where required, walls should be integrated with naturalised landform and riparian planting so water corridors remain coherent and legible landscape features.
- Complete retaining and associated planting early within each development stage. Planting should be maintained and replacement planting undertaken until an effective landscape framework is established.

Recommended Response by Height:

Retained height	Recommended response
Up to 1.5 metres	Recessive finish and planting where visible from public or neighbouring areas. Use planted batters where space permits.
Over 1.5 to 3 metres	Step or terrace where prominently visible. Provide planting at the toe and top and break up long continuous runs.
Over 3 to 4 metres	Require site specific cross sections, elevations and a coordinated retaining and landscape plan. Avoid a single exposed face.
Over 4 metres to 5.98 metres	Treat as high priority walls. Reconsider grading first, then use multiple tiers, generous setbacks and substantial planting. Demonstrate the visual outcome from nearby sensitive locations before approval.

Appendix 1 – Landscape Assessment Methodology

Appendix 2 – Analysis Maps & Photographs

Appendix 3 – Masterplan
