

RFI Response to Landscape 25/06/2025 250, 256 West Hoe Heights –

Date: 30/06/2025

Prepared for: Vineway Ltd.

Site Location: 53A, 53B & 55 Russell Road (Stage 1) / 88, 130 & 132 Upper
Ōrewa Road (Stage 2), Wainui, Auckland

The purpose of this RFI response is to provide a response to landscape specific matters following feedback received from landscape specialist Helen Mellsop on 25/06/2025 (**Responses** are provided below corresponding RFI comments). Note that some comments received from Ms. Mellsop are more in statement form rather than queries / directions that are to be responded to, these items have therefore been responded to with 'No response required'

Overall Summary

2 – The proposal would result in a complete change of landscape character from rural to urban. The urban character would be consistent with that of adjacent and nearby urban development at Ara Hills, West Hoe Heights and Strathmill.

Response: Agreed and this is addressed within the Updated Greenwood Associates Landscape Assessment.

3 – The visual and rural amenities of adjoining properties directly south of the proposal would be significantly compromised by the proposal, particularly during the construction period.

Response: The Greenwood Associates Landscape Assessment did not undertake an assessment of the effects during construction as the timing of construction has yet to be determined by the client, additionally it should be noted that the extent of retaining across the site has been reduced (in terms of height / excavation etc..) from the drawings that Ms. Mellsop has based her assessment on. As assessment undertaken by SLR concluded that construction noise effects will be less than minor. It is notable that plots directly to the south of the proposed development are predominately zoned for Future urban and are anticipated to be developed in time.

Several sites to the south fall away from Upper Orewa Road/ Russell Road and as such are unlikely to directly view the proposed site.

4 – The proposal would result in moderate-high adverse effects on landscape character and values during construction and moderate adverse effects on completion, reducing to low-moderate over time as street tree and revegetation planting matures.

Response: As outlined in the response to point 3, Greenwood Associates did not provide an assessment of the effects during construction as the applicant has not finalised the order of construction across the site. In terms of effects of the finalised proposal, Greenwood Associates, provided a rating of low, which as per the NZILA rating scale of effects, both the 'low-mod' determined by Ms. Mellsop and 'low' by Greenwood Associates are both considered to be 'minor' when equated to the RMA rating scale (shown below for reference).

VERY LOW	LOW	LOW-MOD	MODERATE	MOD-HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
LOW		MODERATE		HIGH		

					SIGNIFICANT	
LESS THAN MINOR		MINOR		MORE THAN MINOR		
VERY LOW	LOW	LOW-MOD	MODERATE	MOD-HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH

Therefore, in terms of the long-term effects it can be considered that Greenwood Associates and Ms. Melsopp are largely in agreement with one another. It should also be noted that Greenwood Associates have adopted Ms. Melsopp's recommendations regarding planting within the proposal, specifically at the western edge and at the entrance to Upper Ōrewa Road.

5 – The development has poor connectivity (vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist) both within the site and with surrounding rural and urban areas. While pedestrian connectivity has been improved in the RFI plans, additional pedestrian connections are recommended.

Response: Connectivity is not a landscape consideration and has instead been addressed by the Urban Design Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis prepared by Cam Wallace of Barker and Associates in response to Urban Design requests for further response.

6 – The steep topography of the site means that substantial earthworks would significantly modify the natural landform. However retention and protection/revegetation of intermittent and permanent water courses and wetlands means that the natural patterns of the landscape would be retained to some extent and linkages created to Nukumea Scenic Reserve and other bush areas to the north. The naturalness of wetlands and streams within the site would be enhanced and some public access would be provided to and along stream courses.

Response: No response required.

7 – Roads and development have in the main been located to follow land contours and to minimise the extent of earthworks required. The decision to provide level building platforms on each proposed residential lot has increased the extent of earthworks and associated retaining walls and resulted in steep batters above stream gullies. These even steep batters, managed as mechanically stabilised earth (MSE) retaining walls would detract from the naturalness of the gullies.

Response: No response required.

8 – The strategy for retaining walls, with public-facing walls to be masonry block construction and walls greater than either 1.5 or 2.5m (this height has not yet been confirmed) to be stepped with intermediate planting, should adequately mitigate the adverse visual amenity and visual dominance effects of these structures from public places. If stepping of walls only occurs above 2.5m in height, substantial planting would be required below the walls for adequate mitigation of visual amenity impacts.

Response: Refer to the Retaining Wall Response Memorandum prepared by Terra Studio. The retaining strategy has been altered from that originally submitted to council with a number of higher walls reduced in height across the proposal.

9 – Proposed street tree, amenity and revegetation planting is generally appropriate in location, size, and species mix. A greater proportion of taller growing species is required in the Lower riparian planting mix to provide shade to stream courses and wetlands.

Response: Noted. The lower riparian planting mix has been addressed and updated in the Updated Landscape Plan.

10 – Detailed landscape design plans would be required for communally and privately owned bush and riparian areas, the Significant Ecological Area, walkways, and any other community facilities. These plans would need to be implemented prior to issue of titles for each stage of the development.

Response: Agreed. These plans can be provided at a later stage along with a revegetation strategy.

11 – The proposed conditions of consent do not currently provide sufficient certainty that revegetation areas, existing bush, walkways, and any other community facilities on communally or privately owned land would be consistently maintained and protected in perpetuity.

Response: Maintenance of these areas has been addressed by the Residential Society conditions located within the Proposed Draft Conditions document, prepared by B&A.

Landscape assessment peer review

12 – Methodology:

The Landscape Assessment Report and Addendum from Greenwood Associates have been prepared in general accordance with Te Tangi a te Manu NZILA Aotearoa Landscape Assessment Guidelines. The methodology is generally appropriate – it includes a description and analysis of the receiving landscape attributes, character and values and an evaluation of potential effects on landscape values. However, construction effects and cumulative effects have not been considered fully. The relevant statutory context has been briefly identified but there is no assessment of the landscape-related matters. In particular there is no consideration of landscape-related matters in AUP B2 Urban Growth and Form, AUP H4.2 Residential – Mixed Housing Suburban Zone, or E38.2 Subdivision – Urban

Response: Refer response to items 3 and 4 above with regards to effects during construction.

13 – Landscape attributes, character, and values:

The landscape attributes are accurately described in the Greenwoods report and addendum, and the overall landscape character correctly identified. I agree that the key elements contributing to landscape character are the patterns of gullies and ridgelines, the rolling to steep topography, the patches of regenerating native vegetation and exotic forestry interspersed with open pasture, and the relative rural quietness and isolation (albeit influenced by existing and consented development west of SH1). Panoramic public views over the wider rural and urban landscape from the Upper Ōrewa Road ridge also contribute to the aesthetic attributes of the area. In my assessment the immediate landscape context of the site is valued for its rural character, the contrast with nearby urban areas, the naturalness of indigenous and exotic vegetation patterns, the unmodified and legible landforms, and the remaining level of rural amenity (quietness, spaciousness and rural activities). The associative cultural values of the landscape to mana whenua are set out in the Cultural Impact Assessments from Ngaati Whanaunga and Te Kawerau ā Maki.

Response: No response required.

14 – *Physical changes as a result of the proposal:*

The physical changes likely as a result of the proposal are, in the main, accurately described in paragraphs 6.4 to 6.15 of the Greenwoods report. The large number of retaining walls and the steep batters adjacent to riparian corridors are identified but the significant modification to the natural landform is not discussed.

Response: No response required.

15 – *Effects on visual amenity values:*

The visual catchment identified for the proposal is mostly accurate, although future views from the Te Ara Hills subdivision immediately adjacent to the site have not been included. The representative public and private viewpoints identified in the report are appropriate and cover most of the range of potential visibility.

Response: No response required.

16: *The rural character and naturalness of views towards the site from Upper Ōrewa Road and Russell Road would be substantially reduced by the proposal. However, given the extent of existing and zoned urban development west of SH1 at Milldale and Te Ara Hills, the change would not be unexpected to locals and visitors. I consider that adverse effects on the amenity of transient views from the roads would be low-moderate in extent once revegetation planting on the site matures. Exposed earthworks and loss of vegetation mean that temporary effects during the staged construction period (which could extend over at least 8 years) would be moderate in magnitude. From more distant viewpoints, I agree that adverse visual amenity effects would be low or very low in the longer term.*

Response: Refer to response to comments on effects during construction. However, in this point Greenwood Associates consider Ms. Melsopp's assertion that temporary effects would be 'moderate' to be appropriate.

17: *In my opinion, potential adverse effects on the visual and rural amenities of properties to the immediate south of the proposal have been underestimated in the Greenwoods report. A number of these properties (including 90, 100 and 118 Upper Ōrewa Road and 3, 11, and 35 Russell Road) have primary residential outlooks over the site and could anticipate continued rural uses for some time under the Future Urban zoning. The rural character, pleasantness and naturalness of these outlooks would be significantly altered by development, with moderate-high adverse effects during earthworks and construction and moderate adverse effects remaining even when street and riparian planting becomes established. The privacy, relative quiet and spaciousness anticipated in a rural environment would be significantly compromised. From the consultation records, it appears that the majority of these properties may be land-banked for future urban development.*

Response: Greenwood Associates are not in full agreement. It is considered that the underlying FUZ zoning which applies to the majority of neighbouring properties to the south creates a reasonable expectation that urban development will be present, as does the presence of a nearby urban development which is of a similar magnitude to what is proposed. As a frame of reference, Greenwood Associates would agree with this point if the development were occurring farther away from recently established urban areas such as Ara Hills, which is adjacent to the subject site. Refer to earlier responses to points 3 and 4 for additional assessment.

18 – *Effects on landscape character values:*

These effects are discussed in paragraphs 3.32 to 3.38 and Section 7 of the Greenwoods report and in the June addendum.

Response: No response required.

19: *The obvious outcome of the proposal would be a change from rural to urban character, as stated in the report, and an associated loss of rural amenity for surrounding properties. I agree that the density and style of development, with predominantly standalone single or two-storey dwellings, would be consistent with that in the adjoining Ara Hills subdivision and across the motorway at West Hoe Heights and Strathmill. For people not familiar with the locality, I agree that it would be perceived as a logical continuation of greenfields urbanisation.*

Response: The proposal is a logical continuation of Greenfields urbanisation and therefore is anticipated in accordance with the underlying zoning. It can be considered that the construction effects are expected to be minor.

20: *The retention and enhancement of the wetlands, gullies and streams would retain the landscape pattern of gullies, ridgelines and patches of native vegetation and would enhance the naturalness and public accessibility of these natural features. There is also potential for enhancement of the naturalness, aesthetic and experiential attributes of the SEA in the north-west area of the site.*

Response: No response required.

21: However, the flattening of the ridges to provide level building platforms and outdoor spaces means that steep 1:1 batters (I assume these are mechanically stabilized earth fill MSE walls) would be created on the upper slopes of the gullies. The earthworks plans and the representative cross sections provided as further information show that in many cases these batters are of substantial vertical height (more than 6 metres). Proposed planting on these MSE walls is largely Lot Revegetation Mix (PM), which is predominantly shrubs capable of reaching a height of 2m. The steepness and evenness of these slopes would still be legible with this

type of planting and would detract from the naturalness of the wetland/stream gullies. In addition, growth and survival of shrubs and trees may be difficult on the MSE walls. As a result I do not agree with the Greenwoods assessment that the cut and fill strategy is largely sympathetic to the local topography.

Response: The strategy has changed in terms of retaining since the initial plan set issue with an abundance of split retaining walls and batter slopes proposed, therefore this comment can be considered to have been addressed by the Terra Studio Retaining Wall Response Memorandum

22: The addendum to the landscape assessment states that the western 'urban-rural' edge would be a vegetated rather than a hard built edge, with larger lots near the boundary. However, the density of built form enabled along the western edge is very similar to that in the remainder of the proposed development. And while a vegetated edge would be enabled in the upper west boundary (Stage 2B- 2), development in Stage 2C is largely raised above the boundary and proposed PM shrub planting would not provide a backdrop or foreground to housing adjoining this boundary.

Response: This suggestion has been incorporated into the Updated Landscape Plan.

23: I agree that in the main, proposed development would not be perceived as ribbon development of identical built form atop a ridgeline. The exception to this could be the Stage 2B-2 built development in the upper part of the site.

Response: No response required.

24: In my opinion, the conclusion of a 'low' overall effect on landscape character and values is not credible or justifiable. It appears that this conclusion is based on comparison with an expected urban outcome, rather than effects on the landscape as it is currently. In my assessment, the proposal would result in moderate-high adverse landscape effects during construction and moderate adverse effects on completion, reducing to low-moderate over time as street tree and revegetation planting matures.

Response: In terms of effects of the finalised proposal, Greenwood Associates, provided a rating of low, which as per the NZILA rating scale of effects, both the 'low-mod' determined by Ms. Mellsop and 'low' by Greenwood Associates are both considered to be 'minor' when equated to the RMA rating scale (shown below for reference). For further detail, refer to the responses to points 3 and 4 above.

Landscape Plans

25 – Open space and pedestrian/ cyclist connectivity:

The provision of neighbourhood parks in both Stages 1 and 2 of the proposal is supported. Both proposed parks adjoin existing or proposed bush covenant areas or SW ponds and have good road frontage for passive surveillance. Pedestrian and cyclist access to these parks is provided on the roads and JOALs and via some proposed pedestrian connections.

Response: No response required.

26: There is poor pedestrian connectivity between some parts of the development. The proposed connections across gullies and bush areas shown on the original landscape plans and in the Terra Studio RFI plan are positive, but additional connections from Road 03 to Road 04 and from Road 24/JOAL 38 to Road 22 are recommended.

Response: Additional pedestrian connections have been illustrated within both the updated Landscape Plan and Terra Studio's Updated Architectural Drawings.

27: In order to reduce adverse effects on the ecological integrity of the existing bush covenant area between Stage 2A-1 and Stage 2B-3, I recommend that this proposed walkway connection be constructed as a 1.5m wide compacted gravel path with no lighting. This would minimise vegetation clearance and maintain permeability within the bush area. An alternative route would be available along the roads, with good passive surveillance and lighting in the evening/night.

Response: Happy to locate 1.5m compacted pathway to connect Stage 2A-1 and Stage 2B-3.

28: The proposed pedestrian connection with the westernmost part of Ara Hills is positive, but a road connection between the two developments in this location would be of greater value for connectivity. Proposed walkway connections eastward to Ara Hills from Stage 1A-3 and southwards to Russell Road from Stage 1A-4 are also beneficial, although overall the development has poor vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist connectivity with the current urban and rural environment.

Response: Connectivity is not a landscape consideration and has instead been addressed by the Urban Design Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis prepared by Cam Wallace of Barker and Associates in response to Urban Design requests for further response.

29 – Revegetation Planting:

The native revegetation of wetlands, gullies, riparian areas, and upper hill slopes is supported. This planting would enhance the natural character of wetlands and streams and provide a buffer/extension to the SEA. The proposed native species

are appropriate, although I have recommended a greater diversity of taller growing species in the 'Lower riparian planting mix' to provide shade to wetlands and water courses. I understand that revised plans to be submitted on the 19/06/25 will include additional taller growing species but I have not reviewed those plans.

Response: This comment has been incorporated into the Updated Landscape Plan. Plant species within the Lower Riparian Planting Mix have been adjusted as necessary in order to add additional taller species to provide shade to the under story planting.

30: Finalised landscape design drawings are required by proposed land use Condition 41. In order to allow monitoring of implementation and certainty that native revegetation areas would be established and maintained, it is recommended that this condition contain additional detail. A potential condition is included below.

Response: No response required.

31: Conditions of consent (Conditions 80 and 82) require formation of an incorporated society that would own the larger bush covenant lots (Lots 1901, 1904, 1905, 1908, 1920 and 1922) and be responsible for protecting the vegetation and the ecological health of the bush covenant areas. It appears that Lot 1910 in Stage 2A-2 has been mistakenly left out of the condition. The conditions do not currently require the incorporated society to maintain the native vegetation, walkway connections and lookouts shown on the plans in accordance with an approved specification, or to undertake any specified ongoing pest control programme. I recommend that conditions be included requiring provision of a long term bush covenant management plan, and ongoing implementation of that plan.

Response: Planning/ legal to discuss appropriate conditions and covenant plans

32: Many of the proposed riparian revegetation areas are within private properties, but subject to bush covenants (NB. this is not shown correctly on the landscape plans dated 14/04/25 and scheme plans should be referred to instead). There are currently no mechanisms to ensure consistent maintenance and management of these areas, including replacements of dead or diseased plants and ongoing management of plant and animal pests. Greater consistency of management could be achieved if ongoing maintenance of these areas was the responsibility of the incorporated society rather than individual landowners. At the least, ongoing maintenance should be required in accordance with a plant and animal pest management plan approved by Council prior.

Response: The Updated Landscape Plans have rectified this discrepancy. In terms of ongoing maintenance, this has been addressed within the Proposed Draft

33: The 14/02/25 landscape drawings do not include any weed control and infill planting within the SEA on the site. Part of this area is currently weed-dominated (predominantly gorse). I understand that this will be addressed within the revised Proposed Consent Conditions and landscape plans to be submitted on 19/06/25, but I have been unable to review these documents.

Response: Weed control measures within these areas can be addressed during EPA stage.

34 – Additional Screen Planting :

The Greenwoods Landscape Assessment, in discussing effects on the visual amenity of residents at 118 Upper Ōrewa Road, states that additional planting has been provided at the intersection of this road and proposed Road 17 to screen the road and traffic movements. However the landscape drawings only show two street trees in this location. I recommend that additional native screen planting be added to the plans to mitigate adverse visual effects experienced from this property.

Response: This suggestion has been incorporated into the Updated Landscape Plans. Additional native screen plants and street trees have been located near the entrance of road 17 to provide further screening of the road and associated traffic movements.

35 – retaining wall and fencing plan:

I understand that retaining walls facing streets and publicly accessible spaces are proposed to be of masonry block construction. I also understand that walls greater than 1.5m in height would be stepped, with intermediate planting. This proposal would ensure that the potential visual dominance of these retaining walls was adequately mitigated. However, these details are not currently shown in the application plans or ensured by conditions of consent. The 14/02/25 landscape drawings only show a stepped wall typology for walls greater than 2.5m in height, with hedge planting to screen walls less than 2.5m.

36: *A wide palette of fencing types is proposed in the landscape drawings, with frontage fences being powder coated or with a dark stain or paint finish. Front yard fences appear to comply with Standard H4.6.14 in the MHSZ where they are not combined with retaining walls (1.2m). However, drawings of combined retaining walls and fences on Dwg 2180/44 Typical Retaining Sections show non-compliance with Figure H.4.6.14.1, which requires the combined height of retaining and fence on side boundaries to be 2.0m. I recommend that the finalised landscape drawings to be submitted pursuant to conditions of consent specify compliance with a combined height of 2m, except where a safety from falling barrier of 1.1m in height is required. The MHSZ standard is intended to minimise the visual dominance of combined retaining and solid fencing, and this is an important consideration given*

the use of retaining walls on most residential boundaries.

Response to 35 and 36: A comprehensive review from UD, Landscape, and Architecture have identified certain combined retaining wall and fencing heights throughout the development. Additional fencing typologies as a tactical design response include lowering side boundary fencing to 1.5m where required, and stepped retaining walls, which will aid in reducing the visual dominance of these structures. For further detail refer to the Terra Studio Retaining Wall Response Memorandum.

37: The landscape drawings show 1.8m open security fences on side boundaries within the 'Lot Revegetation Mix' PM planting areas and between this planting and the private or communally owned riparian planting. Many of the PM planting areas are steep 1:1 batters with MSE retaining walls and fencing in these areas would unnecessarily compartmentalise these planting areas, without any substantial benefit for dwelling security. I recommend that these fences be deleted where they are within or on the boundary of PM planting areas, except where prevention of access to wetlands or SW treatment devices is required for safety.

Response: Where necessary, this fence line can be reduced to a 1.2m safety fence to act as a safety barrier. The 1.8m fence will remain if deemed beneficial as security measure to the respective property.

Preliminary landscape specific comments from Council which have been previously addressed, and no further response is required:

It is acknowledged Chris Campbell's Visual Assessment Memo dated 11/06/25 was received and acknowledged by Helen Mellsop.

2: Inclusion of an evaluation of landscape values and valued attributes in the 'Existing Environment' section of the report. While landscape character is described in 3.24 to 3.31, there is no evaluation of landscape values as set out in paragraphs 5.28 to 5.34 of Te Tangi a te Manu. (Query received 9th May 2025)

Response: Refer to the Addendum to the Landscape Assessment Report. Provided 12 June.

3: Revision of Section 6 Assessment of Landscape Effects to include effects on physical, associative and perceptual attributes of the landscape (rather than just physical attributes), including effects on the landscape values identified previously in the report (refer Chapter 6 of Te Tangi a te Manu). (Query received 9th May 2025)

Response: Refer to the Addendum to the Landscape Assessment Report. Provided

12 June.

4: There is a lack of connection to Russell Road in the south-eastern part of the development (probably to avoid any requirement to upgrade this gravel road); (Query received 9th May 2025)

Response: This is an urban design/transport matter and has been addressed in the B&A memorandum and Commute memorandum

5: There is a lack of a road connection from Road 9 to Ara Hills.

Response: This is an urban design/transport matter and has been addressed in the B&A memorandum and Commute memorandum (Query received 9th May 2025)

6: There is a lack of a road connection from Stage 2A-1 to Ara Hills.

Response: This is an urban design/transport matter and has been addressed in the B&A memorandum and Commute memorandum (Query received 9th May 2025)

7: Please confirm DOC discussions or agreements (Query on 9 May 25)

Response: DOC will not be acquiring this lot, so it will be owned in equal shares by lot owners and managed by a Residential Society. The final plans will reflect this, which will be provided 19 June. Conditions of consent will reflect this, provided June 17.

9: Concerns regarding heights of retaining walls (Query received 9th May 2025)

Response: Additional plans by Greenwoods will address. Retaining plans will: Distinguish between vertical walls and 1:1 slopes or 1:3 batters. Refer to Terra Studio Retaining Response Memorandum

11: There is a lack of a neighbourhood park in Stage 1. (Query received 9th May 2025)

Response: Stage 1 Park has been provided. Refer to Terra Studio Response Memorandum. Provided 12 June.

12: There is a lack of proposals for weed control and infill planting in the SEA – part of this area is currently weed-dominated but there is no mention of weed control or replanting in the Revegetation Plans. (Query received 9th May 2025)

Response: This has been addressed within the Proposed Consent Conditions Memorandum prepared by Barker and Associates. Conditions will be provided 19th June. A draft Implementation Plan has been prepared by Greenwoods, provided

June 12.

14: Are there any proposed conditions outlining that retaining walls adjoining public places will not be split into heights greater than 1.5m with planting? (Query received 20th May 2025)

Response: Additional plans by Greenwoods will address – Stepped walls have been shown on plans. Refer to Terra Studio Retaining Response Memorandum

16: Where are landscape plans showing weed control and planting in the SEA area above Stage 2? (Query received 20th May 2025)

Response: This has been addressed within the Proposed Consent Conditions Memorandum prepared by Barker and Associates. Conditions will be provided 19th June. A draft Implementation Plan has been prepared by Greenwoods, provided June 12.

17: Greenwoods states that an addendum to the LVA would be provided addressing feedback. When will this be available? (Query received 20th May 2025)

Response: Refer to the Addendum to the Landscape Assessment Report. Provided 12 June.

19: Lack of cross sections across stream courses demonstrating dwellings, retaining walls, batters and planting Query received 20th May 2025)

Response: Refer to Terra Studio Retaining Response Memorandum