

Memorandum

22 December 2025

Memo to: Knight Investments Limited - Daniel Nakhle

Memo From: Nick Rae

Re: Fast-track Approvals 2024 Referral Application – Ardmore Business Park Development – Landscape Considerations

This report has been prepared in relation to a fast-track referral application by Knight Investments for the proposed Ardmore Business Park ('the Project') at Ardmore, Takanini, Auckland.

The Project

The Project Area is approximately 511 hectares (gross and inclusive of the total land area associated with the Ardmore Airport).

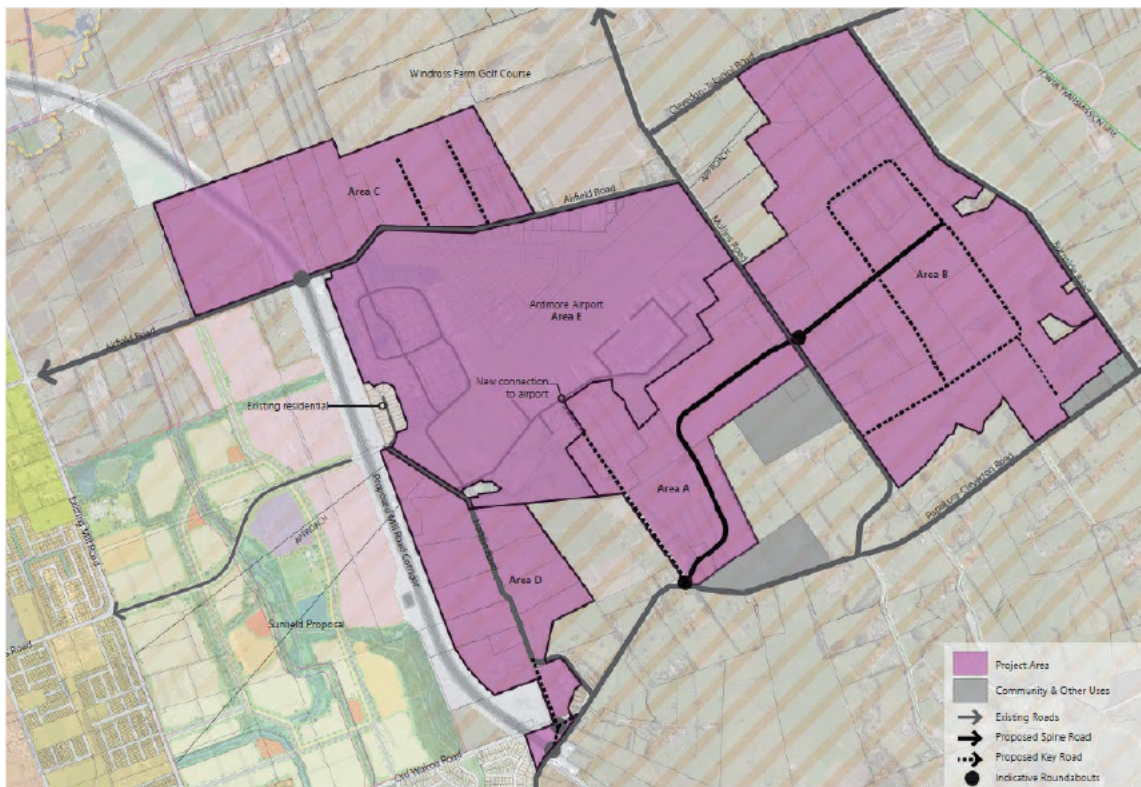


Figure A - Project Area

Of this total it is anticipated that

- (a) The net developable area will be between 193-276 hectares, which excludes significant ecological areas ("SEA"), streams, stormwater management areas and that part of the Airport used for existing operations/runways and activities that are already under construction
- (b) The likely gross floor area for future activities/buildings would be between 67 hectares and 136 hectares, with additional land also for yards, individual site landscaping and car parking etc.

The Project at a broad level includes

- (a) The construction and development of a business park for light industry/service type activities
- (b) A green/blue network providing riparian planting, stormwater management and wastewater disposal and protection of existing SEAs
- (c) Upgrades to existing roads and intersections
- (d) New roading connections to the Airport and the wider site
- (e) Land modification works and infrastructure.

The sites that form part of the Project Area are attached to this letter.

Scope

Transurban has been engaged to provide input into the Project from a landscape perspective.

The scope of this report is to describe the anticipated and known landscape and visual effects of the Project.

Transurban has visited the Project area and understands its condition and landscape features generally. Further analysis and assessment will be undertaken as part of the substantive application process.

Methodology

The scope is high level and more of a desk top review including aerial photographs, Google Earth and what can be seen from surrounding roads and some of the key properties within the Project area.

For this referral application, Transurban has been requested to outline the anticipated and known adverse landscape and visual effects of the Project on the environment, and the measures that can be proposed to manage those effects.

The assessment follows the concepts and principles outlined in 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines' 2022, particularly the need to identify existing landscape values, identify and describe any effect and determine the magnitude of effects, but it is not a comprehensive landscape and visual assessment.

Landscape effects in this assessment are the consequences on landscape values as appreciated by people. To assess this, the visual audience is required to be defined. Experiencing the landscape is multisensory, however the primary experience considered in this assessment is visual. Determining who will see the proposal, and from where, are important aspects of assessing the magnitude of any effect.

In preparing this report, Transurban has drawn on the following:

- Visited the Project area on three occasions to understand the current condition and identify and understand the existing features and qualities,
- Visited immediate surrounding roads and more distant locations to assist with determining where the site is visible from, and who the visual audience would likely include,
- Considered the existing vegetation on site in terms of its general condition and contribution to the landscape,
- Reviewed the high-level ecological mapping,
- Mapped the existing contours to understand topography and existing falls and drainage patterns,
- Determined likely landscape values,
- Identified anticipated or known landscape effects and provide an initial assessment as to the magnitude of effects, which has been used to inform the development of the Concept Plan.

The Project Area

Ardmore Airport is an established general aviation airway, supported by associated activities on a large land holding. Land for industrial uses has recently been enabled on the western corner of the airport, and more is planned through areas currently lodged for resource consent.

The proximity of the Project to the airport provides an opportunity for further industrial activities and additional for access to the airport. The land surrounding the airport may be required for future transport connections, particularly if Hamlin Road is severed by the proposed Mill Road Stage 2 NOR.

The size and shape of each area responds to title boundaries resulting from the applicant's consolidation strategy.

Area A has the highest elevation, and the eastern end is effectively the crest of three water catchments.

The landform is generally flat, but with the western part of Area-A being slightly more undulating and generally falling to the west. There is a fall to the runway, like a small terrace from Area A. The land use consists of mostly grazed pasture, some vegetable growing, some cropping, and some land in kiwifruit vines.

There are a range of trees over the land, mostly exotic species in shelter belt forms, which range in intensity, typically more around kiwifruit orchards. There are three groups of Kahikatea trees protected by an AUP Significant Ecological Area overlay at the south-eastern end of Area B. Importantly, water to these three groups will have to be maintained. There are other native specimens scattered, however a detailed list is yet to be prepared. There are domestic type landscape solutions around existing dwellings on some of the lots within the Project area.

Some of the trees exist within road reserves, requiring landowner consent for removal where roading improvements are proposed.

There is one natural stream feature at the south-eastern corner of Area B, and there are many farm drains, mostly in straight alignments conveying water throughout the rest of the land. These are typically along boundaries or paddock fence lines.

Context

The Ardmore Airport is located on relatively flat land but slightly elevated from the rest of the Ardmore – Clevedon valley at the toe of the shallow foothills of the Hunua Ranges.

The Airport has been a key part of this landscape since 1945 when it was completed as an operational base for the US Air Force and to train New Zealand pilots, but this changed at the end of the war. It has been a general aviation airport since around 1957¹.

The northern runway is now disused, and industrial development is proposed to replace this and extend to Airfield Road. This use will complement the recently developed industrial area at the north-west corner accessed from Airfield Road.

The east-west runway is proposed to be retained. Most of the existing airfield development and hangars are located along the southern side of the runway, including pilot training, rescue helicopters, war birds, a number of engineering and servicing businesses and private aircraft hangars.

The vegetation within the airport is generally grass, however there are some good specimen trees associated with the development at the southern side.

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ardmore_Airport_\(New_Zealand\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ardmore_Airport_(New_Zealand))

The hangar and industrial buildings are existing elements in the landscape which can be seen from many places, however the shelter belts and trees in the land around the airport quickly restrict views and there is a distinct change of character and identity when arriving at Ardmore from all directions.

Whilst not part of the existing or future environment, the design has responded to the proposed Mill Road Stage 2 corridor, as a notice of requirement has been lodged with Auckland Council (which is a relevant matter under s 104(1)(c) RMA). The design ensures compatibility with the proposed designation by incorporating it into the Concept Plan. The future environment also includes the Mill Road Stage 1 designation, which terminates just north of Philip Road.

The surrounding area is a mix of uses, and a range of buildings. To the north exists the Windross Farm Golf Course. To the south is the Kennel Club with a large arena style building and large parking areas. The Auckland University's meteorological site contains a number of small buildings including some that look like dwellings in an open pasture environment.

The relatively flat landform and soil conditions means that there is a high ground water table and parts flood regularly.

Attachment B includes some photos of the context, however a full context analysis will be undertaken for the substantive application.

Visual audience of the site

The visual audience of the Project will include:

- All people travelling on Airfield Road, Papakura-Clevedon Road, east of Hamlin Road, Mullins Road, Hamlin Road, and Bullens Road. These views will only be available to part of the development from any particular viewpoint.
- Glimpse views to industrial buildings may occur for people using Burnside Road, depending on the ability to retain existing vegetation and or propose additional.
- People with views from within the airport.
- People in the wider landscape with distant views (where not obstructed by landform or vegetation), particularly from the more elevated land to the south and north-east.
- Immediate neighbours where their views are not currently internalised.

The visual catchment is medium in scale, and the majority of the viewing audience will be those reasonably close to the site. Many will be transient viewers, while a smaller number will have stationary views, and will be more sensitive to change.

Landscape Values

The key landscape values for the site and wider context include:

- A general rural character, albeit one which is heavily influenced by Ardmore Airport (as a form of physical infrastructure), with a clearly identifiable runway and supporting buildings such as hangars and storage of aircraft.
- The existing native vegetation in the SEA areas provide a greater sense of place and visual confinement.
- A reasonable visual confinement where land contains many shelter belts. These are generally orientated in a north-west to south-east orientation to ensure good sun access while providing shelter from the south-westerly winds.
- A subtle change in landform and height from the airport up to the higher land to the south-east, however the landform is generally very flat.
- There is the ability for the viewer to appreciate being in a broad valley with views to the hills to the south and north-east.
- There is a predominance of pasture however there are a number of sites that are regularly cultivated and grow crops. The visual experience of these areas changes throughout the year depending on the cropping being undertaken.
- Historically, the area was used for horse training, and a number of the training oval tracks remain and add geometric patterns in this landscape.
- The Windross Farm Golf Course provides a recreation and sporting facility directly north of Area C.
- Structured plant nurseries result in an intensive grid patterns, some with shade or glass houses.
- The buildings within this landscape vary from typical dwellings with farm implementation sheds to larger packing sheds, the indoor arena for the Kennel Club and a large solar farm.
- The waterways are heavily modified and exist mostly as straight farm drains, however the watercourse along the south of Area B is natural in alignment and with native vegetation along its banks, enabling people to understand and identify this natural element.

There are no significant landscapes or natural character values (either mapped by the AUP through an outstanding natural landscape or feature, or an outstanding or high natural character overlay, and it is unlikely that there are any unmapped features which would qualify as such features) associated with the site or its immediate surrounds.

There are no significant volcanic viewshafts applying to the Ardmore area.

The environment is consistent with a mixed rural outcome, but with the influence of the industrial character of the airport.

Auckland Unitary Plan

The airport is zoned Special Purpose - Airports and Airfields Zone. All the sites around the airport are zoned Rural – Mixed Rural zone in the Auckland Unitary Plan (“AUP”). The Mixed Rural zone continues beyond the application site in all directions, except at the south where the Project area abuts the Residential Single House zone for a short length.

The Project area is close to the urban zoned land in Takanini and the Future Urban zone generally west of the existing Mill Road and north of Papakura-Clevedon Road.

The airport is also managed through a precinct, and another precinct applies to land owned by Auckland University providing meteorological data monitoring.

To the south-east corner of the Project area is a site zoned Open Space – Sport and Active Recreation zone, upon which the Ardmore Hall is located (currently disused), next to Bell Field (which has been used for cricket).

The Mixed Rural zone provides flexibility to accommodate a range of rural production activities and associated non-residential activities. This includes anticipated built forms such as greenhouses, intensive farming, post-harvest facilities, rural industries and on-site primary produce manufacturing, equestrian centres, restaurants and cafes, garden centres and markets, and generally few dwellings. Dwellings are limited to 9m in height, while other buildings limited to 15m height. Buildings are required to be set back from roads and lot boundaries to minimise adverse effects on character and amenity values enjoyed by neighbours.

These outcomes exist in some parts of the physical environment as discussed above.

Anticipated and known landscape and visual effects

The design strategy is to internalise the impact, such as limiting the visibility of buildings from Papakura-Clevedon Road through a spatial separation defined by the natural water course and existing topographical change and planting solutions.

The intention is that buildings address the internal roads within a new landscape setting (including the front yard landscaping).

Amenity and rural character effects for adjoining neighbours can be managed through sensitive design.

The visually compartmentalised landscape means it is less sensitive to change. Those people viewing larger buildings from the rural elevated context are not likely to be adversely affected visually given the wider mixed built form context, and some existing built form elements being highly visible.

Notwithstanding the above, the initial high-level assessment has identified the following effects:

- The Project will result in a change from a rural character to urban character due to an urban streetscape and more intensive industrial buildings. This in itself is not necessarily an adverse effect, as other parts of the landscape successfully contain urban activities with an industrial character (particularly around the Airport), as they have been determined an acceptable change to the landscape.
- While large packhouse or glass house type structures are anticipated within the rural zone, the proposed intensity is the biggest difference.
- As noted above, the landscape already includes views to industrial development on the airport itself (both existing and consented) and in the context of the airport means that the landscape is less sensitive to change.
- The Project will result in the loss of many trees, mainly due to the fill required. This will change the character of the area to a more visually open landscape. However, many trees are not protected (except where generally captured by provisions relating to stream and wetland setbacks) therefore this impact could occur as of right. A permitted baseline therefore applies to such removal.
- The earthwork filling to create fall across the Project areas will likely change the natural land form. This would be mitigated through planting and hedges to screen or integrate the batter slopes into the landscape.
- The management of the watercourses with native planting will likely have positive effects, such as the enhancement of the water quality and biodiversity.
- Existing trees and shelterbelts on boundaries with other properties, not roads, can be retained and enhanced with additional planting, and will continue to provide visual screening.
- Loss of trees within the road reserve, particularly along Mullins Road, will be required, changing the visual characteristic of the road environment.

Mitigation of potential adverse effects

The retention of existing shelter belts and other trees along the perimeter boundaries of the Project and internally where possible, plus the planting of new shelter belts and groupings of trees will assist over time with a continuation of visual containment and where necessary preventing or obscuring views, particularly where the Project area is near to existing dwellings.

New tree planting on batter slopes along new stormwater devices and between future development sites will assist with integrating the development into the existing environment.

Buildings will not be screened from roads, and some buildings are likely to be seen from neighbouring sites. Front yard landscaping and street trees will mitigate the effects of new buildings along with the location of these buildings.

Potential benefits

The positive landscape and visual effects which could be enabled through this Project include:

- More efficient use of land, through effective stormwater management and enabling land modification across boundaries in a comprehensive way,
- The Project will include native planting along streams and stormwater devices which will have positive effects on the visual amenity and landscape values of these sites.

Specific site design and details will form part of the substantive application and will assist in integrating with the landscape. These are likely to include:

- Setbacks from Project boundaries, and edge planting along directly adjoining neighbours.
- Landscaping of the front yards.
- The maintenance and retention of existing stands of Kahikatea, including through stormwater management.
- Retention of existing shelterbelt planting where possible, and the construction of new shelterbelts where necessary

Conclusion

The Project represents a change for the site from rural to urban character and is a landscape change that is not uncommon around other airports in New Zealand and around the world.

The key effects identified include:

Positive effects: The Project will have positive effects on the natural systems which contribute to landscape values, such as streams / watercourses and wetland environments.

Adverse effects: Loss of rural character generally and the broader impact of the landscape transformation from rural to industrial, potential direct impacts on the rural character enjoyed by people within dwellings on neighbouring land or land close by. While the landscape provides limited views, some will experience change (albeit viewed within the context of existing industrial development). The proposed earthworks will most likely not give rise to adverse effects when experienced from more distant locations, however there may be localised effects in respect of the relationship to neighbouring properties.

Mitigation: Vegetation can be used to screen areas where required (e.g. buffer edges) or continue to provide a layered outcome where tall hedges or shelterbelts could continue between buildings. A mix of plant sizes, including larger trees and shrubs, will mitigate adverse effects. Planting can transition the change from rural to urban and provide a positive urban environment that is attractive where buildings are integrated in the landscape. The location of buildings and internal circulation areas on sites can respond to the location such that the design inherently provides a level of mitigation.

Author:



Nick Rae

Nick Rae holds a Master of Urban Design from Sydney University and a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. He is a Member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, but is not a Registered Landscape Architect.

Nick is a founding member of the Urban Designers Institute Aotearoa, a professional institute that accredits urban design professionals. His urban design skills draw on his landscape skillset along with knowledge gained through working with other design disciplines.

Nick's landscape architectural career has spanned the last 28 years in New Zealand, Sydney, Riyadh, and London. Since 2009 Nick has been the managing director of Transurban Limited.

Nick has had significant involvement in the master planning and detailed design of residential and retirement, industrial and centre developments including subdivision, and land form changes and enhancement of natural systems.

This includes designing and providing strategic advice in response to landscape features, through to detailed landscape design, plant selection and implementation, design of circulation networks and park strategies. He has particular interest in stormwater management and the relationship this has with the landscape. Stream and wetland restoration has led to the rehabilitation of natural systems, while creating great places for people to recreate in, and experience and appreciate the natural environment.

Nick has been involved with the design and consenting of industrial projects in Wiri, Beachlands, Silverdale, Mangawhai and Pukekohe.

Nick has undertaken landscape and visual assessments for a wide range of projects.

Attachment A – Site identification

Area A

Site	Address	Legal Description	Area (m ²)
1	47 Mullins Road	Lot 2 DP 206430	36,987
2	53 Mullins Road	Lot 3 DP 206430	218,058
3	61 Mullins Road	Lot 1 DP 75641	16,187
4	803 Papakura-Clevedon Road	Lot 1 DP 450259	15,060
5	7 Bullens Road	Lot 1 DP 141367	12,819
6	19 Bullens Road	Lot 2 DP 450259	170,300
7	49 Bullens Road	Lot 2 DP 111591	40,620
8	51 Bullens Road	Lot 2 DP 473510	112,028
9	52 Bullens Road	Lot 1 DP 473510	4,184
		Total	626,243

Area B

Site	Address	Legal Description	Area (m ²)
1	45 Clevedon-Takanini Road	Lot 3 DP 169281	42,200
2	61 Clevedon-Takanini Road	Lot 1 DP 112997	90,708
3	40 Mullins Road	Lot 2 DP 169281	136,208
4	50 Mullins Road	PT ALLOT 50 Parish OF PAPAURA	40,468
5	66 Mullins Road	Lot 1 DP 22687	192,225
6	90 Mullins Road	LOT 2 DP 598608	57,569
7	100 Mullins Road	LOT 1 DP 598608	123,694
8	114 Mullins Road	Lot 1 DP 95196, Lot 1 DP 81758	50,002
9	124 Mullins Road	Lot 2 DP 129748	224,901
10	1 Burnside Road	Lot 1 DP 165259	69,782
11	37 Burnside Road	Lot 2 DP 165259	11,188
12	51 Burnside Road	Lot 2 DP 112997	67,394
13	61 Burnside Road	Lot 2 DP 311910	98,550
14	93 Burnside Road	PT ALLOT 1 DP 94470	148,013
15	133 Burnside Road	LOT 2 DP 533681	393,676
		Total	1,746,578

Area C

Site	Address	Legal Description	Area (m ²)
1	308 Airfield Road	Lot 5 BLK XV DP 20982	210,209
2	348 Airfield Road	Lot 1 BLK XV DP 192819	81,740
3	360 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 192819	40,105
4	368 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 96780	60,020
5	382 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 96780	52,708
6	394 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 198874	20,000
7	396 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 208957	175,205
8	398 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 208957	6,017
9	448 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 336380	32,303
10	460 Airfield Road	Lot 2 DP 336380	17,707
11	470 Airfield Road	Lot 1 DP 92845	51,799
		Total	747,813

Area D

Site	Address	Legal Description	Area (m ²)
1	95 Hamlin Road	Pt Lot 1 DP 50029	30,654
2	115 Hamlin Road	Pt Lot 1 DP 50029 Pt Lot 2 DP 50029	57,230
3	120 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 BLK XV DP 53384	40,589
4	125 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 BLK XV DP 53136	51,817
5	130 Hamlin Road	Lot 2 DP 53384	40,868
6	135 Hamlin Road	Lot 2 BLK XV DP 53136	40,519
7	140 Hamlin Road	Lot 3 DP 53384	41,564
8	143 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 DP 11032	51,395
9	146 Hamlin Road	Pt Lot 4 DP 53384	43,215
10	151 Hamlin Road	Lot 1 DP 316491	11,310
11	155 Hamlin Road	Lot 2 DP 316491	91,113
12	161 Hamlin Road	Lot 6 DP 39433	32,653
13	881 Papakura-Clevedon Road	Lot 1 DP 483053	19,174
		Total	552,101

Area E

Site	Address	Legal Description	Area (m ²)
1	371 Airfield Road	LOT 1 DP 578804	1,181,118
2	453 Airfield Road	Lot 200 DP 319290	2,078
3	457 Airfield Road	Lot 202 DP 458277	3,685
4	463 Airfield Road	Lot 203 DP 458277	1,301
5	469 Airfield Road	Lot 204 DP 458277	4,004
6	473 Airfield Road	Lot 205 DP 458277	3,533
7	479 Airfield Road	Lot 206 DP 458277	5,161
8	487 Airfield Road	Lot 207 DP 458277	14,751
9	495 Airfield Road	Lot 208 DP 458277	4,359
10	499 Airfield Road	Lot 209 DP 458277	1,500
11	99 Corsair Lane	LOT 2 DP 578804	222,692
		Total	1,444,182

Total land area: approx.. 511ha



Ardmore Business Park

Landscape Context Images

Attachment B



Photo 1 - View from elevated land near Creightons Road looking north west over the Ardmore-Clevedon valley, where the solar farm (600 Papakura-Clevedon Road) can be seen as the black area and beyond this is the Project area. Scattered buildings, many shelter belts and trees and some large wind breaks which limit views.



Photo 2 - View from Papakura-Clevedon Road illustrating part of the Solar farm visible from the road, Most is obscured by landform and trees.

All photos taken using iPhone 12 (some with digital zoom) and cropped to suit to provide examples of the surrounding environment



Photo 3 - View from Papakura-Clevedon Road, outside Solar farm looking north with Ardmore school to the right, and Project Area B to left and beyond stream (mid ground) including Kahikatea forest in background.



Photo 4 - View from Monument Road / Tourist Road intersection towards the Zealandia Horticulture glass houses and packing sheds (185 Tourist Road). This site has a high proportion of built form existing, which is visible from the surrounding roads and neighbouring lots and those elevated to the south west, but the trees and shelter belts generally provide intermittent views, or totally screen this built form. Whilst this is different to the surrounding it is anticipated within the zone and contributes to the mixed rural character.



Photo 5 - View from Area A (53 Mullins Road) to the north with the hangers on the south eastern side of Ardmore Airport visible behind a shelter belt (on boundary with Airport) in winter. The shelter belts generally provide a good visual screen.



Photo 6 - An example of existing watercourses with Project Area A on boundary with Airport. Most are artificial drains and can be adjusted, however consideration of the existing growing environment for trees needs consideration if changes are proposed.



Photo 7 - An example of the view from the southern side of the Ardmore Airport runway to the north with existing industrial buildings along Airfield Road and rolling Hills beyond.



Photo 8 - View from the southern side of airport to recent industrial development at north west corner of airport (no buildings yet), but expect similar to those existing to the right). Tallest trees above plane are central to that development.



Photo 9 - Example of an existing dwelling adjacent to Mullins Road opposite Area B.



Photo 10 - Example of Kahikatea groves in the Project Area, some are protected, some are not.



Photo 11 - View north along Hamlin Road from where the road rises to the south, Existing trees provide good screening to activities to the right, including the airport which is behind. 151 Hamlin Road is to the left.



Photo 12 - View looking south along Mullins Road with the end of the runway to the right and illustrates the slight change in level where the land rises, Development is proposed in the grass area to the right, and beyond the vegetation at the level change.