

To: Listed Projects Team – Ministry for the Environment

From: Joseph McCready – Barker & Associates Limited

Date: 12 February 2026

Re: Landscape and Visual Effects Memorandum for 133 Greenhill Road, Hamilton.

1.0 Introduction

The site at 133 Greenhill Road, comprises approximately 196 hectares of land currently zoned General Rural within the Waikato District Plan. The landholding is strategically located on the northern edge of Hamilton, directly adjoining the Waikato Expressway, and has frontage to both Greenhill Road and Puketaha Road. Its position at the urban–rural interface situates it within an area experiencing significant growth pressure and transition, where peri-urban land is increasingly being considered for industrial and service-based activities to support regional development.



Figure 1: Greenhill Road Development Masterplan (B&A).

In physical (biophysical) terms, the whenua is part of the Hamilton basin floor, with predominantly flat to gently rolling landforms characteristic of the wider Waikato lowlands. The property is presently used for productive rural purposes, including grazing and pasture, with a landscape pattern defined by rectilinear paddocks, shelterbelts, and hedgerows. Scattered farm buildings and exotic tree plantings provide intermittent vertical elements, while the Waikato Expressway bisects the property into two distinct land blocks, creating both constraints and opportunities for future urban-scaled development.

From an associative perspective, the land is located within the rohe of Waikato–Tainui and is culturally connected through whakapapa and historical land use. The whenua forms part of the transitional rural

setting that has long provided for food production and as a buffer to urban Hamilton. For contemporary communities, the site also holds value as part of the productive rural landscape and as an edge environment shaping the experience of arrival to Hamilton from the expressway corridor.

Perceptually, the site has an open, modified rural character typical of peri-urban landscapes. Views across the property are generally expansive, framed by hedgerows and intermittent shelter planting, with the expressway, local road corridors, and adjoining rural-residential dwellings providing the primary audience. The openness and scale of the landholding contribute to its legibility as a rural block, while its proximity to infrastructure networks positions it as a logical future urban node.

The purpose of the masterplan is to provide a high-level structure plan to transition this land from its current rural state to a mixed-use environment with industrial, rural-residential, and service activities. In alignment with Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, the assessment and design process considers the interrelationship of the physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions of the landscape. The intent is to enable development that supports regional economic growth and infrastructure needs, while also protecting and enhancing landscape values through the integration of green infrastructure, stormwater management, riparian corridors, and landscape buffers.

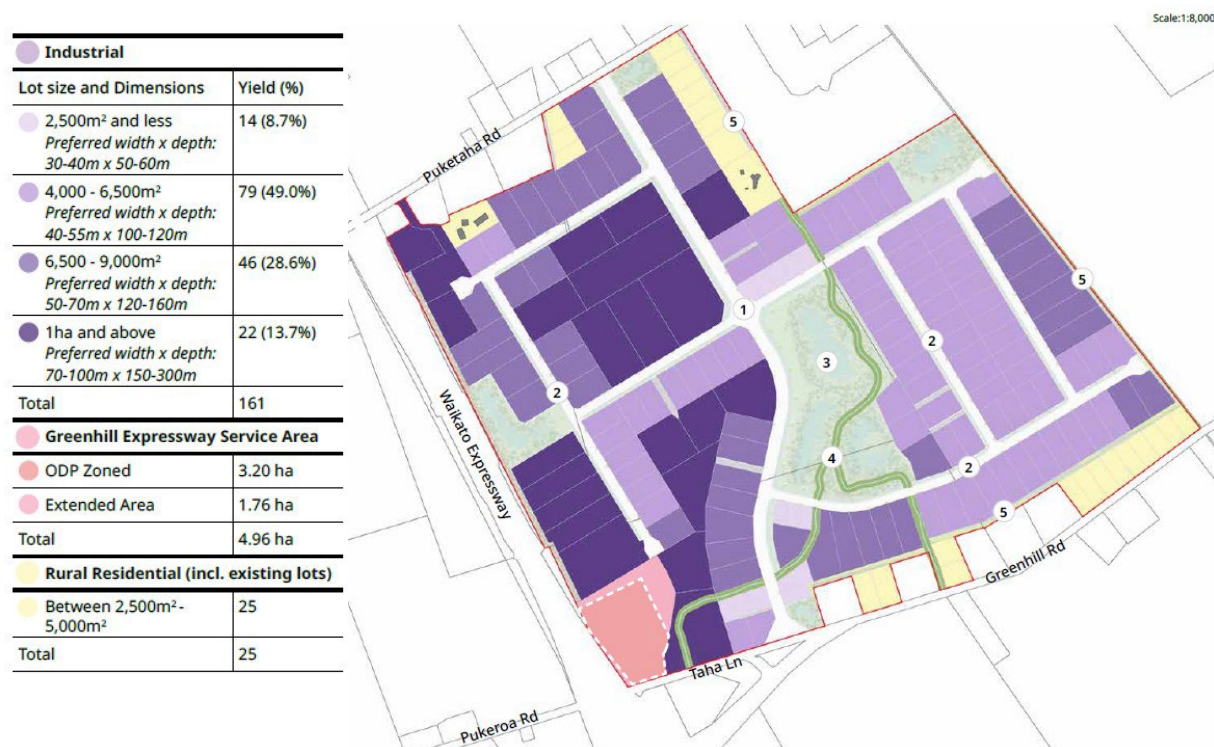


Figure 2: Greenhill Road Development Lot Distribution (B&A).

1.1 Project Summary

The Greenhill Industrial Park Masterplan establishes an integrated development framework that provides for a range of industrial land uses within a cohesive landscape and infrastructure structure. The key components are summarised as follows:

- Industrial Land Use:** Approximately **161 industrial lots** ranging from **≤2,500 m² to 1 ha+**, with the majority (49%) in the **4,000–6,500 m²** range. The lot pattern enables operational flexibility, efficient vehicle movement, and connection to three-waters infrastructure.

- **Rural-Residential Interface:** Approximately **25 rural residential lots (including existing lots)**, generally within the **2,500–5,000 m²** range, form a transitional edge that provides a lower-density buffer between industrial activity and the surrounding rural environment.
- **Landscape and Ecological Framework:** A blue-green network incorporating **10–15 m wide** planted landscape buffers, stormwater basins and wetlands, riparian corridors, and retention of existing mature trees where practicable. This framework is designed to enhance ecological connectivity, filter stormwater, and reinforce amenity at key site interfaces.
- **Infrastructure and Movement Network:** A connected collector and local road network supports efficient industrial transport and integration with the wider transport network, and includes vegetated swales and shared path opportunities.

The Masterplan delivers a structure that balances economic productivity with environmental and amenity outcomes. The development will contribute to regional industrial land supply and employment opportunities while maintaining landscape values and sense of place through integrated design, water-sensitive development, and contextual planting consistent with the principles of *Te Tangi a te Manu*—recognising the interconnection of people, place, and the living landscape.

2.0 Receiving Environment

2.1 Broader Landscape Description

The site at 133 Greenhill Road is situated within the northern Waikato basin, forming part of the transitional peri-urban landscape on the edge of Hamilton. The broader setting is characterised by flat to gently undulating landforms typical of the basin floor, with open expanses of pasture and rectilinear paddocks enclosed by shelterbelts, hedgerows, and fence lines. This pattern produces a strongly modified and geometric rural environment reflective of long-standing agricultural use.

To the east, west, and north, the landscape maintains a productive rural character dominated by grazing, horticulture, and scattered rural residential properties. Exotic shelter vegetation, intermittent farm dwellings, and accessory structures punctuate the openness, but built form remains sparse and low in scale. Indigenous vegetation cover is limited, with ecological values largely confined to riparian corridors, modified farm drains, and shelter planting.

The Waikato Expressway bisects the wider landholding, creating a significant infrastructural element that both divides and connects the rural landscape. The Expressway, together with adjoining arterial routes such as Greenhill Road and Puketaha Road, reinforces the area's role as a rural edge increasingly influenced by urban growth. To the south, Hamilton's suburban expansion, including the Rototuna growth area, forms a distinct urban interface where residential development directly abuts the rural land.

In perceptual terms, the broader landscape conveys a sense of openness and productivity, overlaid with the movement and visibility associated with the Expressway and local road network. The juxtaposition of rural land use with expanding urban form produces a transitional character typical of peri-urban Hamilton.

In associative terms, the whenua (land) holds cultural significance for mana whenua, including Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Haua, and Waikato-Tainui, as part of the wider Waikato River catchment. These relationships reflect whakapapa, kaitiakitanga, and long-standing occupation of the area, notwithstanding the current highly modified and pastoral setting.

Overall, the broader landscape is best understood as a rural-productive fringe landscape in transition, where traditional pastoral qualities coexist with transport infrastructure and the encroaching influence of Hamilton’s metropolitan growth.



Figure 2: Wider context (WDC Online maps).

2.2 Site Description

The site at 133 Greenhill Road comprises approximately 196 hectares of land within the Waikato District, located immediately north of Hamilton’s urban edge. The whenua is currently zoned General Rural and accessed from Greenhill Road and Puketaha Road, with the Waikato Expressway forming a defining feature through the centre of the landholding.

The land is divided into two distinct blocks by the Expressway corridor. Both blocks are predominantly flat to gently rolling, consistent with the wider Hamilton basin floor. The paddocks are laid out in a rectilinear pattern, defined by fence lines, shelterbelts, and hedgerows, giving the site a strongly modified and geometric structure.

The predominant land use is pastoral farming, with open pasture used for grazing. Scattered farm dwellings and accessory buildings are present but limited in scale and dispersed across the property. Vegetation is primarily exotic, consisting of shelter plantings, hedgerows, and isolated specimen trees, with indigenous vegetation largely absent. The site also contains a network of drains managed by the Waikato Regional Council, contributing to stormwater conveyance and drainage of the productive land.

The site reads as part of the peri-urban rural fringe. To the south, the land directly abuts Hamilton’s urban growth areas, with the Rototuna suburbs forming a clear transition from rural to urban form. To the north and west, the site is contiguous with productive farmland and rural-residential properties, while to the east the Waikato Expressway provides a direct infrastructural connection to the wider region.

Perceptually, the site retains a predominantly open and productive rural character, with wide views framed by shelterbelts and occasional dwellings. The Expressway, with its traffic movement and associated

designation, introduces a strong infrastructural element that alters the site's sense of coherence and reinforces its transitional role between rural and urban environments.

In cultural terms, the land is situated within the rohe of Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Haua, and Waikato-Tainui, and is part of the Waikato River catchment. Although highly modified, the whenua holds enduring mana whenua associations through whakapapa and kaitiakitanga responsibilities, reflecting its place within a wider cultural landscape.



Figure 3: The Site (Google Maps).

2.3 Landscape Values

As per Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, all landscapes express values through their physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions. The values of the site at 133 Greenhill Road, and its broader setting, are summarised below.

2.3.1 Associative Dimension

The site is part of the rohe of Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Haua, and Waikato-Tainui, with whakapapa ties to the Waikato River catchment and surrounding whenua. These associations encompass identity, belonging, and responsibilities of kaitiakitanga, even where the land has been highly modified through pastoral farming and infrastructure. The Waikato basin holds enduring cultural narratives, including taonga tuku iho and mātauranga related to food production, waterways, and occupation.

For the wider community, the area represents a productive rural buffer on Hamilton's urban fringe. Its agricultural function and openness carry associations of rural character, amenity, and transition between city and countryside.

2.3.2 Mana Whenua Values

Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Haua, and Waikato-Tainui maintain cultural and spiritual relationships with the site. The land is linked to whakapapa, ahi kā (occupation), and kaitiakitanga obligations. Although the land is now

extensively modified, these values persist through continued recognition of the site as part of ancestral whenua and the Waikato River catchment. The potential for restoration of ecological corridors (such as drains and riparian margins) provides opportunities to uphold mana whenua aspirations for mauri and ecological health.

2.3.3 Biophysical (Physical) Dimension

The site is characterised by flat to gently rolling landforms, productive pasture, and a rectilinear structure of paddocks and shelterbelts. The Waikato Expressway constitutes a dominant infrastructural presence. Vegetation is predominantly exotic and modified, with limited ecological values aside from drainage networks and potential riparian restoration. Overall, the biophysical values are moderate, reflecting productive capacity and functional land use, but with diminished naturalness and ecological integrity.

2.3.4 Sensory (Perceptual) Dimension

Perceptually, the landscape is experienced as open and productive, with wide horizontal views framed by intermittent shelterbelts. Movement and sound from the Expressway introduce qualities of dynamism and reduce tranquillity. The proximity of Hamilton's suburban edge alters the sense of remoteness, reinforcing a transitional and functional character. Amenity values lie in the openness, legibility of landform, and experience of rural space near the city.

2.4 Visual Catchment Description

2.4.1 Extent of the Visual Catchment

The site at 133 Greenhill Road is located on the Hamilton basin floor and is generally open in character, although intermittent shelterbelts and hedgerows create localised screening. The Waikato Expressway bisects the property, introducing a prominent linear infrastructure element and influencing views from both within and across the site.

The visual catchment extends across the immediately surrounding rural-residential properties and farmland, with views available from adjoining roads (Greenhill Road, Puketaha Road, and Expressway ramps). The flat landform and intervening vegetation limit wider visibility, though elevated viewpoints from the southern edge of Rototuna and transport corridors afford more extensive outlooks.

The catchment can be described as follows:

- **Northern extent** – Views across farmland and lifestyle blocks beyond Puketaha Road, limited by shelterbelts and hedgerows.
- **Western extent** – Encompasses rural land accessed from Greenhill Road, with sightlines generally filtered or interrupted by mature vegetation.
- **Eastern extent** – The Waikato Expressway corridor forms a dominant visual boundary, with intermittent visibility from the carriageway and off-ramps. Beyond this, views diminish into the low-lying basin floor.
- **Southern extent** – Views from Rototuna and neighbouring suburbs across the open paddocks, providing a clear sense of transition from urban to rural edge.

2.4.2 Primary Viewing Audiences

The following viewing audiences have been identified:

- **Immediate road users** – Motorists on Greenhill Road, Puketaha Road, and the Waikato Expressway have transitory views of the site. The Expressway provides a highly visible corridor where the openness of the land is readily perceived, particularly where shelter vegetation is sparse.
- **Adjoining rural-residential properties** – Residents along Greenhill Road and Puketaha Road experience regular and close-range views into the site. For these viewers, the open paddocks and pasture form the dominant outlook, with shelterbelts providing intermittent screening.
- **Urban edge residents** – Dwellings in Rototuna, particularly those north of Borman Road and Kay Road, experience views across the southern paddocks. These views emphasise the peri-urban interface, with open pasture forming a backdrop to the suburban edge.
- **Wider public realm** – More distant views are available from elevated points within Hamilton’s northern suburbs. While these are limited by landform and vegetation, they contribute to a broader perception of the site as open rural land contiguous with the city’s edge.

2.4.3 Factors Influencing Visibility

- **Topography** – The predominantly flat landform reduces prominence, although openness across paddocks enables clear views at close range.
- **Vegetation** – Shelterbelts, hedgerows, and riparian planting significantly fragment visibility, creating a mosaic of open and enclosed outlooks.
- **Built form and infrastructure** – The Expressway is the dominant feature, drawing visual attention and altering the perception of coherence within the landscape. Rural buildings are scattered and of limited visibility.

2.4.4 Key Viewpoints

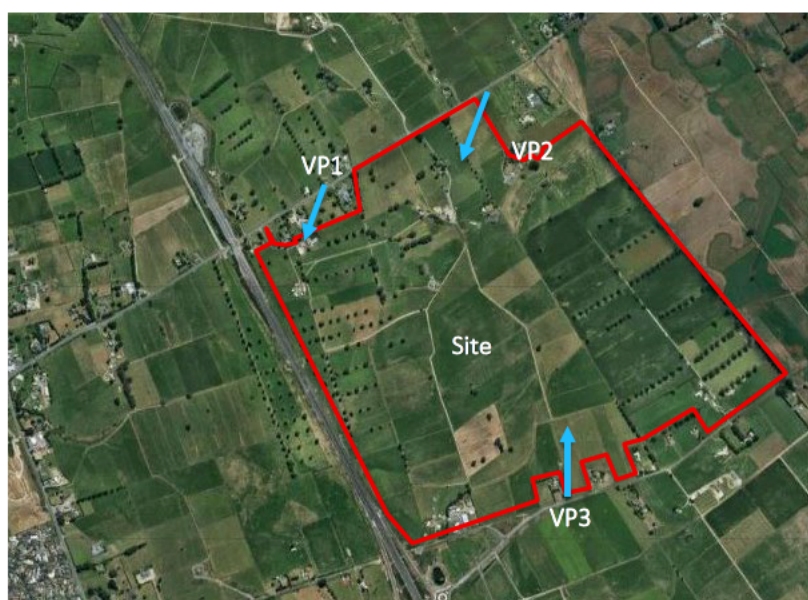


Figure 4: Key Viewpoints (B&A).

Viewpoint 1 – 57 Puketaha Road

From 57 Puketaha Road, the site is visible at close range, with both residents and passing motorists forming the primary viewing audience. Viewer sensitivity is moderate to high, reflecting the regular exposure of residents and the transient but repeated experience of road users. Views are generally oblique, with occasional perpendicular outlooks, where the middle-ground is dominated by open pasture. Intervening shelterbelts and hedgerows provide partial screening, but where these are absent the rural openness is clearly legible. The potential visual change would involve the replacement of open rural fringe character with built industrial or commercial form, altering the scale and texture of the outlook. The magnitude of change is assessed as moderate to high, given the proximity of the viewing location and the extent of visibility across open paddocks.



Figure 5: VP1 (Google Streetview).

Viewpoint 2 – 95 Puketaha Road

At 95 Puketaha Road, views are primarily perpendicular across open paddocks that form part of the site's northern boundary. Viewer sensitivity is moderate, reflecting the presence of residents with regular sightlines and passing traffic with more limited duration of view. Existing shelterbelts provide some intermittent screening but do not fully obstruct views into the property. The anticipated change would involve a shift from rural pasture and scattered rural structures to an urbanised built environment, transforming the rural edge into a developed frontage. For nearby residents the magnitude of change is considered moderate to high, while for transient road users the magnitude is lower due to the brief and interrupted nature of views.



Figure 6: VP2 (Google Streetview).

Viewpoint 3 – Corner of Gordonton and Pukeroa Road

From the corner of Gordonton and Pukeroa Roads, the site is perceived at a more strategic viewing location where rural and suburban patterns converge. Viewer sensitivity is high, as the audience includes both commuters and nearby suburban residents who experience regular and sustained views. Outlooks are a combination of perpendicular and oblique, extending across open pasture that presently defines a clear rural frontage. The potential visual change would be the expansion of built urban form into what is now a predominantly open rural setting, reducing the perceived separation between countryside and urban edge. For adjacent residents the magnitude of change is assessed as high, while for road users it is moderate, reflecting the transient quality of views and the potential for roadside planting or built form design to reduce visibility over time.



Figure 7: VP3 (Google Streetview).

3.0 Key Effects & Approaches to Address Key Effects

3.1 Changes to Local Character

The proposed urban development will transform the site from a predominantly open, rural-productive landscape to an industrial environment. The existing pattern of pasture, paddocks, and shelterbelts will give way to industrial lots, roading, and some rural lifestyle housing, introducing a strong sense of built form where openness once prevailed.

This change represents a fundamental shift in local character. For some, it will signify the logical extension of Hamilton's urban edge, aligning with growth strategies and providing industrial property space. For others, it will mark the loss of familiar rural qualities, tranquillity, and amenity values associated with open farmland.

Key contributors to change include:

- **Built form** – Large format commercial buildings will alter the current low-rise, scattered rural pattern.
- **Movement and activity** – Traffic, pedestrian flows, and urban rhythms will replace the quiet, slow-paced rural environment.
- **Lighting and servicing** – Street lighting, stormwater infrastructure, and utility corridors will introduce an urbanised sensory layer.

How well this transition integrates depends on the quality of design. Sensitive building heights, varied rooflines, and materials that complement the setting can soften contrast. Conversely, uniformity or excessive scale risks a stark shift in sense of place.

3.2 Impacts on Visual Amenity

For residents on Greenhill Road, Puketaha Road, and adjoining rural properties, the development will replace rural outlooks of open paddocks and shelterbelts with built form, streets, and planting. This constitutes a permanent change, with a moderate to high magnitude of effect for close-range audiences.

From Rototuna and the southern urban edge, the site will be perceived as an extension of the existing suburban environment, reducing the sense of separation currently afforded by the open paddocks. For road users on the Expressway, views will shift from open rural land to an enclosed, urban edge landscape, reinforcing Hamilton's metropolitan presence.

Amenity effects can be moderated through well-designed public realm elements, green corridors, and boundary planting that provide a layered transition and visual softening.

3.3 Approaches to Address Key Effects

3.3.1 Strengthen Green Infrastructure Framework

- Retain and restore drainage lines and riparian margins as ecological spines, using indigenous planting to reinforce identity and soften the urban edge.
- Establish greenways and open space networks to provide continuity and maintain openness within the development.

3.3.2 Sensitive Perimeter Design

- Employ larger lots and reduced building heights along Greenhill Road and Puketaha Road to create a sympathetic edge to adjoining rural land.
- Introduce buffer planting and open spaces along key boundaries to reduce visual dominance.

3.3.3 Integration with the Broader Landscape

- Use planting palettes and landscape treatments that respond to the existing rural framework of shelterbelts and hedgerows, providing continuity while transitioning to an urban form.

3.3.4 Cultural Landscape Integration

- Embed mana whenua narratives into reserve design, public art, and street naming to reflect whakapapa and strengthen cultural identity.
- Support opportunities for kaitiakitanga through water-sensitive design and ecological restoration.

3.3.5 Manage Sensory Changes

- Position high-activity areas (e.g. playgrounds, centres) away from rural edges to reduce spill effects.
- Use planting and design measures to mitigate lighting and noise impacts on adjoining properties.

3.3.6 Enhance Public Realm Quality

- Provide generous street trees, berms, and pedestrian-friendly environments to ensure urban character is perceived positively.
- Link reserves, stormwater areas, and walking/cycling routes into a cohesive and accessible network.

4.0 Conclusion and Overall Effects

The proposed development at 133 Greenhill Road will result in a clear transformation of the site and its surrounds from a predominantly open, productive rural landscape to an industrial environment. This change is consistent with strategic growth planning for Hamilton’s northern edge and aligns with the role of the site within the Future Proof Strategy and Metropolitan Spatial Plan.

From a landscape perspective, the key effects relate to:

- **Local character** – A shift from rural–productive openness to large format industrial development. This is a permanent and fundamental change, but one anticipated in planning terms. Its success depends on design quality and integration with green and cultural frameworks.
- **Visual amenity** – Residents adjoining Greenhill Road and Puketaha Road will experience the greatest change, with rural views replaced by built form. For Rototuna residents, the development will consolidate the urban edge. For Expressway users, the site will transition from open farmland to a managed, planted urban frontage.
- **Associative and mana whenua values** – While the land has been highly modified, it remains culturally significant within the rohe of Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Haua, and Waikato-Tainui. Opportunities exist to uphold kaitiakitanga through ecological restoration, riparian enhancement, and incorporation of cultural narratives into design.
- **Biophysical and sensory qualities** – Productive capacity will be reduced, but ecological gains may be achieved through restoration of drains and riparian corridors. Sensory values will shift towards an urban condition, with increased activity, noise, and lighting offset by improved public realm and amenity.

Overall effects are assessed as moderate to high in magnitude at the local scale, particularly for adjoining residents and rural character. At the broader district scale, effects reduce to moderate, as the change represents a logical urban expansion consistent with policy direction.

With appropriate mitigation through sensitive perimeter design, robust green infrastructure, cultural landscape integration, and high-quality public realm the development has the potential to establish a well-integrated commercial development that respects its transitional context and maintains a degree of continuity with the wider landscape.

5.0 Qualifications and Experience

- Joseph McCready is a registered landscape architect with more than 15 years of practice experience including as a team leader.
- He has worked for various firms including Beca, Jasmax, Auckland Council, Thomas Consultants Ltd and Barker & Associates. He has varied experience across a wide range of projects at various scales from

large scale infrastructure to subdivisions and parks carrying out both landscape design and landscape and visual assessment roles.

5.1 Qualifications

- BCom, University of Auckland.
- BLA (hons), Unitec.
- NZILA Registered Landscape Architect.

5.2 Relevant Projects

- Drury East Residential Masterplan, Auckland, encompassing approximately 102 Ha and accommodating up to 1500 dwellings, a new school, small neighbourhood centre and parks (Fulton Hogan Land Development Ltd).
- Wellsford North Masterplan, Auckland, encompassing approximately 48 Ha and accommodating up to 1,000 dwellings, small neighbourhood centre and parks (Wellsford Welding Club Ltd).
- Rotokauri Masterplan, Hamilton, encompassing approximately 130 Ha and accommodating up to 3,100 dwellings and several neighbourhood parks and esplanade reserves (multiple clients).
- Frankton Ladies Mile Masterplan, Queenstown, encompassing 17 Ha and accommodating up to 750 dwellings in terraced housing and apartment typologies (Maryhill Ltd).



Joseph McCready

NZILA Registered Landscape Architect / Associate, Barker & Associates Limited



2.0 Masterplan



Scale: 1:8,000 @ A3

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Proposed Industrial Lots (with indicative buildings and on-lot landscaping)
- Proposed Rural Residential Lots
- Proposed Greenhill Expressway Service Area (Extended)
- Proposed Road Swales
- Proposed Landscape Buffer between Rural Residential and Industrial Lots (10-15m)
- Proposed Landscape Buffer along Waikato Expressway (10-15m)
- Proposed Stormwater Ponds & Riparian Areas
- Potential Existing Mature Trees for Retention (pending further investigation)
- Existing Modified Watercourse for Realignment & Renaturalisation
- WWPS Proposed Wastewater Pumpstation
- Existing Radio Aerial for Retention
- Existing Overhead Power Pole and Lines for Retention
- Designation J17 (Requiring Authority - NZTA)
- Expressway Noise Control Areas
- 1 Existing Rural Residential Properties (outside of the Site)
- 2 Existing Childcare
- 3 Potential Access Options to Greenhill Expressway Service Area
- 4 Existing Residential Dwelling to Retain



Figure 8 High-level Masterplan

2.1 Landscape Strategy



Scale: 1:8,000 @ A3

Wetland Restoration:
To restore existing wetlands and increase ecological values.

*Carex secta**Cordyline australis*

Comprehensive Tree Planting: To increase street amenity and ecological values of the road network.

*Alectryon excelsus**Vitex lucens*

Enhanced Boundary planting: To enhance boundary planting alongside existing vegetation.

*Populus sp.**Podocarpus totara*

Enhanced Boundary planting: To enhance boundary planting along Waikato Expressway.

*Phormium tenax**Leptospermum scoparium*

Public Open Spaces:
To provide high quality public amenity and open green spaces.



Footpath



Outdoor furniture

Stream Realignment:
To enhance riparian corridor & increase area of native vegetation.

*Coprosma robusta**Pittosporum tenuifolium*

Legend

Site Boundary

Proposed Industrial Lots

Proposed Rural Residential Lots

Proposed Greenhill Expressway Service Area

Proposed Road Swales

Proposed Landscape Buffer between Rural Residential and Industrial Lots (10-15m)

Proposed Landscape Buffer along Waikato Expressway (10-15m)

Proposed Stormwater Ponds & Riparian Areas

Potential Existing Mature Trees for Retention (pending further investigation)

Existing Modified Watercourse for Realignment & Renaturalisation

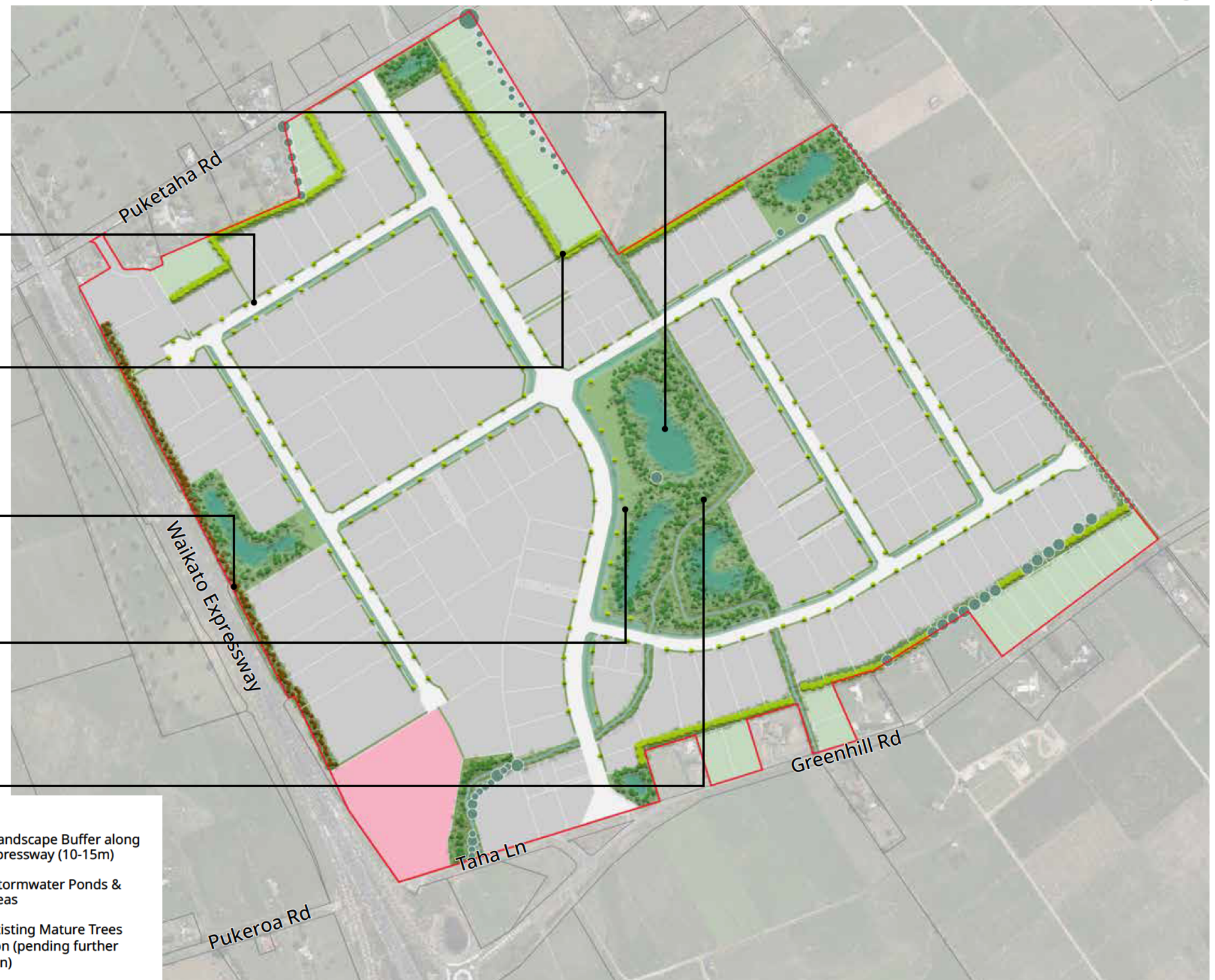


Figure 9 High-level Landscaping Masterplan

2.2 Lot Sizes and Yield Distribution

Industrial	
Lot size and Dimensions	Yield (%)
2,500m ² and less <i>Preferred width x depth: 30-40m x 50-60m</i>	14 (8.7%)
4,000 - 6,500m ² <i>Preferred width x depth: 40-55m x 100-120m</i>	79 (49.0%)
6,500 - 9,000m ² <i>Preferred width x depth: 50-70m x 120-160m</i>	46 (28.6%)
1ha and above <i>Preferred width x depth: 70-100m x 150-300m</i>	22 (13.7%)
Total	161
Greenhill Expressway Service Area	
ODP Zoned	3.20 ha
Extended Area	1.76 ha
Total	4.96 ha
Rural Residential (incl. existing lots)	
Between 2,500m ² - 5,000m ²	25
Total	25

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Residential Dwellings to Retain
- 1 Proposed Industrial Collector Road
- 2 Proposed Industrial Local Road
- 3 Proposed Stormwater Ponds and Riparian Areas
- 4 Existing Regional Council Drains for Realignment & Renaturalisation



Figure 10 Land Uses and Densities