

Boffa Miskell



# 82 Hobsonville Road

Urban Design Summary Statement  
Prepared for Kings Heights Group Limited

28 February 2023

Boffa Miskell



## Document Quality Assurance

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# 1.0 Introduction

Boffa Miskell Limited has been requested by Kings Heights Group Limited to prepare an Urban Design Summary Statement in respect of a proposed retirement village at 82 Hobsonville Road, West Harbour ('the Site').

The proposal is being submitted for consideration for processing under the 'Fast-Track' pathway for resource consenting provided for by the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) Act 2020.

The purpose of this statement is to provide a summary of the Site's key characteristics relevant to urban design outcomes and a preliminary assessment of the proposal from an urban design perspective. Should the project be successful in entering the Fast-Track system for resource consent a full Urban Design Assessment will be prepared at the EPA stage.

In undertaking this preliminary assessment, the writer has visited the Site. The assessment is based on an architectural plan set by ASC Architects dated 22 February 2023.

## 2.0 Site and surrounds context

### 2.1 The Site

The Site has a total area of approximately 4.05ha. It is roughly rectangular in shape, with an approximately 120m long frontage to Hobsonville Road and a depth of approximately 350m.

The Site has a high point at its south-western corner towards Hobsonville Road, with a slope down to the east along its frontage of approximately 5m. Overall, the street frontage of the Site sits higher than land on the opposite side of Hobsonville Road. From its street frontage, the Site slopes 15m – 20m down to the north over a distance of approximately 180 towards the centre of the lot (approximately 8-10% slope), stepping up 10m in height towards its north-western boundary. These characteristics offer long distance views to the north and east over Whenuapai and Hobsonville (refer Figure 3) and south-east over the Waitemata Harbour to downtown Auckland.

The southern part of the Site is currently in long grass. There is a permanent stream, surrounded by scrubby bush, in the low part of the Site towards its centre. This stream, which connects to Waiarohia Inlet in the Upper Waitemata Harbour, enters the Site on its eastern side. The northern part of the Site is in grass and sporadic bush.

There is a large house at the south-western corner of the Site, no longer used for residential purposes. The Site is otherwise clear of buildings and structures.

The Site is close to the intersection of Hobsonville Road with Westpark Drive and Westpoint Drive. Westpark Drive provides access to the established residential suburb of West Harbour on the south side of Hobsonville Road. Westpoint Drive is a planned new road providing access to light industry land uses emerging to the north-east of the Site along Hobsonville

Road. The southern end of Westpark Drive (being that part closest to the Site) and central sections of the road have been completed.

Hobsonville Road is a major road in the area, connecting between the developing new suburbs of Hobsonville Point and Scott Point to the east and the north-western motorway to the west. That part of the road adjoining the Site has one traffic lane in each direction and a central painted median strip. There is no footpath along the Site's frontage.



*Figure 1: Aerial image showing the boundaries of the Site, contours, and the stream which enters the Site from the east. The image does show the recently constructed part of Westpoint Drive to the east or recently constructed commercial buildings in that area.*



*Figure 2: Looking west towards the southern end of the Site, along its Hobsonville Road frontage, and towards the existing house on the property.*



*Figure 3: The view to the north over the Site. The bush area visible at the centre of the photo is around the stream that passes through the middle of the Site. On the right of the photograph are new light industrial / commercial buildings accessed from Westpoint Drive.*



*Figure 4: The view south to residential properties opposite the Site on Hobsonville Road.*

## 2.2 Surrounding area

Neighbouring properties on the north side of Hobsonville Road through to Westpoint Drive appear to largely accommodate a variety of rural and rural lifestyle uses, with land being predominantly in grass. East of Westpoint Drive, there is an emerging grouping of light industry and commercial activities. These are generally in large scale, warehouse style buildings and replace previous horticultural land uses (fruit and vegetable growers) in this area.

As noted, opposite the Site on the south side of Hobsonville Road, is the residential suburb of West Harbour. This stretches along an approximately 4km length of Hobsonville Road between Scott Point in the east and Massey to the south-west. It comprises largely detached residential

housing of one to two storeys in height, largely constructed from the late 1980s onwards, on streets and sections with established planting. Houses directly opposite the Site on Hobsonville Road include both detached houses and a row of attached townhouses accessed from a laneway that runs along the rear of the buildings, parallel to the road. The majority of houses opposite the Site do not have vehicle access from Hobsonville Road. Most have limited visual presence on Hobsonville Road, being screened from view by fences and planting, or being partly set below road level.

Westgate Metropolitan Centre is approximately 1.5km to the west along Hobsonville Road and Hobsonville Local Centre is 2.1km to the east. Both centres offer a wide variety of retail and commercial services, including supermarkets. Bus route 120 passes in front of the Site, with bus stops 130m to the west and 40m to the east along Hobsonville Road. This bus route provides a half hourly service with stops at both the Metropolitan and Town Centres. The route travels between Constellation Drive bus station and Henderson train station.

## 2.3 Planning context

### 2.3.1 Operative zoning

The Site and all adjoining properties are in the Future Urban zone in the Auckland Unitary Plan ('AUP'). This zoning, which identifies land intended for future urban growth, extends over a much larger area to the north and is covered by the Whenuapai Structure Plan (discussed in greater detail below). Residential properties on the south side of Hobsonville Road, opposite the Site, are in the Residential - Mixed Housing Urban ('MHU') zone, and the emerging commercial properties to the north-east along Hobsonville Road are in the Business - Light Industry zone.

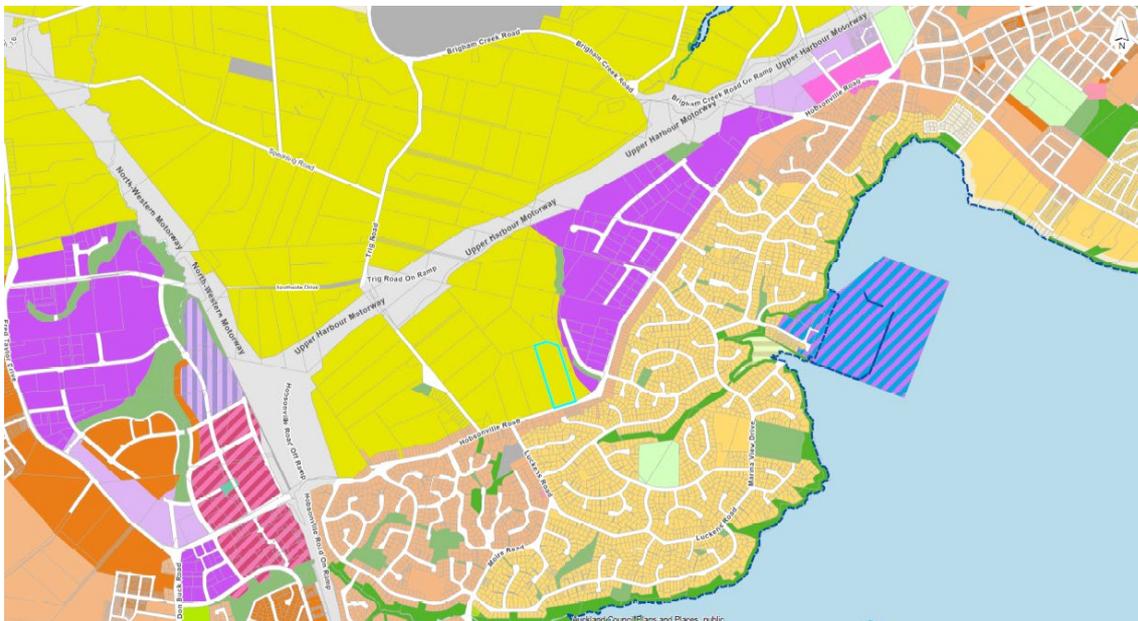


Figure 5: Operative zoning in the AUP. The bright yellow colour is Future Urban zone.

### 2.3.2 Whenuapai Structure Plan

The Whenuapai Structure Plan, released by Auckland Council in 2016, set out a spatial vision, showing an arrangement of various land uses and infrastructure elements, for transformation of the Whenuapai area from its existing predominant semi-rural state to an urbanised condition over a 10-20 year period. Release of the Structure Plan followed an extensive stakeholder and community engagement process. The Structure Plan covers an area of approximately 1500ha to the north of Hobsonville Road and to the east of the north-western motorway through to the coast of the Upper Waitemata Harbour.

The Structure Plan has a number of key objectives. These include<sup>1</sup>:

- A range of quality housing choices are provided to meet the needs of a growing and diverse community;
- Whenuapai has a quality compact urban form with increased residential densities close to public transport services and amenities; and
- Stream networks are utilised as recreational routes and connections between open spaces and the coast where practicable.

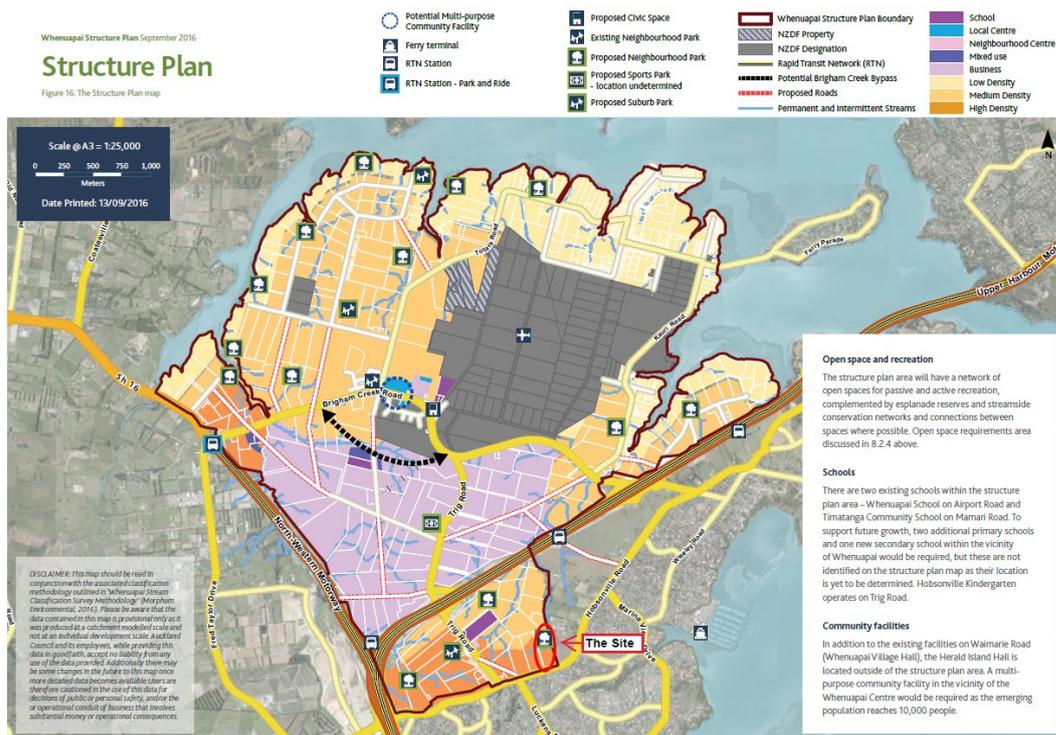


Figure 6: Operative zoning in the AUP. The bright yellow colour is Future Urban zone.

The Site is at the south-east corner of the Structure Plan. The majority of the Site is identified as high density residential. This land use extends west in a thick band through to the north-western motorway and Westgate Metropolitan Centre. The balance of the Site, at its northern end, is identified as having medium density residential. An indicative Neighbourhood Park is also shown on the Site. These are described within the Structure Plan as passive recreation

<sup>1</sup> 2016 Whenuapai Structure Plan, Auckland Council, page 21.

spaces within residential zones accessible by most residents within a 400m walk.<sup>2</sup> Amongst its transport improvements, the Structure Plan identifies an improved bus connector network connecting to Westgate along Hobsonville Road, passing in front of the Site.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.3.3 Plan Change 5

Plan Change 5 ('PC5') was a Council initiated plan change notified in September 2017, proposed to implement the Whenuapai Structure Plan through the introduction of Whenuapai 3 Precinct into the AUP. PC5 was withdrawn by Council in June 2022 due to infrastructure budgetary constraints. Prior to PC5's withdrawal, Council developed Variation 1 to the plan change.

PC5, as proposed to be modified by Variation 1, remains of relevance to development on the Site, as it represents Council's most recent thinking on appropriate land use and spatial outcomes within the Future Urban zoned area covered by the Whenuapai Structure Plan and PC5.

Variation 1 proposed Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings ('THAB') zoning for the entire Site and the adjoining properties to the south-east and west. The THAB zone provides for 'urban residential living in the form of terrace housing and apartments' and for the AUP's 'greatest density, height and scale of all the residential zones.' The zone anticipates that, where it applies, it will result in a high degree of visual change.<sup>4</sup>

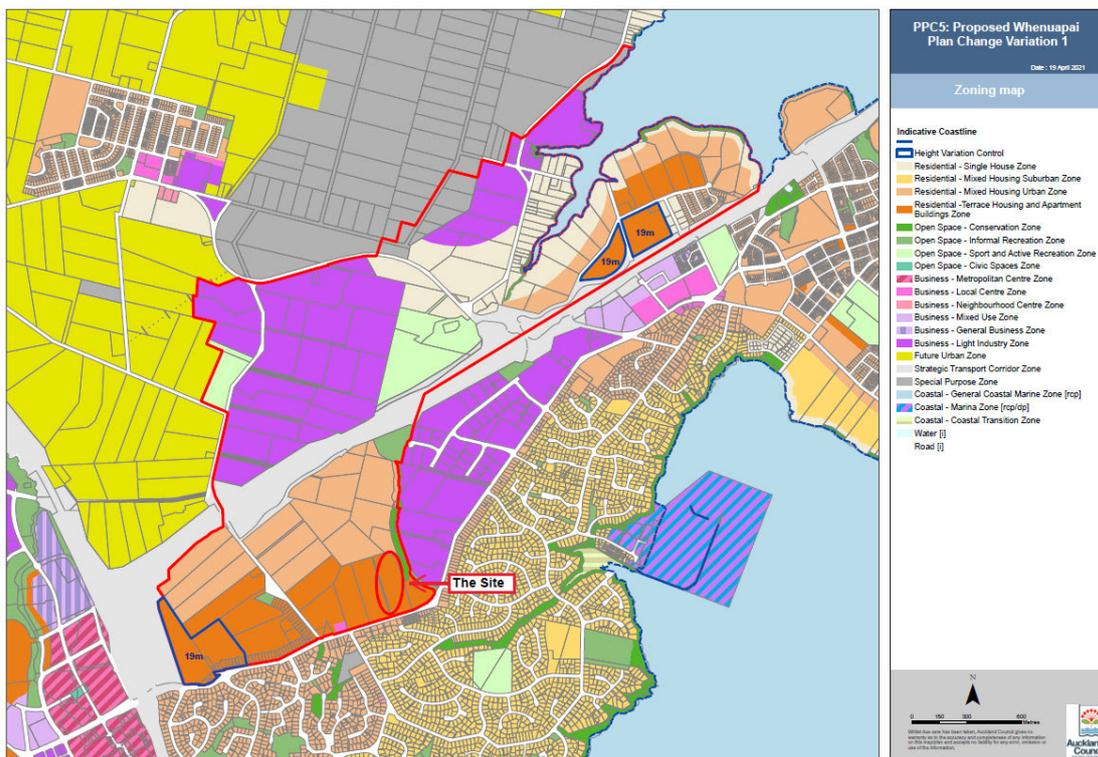


Figure 7: PC5 Variation 1 zoning map.

<sup>2</sup> 2016 Whenuapai Structure Plan, Auckland Council, page 87.

<sup>3</sup> 2016 Whenuapai Structure plan, Auckland Council, page 113.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to H6.1 THAB zone description.

Anticipated outcomes for development in the THAB zone, as stated within the AUP description of that zone (H6.1) are that it:

- Achieves the planned urban character of the zone;
- Achieves attractive and safe streets and public open spaces;
- Manages the effects of development on adjoining sites, including visual amenity, privacy and access to daylight and sunlight; and
- Achieves high quality on-site living environments.

To the east of the Site, the Variation 1 zoning map shows Open Space – Conservation zoning applying to that part of the stream outside the Site as it heads north towards the Upper Waitemata Harbour. Properties to the north of the Site are shown to have MHU zoning, a medium density residential zone which anticipates houses of up to three storeys in height. Approximately 250m to the west of the Site, the zoning map shows a Neighbourhood Centre.

### Whenuapai 3 Precinct provisions

Parts of the proposed Whenuapai 3 Precinct provisions and plans (as modified by Variation 1) of relevance to this preliminary assessment of the concept development of the Site include Whenuapai 3 Precinct Plan 1. This shows a permanent stream across the Site and an indicative open space in the northern part of the Site.

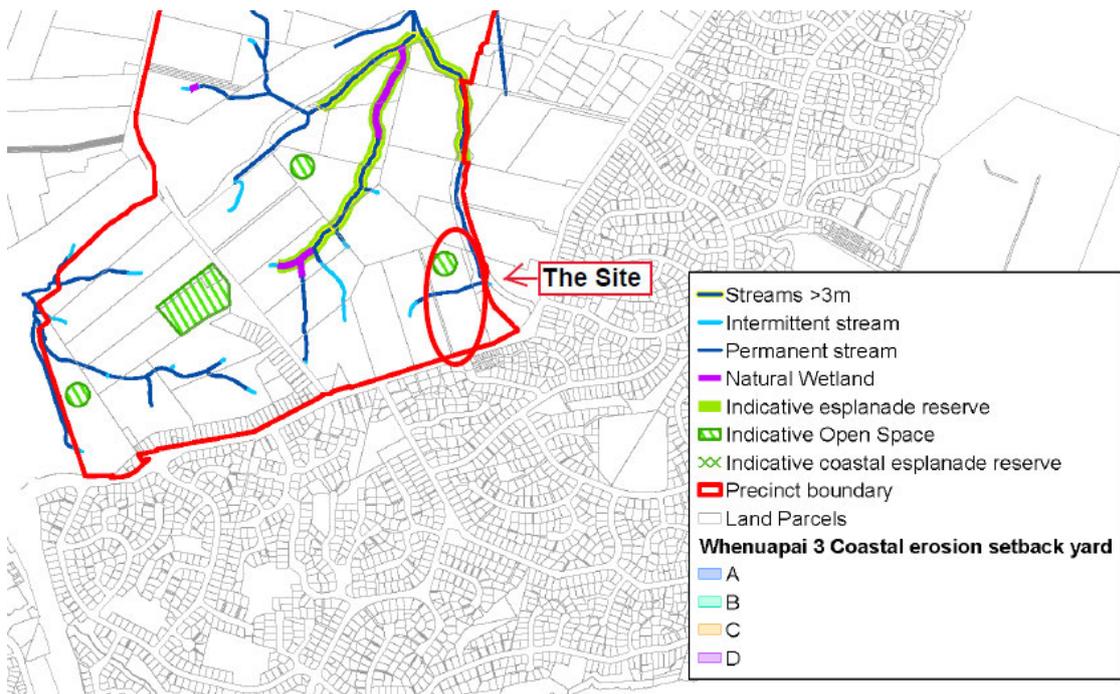


Figure 8: PC5 Variation 1 amendments to proposed Whenuapai 3 Precinct Plan 1

Development within the Precinct is subject to a standard (I16.16.6.1) are required to comply with Precinct Plan 1 or provide an alternative measure that will generally align with the outcomes sought in the Precinct Plan.

### 2.3.4 Plan Change 78

Plan Change 78 ('PC78') is Auckland Council's proposed response to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development ('NPS-UD') and amendments to the Resource Management Act which require territorial authorities to introduce Medium Density Residential Standards ('MDRS') into their district and regional plans.

Both the NPS-UD and the MDRS reflect the government's expectation that councils amend their plans in order to enable residential intensification. The NPS-UD requires relevant councils to enable building heights of at least six storeys within a walkable catchment of: existing and planned rapid transit stops; the edge of city centre zones; and the edge of metropolitan centre zones. RMA amendments associated with the MDRS require these standards, which permit three houses up to three storeys in height per site, to be introduced into relevant residential zones.

PC78 does not apply to the Site due to its Future Urban zoning. It is of wider contextual relevance to the proposed development, however, as it shows how the density and scale of built form within the existing urban area along Hobsonville Road may change over time. The PC78 notified zoning maps show:

- All West Harbour residential properties opposite the Site changing from the two storey Mixed Housing Suburban zone to the three storey MHU zone;
- A six storey THAB zone walkable catchment area extending east out from Westgate Metropolitan Centre along Hobsonville Road towards the Site.

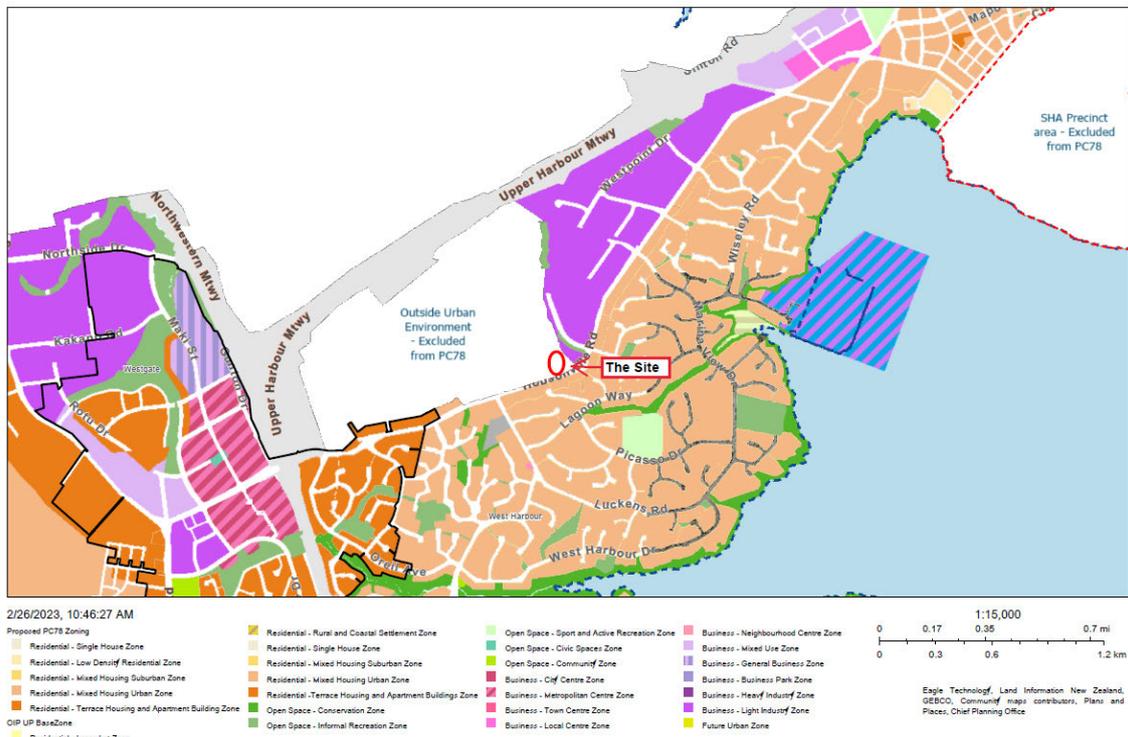


Figure 9: PC78 proposed zoning around the Site.

### 2.3.5 Summary of Site attributes

Summarising the above, key attributes of the Site and its surrounding environment are:

- The Site's large size (approximately 4ha) and regular shape means that it is well suited to a comprehensive, masterplanned form of urban development.
- The Site is in a wider area that is undergoing rapid transformation from previous rural to urban land uses. It is situated on a growth corridor within a short walk of a future neighbourhood centre planned through the Whenuapai Structure Plan and PC5 processes and along a transport corridor with planned public transport improvements improving connections through to Westgate Metropolitan Centre.
- Council's most recent strategic planning for the area (Variation 1 to PC5) identifies the Site and adjoining properties to the west through to Westgate Metropolitan Centre as suited for the AUP's highest density residential zone: the THAB zone.
- The Site's position in an area of higher elevation within the wider area and Site slope enables long distance views out over the surrounding landscape, contributing to the amenity of any potential residential development.
- A permanent stream passes through the middle of the Site, offering the opportunity for its restoration to provide both residential amenity and open space outcomes.

## 3.0 The proposal

The proposal is for a comprehensively planned retirement village and is described in detail in the assessment section that follows. Below key elements of the concept are summarised:

- 354 units are proposed. This comprises 42 villas (one storey duplex and attached houses), 45 care units, 267 apartment units, and associated reception / administration areas.
- There are six apartment buildings, varying in height between four and six levels. Each apartment building has basement parking.
- Proposed communal facilities include a bowling green, a pool, a café, and a clubroom - several facilities being housed in a two storey amenities building at the centre of the Site.
- Adjoining the communal amenities building there is a three storey care building, also with basement parking, providing hospital level care.
- There is a 20m wide corridor formed around the stream at the centre of the Site. This forms part of a wider landscaped setting of open spaces and walkways through the Site.



Figure 10: Proposed site plan for 82 Hobsonville Road

## 4.0 Preliminary urban design assessment

### 4.1 Methodology

This section undertakes a preliminary urban design assessment of the proposal based on the 22 February 2023 ASC concept plans. Potential urban design effects are assessed from a synthesis of:

- Urban design guideline documents, including: *The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol*, North Shore City and Auckland City Councils' *Good Solutions Guide for Apartments*, and Auckland Council's *The Auckland Design Manual*;
- An understanding of the characteristics of the Site and the wider area; and
- General good urban design practice.

The assessment also considers those built form outcomes and matters for consideration for new development in the AUP's THAB zone, being that zone proposed by Council's Variation 1 to PC5.

### 4.2 Density and typology

The Site is well positioned for the intensity of apartment buildings and attached residential units that are proposed. It is approximately 250m west of a neighbourhood centre shown in the PC5 Variation 1 zoning plan that will provide for residents' local convenience needs and has good

bus (with proposed improvements) and vehicle links to the services and amenities within Westgate Metropolitan Centre and Hobsonville Local Centre to the west and east along Hobsonville Road.

The suitability of the Site for apartment and attached housing development is also shown by these more intense housing forms being those encouraged by the THAB zone, which is the PC5 Variation 1 proposed zoning for the Site and wider area – Variation 1 representing Council's most recent thinking for the Whenuapai Structure Plan area.

### 4.3 Site layout

Proposed buildings and open spaces are arranged on the Site in a manner which both positively responds to the Site's characteristics and is consistent with good urban design practice. The following is noted:

- An open space framework within the Site provides the basis for a pedestrian / vehicle movement network within the Site and clear structuring of built form. At its centre is an open space corridor of at least 20m width around the stream which passes through the Site. This connects with areas of communal open space and pedestrian pathways. A simple internal street network of linear streets which run north-south down the Site and which have short east-west connecting arms provides a robust structure off which to align proposed villas and apartment buildings, resulting in a visually legible layout.
- Apartment buildings are positioned towards the Site's street frontage, providing the foundation for an urban built character, consistent with THAB zone planned outcomes.

### 4.4 Street interface

To Hobsonville Road, the development presents a strong street edge of a centrally positioned four storey apartment building and two flanking six storey apartment buildings, separated by the two proposed north-south internal streets.

The buildings have a relatively deep setback from Hobsonville Road. This depth will allow for substantial front yard landscaping, including tree planting (as indicated on the concept site plan), with the general alignment of street frontage buildings and deep planted setback contributing to an attractive urban built character.

It is noted that there is a proposed Notice of Requirement along Hobsonville Road. That may result in part of the Site along its frontage being taken, however sufficient depth of yard will remain in front of the proposed buildings for the quality urban outcomes sought for the project, including landscaping.

There is a pick up and drop off area for residents and visitors behind street frontage tree planting, parallel to the street and in front of the central apartment building. This building – Block A – houses the retirement village's main reception. The street frontage village reception provides a sense of address and legibility to the development, and also contributes activity to the street edge, while the pick up and drop off area avoids areas of carparking visible to the street.

In addition to the position of the village's main reception towards Hobsonville Road, the concept plans indicate street frontage ground and upper floor residential units will look out over the street, providing the opportunity for passive surveillance.

Overall, the concept plan is considered to provide a strong foundation, to be developed through a landscape plan and building elevations, of a development that contributes to a safe and attractive urban street interface.

## 4.5 Neighbourhood character

The proposal combines smaller scale attached residential units within a landscaped environment of larger scale apartment buildings and a care facility building that vary in height from three to six storeys. The overall density and scale of the development will contribute to the change to the visual character of the northern side of Hobsonville Road from a semi-rural to urban character already underway along the road with the construction of large scale commercial buildings in the Light Industry zoning to the east of Westpoint Drive. It is also consistent with a change in character from rural to urban signalled by the AUP's Future Urban zoning of the Site and surrounding area, and is consistent with a significant change to an intensified urban residential character signalled by the THAB zoning of the Site and neighbouring properties in Variation 1 to PC5.

The apartment buildings form a coherent grouping towards the southern end of the Site, contributing to an urban condition along its road frontage, as encouraged by the THAB zone. Bulk then steps down through the lower height (three storey) care building to the smaller scale villas at the northern and eastern ends of the property. This range of building heights and scales enables the development to both positively respond to the existing, predominant low scale nature of the surrounding environment while anticipating the future intensified urban character of this northern side of Hobsonville Road.

At six levels, four of the proposed apartment buildings are of a greater height than the five storey buildings generally anticipated by the THAB zone. Presuming 3.2m floor to floor heights and allowing space for greater ground floor height and roof structure, overall height for these buildings may be in the range of 19m – 21m, above the THAB zone's 16m maximum building height. At a principled level, it is considered that buildings of this scale can be comfortably accommodated within the rapidly changing character on the northern side of Hobsonville Road, noting that modulation of building massing, façade articulation and the visual filtering effect of on-site landscaping including specimen trees, all to be progressed as the scheme moves from concept to resource consent level design, will further assist in integrating the buildings into their surrounds.

The proposed height of the buildings must also be seen within the wider future environment of larger scale and multi-level buildings along Hobsonville Road. This includes buildings up to a potential 20m in height in the Light Industry zoned area directly to the east, potential apartment buildings of up to at least five storeys in the future THAB zoned area to the direct west of the Site, and potential apartment buildings of up to at least six storeys in the THAB zoned walkable catchment area further to the west along Hobsonville Road proposed by PC78.

The topography of the Site, with the apartment buildings generally positioned on that part where the land falls 15m – 20m down from the road frontage towards the stream at the Site's centre, will also assist in moderating the perceived scale of the larger buildings within the development, stepping building massing with the land form down the Site.

## 4.6 On-site amenity

The site plan is considered to have an overall structure that, as design development progresses through to resource consent level, will provide for good levels of on-site amenity for retirement village residents. The following observations are made:

- The movement network within the Site is comprised of a series of linear streets and paths, allowing good lines of sight along them, providing for wayfinding and safety. These movement routes are adjoined by buildings which align and face out to them, enabling opportunities for good levels of passive surveillance.
- The design of the on-site streets suggest, at concept level, narrower carriageways that use a semi 'shared space' approach to pedestrian and vehicle movement, where design interventions slow vehicle speed and give higher priority to pedestrian movement. These street designs are common in both contemporary retirement villages and larger scale, comprehensively designed residential developments. These interventions could be further developed through the resource consent design development of the project.
- Pedestrian movement along streets is supported by a pedestrian path network through the Site's open spaces, positively adding to overall site permeability. A pedestrian path is proposed alongside the stream within the Site. There is an opportunity through the next stage of design to extend that path to connect with an existing path network adjoining the stream on the adjacent property to the east.
- The majority of buildings have an east-west alignment, optimising sunlight access to the private outdoor living spaces of the greatest number of units. Units have well-sized outdoor living spaces, either in a patio or balcony format, allowing for the placement of outdoor furniture and chairs. Residents will also have access to a variety of both indoor and outdoor communal spaces, providing additional amenity and opportunities for social engagement.
- Communal indoor and outdoor spaces are grouped, in part to an area adjoining the stream. This is broadly in the same location as that shown for an 'Indicative Open Space' in Whenuapai 3 Precinct Plan 1, as modified by Variation 1 to PC5. The placement of these communal open spaces, adjoining the stream, positively leverages off the amenity offered by this waterbody and, subject to resource consent level landscape and architectural design, are considered sufficient in size and function to meet the recreational needs of village residents consistent with the outcomes sought for open space in this area by Variation 1.
- There is a clear arrangement of building 'fronts' and 'backs' through the Site, with the front elevation of buildings and front doors / lobby entries of residential units and apartment buildings directly facing towards Hobsonville Road / the Site's internal street network.
- The alignment of buildings and residential units and the spacing between them allows good levels of both privacy to and outlook from habitable rooms, including principal living rooms. Outlook is over Hobsonville Road, internal streets and open spaces, or towards side boundaries. For those residential units with outlook towards side boundaries, the distance to the boundary is approximately 6m, consistent with operative AUP expectations for outlook from principal living rooms.
- Car parking is accommodated on the Site that appropriately manages potential adverse visual effects on amenity. Parking for all apartment buildings is within a basement level, with carpark entries discretely placed to the side of buildings. Villa units all have

carparking in the form of a single garage and carparking pad, positioned and integrated into the floorplan beside street frontage habitable rooms and front doors, ensuring that front elevations are not dominated by garaging. Villa carparking pads are well-spaced along the Site's internal street frontages, allowing opportunity for specimen trees and planting within front yards.

## 4.7 Effects on neighbours

The proposed villas which adjoin the majority of the length of the Site's eastern and northern boundaries are one storey in height. At this scale, their potential to create adverse effects on neighbouring properties is very low. The greatest potential for adverse effects on neighbours results from bulk and scale effects of the proposed apartment buildings. These potential effects, with reference to the concept site plan, and which include privacy, visual dominance and daylight effects, are considered to be able to be appropriately managed as the concept progresses through to resource consent level design. The following observations are made:

- Upper level principal living rooms of some apartment units face out towards side boundaries. The concept design shows the setback of the glazing for these units is approximately 6m. This meets the THAB zone outlook space standard minimum depth metric – this standard being the primary tool the THAB zone (and most other residential zones) uses to manage privacy outcomes. The orientation of outlook for these residential units towards side boundaries will result in some privacy impacts to neighbouring properties. This is not unexpected as the area changes from its existing largely undeveloped state to an intensified urban built character. Overall, it is considered that at least a reasonable level of privacy will be retained to neighbouring properties, with elevational design able to further manage and reduce potential privacy impacts.
- Neighbouring properties to the west and east will experience a considerable change in their viewing environment, when looking towards the Site, from a largely open landscape to larger scale built form. As discussed earlier, the scale of the proposed apartment buildings is considered consistent with the future form and scale of buildings in the area as it changes from its existing semi-rural character to an intensified urban character, such that the buildings – within that future anticipated context – are considered to not result in significant visual dominance effects.
- The depth of setback from side boundaries of apartment buildings and the breaks between them is considered to be able to maintain daylight access to neighbouring properties.
- The bulk of the upper portions of the six storey apartment buildings towards side boundaries may require some consideration of the extent of sunlight access retained to neighbouring properties. Potential shading effects additional to those that created from five storey buildings are likely to be low and, to the extent that they may occur, could be managed by appropriate modulation of the higher parts of the buildings.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Having undertaken a preliminary assessment of the proposal, it is considered that it represents an appropriate response to the future intensified urban built character of the area. Proposed buildings are laid out in a logical manner to respond to the Site's shape, orientation and slope and will offer retirement village residents a good level of on-site amenity. The development will contribute to the significant change already underway to an urban character of the surrounding area on the north side of Hobsonville Road from its existing semi-rural character. This change is consistent with that anticipated by Auckland Council's most recent strategic planning for the area.

Overall, it is considered that the development represents an appropriate urban design response to the opportunities and constraints of the Site, achieving a built form able to positively contribute to the attractiveness and safety of the street and suitably manages potential adverse effects to neighbours to a no more than minor extent.

### **About Boffa Miskell**

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