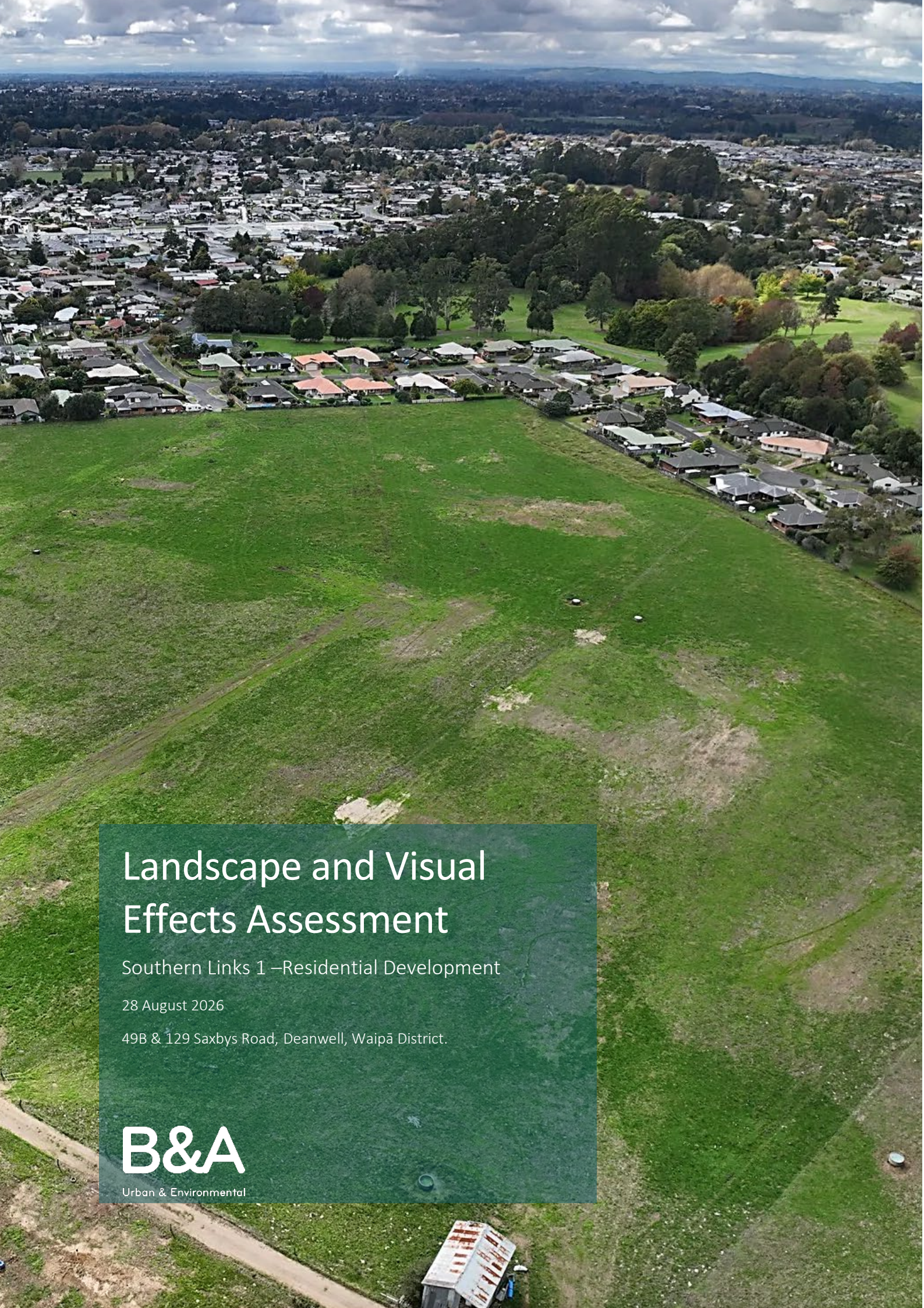




Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

Southern Links 1 –Residential Development

28 August 2026

49B & 129 Saxbys Road, Deanwell, Waipā District.

B&A

Urban & Environmental

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
1.0 Introduction	5
1.1 Project Description SL1 Residential South:	5
1.2 Methodology & Assessment Process	5
1.3 Key Landscape and Visual Impacts to Consider	7
2.0 The Proposal	7
2.1 Development Yield	7
2.2 Landscape Structure and Blue Green Outcomes	8
3.0 The Site	9
3.1 Broader Context	9
3.2 The Subject Site	9
4.0 Planning Context	12
4.1 Relevant Territorial Authorities	12
4.2 Underlying Rural Zone	12
4.3 Context/locality of the Proposal	12
4.4 Equivalent Hamilton City Council Zoning	13
5.0 Landscape Values Assessment	16
5.1 Landscape Values	16
6.0 Landscape Values Effects	21
6.1 Effects on Natural Character	21
6.2 Effects on Biophysical Values	22
6.3 Effects on Sensory and Perceptual Values	22
6.4 Effects on Associative Values	23
6.5 Contributing factors to the Overall Landscape Effects Rating	23
6.6 Overall Landscape Values Effects Rating	25
7.0 Visual Impact Assessment	25
7.1 Extent of Visibility	25
7.2 Viewing Audience Group 1	27
7.3 Viewing Audience Group 2	29
7.4 Viewpoint 7	31
7.5 Viewpoint 8	32
7.6 Viewpoint 9	32
7.7 Contributing Factors to the Overall Visual Impact Rating	34
7.8 Visual Effects Rating	35
8.0 Conclusion & Overall Effects Rating	35
8.1 Mitigation Encapsulated in the Proposal	35
Appendix 1 – Landscape Assessment Methodology	37
Appendix 2 – Maps & Photographs	38
Appendix 3 – SL1 Growth Cell & SL1 Residential South Masterplan	39

Executive Summary

Southern Links 1 (SL1 or the Project) comprises residential and industrial components. This assessment addresses the Residential Area and the proposed Residential Development at Hamilton's southern edge. The Residential Development provides up to 938 residential units, a neighbourhood centre, connected open space, stormwater and ecological corridors, and the transport and servicing infrastructure required to support a new urban neighbourhood.

The Residential Area is a modified working rural landscape of local importance. Its overall landscape value is Low. Its most legible natural and biophysical values are concentrated along the upper Mangakōtukutuku Stream, associated wetland areas, planted riparian margins, the small kahikatea stand and the wider artificial drainage network. Perceptual and associative values arise principally from pastoral openness, the working rural pattern and the contrast with Hamilton's existing suburban edge.

Assessment	Rating	Key reason
Landscape value	Low	Modified rural edge landscape of local importance, with locally stronger values along the stream and wetland corridor.
Landscape effects	Moderate adverse	A permanent Site scale change remains after mitigation, but key water related features and a coherent blue green structure are retained and strengthened.
Visual effects before mitigation	High adverse	The closest residential and recreation audiences would experience a major change from open pasture to residential built form.
Visual effects with mitigation	Moderate adverse	Planting, open space, ecological buffers, stormwater corridors and built form controls soften the new edge and reduce contrast over time.
Overall proposed outcome	Moderate adverse	The effect is more than minor but occurs within a low value, modified urban edge landscape identified for future urban growth.

The proposal incorporates mitigation as part of its design. The upper Mangakōtukutuku Stream, renaturalised drains, five stormwater ponds, riparian planting, a neighbourhood reserve, the 5 metre ecological buffer adjoining Resthills Park, other open spaces and connected paths form an integrated blue green framework. A varied density pattern, frontage controls, landscape treatment and recessive material and reflectivity controls further moderate the prominence of built form and improve integration with adjoining areas.

From a landscape perspective, the post mitigation Moderate adverse effect is considered appropriate in this context. The Residential Area is contiguous with Hamilton's established residential edge, forms part of the wider SL1 growth cell, is influenced by existing and planned strategic infrastructure, and has been identified for longer term urban growth. The proposal will substantially change rural character and openness, but it does so through a coherent settlement pattern organised around water, ecology, open space and movement.

1.0 Introduction

Barker & Associates (B&A) has been engaged to prepare a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) to support the substantive application for Southern Links 1 (SL1 or the Project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. The Project comprises the Residential Area and Residential Development addressed by this LVA, together with a separate Industrial Area and Industrial Development. The LVA assesses effects on landscape character and values, visual amenity and natural character within the Residential Area and the surrounding environment.

1.1 Project Description SL1 Residential South:

The Residential Development forms the residential component of Southern Links 1, a listed project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. The Project is a combined 106 hectare development comprising residential and industrial components. The approximately 46 hectare Residential Area sits within a wider landholding comprising land legally described as Lot 2 DP 589463 (22.21 hectares); Part Lot 2 DP 25668 and Part Lot 1 DP 25668 (33.64 hectares); Lot 3 DP 394366 and Lot 1 DP South Auckland 51518 (7.58 hectares); Lot 1 DPSA 69842, Lot 2 DPSA 11357, Lot 1 DPSA 75305 and Section 1 SO 60814 (26.13 hectares); and Part Lot 1 DP 25668 (26.50 hectares). The Residential Area forms part of the wider Southern Links Growth Cell, an approximately 440 hectare contiguous area along Hamilton's south western edge that includes the Hamilton Southern Links designation.

The proposal seeks approval for a Substantive Application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 for a comprehensively master planned and staged residential development. This includes all necessary resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991, including regional and district approvals where required.

The residential component provides for the establishment of circa 938 residential units, together with a neighbourhood commercial node, open spaces, waterbodies, and infrastructure devices including wetlands and roading.

The proposal includes substantial enabling works to establish developable land, including bulk earthworks across the site. An integrated stormwater management system including wetlands, detention/attenuation devices and treatment ponds supports the development. Ecological restoration is integrated via riparian and corridor planting with appropriate design measures being adopted to enhance and protect key features including the upper tributaries of the Mangakōtukutuku Stream and associated drains.

Access and integration with the surrounding Hamilton area is provided through a connected transport framework, including the establishment of intersections, roading, and walking and cycle networks, along with upgrades to existing transport infrastructure. The residential development is proposed to be serviced via a coordinated strategy, including the extension of public networks, upgrades, and installation of appropriate infrastructure.

1.2 Methodology & Assessment Process

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

Before fieldwork, a desktop study of the Residential Area was undertaken. This included review of the Waipā District Plan, specialist reports including an ecological assessment, proposed precinct plans, and aerial imagery

and Google Street View. Fieldwork was undertaken in May 2026. This involved observing the Residential Area and its surrounding landscape from publicly accessible roads and representative viewpoints. The fieldwork recorded the existing landscape character and values, surrounding land uses, vegetation, landform, viewing audiences and the extent of actual and potential visibility. Photographs were taken from representative locations to document the existing environment and support the assessment of landscape and visual effects. Field observations were also used to verify and refine the findings of the desktop study, including the influence of distance, viewing orientation, landform, vegetation and intervening development on visibility.

Landscape and visual effects were evaluated by considering ‘Sensitivity,’ which reflects the value and susceptibility of the landscape or view to change; and ‘Magnitude of change,’ which considers the scale, extent, and duration of that change. The overall level of effect is determined by combining these two factors (as outlined in Appendix 1), and effects are described as positive, neutral, or adverse as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 1 below shows the scale that has been adopted to describe the overall level of effect:

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

Table 1. Landscape Assessment Ratings Summary

Nature of effect	Use and Definition
Adverse (negative):	The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform which results in a reduction in landscape and visual values
Neutral (benign):	The proposed development would complement (or blend in with) the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape maintaining existing landscape and visual values
Beneficial (positive):	The proposed development would enhance the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, improving the landscape and visual quality through removal of damage caused by existing land uses or addition of positive features

Table 2: Determining the nature of effects

1.3 Key Landscape and Visual Impacts to Consider

The key landscape and visual matters associated with this more compact housing form include:

- The degree of change to existing landscape character arising from the concentration of denser built form;
- The influence of the subdivision layout on spatial character and legibility;
- The relationship with lower intensity residential areas and adjoining open land;
- The experience of the development from public roads, Resthills Park and adjoining residential areas;
- The influence of building setbacks, fencing and boundary treatments on short and medium range views; and
- The role of planting in moderating built form, achieving visual integration and providing an appropriate transition in character.

2.0 The Proposal

The Masterplan for the Residential Development has been reproduced at Figure 1 below and also at Appendix 3. The Residential Development forms the residential component of the wider Project, which is part of the SL1 Growth Cell, a 440ha contiguous land area on the south western edge of Hamilton that includes the Hamilton Southern Links designation. The Residential Area is located within the Waipā District, abutting Hamilton City Council's southern boundary. SL1 is a listed project in Schedule 2 of the FTAA comprising residential and industrial components across 106ha. The Residential Development comprises 46ha, is in single ownership, and is currently used for rural farming activities. Key elements of the proposal include:

- A masterplanned development of a range of residential housing typologies;
- A varied density pattern to respond to site opportunities and constraints;
- A neighbourhood commercial node providing convenience amenities;
- A neighbourhood reserve adjoining the north south ecological corridor;
- An integrated open space, stormwater and ecological framework, including riparian planting;
- Protection and enhancement measures for Mangakōtukutuku Stream; and
- A connected movement framework, including pedestrian and cycle connections.

2.1 Development Yield

The Residential Development will provide up to 938 residential lots. These comprise 592 lots for terrace housing, representing approximately 63 per cent of the residential yield, and 346 lots for duplex or detached dwellings, representing approximately 37 per cent of the residential yield. One additional fee simple lot is proposed for the neighbourhood centre, bringing the total number of fee simple lots within the Residential Development to 939.

Figure 2 below provides indicative examples of the housing typologies anticipated within the Residential Development. These examples illustrate how the different lot types may be developed but do not represent confirmed architectural designs for individual lots.

The Residential Development will also include an approximately 1,000 m² neighbourhood centre intended to provide day to day goods, services and amenities for the immediate neighbourhood. The number and configuration of future commercial tenancies have not been confirmed by the current application material.

2.2 Landscape Structure and Blue Green Outcomes

Renaturalised streams and drains are proposed to establish a continuous natural corridor and five stormwater ponds are proposed to be included as primary blue green infrastructure elements. Refer to Appendix 3 for the masterplan.



Figure 1. The Masterplan – Refer Appendix 3 (B&A).



Figure 2. Examples of project concept house designs (Wingates).

3.0 The Site

3.1 Broader Context

The Residential Area is located within the Waipā District and sits approximately 5km from the Hamilton CBD, on the southern edge of the city. The relevant landscape context includes the Residential Area and wider SL1 site, the adjoining Hamilton City suburban edge to the north and north east, the farms to the west and south, the gully and drainage corridors between these areas, and nearby public open space, including Resthills Park. Key features of the broader landscape context are:

- The Waikato River corridor lies to the north and east and forms part of Hamilton’s landscape structure;
- The suburban context is defined by a fine grain street and lot pattern and intermittent open space;
- Gully and drainage corridors create localised enclosure and provide a continuous green structure;
- The rural context is expressed as a large-scale pattern of paddocks, with associated buildings/infrastructure, contributing to open views;
- The landform is generally flat and shaped by land cover, vegetation pattern and edge conditions; and

Overall, the existing broader context is characterised by a clear transition from Hamilton’s established suburban edge to a more open rural landscape. Figure 3 below shows the location of the Residential Area in the wider landscape context.



Figure 3. The Site and Broader Landscape (Google Maps).

3.2 The Subject Site

The Residential Area is currently predominantly open pasture, organised into paddocks by internal fence lines and farm access patterns. Its character is simple and open, with limited vegetation and a clear working rural land use. Key features of the Residential Area and its immediate interfaces are:

- Vegetation within the Residential Area is limited and dispersed;
- Existing buildings, structures and infrastructure associated with the rural land use are also dispersed and remain subordinate to the open pastoral landscape;

- Mangakōtukutuku Stream introduces a subtle linear variation in landform and land cover through the Residential Area;
- The eastern margin adjoins a continuous drainage corridor, which forms a clear edge between open pasture and the adjoining neighbourhood;
- The immediate suburban interface is characterised by one storey detached dwellings;
- At street ends such as Forth Crescent and Macmurdo Avenue, sealed roads terminate at rural fencing and gates, creating a clear threshold between the suburban streetscape and open rural foreground; and
- Views from these street ends extend directly across pasture towards distant tree lines and, to the south and west, Mt Pirongia.

Overall, the immediate context is defined by the contrast between suburban enclosure and rural openness. Existing buildings, structures and infrastructure contribute to the working rural character but do not materially diminish the openness of the Residential Area. The strongest visual connections occur at street end terminations and open space edges.



Figure 4. The Site and Immediate Surrounds (Google Maps).



Figure 5. Photo 1 (B&A).



Figure 6. Photo 2 (B&A).



Figure 7. Photo 3 (B&A).

4.0 Planning Context

4.1 Relevant Territorial Authorities

The Residential Area is located on Hamilton's south western fringe but lies fully within Waipā District. The Waipā District Plan is therefore the applicable territorial planning framework. The Hamilton City Plan is not statutory for the Residential Area, but its residential provisions provide relevant contextual benchmarks because the Site directly adjoins Hamilton's established urban area and will be accessed and experienced as an extension of that environment.

4.1.1 Outstanding Natural Landscapes / Features

The land is not identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature.

4.2 Underlying Rural Zone

The Residential Area is currently zoned Rural under the Waipā District Plan. The Rural Zone objectives and policies seek to maintain rural character and amenity through an open and spacious landscape pattern by limiting residential density and managing the scale, height and siting of buildings. Built form is generally expected to remain subordinate to the rural landscape, maintain visual amenity and protect landscape values, particularly near water bodies and within areas of higher landscape value¹.

These provisions provide relevant context for understanding the existing landscape baseline. The application would, however, enable a clear transition from rural production land to an urban residential neighbourhood.

The area surrounding the Residential Area has been identified within the Future Proof Strategy as part of the Southern Links Growth Cell.² It also forms part of the wider SL1 landholdings addressed by the strategic boundary agreement for their potential future transfer to Hamilton City, as outlined in the AEE. These strategic directions indicate an expectation of future urban growth, but do not alter the current Rural zoning or provide certainty regarding the timing and form of that growth.

The existing landscape context therefore remains an important consideration. The Residential Area occupies a transitional location at Hamilton's south western edge, influenced by rural land, established urban development to the north east, Resthills Park to the east and existing and planned transport infrastructure. The proposed Residential Development would extend Hamilton's residential pattern towards the future Hamilton Southern Links alignment and contribute to a more legible transition between urban and rural landscape patterns.

Accordingly, the Residential Area is assessed in relation to both its existing rural and urban edge context and the wider strategic expectation for future urbanisation. While the proposed development would result in a substantial change to the existing rural landscape, it would occur within a locality already influenced by Hamilton's urban edge and identified for longer term urban growth.

4.3 Context/locality of the Proposal

The site sits at the interface between the established residential environment to the north east (in Hamilton City), the wider SL1 growth cell (identified in the SL1 Overall Concept Plan drawing in Appendix 3), and the

¹ See, by way of example, Waipā District Plan Objective 4.3.7, Policies 4.3.7.1 to 4.3.7.3 and 4.3.7.6, and Rules 4.4.1.1(a), 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.2 and 4.4.2.9.

² See Future Proof Strategy 2024: Future Development Strategy Update 2024 to 2054, Part B, section B7, Current and Future Growth Areas.

strategic transport infrastructure associated with Hamilton Southern Links. It can therefore be understood within the context of a Hamilton City Council planned growth environment akin to spatial planning where urban land use change is relevant to the future landscape pattern.

The role of Hamilton Southern Links Road corridor is important, but should be understood at the wider growth cell scale. The Southern Links Road designation does not form the immediate edge to all parts of this residential development. This residential proposal includes an arterial road along part of its edge, while balance land to the south and south west sits between parts of the Site and the Hamilton Southern Links designation. In landscape terms, the proposal is therefore not creating a final rural urban edge along every part of its southern boundary, rather it forms an early and coherent component of a larger planned urban structure, to be read in relation to the wider SL1 growth cell and the Hamilton Southern Links Road corridor.

In landscape and visual terms, the proposal is appropriately understood as part of a planned urban growth and infrastructure response in a location already shaped by adjoining residential development, the SL1 growth cell structure, the arterial road framework, the Hamilton Southern Links Road designation, and anticipated boundary change from Waipā District to Hamilton City.

From a landscape perspective, the proposal has a clear settlement pattern rationale. It will extend the existing suburban pattern southward and westward while allowing adjoining balance land to urbanise in a coordinated way over time. This will reduce the risk of fragmented residual rural land between the Site and the strategic transport corridor, support a more legible future urban edge and contribute to a coherent transition from rural production land to an urbanised landscape.

4.4 Equivalent Hamilton City Council Zoning

The Waipā District Plan contains Residential and Large Lot Residential zones in Sections 2 and 3. Those provisions demonstrate residential outcomes within Waipā District, but they are not equivalent to the proposed comprehensively planned urban extension. The Residential Zone generally anticipates a lower intensity residential form, while the Large Lot Residential Zone retains a spacious character with a stronger rural influence. A detailed typology comparison with those zones would therefore provide a less direct measure of the proposed urban form.

The Hamilton City Plan residential zones are used as comparative benchmarks only. They more closely reflect the immediate receiving environment, the relationship with Hamilton's urban edge and the range of attached and detached housing proposed. The comparison does not treat the Hamilton provisions as determinative or as statutory equivalents. The current Rural zoning and the relevant Waipā District Plan provisions remain the statutory baseline for the Residential Area.

4.4.1 Typology Comparisons

The proposed housing typologies provide a deliberate transition in intensity. Typology 1 comprises rear loaded terrace, duplex and detached dwellings and is the most compact format, with narrow frontages, higher Site coverage and rear lane access. Typology 2 comprises front loaded terrace, duplex and detached dwellings and provides an intermediate format, with a stronger street frontage relationship shaped by garages, driveways, front yards and planting. Typology 3 comprises duplex and detached dwellings and is the least intensive format, providing a lower density suburban edge condition.

Table 3 introduces the comparative relationship between the proposed typologies and the Hamilton City Plan residential zones. The detailed discussion that follows uses the table as an anchor and considers built form, likely density, setbacks, landscaping and the mix of dwelling types. The comparison is contextual and does not imply statutory equivalence.

Proposed Typology	Where it aligns with the HCC zone	Main departures from the HCC zone	Conclusion
1	There is some alignment in the bulk-and-location controls: Proposed Typology 1 sits close to HDRZ on 60% Site coverage, 20% landscaped area, 1m front setback to local/collector roads, 1m side setback, 0m rear-lane setback, and 12m ² terrace outdoor living.	HDRZ is explicitly for high-density living, enabling terraced housing and multi-storey apartment buildings, with development contributing to a character of 6 storeys or more and aiming for at least 65 units/ha. In HDRZ, single detached units are non-complying and duplexes are discretionary. Proposed Typology 1 is still an 11m, low-rise, rear-loaded terrace / duplex / detached format with a max 6-unit terrace block, so it is materially less intensive than HDRZ anticipates.	Some standards line up, but as an overall urban form Proposed Typology 1 does not read as a true High Density Residential outcome.
2	Proposed Typology 2 broadly tracks MDRZ on 50% Site coverage, 70% impermeable surface, 20% landscaped area, the 50/40/30 front-landscaping pattern, 1.5m front setback, 5m arterial setback, and 1m rear setback. It also aligns with MDRZ policy direction to reduce parking dominance and support a clear public/private frontage structure.	MDRZ anticipates a stronger intensification outcome: it is aimed at multi-level and attached housing, including terraced units and apartment buildings up to 5 storeys, with an intended net density of 30–65 units/ha. Proposed Typology 2 is more conservative: 11m maximum height, inclusion of detached dwellings, and a generally tighter / lower-rise envelope than MDRZ provides for.	Strong fit, but Proposed Typology 2 is “toned down”. It broadly replicates MDRZ standards, while delivering a less intensive outcome than the MDRZ would ordinarily anticipate.
3	GRZ is framed around a neighbourhood character of single, duplex and terrace housing that is predominantly 10m high, and it enables attached and detached residential units. Proposed Typology 3 matches the low-rise GRZ envelope closely: 45% Site coverage, 70% impermeable surface, 20% landscaped area, 10m height, 45° height in relation to boundary, 1.5m side and rear setbacks, and 20m ² outdoor living for duplex/detached dwellings.	The main difference is that Proposed Typology 3 generally has narrower lot widths and is more conservative than GRZ, because it excludes terrace housing, which GRZ also contemplates. GRZ is more enabling overall.	Very strong fit. Of the three pairings, this one is the most straightforwardly consistent with the HCC zone character and standards.

Table 3. Proposed Typologies and HCC Residential Zones Summary**4.4.1.1 High Density HCP Residential Zone vs Typology 1**

The HCP High-Density Residential Zone (HDRZ) is intended for high-density living in places with good access to the Central City, especially by public and active transport. It anticipates terraced housing and multi-storey apartment buildings and expects development to contribute to a high-density urban character, including taller

forms.³ The HDRZ is the part of the Hamilton framework intended for the greatest building bulk, height, and density.

This is the most comparable HCP zone for Typology 1 (which includes rear-loaded terrace, duplexes and detached dwellings), the most intensive of the three proposed typologies. Typology 1 has the highest proposed Site coverage at 60%, allows terrace housing with narrow frontages, permits a 0m rear-lane setback, reduces front setbacks to 1m on local and collector roads, and allows an 11m building height. Those controls push it toward a more urban, compact form than the other two proposed typologies. However, the proposed Typology 1 is still fundamentally a low-rise terrace/duplex/detached housing format within a masterplanned suburban structure, whereas HDRZ is intended for genuinely high-density urban living, including apartments, buildings of at least six storeys, and densities of at least 65 units per hectare. HDRZ also treats detached dwellings much less favourably than proposed Typology 1. In short, the comparison is sensible because Typology 1 is the most intensive proposed form, but it still falls well short of the scale, intensity, and apartment-led character anticipated by HDRZ.

4.4.1.2 Medium Density HCP Residential Zone vs Typology 2

The HCP Medium Density Residential Zone is intended for areas considered suitable for higher-density development, mainly through multi-level and attached housing. Its focus is on increasing density in a way that delivers good urban design, walkability, and helps public transport and nearby centres function well.⁴

Typology 2 (which includes front-loaded terrace, duplexes and detached dwellings) sits between the other two proposed typologies in intensity and has controls that broadly read like a medium-density format with 50% Site coverage, 20% landscaped area, 1.5m front setback, 1m rear setback, terrace housing with wider frontages than Typology 1, and specific front-yard landscaping controls to manage the visual effects of front-loaded development. This is generally aligned with MDRZ's role of accommodating higher-density redevelopment, primarily through multi-level and attached housing, while still requiring a well-designed public interface.

However, proposed Typology 2 is more conservative than the MDRZ, which provides for a stronger intensification outcome, including multi-level attached housing and apartment forms, and anticipates neighbourhood change typically up to five storeys with a range of forms and a net density of about 30 to 65 units per hectare. By contrast, Typology 2 includes detached dwellings and remains an 11 metre, lower rise suburban format rather than a full medium density redevelopment model. The comparison is therefore useful, but the proposed typology is less intensive than the full outcome anticipated by the MDRZ.

4.4.1.3 HCP General Residential Zone vs Typology 3

The General Residential Zone (GRZ) is Hamilton's principal residential zone and provides for housing supply and choice while balancing existing and future amenity. It anticipates a range of housing types and densities, including detached, duplex and terrace housing, with higher density directed towards locations with access to centres, public open space and other amenities. This comparison is informed by Hamilton City Plan section 4.2.1, Objectives 4.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2, and Policies 4.2.2.1a, 4.2.2.1d, 4.2.2.2a and 4.2.2.2c.

Typology 3 (Duplexes and Detached Dwellings) is the least intensive proposed format for the Residential Development and is centred on detached and duplex dwellings, with a 45% Site coverage limit, 10m maximum height, 1.5m side and rear setbacks, and a minimum 20m² outdoor living area for duplex and detached dwellings. Those controls closely reflect a low-rise suburban form and are consistent with GRZ's role as Hamilton's main residential zone, where a wide range of housing choice is enabled but the prevailing character

³ See, by way of example, Hamilton City Plan Objective 4.4.2.1 and Policies 4.4.2.1a and 4.4.2.1b.

⁴ See, by way of example, HCP section 4.3.1, Objectives 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2, and Policies 4.3.2.1a, 4.3.2.1f, 4.3.2.2a and 4.3.2.2c.

remains lower-rise and more suburban than the Medium Density Residential Zone (MDRZ) or High-Density Residential Zone (HDRZ).

The GRZ is more enabling than the proposed Typology 3. GRZ contemplates a wider range of housing types, including terrace housing, whereas Typology 3 is deliberately narrower and limited to duplexes and detached dwellings. So, the proposed controls are effectively a subset of what GRZ would anticipate. That means the comparison makes sense because both are low-rise and lower-intensity, but the proposed typology is more restrictive and more tightly defined than the broader zone framework.

5.0 Landscape Values Assessment

5.1 Landscape Values

The existing landscape values of the Subject Site are expressed through its urban-rural interface setting, open pastoral land cover, paddock structure, dispersed trees and shelter planting, the upper reach of the Mangakōtukutuku Stream, a network of artificial watercourses, eastern gully or drainage corridor vegetation, and the way adjoining streets and parkland shape local views and experience.

As described in the preceding section, the relevant landscape comprises the Site and its immediate rural, residential and open space interfaces. Together, these elements form a distinct urban edge context at Hamilton's southern boundary.

Within the Site, the landscape is read as working rural land, with simple pasture cover, internal fence lines, farm access elements, the upper reach of the Mangakōtukutuku Stream, artificial watercourses, farm drainage canals and dispersed vegetation. The artificial watercourses form part of the Site's modified rural drainage pattern and are not described as natural streams or natural tributaries. They contribute to the legibility of the working landscape by expressing the Site's drainage history, pastoral land use and hydrological pattern.

The elevated rail corridor approximately 1km to the west, together with regular train movements, limits the perceived extent of ruralness and contributes to the Site being read as more closely associated with Hamilton's urban edge than with the wider rural landscape. The proposed Hamilton Southern Links Road of National Significance would further reinforce this edge condition.

No recorded archaeological Sites or listed heritage places have been identified within the Site or its immediate vicinity.⁵ The wider Waikato landscape has ancestral associations for iwi descended from the Tainui waka, including associations with the Waikato River.

5.1.1 Natural character

Natural character values at the Site are expressed through the natural elements, patterns and processes that remain legible within a highly modified pastoral and suburban edge setting. These values are not strong across the Site as a whole, given the dominance of grazed pasture, artificial drainage, farm access tracks, fencing and adjoining urban development. However, they are more apparent where water, landform, riparian vegetation and wetland features combine to form a recognisable freshwater corridor.

The Mangakōtukutuku Stream is the principal natural freshwater feature within the Site and provides the clearest expression of natural character. Its upper reach extends into the northern part of the Site and is expressed as an incised perennial watercourse with flowing water, a defined bank profile, a soft stream bed, occasional deeper pools and planted riparian margins. These elements contribute to the legibility of water

⁵ See Redox Cultural Heritage Services Ltd, Archaeological Assessment of Effects: SL1 Mexted Development, December 2025.

movement, landform response, riparian margin character and ecological connectivity. The stream corridor provides a stronger natural character cue than the surrounding paddock interiors, particularly where the watercourse, banks, planted margins and floodplain wetland are experienced together as a coherent landscape sequence. Figures 8 and 9 below show the location of vegetation types and existing riparian planting within the Residential Area, while Figure 10 shows the existing stand of kahikatea.



Figure 8. Location of vegetation types within the Site (ecoLogical Solutions).



Figure 9. Existing riparian planting within the Site (ecoLogical Solutions).

The natural character of the Mangakōtukutuku Stream corridor is moderated by its modified rural setting. The stream is influenced by channel incision, localised bank erosion, adjoining pastoral land use, weed presence within riparian margins and the wider artificial drainage network that discharges to it. Despite this modification, it remains the main expression of natural freshwater process within the Site. Its flowing water, vegetated margins and relationship with wetland habitat contribute to the perceived mauri of wai and provide an important taiao cue within an otherwise modified working rural landscape.

The Site also contains a network of artificial watercourses, identified as Drains A to G. These are farm drainage canals and do not contain natural portions from their confluence with the Mangakōtukutuku Stream to their headwaters. While some of the larger artificial watercourses have become naturalised in appearance through incision, flowing water, localised bank change and riparian planting, they remain part of the Site's artificial rural drainage network rather than natural streams or natural tributaries.

Natural character cues are therefore strongest along the Mangakōtukutuku Stream corridor and, to a lesser degree, along Drains A and B, where flowing water, planted margins and vegetated edges create a more legible blue green pattern. Away from these freshwater and drainage features, natural character is expressed mainly through openness, pasture cover, broad sky views and scattered shelter trees, rather than through intact indigenous vegetation, unmodified landform or a continuous natural riparian sequence.

5.1.2 Biophysical values

Biophysical values at the Site are expressed through the low relief landform, pastoral land cover pattern, the upper reach of the Mangakōtukutuku Stream, associated wetland features, a small stand of mature kahikatea, planted riparian margins and the network of artificial watercourses that organise the working rural landscape. The ground plane reads as broadly flat to gently graded and is predominantly grazed pasture, with paddocks, fences, gates and farm tracks forming a clear and functional rural pattern.



Figure 10. Existing stand of mature kahikatea within the Site (ecoLogical Solutions).

In botanical terms, the pasture land cover is dominated by exotic grassland with limited structural diversity. Native vegetation is present mainly as a small cluster of mature kahikatea trees within a grazed paddock and as riparian planting associated with the Mangakōtukutuku Stream and the larger artificial watercourses. This vegetation introduces localised canopy and understorey structure, strengthens the contrast between open paddock interiors and vegetated margins, and contributes to ecological connectivity, landscape coherence and habitat diversity within the Site.

The freshwater and drainage network is a key biophysical component of the Site. The upper reach of the Mangakōtukutuku Stream is a perennial watercourse and provides the principal freshwater corridor. While its ecological condition is moderated by incision, erosion, modified catchment conditions and the influence of adjoining artificial watercourses, the Mangakōtukutuku Stream remains the main biophysical feature through which water movement, aquatic habitat, riparian pattern and ecological connectivity are expressed.

The smaller artificial watercourses, such as Drain A and Drain B, provide a more limited biophysical contribution. These drains are more closely associated with the Site's modified pastoral drainage pattern, generally hold limited surface water, lack strong riparian structure and provide marginal aquatic habitat. Their value is therefore largely functional, relating to drainage and localised water conveyance, rather than to strong natural character or high habitat quality.

Wetland environments occur within the Site in association with the grazed pastoral landscape and the Mangakōtukutuku Stream corridor. These areas contribute to habitat diversity, ecological connectivity, the mauri of wai and the resilience of the wider landscape structure.



Figure 11. Drains within the Site (ecoLogical Solutions).



Figure 12. Drain A (central, north-south) (ecoLogical Solutions).



Figure 13. Drain B (east-west) (ecoLogical Solutions).

5.1.3 Perceptual and sensory values

Perceptual and sensory values relate to the legibility of the urban rural edge, openness and exposure, and the way views are experienced by local viewing audiences from streets and public open space. At street end terminations, views provide direct and extended outlook across pasture toward distant shelterbelts and tree lines, with a wide sky view and a simple foreground to backdrop composition that reads as open rural setting. Within the surrounding residential streets, views are more filtered and framed by buildings, fences, and garden vegetation, producing a more enclosed and sequential townscape experience where visual containment

changes quickly as people move along the street corridor network. The pastoral setting contributes a distinct experiential character, with an expansive grassed ground plane and scattered mature trees producing longer view duration and a broader visual envelope than is typical from within residential streets. The exposed character of the open paddocks, together with shelter planting patterns and tree form, suggests that wind and weather are perceptible components of the sensory experience at the rural edge, particularly where there is limited screening.

Perceptual values vary across the Site. The paddock interiors present the most open and visually simple outlook, while the eastern gully margin provides greater enclosure and textural complexity due to a stronger vegetation structure and margin definition. The suburban edge and street end thresholds are the locations where the contrast between townscape enclosure and rural openness is most clearly read, and where the edge condition is most legible within the local visual catchment.

5.1.4 Associative values

Associative values are expressed through land use legibility and the identity of the edge condition. The Site carries a rural and productive association through its paddock pattern, rural fencing and gate thresholds, and open pastoral character, which sits immediately alongside the domestic scale and everyday lived setting of the adjoining suburb. The suburban edge contributes an association of established residential neighbourhood character, expressed through detached dwellings, garages and driveways, private gardens, and timber boundary fencing. Nearby parkland contributes a community recreation association, with open fields and mature trees forming a recognisable local place within the neighbourhood and providing a setting for everyday use and movement. Together these elements reinforce a clear transition in landscape pattern and identity, where the Site and its margins are experienced as a meeting point between suburban townscape and rural landscape character.

Overall landscape value rating: Low. The Residential Area is a modified rural edge landscape of local importance. The upper Mangakōtukutuku Stream, associated wetland areas, riparian planting and the kahikatea stand have higher localised value, but the Site as a whole is not rare, highly natural, highly intact or especially distinctive.

6.0 Landscape Values Effects

The likely landscape effects from the Residential Development arise from the change in landscape pattern, land use, land cover, visual openness, spatial enclosure, movement sequence and identity. The reasoning is that the existing values are currently expressed through open paddocks, rural fencing, farm gate thresholds, dispersed vegetation, drainage features, an eastern gully or drainage corridor, long views from street ends, and the contrast between suburban townscape and rural landscape. The proposal would reorganise those values into an urban residential pattern, where built form, streets, lanes, open spaces, ponds and riparian corridors become the primary landscape components.

6.1 Effects on Natural Character

The proposal would change the way natural character is expressed across the Site. The existing broad pastoral openness would be replaced by a more structured residential environment, where natural character cues would become more concentrated around water margins, stormwater ponds, riparian corridors and open space areas. This would shift the perception of naturalness from a simple and continuous pastoral ground

plane to a more organised sequence of water bodies, planted margins and open space nodes within the neighbourhood structure.

The renaturalised streams and drains, riparian areas and five stormwater ponds will become the primary locations where natural character is experienced. These components make water related processes more legible from adjacent streets, paths and open spaces and establish a continuous blue green structure through the neighbourhood. Retention and enhancement of the upper Mangakōtūkutu Stream, riparian planting and ecological buffer planting protect the strongest existing natural character cues and strengthen their continuity over time.

The reasoning is that natural character effects are generated by changes to land cover, water expression, vegetation pattern, openness and the visibility of natural processes. The proposal would reduce the dominance of pastoral naturalness across the paddock interiors, but would also establish more deliberate water margin and riparian landscape components within the Site.

6.2 Effects on Biophysical Values

The proposal would reconfigure the biophysical structure of the Site by replacing pastoral land cover with residential blocks, streets, lanes, accessways, servicing corridors, private lots, open spaces, stormwater ponds and riparian areas. This would change the distribution of permeable and impermeable surfaces, the pattern of vegetation opportunity, and the way water is collected, detained, conveyed and experienced within the Site.

The five stormwater ponds, riparian corridors and open space areas will form the main biophysical framework. They concentrate ecological, hydrological and vegetation functions into connected corridors and nodes. Proposed stream and drain restoration, riparian planting, stormwater planting and the neighbourhood reserve provide a stronger and more coherent vegetation and water structure than the existing dispersed pastoral pattern, while residential blocks and streets increase the extent of built and impermeable surfaces.

The proposed Residential Development would also alter the spatial relationship between vegetation and landform. Existing dispersed trees and shelter elements would no longer be the main vertical landscape components. Instead, proposed streetscape planting, riparian planting, open space planting and private lot planting would shape the vegetation structure over time.

The reasoning is that biophysical effects arise from physical changes to landform, land cover, vegetation structure, hydrological pattern and habitat opportunity. The proposal would replace the existing rural production matrix with an urban residential matrix, while retaining and reforming water related landscape components as key organising elements.

6.3 Effects on Sensory and Perceptual Values

The proposal would change this perceptual experience from open rural outlook to a more enclosed and sequential residential townscape. Streets, blocks, dwellings, lanes, boundary treatments and planting would create a finer grained pattern of enclosure and movement. Long views across pasture from existing street ends would be shortened or redirected, and the existing abrupt threshold between suburban street and rural paddock would be replaced by an internal neighbourhood structure.

The collector road, local roads, mid-block paths and rear lanes will create new movement sequences and viewing experiences. Views will be channelled along street corridors, filtered by built form and planting, and opened out at ponds, riparian corridors, open spaces and the neighbourhood park. The varied density pattern, frontage landscape controls, street and open space planting, and the 5 metre ecological buffer adjoining Resthills Park provide visual relief, soften the new residential edge and improve legibility. The result will remain

more enclosed than the existing landscape, but will include deliberate areas of openness and a coherent planted framework.

The different residential typologies would also influence sensory and perceptual effects. Rear loaded terrace, duplex and detached dwellings would introduce the most compact residential pattern, with narrower frontages, higher site coverage and rear lane activity. Front loaded terrace, duplex and detached dwellings would create a stronger street facing residential expression, including garages, driveways, front yards and frontage planting. Duplex and detached dwellings would provide the least intensive built form pattern, with a lower density suburban character. Together, these typologies would change the visual grain, apparent density, enclosure, rhythm and legibility of the urban edge.

The reasoning is that perceptual effects are driven by changes in openness, enclosure, view length, visual complexity, movement sequence, built form prominence and the relationship between foreground, middle ground and backdrop. The proposal would replace a simple rural edge outlook with a more structured residential visual environment, while creating new areas of openness around water and open space components.

6.4 Effects on Associative Values

The proposal would change the associative reading of the Site from rural production land at the edge of the city to an urban residential neighbourhood. The existing farm gate thresholds and open paddock identity would be replaced by streets, dwellings, lanes, pedestrian connections, stormwater ponds, riparian areas and open spaces. The Site would become understood not as a rural edge but as part of the residential settlement pattern.

The blue green framework will become an important new associative structure within the Residential Area. Pond edges, the restored stream and drain corridors, open space nodes, pathway connections and the neighbourhood park will provide landmarks, meeting places and orientation cues. These elements will help establish a local identity connected to water, ecology and public open space rather than relying solely on the residential street and lot pattern.

No recorded archaeological sites or listed heritage places have been identified within the Residential Area or its immediate vicinity.⁶

The reasoning is that associative effects arise from changes to land use identity, memory, familiarity, community relationship, cultural association and the way people understand place. The proposal would change the Site's identity from a rural edge landscape to a residential neighbourhood, while introducing new public realm and blue green features that would form the future basis of local place identity.

6.5 Contributing factors to the Overall Landscape Effects Rating

The key landscape value and effect conclusions are summarised below.

Factor	Rating	Reason
Susceptibility	Low	The Site is a modified and representative rural edge landscape with capacity to accommodate urban change.
Landscape value	Low	Values are local, with stronger localised value along the stream and wetland corridor.

⁶ See Redox Cultural Heritage Services Ltd, Archaeological Assessment of Effects: SL1 Mexted Development, December 2025.

Factor	Rating	Reason
Size and scale	High	The proposal replaces pastoral openness with a comprehensive residential neighbourhood.
Geographical extent	Low	Landscape effects are concentrated within the Site and its immediate interfaces.
Duration	High	The change in land use and built form is permanent.
Pre mitigation effect	Moderate adverse	A clear Site scale transformation occurs within a landscape of lower sensitivity and value.
Post mitigation effect	Moderate adverse	Mitigation improves coherence and integration but does not remove the permanent change in landscape character.

Refer to Appendix 1 for a detailed outline of the assessment methodology. In summary, landscape and visual effects are assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receiving landscape or viewing audience and the magnitude of change arising from the proposal. Sensitivity reflects susceptibility to change and the value of the landscape or view, while magnitude considers the size and scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of change. These factors inform the overall effect rating and whether the effect is adverse, neutral or beneficial.

The following sections discuss the factors contributing to the landscape and visual effect ratings. Low ratings generally arise where sensitivity is limited, key features are retained and change is localised, low contrast, distant, oblique, temporary or reversible. Higher ratings generally arise where the landscape or viewing audience is more sensitive or valued and the change is prominent, extensive, high contrast, long term or permanent.

6.5.1 Sensitivity

6.5.1.1 Susceptibility to Change – Low

At the Site scale, the localised stream, wetland, riparian and kahikatea values do not make the wider landscape rare or distinctive. The modified rural edge landscape has some capacity to accommodate the proposed Residential Development without undue consequences for its overall character. This reflects the Site's comparatively low ecological values outside those localised features, its long standing rural productive use, and the modified condition of its stream and drainage systems. Its open pastoral character and urban rural edge condition are representative of similar transitional landscapes around Hamilton and the wider Waikato region.

6.5.1.2 The Value of the Landscape – Low

The Residential Area is of local landscape importance only. It is not identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Outstanding Natural Feature (ONL/F) in any of the relevant planning documents, nor does it contain any such feature within its extent. Its landscape values are derived from its local context, including its open pastoral character, modified rural production use, stream and drainage patterns, and its position at the urban rural edge. While these attributes contribute to the character and amenity of the immediate receiving environment, they are not of a level of rarity, distinctiveness, naturalness or intactness that would indicate a higher order landscape value.

6.5.2 Magnitude of Change

6.5.2.1 Size/scale – High

The Residential Development will result in major changes in the key characteristics of the landscape, including key aesthetic or perceptual elements. It is noted, however, that the Site is not rare or unique in the Hamilton context. Therefore, while the scale of local change will remain major, the proposal will affect a representative rural edge landscape rather than one containing scarce, distinctive or irreplaceable landscape values. The change is consequently less significant in the wider landscape context than an equivalent change affecting a rare or highly valued landscape.

6.5.2.2 Geographical extent – Low

The landscape effects will occur primarily at the Site scale and within the immediate setting. They will be concentrated within the Residential Area and its adjoining rural, residential and open space interfaces, with limited influence on the character and values of the wider landscape.

6.5.2.3 Duration and reversibility - High

The proposed Residential Development will result in a permanent change to the land use within the Residential Area and will include the introduction of built form.

6.6 Overall Landscape Values Effects Rating

Using the effects scale in Tables 1 and 2, the overall landscape effect before mitigation is assessed as **Moderate adverse (more than minor)**. This reflects a clearly perceptible Site scale transformation that is most apparent within the local receiving environment, but does not dominate the broader landscape context.

The proposal incorporates mitigation through retention and enhancement of the upper Mangakōtukutuku Stream, renaturalisation of drains, five stormwater ponds, riparian and ecological buffer planting, connected open spaces, the neighbourhood reserve, a varied density pattern, frontage landscape controls and recessive material and reflectivity controls. These measures retain and strengthen the principal water related landscape values, establish a coherent blue green framework, provide visual relief and soften the new residential edge as planting matures.

The embedded mitigation reduces the prominence and contrast of the development but does not reverse the permanent change from rural production land to an urban neighbourhood. The post mitigation landscape effect therefore remains Moderate adverse (more than minor). From a landscape perspective, this level of effect is considered appropriate because the Site has Low overall landscape value, directly adjoins Hamilton's established residential edge, forms part of the wider SL1 growth cell, is influenced by existing and planned strategic infrastructure, and has been identified for longer term urban growth. A more than minor effect is not, by itself, an indication that the proposal is unacceptable; the key consideration is whether the resulting landscape pattern is coherent and responds appropriately to the Site's values and context.

7.0 Visual Impact Assessment

7.1 Extent of Visibility

The Site is located at the southern edge of Hamilton, within the Waipā District. It is generally flat, which can allow longer range views where open and uninterrupted. However, the actual visual catchment is relatively

contained and localised. Features such as intervening buildings, and larger vegetation substantially limit views of the Site.

Visibility is greatest from locations closest to the Residential Area, particularly where existing streets, parks and adjoining properties have a direct relationship with the open rural edge. The most open and sustained public views are associated with Resthills Park, including the community building, playing fields and car park, where views are available toward the eastern edge of the proposed Residential Development. Adjacent residential properties and nearby street end locations are also important, as these are the places where the existing contrast between suburban development and open pastoral land is most clearly experienced.

Views from the wider surrounding road network are generally more limited, brief and intermittent. The flat topography means that views are readily screened by foreground buildings and vegetation, rather than extending broadly across the landscape. To the west, views from Collins Road are distant and oblique, with visibility further restricted by intervening vegetation, buildings and the elevated rail corridor. Beyond the rail corridor to the west opportunities for views toward the Site are very limited. To the north, including from the Gallagher Aquatic Centre, views are also distant, filtered and substantially contained by intervening urban development and vegetation.

Overall, the visual catchment is localised. The most pronounced changes in view will occur from adjoining residential properties, Resthills Park and other close interface locations where existing views include open rural land. From more distant or oblique locations, the proposal is likely to be perceived, if at all, as a minor change within the broader urban edge setting.

7.1.1 Viewpoint Selection

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map identified the locations from which the Proposal may theoretically be visible based on publicly available topographical information. It does not account for the screening effects of buildings, vegetation or other intervening features. The ZTV therefore defines the total visual catchment (yellow hatch in Figure 14). Refer to Appendix 1 for the ZTV methodology and Appendix 3 for the ZTV map.

Viewpoints were selected from publicly accessible locations within the ZTV area, including roads, reserves and other public spaces. Views from private properties are assessed by reference to nearby public locations, aerial information, site observations and the character of the relevant viewing audience.

The selected viewpoints were ground truthed during a site visit to confirm actual visibility and understand the influence of topography, existing buildings, vegetation and distance. In this case, site observations confirmed that the actual visual catchment is more contained than the initial ZTV mapping suggests, with views generally concentrated around the immediate residential, rural edge and reserve interfaces.

The visual assessment is structured around representative Viewing Audience Groups (VAGs) and the Viewpoints within those VAGs are broadly representative of views to the Site. For example, VAG1 contains residential properties, roads, reserves and schools and the Viewpoints 1-4 are broadly representative of the views from those places within VAG1.

The viewing audiences most likely to experience noticeable visual change are adjacent residents and users of Resthills Park, where views toward the Residential Area are closer, more open and more sustained. Wider residential audiences, road users and more distant viewers are likely to experience a more limited degree of visual change due to separation distance, intervening built form, vegetation, flat landform and the rail corridor. The selected viewpoints therefore provide a representative basis for assessing the likely visual effects of the proposed Residential Development across the local visual catchment.

7.2 Viewing Audience Group 1

As outlined in figure 14, Viewing Audience Group 1 (VAG1) includes Viewpoints 1 to 4 and comprises the residential and community environment to the west and north west of the Residential Area. The viewing audience is generally bound by Collins Road to the north, the rail line to the west, the Mangakōtukutuku Stream corridor to the east, and Saxbys Road to the south.

The area is largely residential in character and forms part of the established Hamilton suburban edge. It includes residential properties, local streets, Deanwell School, nearby reserve areas within Hamilton City, the Rural Urban Boundary, and community facilities including the Gallagher Aquatic Centre. Te Kura Amorangi o Whakawātea is also located within this broader viewing audience and has views toward the western edge of the proposed development.

The visual environment is generally characterised by low rise residential built form, private gardens, street trees, boundary fencing, reserve open space, and local movement corridors. The topography is generally flat, which limits opportunities for elevated or expansive views across the Site. Views are further filtered or contained by intervening dwellings, fences, garden vegetation, larger tree groups, and built form. However, more open views are available from locations close to the Site boundary, street ends, school or reserve edges, and Resthills Park, where the existing open pastoral character of the Site is more apparent.

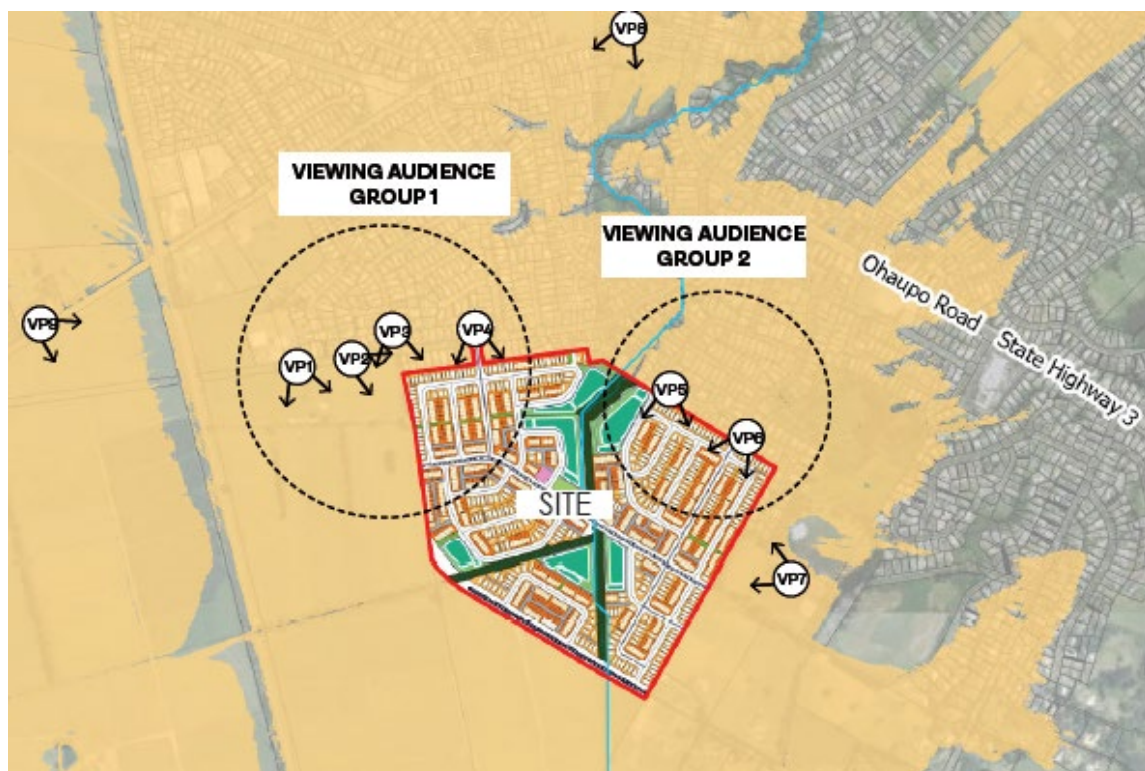


Figure 14. ZTV, Viewpoint locations and Viewing Audiences (B&A).

7.2.1 Visual Effects on VAG1

Visual effects for VAG1 vary depending on proximity, orientation, existing screening, and the degree of openness available from each viewpoint. The greatest visual effects are expected to be experienced by adjacent residential properties, where views are closest, more direct, and more strongly associated with the existing rural edge condition. To a lesser degree and intermittently some visual impact will also be experienced by road users within VAG1.

For adjacent properties, the proposal will introduce a substantial change from open pastoral outlook to a suburban residential neighbourhood. This will alter the existing visual character, reduce the sense of openness, and change the current rural edge identity experienced from the closest views. The change will be most noticeable where existing views extend across paddocks towards the western edge of the Site, including from the nearby school Te Kura Amorangi o Whakawātea.



Figure 15. VP4 taken from VAG1 on Saxbys Road (north) (B&A).

From more internal residential streets within VAG1, visual effects are more contained. The flat landform, intervening houses and trees limit the extent of available views. In these locations, the proposal is more likely to be perceived in partial views, glimpses, or at the end of local streets, rather than as a broad continuous change across the full Site.

The proposal will also change the visual relationship between the existing Hamilton residential edge and the rural land beyond it. Where the current edge condition is defined by open paddocks, rural fencing and longer views, the outlook will become more urbanised and enclosed. This represents an adverse visual effect for viewers who currently experience openness, rural character and a clear contrast between suburban streets and pastoral land.

Taking the embedded landscape mitigation into account, visual effects for the immediately adjoining properties within VAG1 are assessed as Moderate High adverse, reflecting close and direct replacement of an open pastoral outlook. Effects reduce to Low adverse across the wider residential area where views are filtered, intermittent or limited to street ends. The overall visual effect for VAG1 is assessed as Moderate adverse (more than minor), with the greatest effects concentrated at the immediate interface with the Site.



Figure 16. VP2 taken from VAG1 on Saxbys Road (north) (B&A).

7.3 Viewing Audience Group 2

Viewing Audience Group 2 (VAG2) includes Viewpoints 5 and 6 and comprises the established residential area to the east of the Site. This viewing audience is generally bound by Ohaupo Road to the north, the Mangakōtukutuku Stream corridor to the west, and Resthills Park to the south east.

The area is largely residential and forms part of the established Hamilton suburban edge. The topography within VAG2 is generally flat, which limits elevated or panoramic views of the Site. Views are further influenced by intervening residential built form, trees and larger areas of vegetation associated with the reserve and stream corridor. As a result, views from much of the wider residential area will be filtered, intermittent or contained. More open and direct views are available from locations adjoining the Site such as cul-de-sac ends and the outdoor living spaces of properties abutting the Site.

7.3.1 Visual Effects on VAG2

Visual effects for VAG2 will vary according to proximity, orientation, intervening vegetation and the degree of openness. The greatest visual effects are expected to be experienced by adjacent residential properties, where views toward the eastern edge of the proposed development are closest and most direct.

For these viewers, the proposal will introduce a clear change from an open rural outlook to a more urban residential edge. Existing views that include pasture, rural openness and a relatively simple rural foreground will be largely replaced by 1 to 2 storey terraces, duplexes or detached houses. This will reduce the visual openness presently experienced, and will shift the current contrast between established suburban development and the adjoining rural landscape to the western edge of the development. From the VAG2 Viewpoint locations, the proposal will form a new residential backdrop and will change from rural land to an urban neighbourhood.

From the wider residential area within VAG2, visual effects are likely to be more limited. The flat landform, intervening houses and larger vegetation will restrict the extent of available views. In these locations, the proposal is likely to be seen in partial views or glimpses, rather than as a broad or continuous change.

Taking the embedded landscape mitigation into account, visual effects for the adjoining properties within VAG2 are assessed as Moderate adverse, while effects across the wider residential area are Low adverse because views are filtered and intermittent. The overall visual effect for VAG2 is assessed as Moderate adverse (more than minor) and is concentrated at the immediate Site interface.



Figure 17. VP5 taken from VAG2 on Forth Cres (B&A).



Figure 18. VP6 taken from VAG2 on Macmurdo Ave (B&A).

7.4 Viewpoint 7

Viewpoint 7 (VP7) is located within Resthills Park which includes community buildings, playing fields and car park. The viewpoint represents views available to reserve users, including people using the sports fields, community facilities and car parking areas.

The surrounding area is largely residential in character and forms part of the established Hamilton suburban environment. Resthills Park provides an open public space within this context, with playing fields, community facility buildings and car parking. From this location, clear views are available toward the eastern edge of the proposed development.

The topography within the reserve varies between undulating and flat. The location of the community buildings is elevated approximately 2-3m above the existing ground level of the Residential Area. Views are partially influenced by intervening vegetation, existing residential built form and boundary treatments. The open character of the reserve allows broader views than surrounding streets and the extent of visibility toward the Site is largely uninterrupted near sports fields. The viewpoint is therefore important because it represents one of the more open public viewing locations close to the Site.



Figure 19. VP7 Resthills Park facility car park (B&A).

7.4.1 Visual Effects on VP7

From VP7, the proposal will introduce a noticeable change to the visual setting of Resthills Park. Existing views toward the Site currently include an open rural edge condition, with the reserve experienced in association with adjoining pastoral land and an open outlook. The proposal will change this relationship by introducing residential built form and new planting (including a 5m wide ecological buffer) along the eastern edge of the development.

The greatest visual effect will be the change from an open rural backdrop to a more defined urban residential edge. This will reduce the sense of openness currently experienced from parts of the reserve and will alter the contrast between the established residential area, the reserve and the adjoining rural landscape. The change will be most apparent from the playing fields, community building and car park where views toward the Site are more open and direct.

The generally flat topography and intervening vegetation will moderate the extent of visibility. The proposed open space and stormwater framework, together with the 5 metre ecological buffer and associated planting

along the eastern edge, will provide separation, filter views and soften the appearance of the new residential edge as planting establishes. The change will remain clear and permanent, but its contrast and visual prominence will reduce over time. The visual effect at VP7 is assessed as Moderate adverse at establishment, reducing to Moderate Low adverse in the longer term.

7.5 Viewpoint 8

Viewpoint 8 (VP8) is located at the Gallagher Aquatic Centre, to the north of the proposed development. The viewpoint represents views available to visitors, staff and users of the aquatic centre, together with people moving through the associated car parking and access areas. The car park and buildings are elevated approximately 2-3m above the adjacent road reserve.

The surrounding area is largely residential in character and sits within the Hamilton City urban environment. The visual setting includes residential development, street trees and other established urban built form. The viewpoint is therefore experienced within an existing suburban context, rather than from an open rural setting.

The topography between the viewpoint and the Site is generally flat. As a result, visibility of the Site is very limited. Where views are available, they are likely to be partial, filtered and seen in the context of the existing urban edge.



Figure 20. VP8 Gallagher Aquatic Centre car park on Collins Road (B&A).

7.5.1 Visual Effects on VP8

From VP8, the broader outlook is across middle distance rooftops and taller trees. Upper portions of dwellings may be glimpsed in the distance, but intervening residential development and vegetation will substantially contain the view. The visual effect at VP8 is assessed as Very Low adverse.

7.6 Viewpoint 9

Viewpoint 9 (VP9) is located near 170 Collins Road, 2.5km west of the proposed development. The viewpoint represents views available from the local road environment and from the broader rural and rural lifestyle setting to the west of the Site. The surrounding area is largely rural in character, with a small number of larger lifestyle properties located within Waipā District. The visual environment is characterised by open pasture,

rural road frontage, scattered dwellings, shelter planting, boundary vegetation, farm access points and larger lot rural residential development.

The topography is generally flat, which limits elevated views across the wider landscape. From this location, views toward the development area are distant and oblique, and are further restricted by intervening vegetation, existing built form and the rail corridor. As a result, visibility of the Site is very limited. Where views are available, they are likely to be partial or filtered, rather than broad or direct.

7.6.1 Visual Effects on VP9

From VP9, the proposal will result in very limited visual change due to the distance from the Site, the oblique viewing angle and the extent of intervening screening. The proposed development may be perceived in partial or filtered views, but it is unlikely to form a prominent or dominant feature from this location.

The main visual change will be the introduction of residential built form and associated urban elements within the current rural edge landscape. From VP9, this change will be substantially moderated by the flat landform, intervening vegetation, rural lifestyle development and the rail corridor, which restrict the extent and clarity of views towards the Site.

For road users on Collins Road, views will generally be brief and transient. For nearby rural lifestyle properties, visibility will depend on orientation, boundary planting, dwelling position and the presence of intervening vegetation. Where views are available, the proposal is likely to be seen as part of a wider urban edge change, rather than as a close or highly exposed visual element.

Overall, the visual effect at VP9 is assessed as Low adverse. The proposal will contribute to a change in the perceived rural outlook to the west of the Site, but visibility is very limited, views are distant and oblique, and the development will be strongly moderated by intervening vegetation, built form and the existing rail corridor.



Figure 21. VP9 from the berm outside 170 Collins Road (B&A).

The post mitigation visual effect conclusions are summarised below.

Audience	Rating	Key reason
VAG1	Moderate adverse overall	Moderate High for the closest properties and Low across the wider residential area.
VAG2	Moderate adverse overall	Moderate for adjoining properties and Low across the wider residential area.
VP7	Moderate to Moderate Low adverse	Moderate at establishment, reducing as the ecological buffer and other planting mature.
VP8	Very Low adverse	Only limited distant glimpses are expected.
VP9	Low adverse	Views are distant, oblique and strongly filtered.

7.7 Contributing Factors to the Overall Visual Impact Rating

Refer to Appendix 1 for a detailed outline of the assessment methodology.

7.7.1 Sensitivity

7.7.1.1 Susceptibility to change – High

The receiving audiences include residents and users of reserve areas, schools and community open spaces, where attention is typically focused on the surrounding landscape and viewers are likely to have a greater awareness of outlook, openness and visual amenity. This is particularly relevant to adjoining residential properties and Resthills Park, from which views towards the Site are closer, more open and sustained. Although views from the wider residential area, road network and community facilities are often filtered or intermittent, the closest residential and recreational audiences have a direct visual relationship with the existing rural edge. Their susceptibility to change is therefore assessed as high.

7.7.1.2 Value attached to views – Low

The view is a local amenity rather than a recognised landscape-wide view. The views toward the Site have local amenity value because they contribute to the existing experience of openness, rural edge character and contrast between established suburban development and adjoining pastoral land. This value is most evident from adjoining properties, street end locations and Resthills Park, where the open rural outlook forms part of the everyday visual setting. However, the views are not identified as regionally or nationally recognised views, are not associated with an Outstanding Natural Landscape or Feature, and are not understood to be recognised through tourism, art, literature or other wider community markers. The value attached to views is therefore assessed as low.

7.7.2 Magnitude of Change

7.7.2.3 Size and scale – High

The proposal will result in the loss or modification of existing landscape features and the introduction of new built form within the view. From the closest and most open viewing locations, the proposed development will be fully visible and will substantially change the composition of existing views. Open pasture, rural fencing, scattered vegetation, open sky and a simple rural edge will be replaced or partly replaced by residential buildings, roads, domestic activity, stormwater areas, open space and landscape planting. This will create a high degree of contrast in form, scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture, particularly when viewed from adjoining properties and Resthills Park. Although views from more distant locations will be filtered and limited, the size and scale of change experienced from the closest viewpoints is assessed as high.

7.7.2.4 Geographical extent – **Moderate**

The ZTV identifies a relatively broad area of potential visibility. However, site observations confirmed that actual visibility is more localised and contained due to intervening residential development, boundary fencing, garden vegetation, larger vegetation groups and community facilities. The most open and pronounced views are concentrated around adjoining properties, Resthills Park and other close interface locations. Views from the wider residential, rural lifestyle and community environments are generally filtered, oblique or limited. Accordingly, although the visual effects will extend beyond the Site and affect several nearby viewing audiences, they will not be widespread across the full area identified by the ZTV. The geographical extent is therefore assessed as moderate.

7.7.2.5 Duration and reversibility – **High**

Built change is permanent, however perceived effects will reduce as ecological and amenity planting establishes and matures. The visual change will be permanent because the proposal will convert the Site from rural production land to a residential neighbourhood with roads, dwellings, open space, stormwater infrastructure and associated landscape treatment. The change from an open rural edge to a more defined residential edge will remain apparent from the closest public and private viewpoints. Over time, proposed riparian planting, stormwater planting, open space planting and boundary landscape treatment will soften and integrate the new built edge, reducing the perceived level of visual contrast. However, the underlying change in land use, built form and visual character will not be readily reversible, and duration and reversibility are therefore assessed as high.

7.8 Visual Effects Rating

For transparency, the visual effect before embedded mitigation is assessed as High adverse (significant), reflecting the major change experienced from the closest and most open viewing locations. The proposal as applied for includes the open space, ecological buffer, stormwater and landscape framework, varied density pattern and built form controls described above. Taking those measures into account, the overall visual effect is assessed as **Moderate adverse (more than minor)**. Effects are greatest at the closest residential and recreation interfaces and reduce substantially across the wider visual catchment.

8.0 Conclusion & Overall Effects Rating

The assessment distinguishes between an unmitigated reference scenario and the effects of the Residential Development as proposed, which includes embedded landscape and design mitigation. Before mitigation, landscape effects are Moderate adverse, visual effects are High adverse and the combined effect is Moderate High adverse. With the proposed mitigation, landscape effects remain Moderate adverse, visual effects reduce to Moderate adverse and the overall post mitigation effect is **Moderate adverse (more than minor)**.

8.1 Mitigation Encapsulated in the Proposal

8.1.1 Landscaping and Screen Planting

The landscape design is integral to the masterplan. The upper Mangakōtukutuku Stream, renaturalised drains, five stormwater ponds, riparian planting, the neighbourhood reserve, the 5 metre ecological buffer adjoining Resthills Park and other open spaces form a connected blue green framework. This framework protects and strengthens the principal water related landscape values, provides visual relief within the residential pattern, supports walking and cycling connections, and softens interfaces with adjoining residential and recreation

areas. Streetscape, open space and private lot planting will further moderate built form and establish a coherent vegetation structure as the development matures.

8.1.2 Materials, colour, and reflectivity controls

The Urban Design Guide requires a recessive building material and colour palette to limit glare and visual contrast. Roof cladding is limited to a light reflectivity value of 20 per cent, wall cladding to 30 per cent, and glazing and other reflective façade materials to 16 per cent unless they are screened or treated to achieve an equivalent low reflectivity outcome. Matte and low gloss materials and coatings are preferred, and mirror finish metals and highly reflective roof and wall panels are to be avoided. These controls reduce the prominence of built form, particularly in longer and oblique views.

The mitigation measures reduce visual contrast, improve the coherence of the new neighbourhood and retain or strengthen the Site's principal water related landscape features. They do not remove the permanent change in land use or restore the existing pastoral openness. The overall post mitigation effect is therefore assessed as Moderate adverse (more than minor). This outcome is considered appropriate from a landscape perspective because it represents a coherent and integrated urban growth response within a modified, lower value landscape at Hamilton's established edge.

Appendix 1 – LVA & ZTV Methodology

Contributing Factors		High	Low
Sensitivity	Susceptibility to change	The landscape is strongly distinctive with important biophysical, sensory, and associative aspects. There is an absence of landscape detractors which make it highly vulnerable to the type of change which would result from the proposed development.	The landscape lacks any distinctive biophysical, sensory, or associative aspects. It has many detractors and can accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences to landscape character.
	The value of the landscape	The landscape requires protection as a matter of national importance (ONF/L).	The landscape is of low or local importance.
Magnitude of Change	Size or scale	Total loss or addition of key features or elements. Major changes in the key characteristics of the landscape, including significant aesthetic or perceptual elements.	Most key features or elements are retained. Key characteristics of the landscape remain intact with limited aesthetics or perceptual change apparent.
	Geographical extent	Landscape character area scale.	Site scale, immediate setting.
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 10 years).	Reversible. Short Term (0-5 years).

Table 1: Determining the significance of landscape effects

Contributing Factors		High	Low
Sensitivity	Susceptibility to change	Views from dwellings and recreation areas where attention is typically focussed on the landscape.	Views from places of employment and other places where the focus is typically incidental to its landscape context.
	Value attached to views	Viewpoint is recognised by the community such as identification on tourist maps or in art and literature. High visitor numbers.	Viewpoint is not typically recognised or valued by the community. Infrequent visitor numbers.
Magnitude of Change	Size or scale	Loss or addition of key features in the view. High degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour, and texture). Full view of the proposed development.	Most key features of view retained. Low degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour, and texture). Glimpse / no view of the proposed development.
	Geographical extent	Front on views. Near distance views; Change visible across a wide area.	Oblique views. Long distance views. Small portion of change visible.
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 15 years).	Transient. Short Term (0-5 years).

Table 2: Determining the significance of visual effects

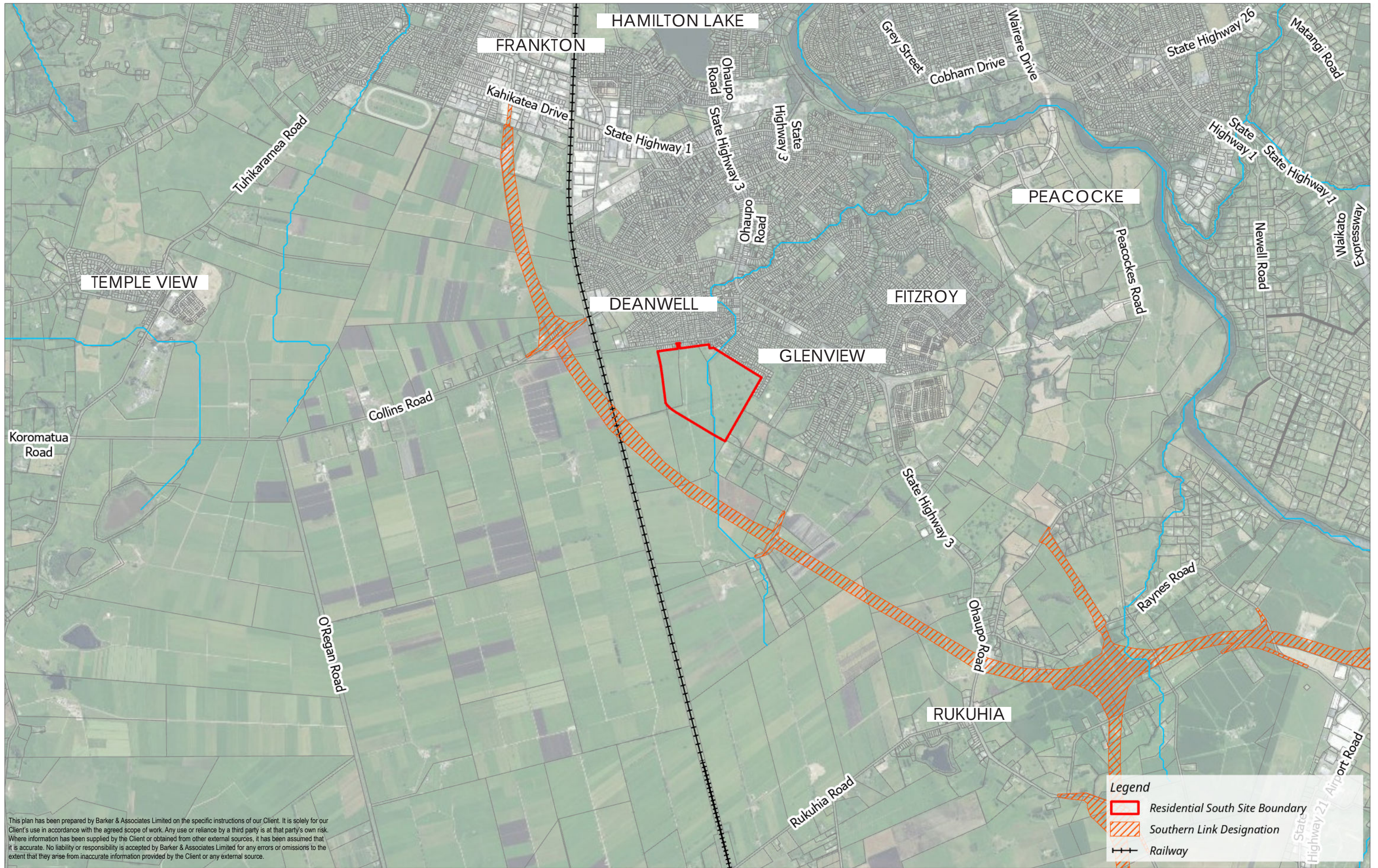
Nature of effect	Use and Definition
Adverse (negative):	The proposed development would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform which results in a reduction in landscape and visual values
Neutral (benign):	The proposed development would complement (or blend in with) the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape maintaining existing landscape and visual values
Beneficial (positive):	The proposed development would enhance the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, improving the landscape and visual quality through removal of damage caused by existing land uses or addition of positive features

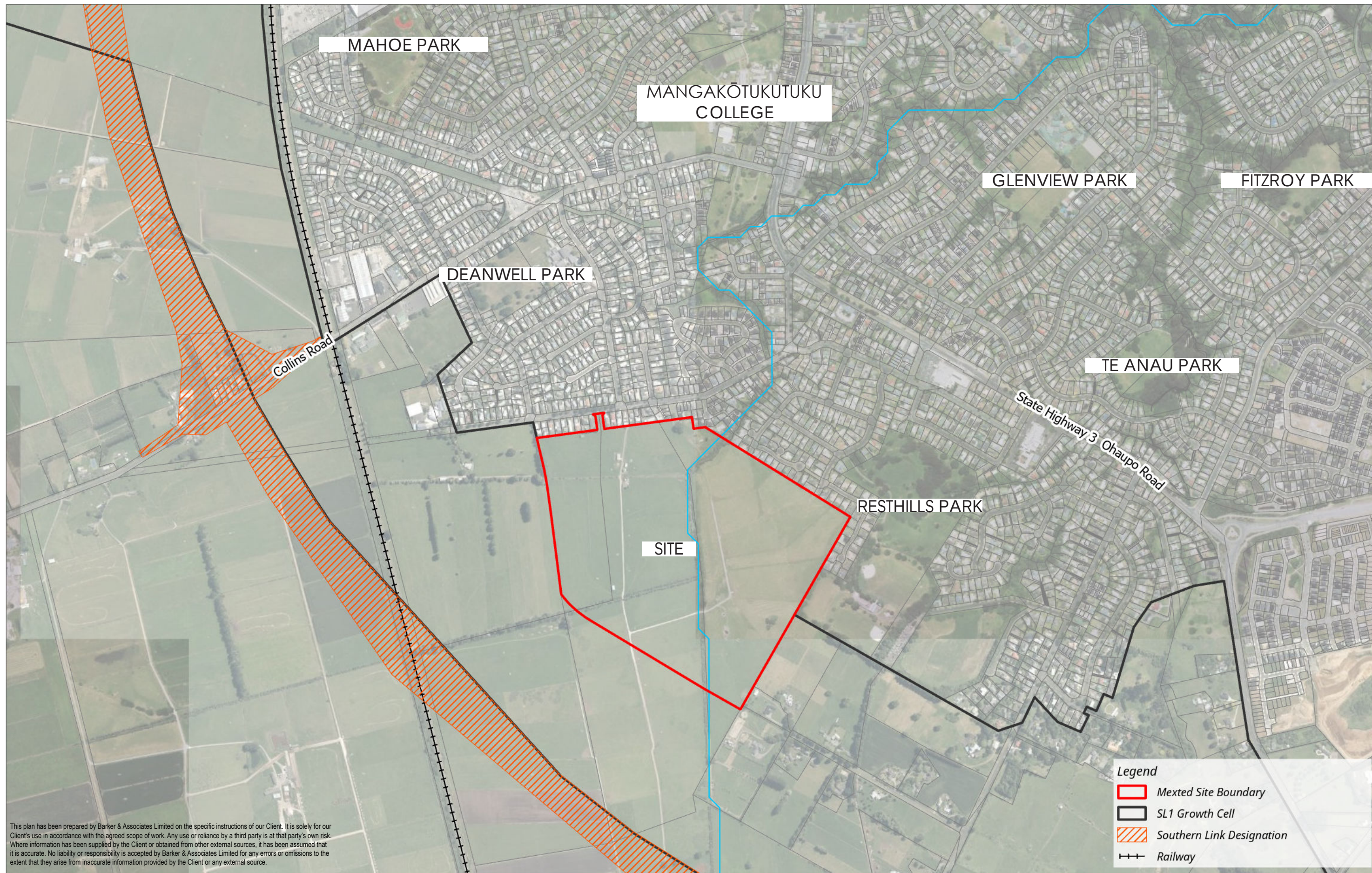
Table 3: Determining the nature of effects

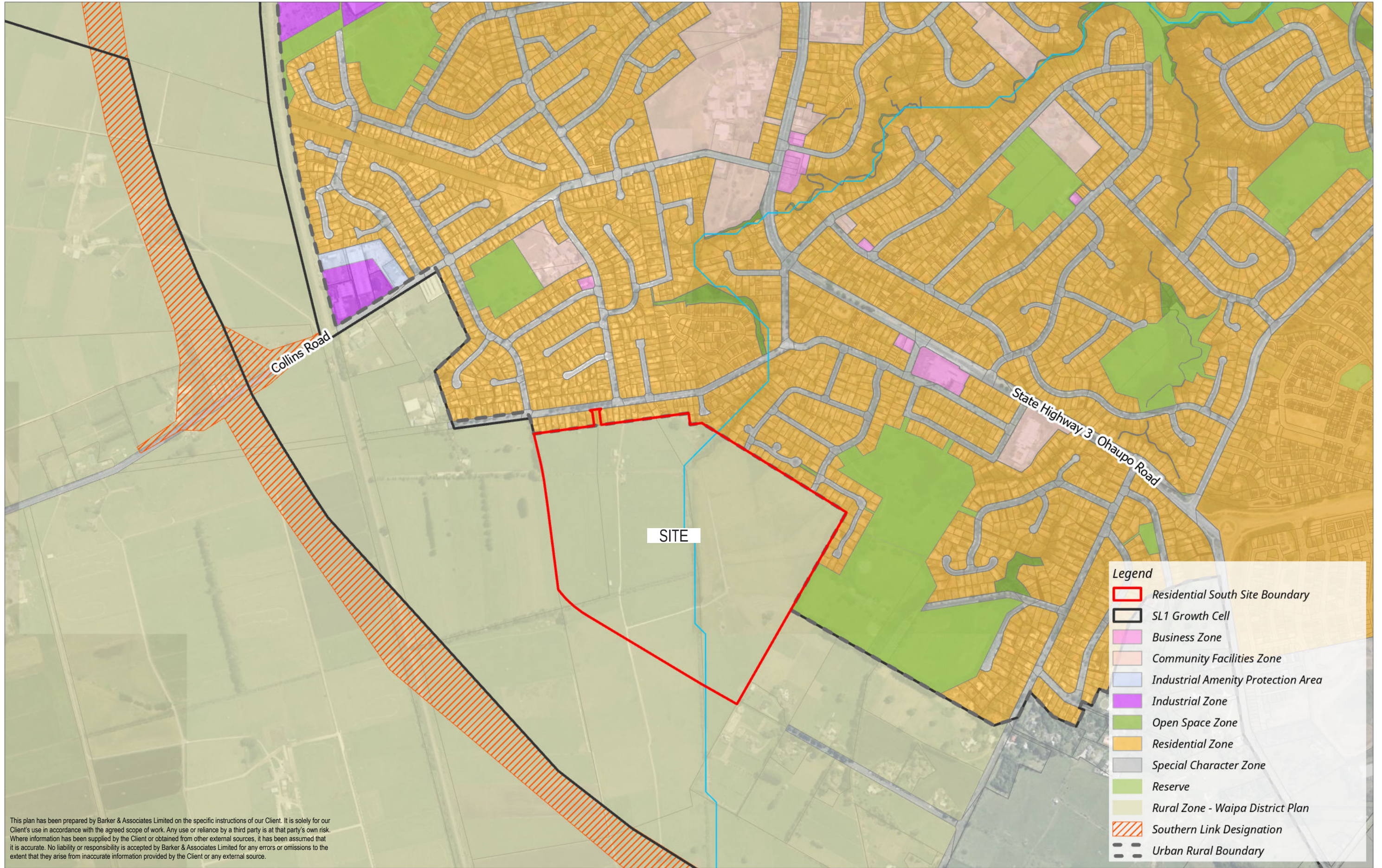
Effect Rating	Use and Definition
Very High:	Total loss to the characteristics or key attributes of the receiving environment and /or visual context amounting to a complete change of landscape character.
High:	Major change to the characteristics or key attributes of the receiving environment and /or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or a major effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Moderate-High:	A moderate - high level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have a moderate - high level of effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Moderate:	A moderate level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have a moderate level of effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Moderate -Low:	A moderate - low level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have moderate - low level of effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Low:	A low level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have a low effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Very Low:	Very low or no modification to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline or available views, i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation.

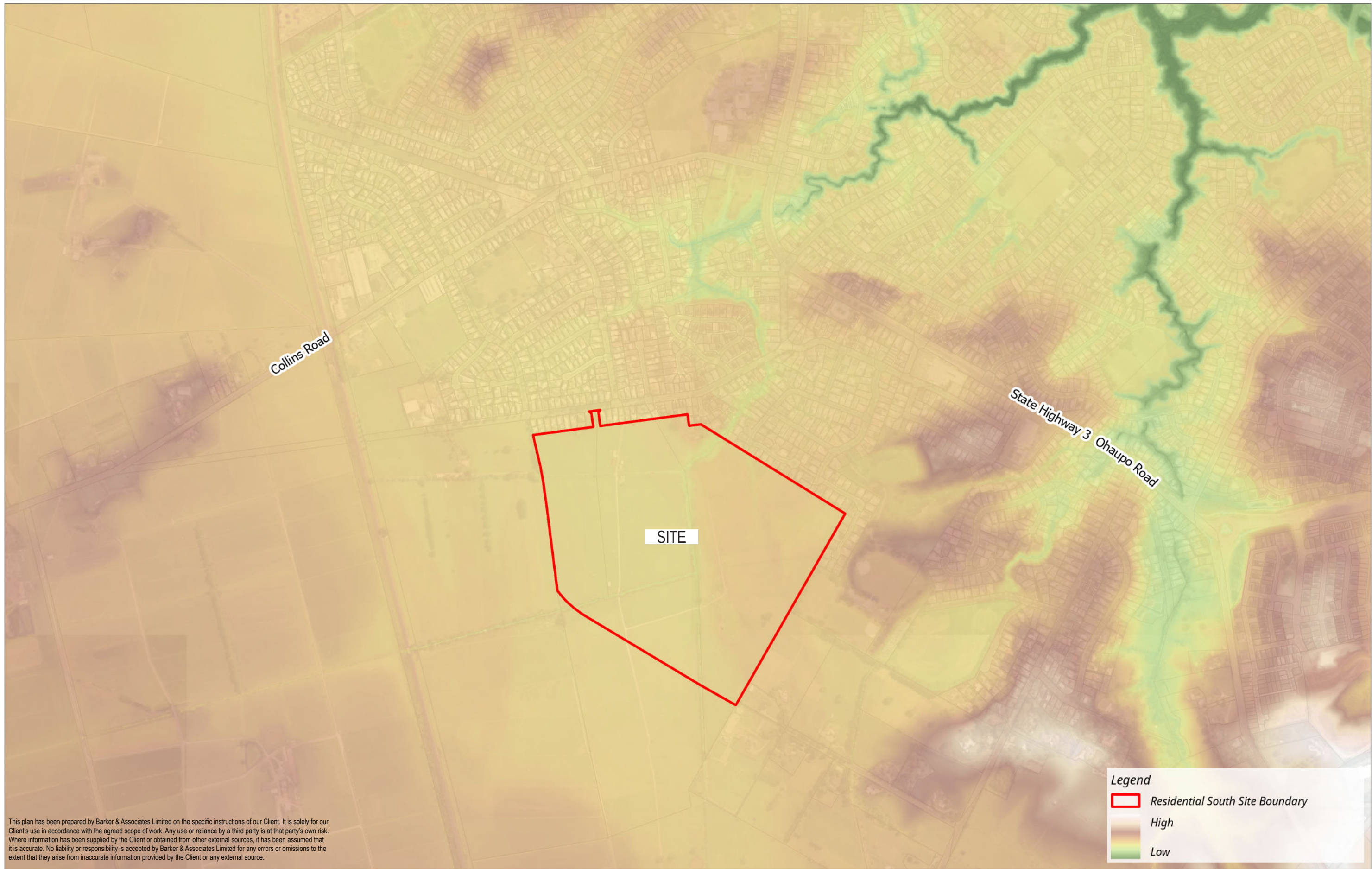
Table 4: Determining the overall significance of landscape and visual effects

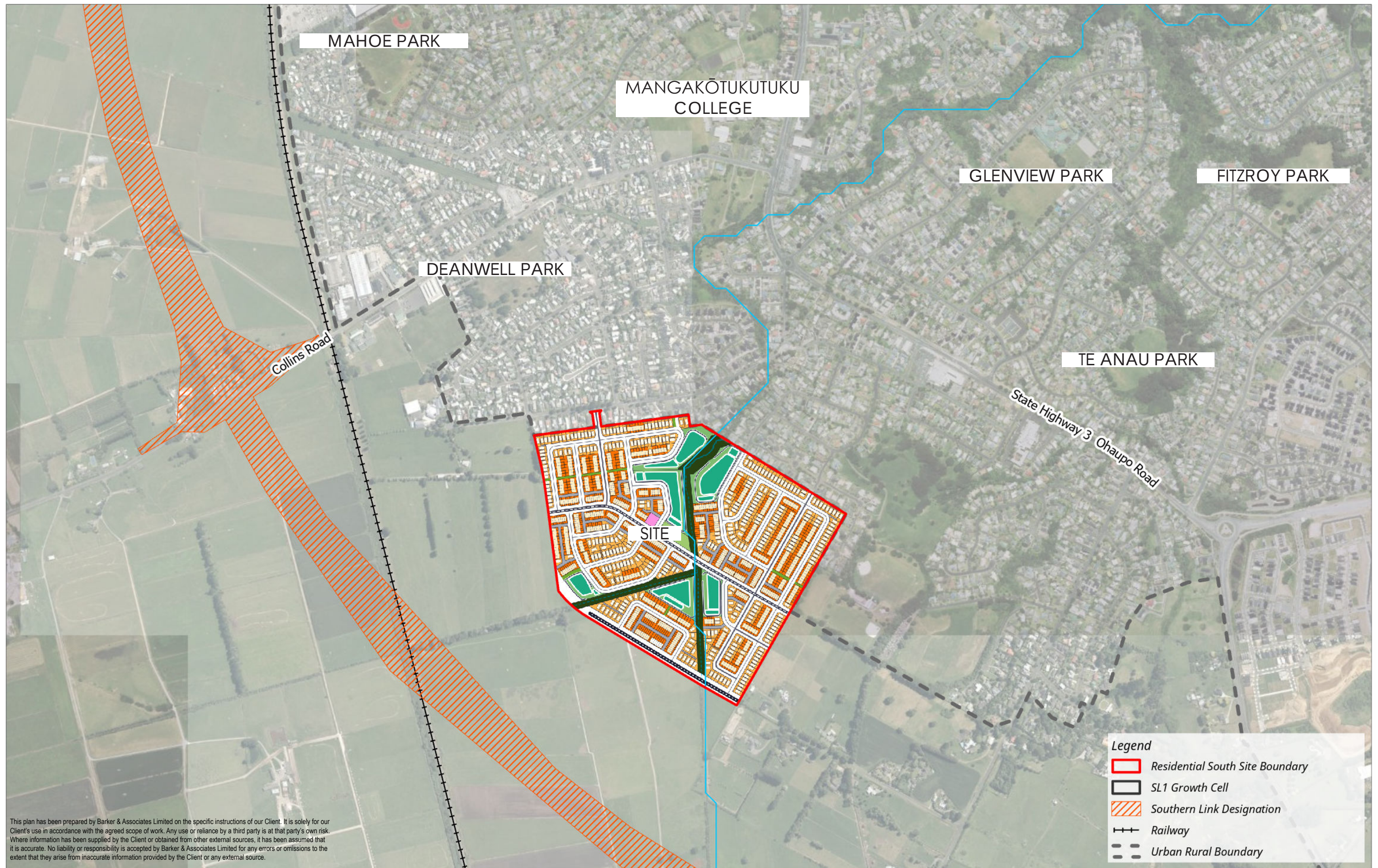
Appendix 2 – Maps & Photographs

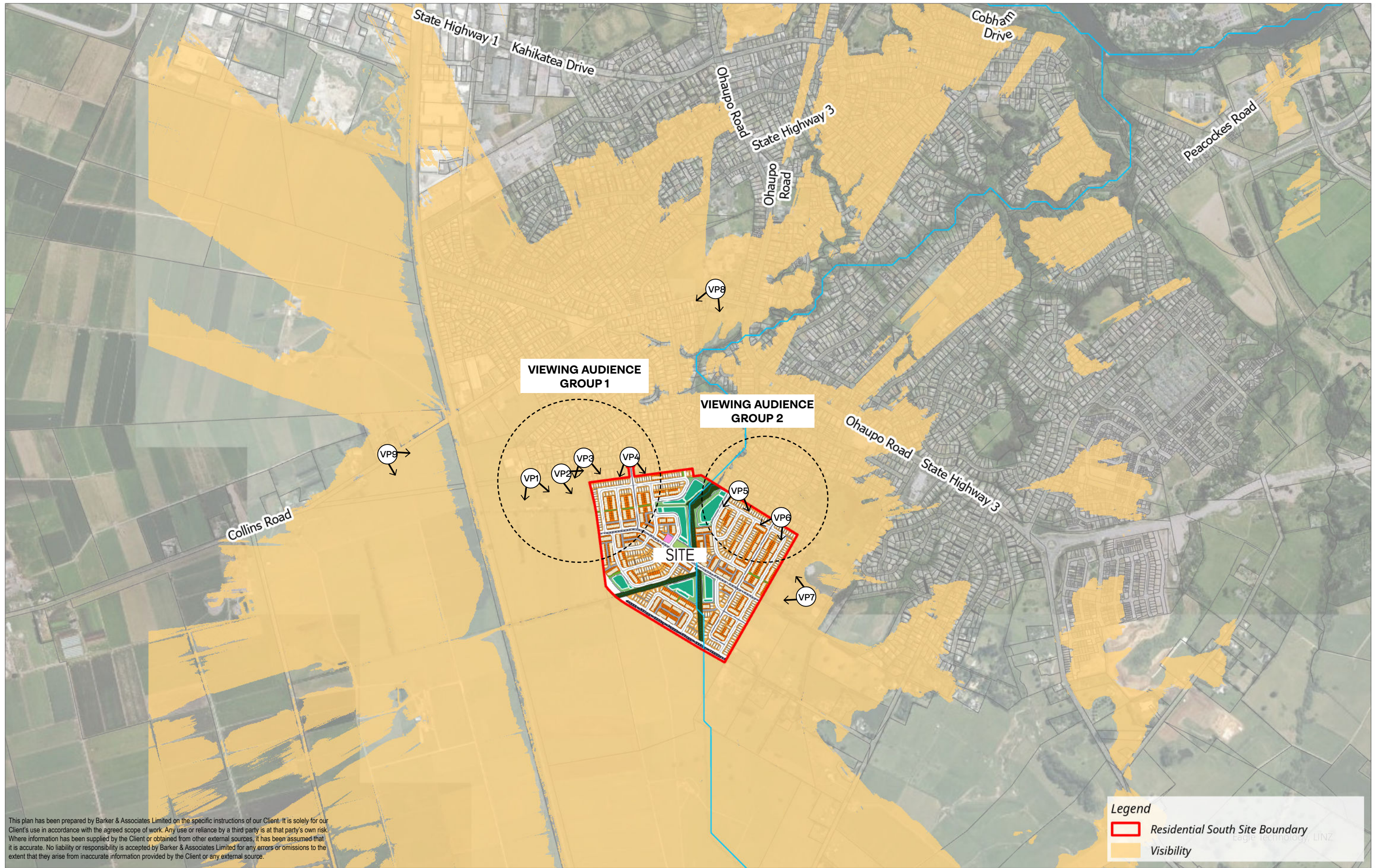














VP1



VP2



VP3



VP4



VP5



VP6



VP7

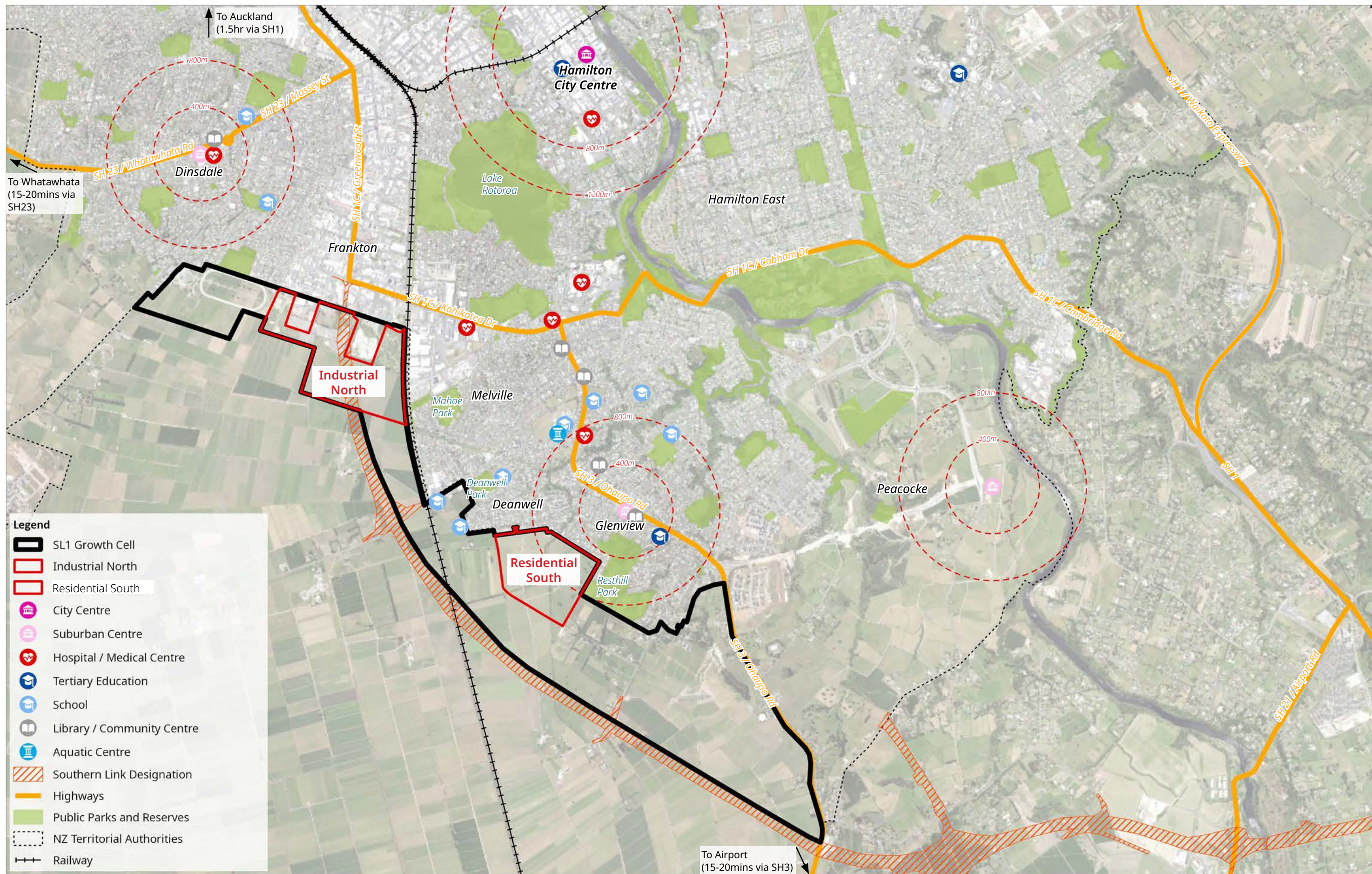


VP8



VP9

Appendix 3 – SL1 Growth Cell & SL1 Residential South Masterplan



Legend

- SL1 Growth Cell
- Industrial North
- Residential South
- City Centre
- Suburban Centre
- Hospital / Medical Centre
- Tertiary Education
- School
- Library / Community Centre
- Aquatic Centre
- Southern Link Designation
- Highways
- Public Parks and Reserves
- NZ Territorial Authorities
- Railway

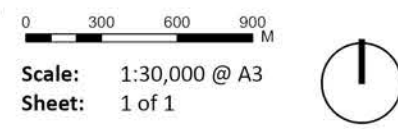
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Job Number: 25546 & 26111

Drawing: Wider Context

Version: Draft

Date: 29/06/2026

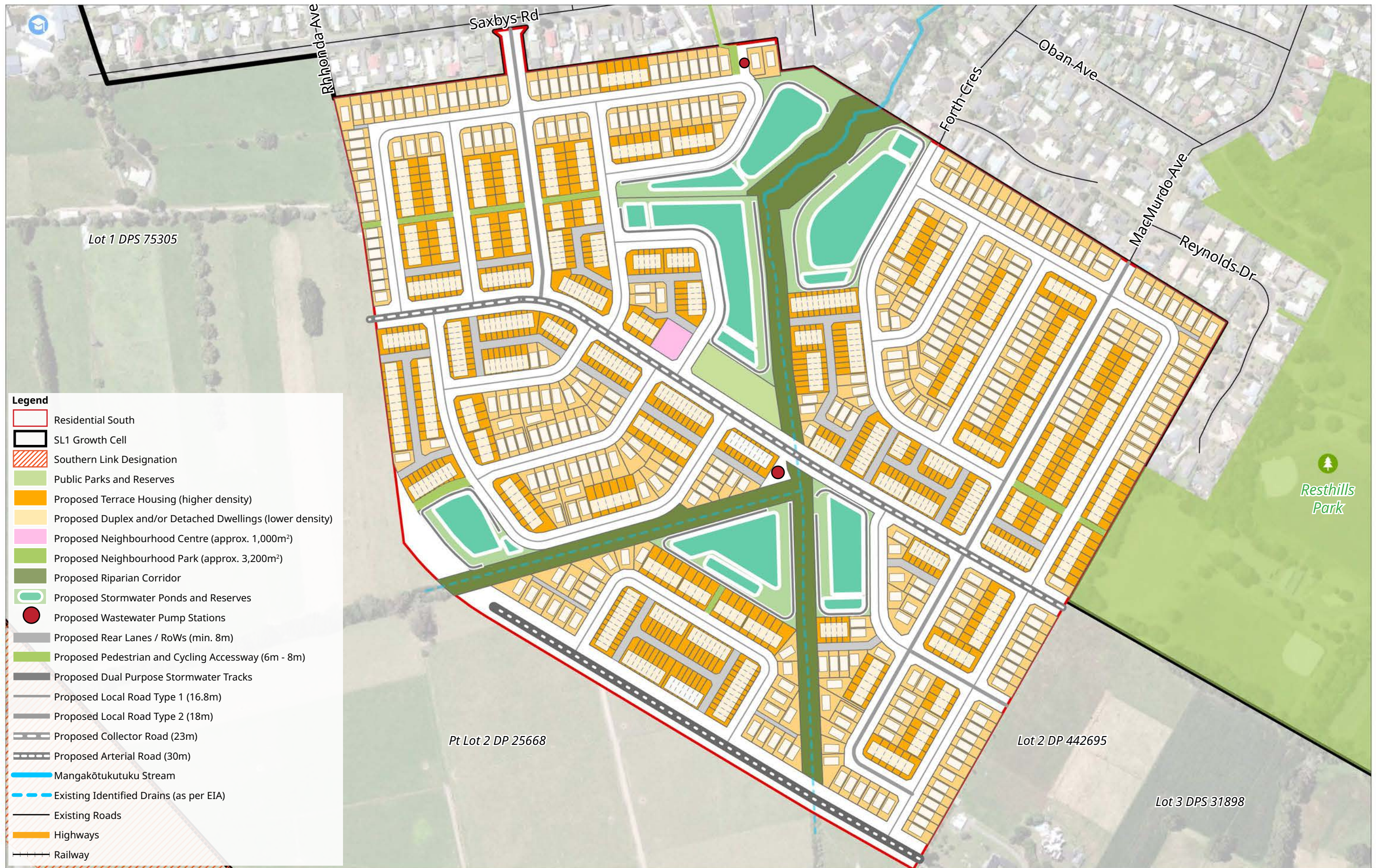


SL1 Residential South & Industrial North Substantive Application

49A and 49B Saxbys Road, Saxbys Road, 18, 20 & 24 Wickham Street, 160 & 162 Higgins Road, Waikato

B&A

Urban & Environmental



Client: Saxby Rd JV Ltd, Industrie Property Tahī
& South Park Agri Development Ltd
Job Number: 25546 & 26111

Drawing: Residential South Proposed Masterplan
Version: Draft
Date: 13/07/2026

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Sheet: 1 of 1



SL1 Residential South & Industrial North Substantive Application

49A and 49B Saxbys Road, Saxbys Road, 18, 20 & 24 Wickham Street, 160 & 162 Higgins Road, Waikato

B&A
Urban & Environmental