

# Ashbourne Development, Matamata

Date: 21/01/2025

Prepared for: Unity Developments

Site Location: Station Road, Matamata

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QA/QC Check: Richard Greenwood

## *Introduction*

Unity Developments engaged Greenwood Associates to provide landscape architectural services for the master planning, consenting and design of Ashbourne. Ashbourne is located approximately 1.8 kilometres south-west of the centre of Matamata in the Waikato and comprises a total area of 125 hectares. Ashbourne is a multi-use development that includes four key precincts:

1. A new residential community, comprising circa 520 new residential units with a variety of densities, a green space and a commercial node;
2. A multi-functional greenway that weaves from the neighbourhood centre and commercial node to the Waitoa River on the site's western boundary with an active-mode pathway along the length;
3. A retirement living core, comprising circa 218 units, an aged care service and supporting facilities that will be provided across a staged development; and
4. Two solar farms which will provide a sustainable energy resource onsite, with the potential to integrate into the wider electricity network to generate energy outside of the immediate development.

This three-stage development, with each of the four key precincts having their own sub-stages, will ensure demand is met over the short, medium and long term.

The 42-hectare residential community is underpinned by a series of design principles, which focus on creating a well-connected, legible and diverse community on the edge of Matamata. The eight-stage development is framed around a central spine road which runs from Station Road, to the north of the site, down to the eastern boundary.

Intersecting this is a secondary spine road connection to link the wider residential precinct to the commercial node, green space and greenway. This transport network, supported by local roads, pedestrian and cycle connections, enables a legible grid structure in the residential area. A range of housing typologies and densities are proposed to meet the growing and changing needs of the housing market to ensure there are options for future residents.

The commercial node located in the heart of the development, includes a number of amenities and services to support the Ashbourne development, wider community and local economy, such as local shops, a childcare facility and a café. The commercial node comprises an area of 0.75 hectares in the centre of the Ashbourne development, that includes a number of commercial properties, café, childcare facility and superette.

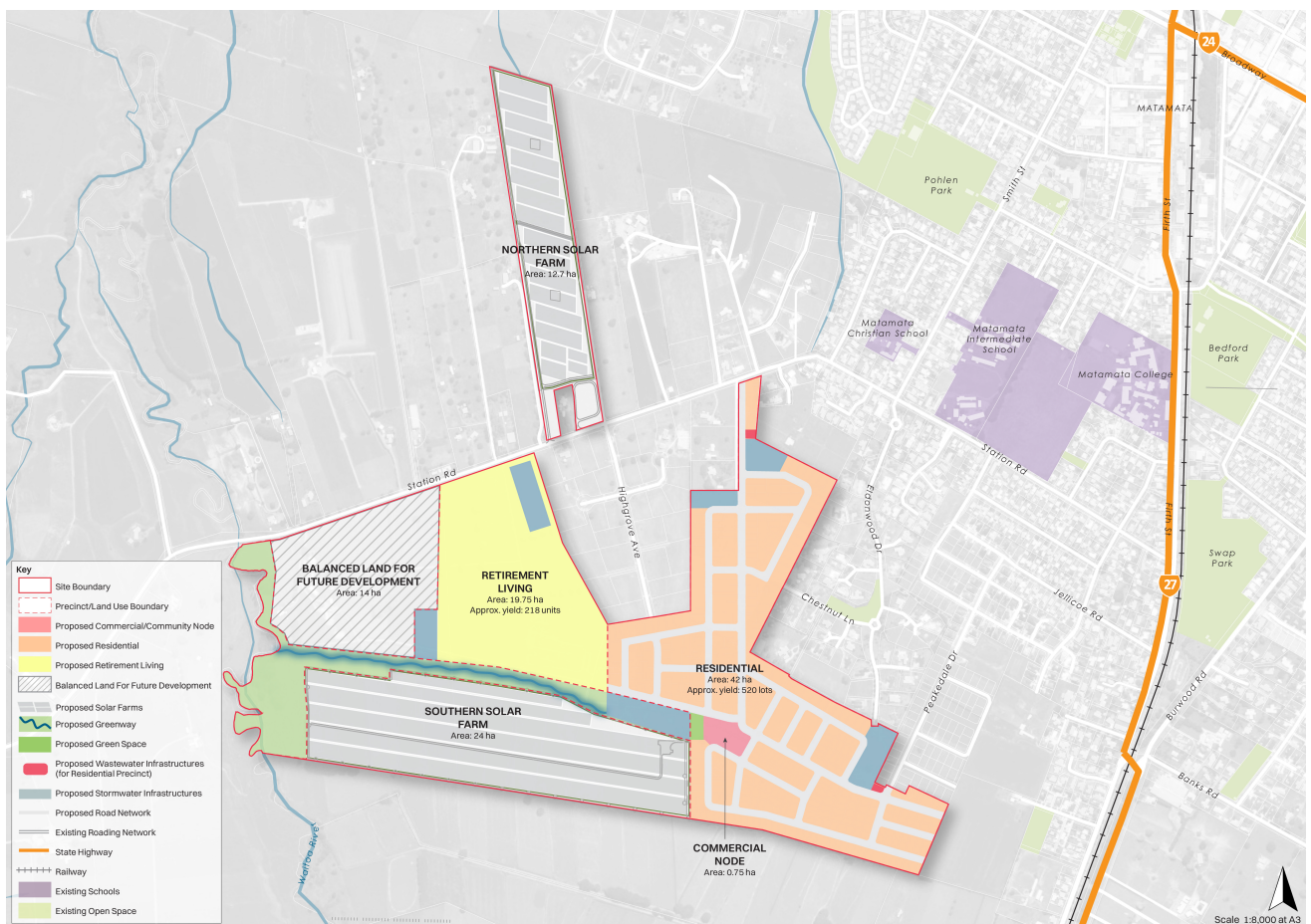
This element of the proposal has been scaled to support the density proposed in the residential and retirement village components to ensure it does not threaten the primary purpose of the town centre of Matamata. The multi-functional greenway links the commercial node and open spaces of the Ashbourne development area.

This corridor interconnects infrastructure, cultural narrative, ecological wellbeing, connectivity and amenity to support a place-based identity. A number of uses are proposed along this corridor to encourage future residents to interact with the greenway, such as sheltered rest areas for relaxation and socialisation, active mode pathways, and play areas.

To support the growing demand for retirement living in Matamata, Ashbourne is anticipated to deliver circa 218 retirement living units, as well as the supporting healthcare and community facilities across an area of 19 hectares. A staged approach is proposed, from north to south, to establish a high-quality development overlooking the greenway.

Two solar farms are proposed to produce energy for over 7,000 homes per year, with the ability of powering not only Ashbourne but the wider community. The northern solar farm has an area of 12.7 hectares, while the southern solar farm is twice the size with an area of 24 hectares.

An underpinning design principle of the solar farms is the dual-use, with agrivoltaic farming proposed to be undertaken underneath the solar panels to promote sustainability and preserve the identified highly productive land. Typical landscaping, planting and security will complement the solar farms to ensure their integration with the wider Ashbourne development.



Masterplan supplied by Barker & Associates LTD 21/01/2025

## *Purpose of this memorandum*

This memorandum has been prepared to support a referral application under the Fast Track Approvals Act (2024). This following sub-sections provide a high-level summary of the landscape matters (both assessment and design aspects) related to the proposal to develop a range of activities as described above.

Greenwood Associates have prepared a landscape assessment report (J002022-LA-SUBMISSION) which was undertaken as per the methodology of an 'area-based landscape assessment' as outlined in section 10 of the 'Te Tangi A Te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'.

This assessment identifies the landscape character and landscape values of the site and proposes a series of design measures to ensure that the proposed development can be integrated within the landscape.

## *Landscape context*

Greenwood Associates defined the landscape character of the site, and its immediate surrounds as follows<sup>1</sup>;

*'Taking the above into account and based upon site observations the landscape character of the site and its immediate surrounds to be defined as rural-residential, with the 'ruralness' increasing within 'Site One' in the western portions of the site due to the distance from residential and rural-residential built-form. '*

## *Landscape proposal*

Greenwood Associates identified the greatest 'character defining element' of the site was its function as acting as transitional landscape between the urban area (Matamata) and the traditional rural landscape (farms surrounding Matamata).

Failing to preserve this identified character element (i.e: creating a sudden and stark change in landscape patterning) has the potential to create adverse effects through the development appearing as a 'fragment' within the landscape and creating a urban-rural edge with 'jumbled' patterning

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<sup>1</sup> Refer 'Appendix 1-4 attached' for site context images

rather than the smooth transition currently present.

In order to preserve this character element whilst taking into account the proposed masterplan layout of the residential, solar farm and retirement community, Greenwood Associates proposed the following landscape design responses for the different components of the proposal;

### Residential Community

- Restrict fencing to a single type, either to be installed at the sub-division stage by the applicant or individually by individual lot owners, I recommend a 1.2m post and rail fence with shrub planting and/or a hedge behind this fence.
- Keep verge treatments (in terms of tree planting and lawns on the Peakedale Drive extension with that already installed in the adjacent residential development. These can be modified to be more site specific towards the centre of the development. Keeping the streetscape consistent will allow for a smooth visual transition between communities and will avoid creating an 'entrance statement' and rather will present the entire residential areas as one larger neighbourhood rather than separate communities.
- Front yard treatments of the lots in the adjacent residential community vary from low-level retaining to no fences, to brick fences this should be encouraged in lots near the transition point at the Peakedale Drive extension to maintain the continuity of streetscape character.

### Retirement Village

- Rural-residential edge to be extended to continue the character of the transitional landscape through the following measures;
  - Ensuring that residential built-form within the retirement is set back from the road reserve in a manner and distance akin to the existing rural-residential lots on Station Road,
  - Provide the mechanism to ensure that there is variance in the residential built-form at the 'northern edge' of the proposed retirement village in terms of building form, external finish and setback from Station Road. This will ensure that this built-form does not present as 'ribbon development' within the landscape,
  - Retain some of the existing mature trees that will sit within the retirement village, these allow for some trace elements of rural character to remain,

- Continue the post and rail fence of the neighbouring rural-residential sub-division, if not for the entirety of the Station Road interface at least to 10m past the future entrance signage to allow for a transition to edge planting,
- Planting at the edge can be planted in clusters of native species with a combination of trees and small shrubs to provide partial screening, this planting does not need to extend the entire length of the frontage with Station Road, as I do not consider it inappropriate to view built-form within a rural-residential environment,
- An additional measure with regards to planting could involve more formalised plantings closer to the existing rural-residential community gradually transitioning to more organic planting closer to the proposed greenway planting.

### Northern Solar Farm

- Screen planting of a 7m buffer strip consisting of a minimum of 3 rows of planting and 1-2 rows of medium sized trees (4-5m maximum height) behind the common boundary with adjoining properties that have their primary dwelling within 50m of the solar farm boundary,
- Where a neighbouring dwelling is greater than 50m from the common boundary with the solar farm, a 3m buffer strip consisting of a minimum 2 rows of shrub planting and 1 row of medium sized trees (4-6m maximum height).

### Southern Solar Farm

- Screen planting at western portion of solar farm – linking to proposed greenway planting – with taller trees planted at west portion of greenway to screen solar farm from neighbouring property at 319 Station Road,
- Screen planting at southern boundary, with taller trees planted at common boundary with 72A Hinuera Road and smaller shrub behind to minimise effects of shading.

The preceding measures have been graphically conveyed through a series of sections showing the key interfaces identified above, these sections form a part of attachment 1.

These measures will also form the foundation of Greenwood Associates design philosophy as the design develops over the course of the project cycle and will be reflected on our future plans and sections.

Greenwood Associates will also produce a series of 'issue-based'

assessments for each component of the proposal to provide a 'test' and in-depth analysis of the implementation of the proposed measures, these assessments will be supported by a series of visual simulations of the various components of the site.

### *Greenwood Associates Staff Qualifications*

The landscape assessment report was prepared by Christopher 'Chris' Campbell. Chris has 18 years of professional experience as a landscape architect (BLA (Hons.) – Lincoln University, NZ (2004) and is a Senior Associate at Greenwood Associates. Chris heads our landscape assessment department and has personally authored 65 landscape assessment reports since early 2020. Chris has appeared as an expert witness at resource consent hearings and has recently completed the 'Making Good Decisions' training course with a view to acting as a commissioner at panel hearings.

In addition to heading our landscape assessment depart, Chris also acts a project manager / design lead and has led a number of our larger residential development projects across Aotearoa, inclusive of a number, that like the proposal, involve the conversion of a working farm into a modern residential community.

The cross-sections were prepared by Simon White, Simon has 14 years of professional experience (BLA – Victoria University, NZ (2010) and heads our Hamilton office. Simon acts as a design lead on a number of our larger residential development projects and has worked on a number of residential and retirement community projects.

### *Conclusion*

I am of the opinion that there are no landscape-related reasons (i.e: effects on landscape character and visual amenity) why the development, as described above could not proceed under a fast-track application process. Further assessment will be undertaken a full landscape assessment<sup>2</sup> and associated landscape plans, however at this stage no significant landscape effects (i.e: effects on landscape character and visual amenity) preclude this development from occurring within the existing environment.



**Chris Campbell** BLA(Hons.)  
Senior Associate – Landscape Architect

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<sup>2</sup> 'Issue based assessment' as per Te Tangi A Te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand landscape Assessment Guidelines – Published July 2022