

Technical Memorandum – Fast-track Application

Waikanae North Development Limited Urban Subdivision Development

Date: 20 July 2026

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Introduction

This memo responds to a request for comment from the expert panel assessing Waikanae North Development Limited's ("WNDL") substantive application to undertake an urban subdivision development at 169-171 Peka Peka Road, Kāpiti, under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

Boffa Miskell have been engaged by Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) to provide urban design advice in relation to KCDC plans and policies for the Project. A masterplan design report and an urban design assessment have been prepared for the proposed development by McIndoe Urban Limited and Local Landscape Architects Ltd. This memo provides comments on the effects of the project on urban design matters in relation to the district council consents being applied for.

Pre-lodgement feedback on the draft application

Boffa Miskell was previously engaged by KCDC to provide pre-lodgement advice on the draft application as provided to KCDC for review. This advice was supplied in a memo dated 22 January 2026, a copy of which is attached to this memo as per the Panel's request within Minute 1.

The pre-lodgement review found that the applicant's Urban Design Assessment of the Project was generally consistent with current good practice, and its conclusions were broadly reasonable. The review identified some unresolved matters or potential improvement around the themes of connectivity, movement, road hierarchy, public space, staging, lot development constraints and boundary interfaces.

The review concluded that the urban design documentation for the Project demonstrated best practice urban design thinking and methodology by providing a thorough assessment of the site, supporting design decisions regarding the layout and density, and applying these principles through statutory mechanisms where detailed design was not yet available. Further recommendations were provided to address any outstanding issues identified that could either improve the Project or avoid any potential adverse effects.

Additional information was therefore recommended to support the application, including cross sections, new lot testing models, more detailed mitigation strategies, along with design refinements to reduce density at rural boundaries and strengthen the transition between urban and rural environments.

A meeting was held between WNDL and the reviewers (for Council) on 28 November 2025 to discuss these matters along with Landscape and Visual matters. A further response was provided by the Applicant on 12 December 2025.

Review of application (and regulatory assessment)

Approach of Peer Review

This component responds to the substantive application, lodged in March 2026. This peer review provides commentary on the urban design elements of the Project, itemised by themes as identified within the pre-lodgement advice. For the purpose of this report, themes surrounding the natural character and landscape have largely been covered by Council's consultant Landscape Architect, Ms McRae, in her Landscape and Visual Assessment Review, so these matters will only be addressed where the outcome is uniquely relevant to urban design outcomes.

Existing Environment

The Urban Design Assessment (UDA) and Waikanae North Masterplan Design Report (MDR) has provided a comprehensive description across all scales of the existing environment of the Site and its wider context. While the Project introduces a new urban form that is significantly changed from the existing rural landscape, the UDA has articulated how the proposed road layout, public space arrangement and density of built form respond to these contextual challenges.

Proposal Description

The proposal is clearly described in terms of scale, layout, access, densities and controls. It comprises a town centre, with some medium density and a large proportion of detached dwellings dispersed at varying densities depending on the neighbourhood character. The MDR explains the vision of the Project, including detailing decisions behind the Site layout, land use components, connectivity (including roading typologies), open space strategy, neighbourhood character and demonstrates some lot testing with typical lot sites across the neighbourhoods. This latter component of the MDR demonstrates key design controls such as building height limits and landscape treatments to prove that individual lot development will be achievable within the outcomes sought by the Project.

Detailed design of the individual residential, commercial and mixed-use lots is not provided at this stage in the Project application, however the MDR is supplemented by an urban design assessment which outlines a regulatory framework for approving the individual designs, including a design framework uniquely tailored to the different neighbourhoods or lot types, with a design panel application process included for further safe-guarding of development to meet the Project's intent.

Statutory Planning matters

All relevant statutory documents are identified and have been addressed to some degree within the MDR and UDA. The Project is clear that the proposed development is not intended to meet the requirements of the Rural Zone, and that the proposed development will be residential in nature, thereby adopting land use controls from the District Plan's General Residential Zone and Local Centre Zone provisions. Of note, each of the residential lot types explain how the planning restrictions meet or deviate from the current District Plan provisions.

The Kāpiti Coast Residential Design Guide (Appendix 24 of the Operative Kāpiti Coast District Plan 2021) and Centres Design Guide (Appendix 25) form the basis for the assessment framework for the UDA. The UDA has also considered Appendix 6 of the Operative Plan - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Guidelines (CPTED).

There are other overlays within the Project Site, such as the Rural Dunes Precinct and the Waikanae North Rural Eco Hamlet Precinct. While these matters are largely covered in Ms McRae's LVA Report, it is noted that measures have been adopted from these Precincts such as avoiding wetland areas and revegetation to enhance dune and wetland areas.

This report will therefore focus on the success of the Applicant's regulatory framework that has been adopted for this Site, and its likelihood to deliver good urban design outcomes.

Assessment of effects

The Site is proposed to be developed according to a masterplan, details of which are outlined in the Waikanae North Masterplan document. In summary the masterplan has broken the site down into four areas of which I have been referring above to as "neighbourhoods":

- Western Dunes - elevated land occupied by less regular residential lots and deformed spatial patterns. Dune tops retained as open space.
- Dune Foothills - suburban and medium density housing occupies gently sloping land at the eastern base of the dunes. Green corridors traverse the area.
- Local Centre - a mixed-use heart provides commercial destinations, shared spaces and community facilities.
- Eastern Flats - large flat areas suit conventional detached housing. Residential lots are integrated with restored wetlands.

Urban Design effects

The assessment concludes that urban design considerations have been well integrated into the Project. In considering the potential economic climate and therefore housing market

during development phases, the Applicant has offered multiple options where apartments or mixed-use have been proposed to downscale to terraced housing.

Neighbourhood design and connectivity

It is largely agreed with the UDA that the Project has been designed in line with the expectations of a well-functioning urban environment internal to the Site. Although it is agreed with the UDA that the location has good strategic connections to SH1, bus, rail and cycle/walking connections, there remains concern that the single road in and out of Peka Peka Road is not an optimal design for a Site expected to host 1,200 residential lots. Further, the rail and existing bus connections are located some distance out of the Site, and the Site will be highly dependent on private vehicle travel for accessing day-to-day needs that are not provided within the commercial centre. While the application indicates future additional links into the Site, these are not guaranteed – particularly to the south where End Farm Road provides the only potential long and winding access point. While the Site has been well-designed to consider internal connectivity and encourage active modes, the Site is located far from other urban amenities and will have limited integration with the wider Kāpiti urban environment.

Improvements have been made to the Project since the pre-lodgement meeting in 2025, including a second connection into the shared path along SH1 from the Western Flats, providing a recreational “loop” for walking and cycling. However, it is considered this additional connection will largely contribute only to local recreation, rather than support wider integration into the surrounding context.

Further details have also been provided around connectivity, road typologies and hierarchy which support the layout. The staging plan is considered to provide an appropriate balance of building some initial density and supporting this with local centre amenities early in the development stages, so that these commercial sites will be more likely to be feasible in the market (Stage 3). There remains concern that the parallel north-south roads within the town centre area both serve as a secondary connector route, limiting opportunities for a slower, more people-centric street within the town centre (Figure 1). The Applicant has stated this design is for resilience and offering multiple routes out of the Site to the north entry/exit point, however it is still considered a missed opportunity to limit road width and vehicle use for one of these streets, and in turn contribute to a clearer road hierarchy.

Exceptions



Figure 1: Road Hierarchy – parallel secondary connectors highlighted in pink

While it is not the scope of this report to comment on the appropriateness of this development at this location, the connectivity and integration challenges form the basis of why this area was not included in the recent KCDC Plan Change to enable more housing growth. During KCDC's Plan Change process in 2021, an urban development greenfield assessment found this location to be the lowest priority for development due to its lack of cohesion in relation to the larger urban environment of Waikanae. The assessment found comprehensive planning would be required with adjacent growth areas to ensure an internally cohesive urban form is developed, which is not possible to achieve through the Fast-track process which excludes adjoining sites. Accordingly, it is not agreed with the UDA that this Site is an appropriate location for residential development of this scale, however, it is agreed that the urban design principles within the Site have been well considered to address the topography and connectivity constraints to provide a well-functioning immediate environment.

The approach of the Site design to align with General Residential and Local Centre standards as outlined in the UDA is considered appropriate to provide local amenities such as a supermarket, commercial activity, community facilities and open spaces that will help to mitigate the effects of the Project having limited integration into surrounding urban areas, providing an acceptable level of self-sufficiency and local amenities within the Site.

Residential Design Guide Assessment

The UDA has assessed all of the proposed residential types against the KCDC residential design guide. The Project does not propose the detailed design of the residential units, as these will be built by developers or individual lot owners at a later stage.

In general, I agree with the UDA that the siting and street frontage across the Site has been well-considered to provide good urban design outcomes, such as solar orientation and passive surveillance. The UDA is thorough in that it demonstrates each housing type, both with north and south street interfaces. This assessment illustrates how to achieve active frontages and provide for passive surveillance when navigating conflicting design outcomes such as privacy and solar orientation for example when a residential unit's private outdoor living space is fronting the street, in these cases, frontages are required to have low (1.2m max height) fencing. Entrances and parking have been well-designed to promote active frontages, provide legible fronts and backs (particularly where units have a dual public interface) and avoid car-dominated streetscapes. Private rear lanes have also been used to help provide active frontages and limit driveway crossings at the street.

The UDA has provided a flexible approach to apartment typologies to allow for market appropriate typologies at the time of building. While apartment typologies would be the preferred approach to enable the project to have the density to support a vibrant local commercial centre, this methodology provides safeguarding of the design approach to be consistent in achieving attractive and integrated built outcomes. It is however noted, that a reduction in density would impact the viability of a sustainable commercial centre. The mixed-use units have also been designed to be replaced by terraced-housing should commercial units not be viable, which in turn would impact the success of the Site as a whole, increasing the reliance on the wider urban area for day-to-day needs. With existing concern about the single-entry-and-exit road, any reduction in local commercial offering would further impact the ability for this Site to provide a well-functioning urban environment for future residents.

Private outdoor living space has been carefully thought through in the design and been demonstrated through the lot testing that they will all comply with the General Residential Standards. The exception is the Apartment Typologies which seek to provide the upper storey requirements of 8m² area/ 1.8m width at the ground floor level as well, instead of the ground floor standard of no dimension less than 3m and is at least 20m² in dimension. This change to the standard is cited in the UDA as allowing more flexibility as to the location of the Apartment block on the Site. However, there are concerns that this approach will locate private outdoor living space directly at the street front, allowing views directly into the apartment unit in an area expected to have high pedestrian activity. While there are some factors that help to mitigate this approach, such as providing a communal private outdoor living space to offset loss of private outdoor living space, the key concern here is the treatment at this interface. While the indicative Apartment layout in Figure 2 is not a detailed design proposal for build, it is considered further safeguarding is needed to ensure a detailed design treatment would address the privacy concerns for this design outcome and avoid residents installing their own privacy measures (such as bamboo screening). A primary part of the reason for the ground floor standard in the KCDC District Plan is to allow for an appropriate buffer at ground level between the site boundary and the primary living area, which is lost through this proposed change. One possible mitigation measure would be to flip the design at the ground level and provide balconies for internal units on the other side, fronting the internal pedestrian area to minimise pedestrian views into the unit and increase the planting buffer (Figure 2). It is further noted the referenced built examples used to demonstrate the apartment designs in Appendix 12 all have larger private outdoor living

spaces at the ground level, providing an appropriate buffer and visual setback for residents of these units.

It is therefore recommended that this standard is either refined to consider the impacts on privacy for residents at the ground floor.



Figure 2: Ground floor balconies (red) are immediately adjacent the street front and could be relocated to the internal street

Built form and appearance

In general, it is agreed with the UDA that built form and appearance has been appropriately considered, and the adopted standards, including Rural Lifestyle Zone height limits at the site boundary where there is a rural interface lot, is an appropriate response to consider the contextual surrounding urban form.

More visually prominent buildings have been deliberately located to have marker buildings at key intersections, such as within and near to the local centre, reinforcing the street hierarchy through building typology. The arrangement of the building typologies, and the density within these typologies has considered the natural landform, for example, having more dense detached housing at the Eastern Flats area, which opting for less dense, larger lot sizes atop the Dunes. Accordingly, I consider that the built form and appearance proposed at this level of detail is appropriate, and detailed design will be subject to a design panel, further supporting good urban design outcomes.

Amenity and Sustainability

The UDA is largely supported in relation to landscape treatment as it relates to planting of public open spaces, streetscape and private outdoor living areas. However, there remain

some unanswered questions which have been raised in Ms McRae's LVA Report, notably, about the treatment of the dune areas and the cut and fill required to facilitate this development, including the intent to have no retaining wall higher than 1m. These issues raised by Ms McRae are quoted below, and it is considered these matters are also critical to understand from an urban design perspective on how these interfaces will appropriately be integrated into the Site without large retaining features.

"A single long section through the development including across the western dune area has also been included as requested in the landscape set (LA7.01-LA7.03) and is reproduced in the Masterplan Design Report (pg 34-35). The above information is helpful, but due to the scale still provides minimal detail on how these interfaces might work. There is no definition within the plan set aside from this to illustrate as to the location, height and lengths where retaining walls might be required across the site.

The Overall Earthworks Plan provided by Landlink Ltd illustrates potential cut depths of up to 28m and potential fill of up to 11m in the dune areas in order to flatten out the areas of dunes to accommodate development. There is still limited information on how these critical dune interfaces are supposed to work and evidence that the modifications to the dunes can be tied successfully back into the natural landform, without the need for excessive retaining structures."

In relation to other Amenity and Sustainability matters raised in the UDA, it is agreed CPTED and privacy have been adequately considered, except for the privacy of the ground-floor apartment typologies as mentioned above.

Centres Design Principles

It is agreed with the UDA that Precinct Plan A is the preferred approach, and every effort should be made to ensure that this is the outcome provided by the project, as this reinforces the Main Spine and contributes to a more active and pedestrian friendly environment. In general, it is agreed that the Project provides a good balance on providing for private vehicle access that is expected at a location of this scale and context, while enabling local commercial activity that will contribute to a pedestrian-friendly local centre environment.

Neighbouring Effects

The Applicant has provided a thorough sunlight assessment in line with the UDIA Shading Practice Note. The findings of this assessment are agreed that shading impacts to the surrounding properties will be negligible.

The visual conditions at the Site boundary however result in the most notable step-change for existing neighbours, considering the shift from a largely vacant rural lifestyle area into an urban greenfield development. The surrounding context creates an "island" like effect for the development, which requires careful integration to help transition the new urban form into the surrounding context, whilst not exacerbating the "island" effect, and limiting future integration opportunities should the surrounding land be developed in the future.

Ms McRae's LVA assessment has considered these changes from an LVA perspective, and considers that this change in character could be better integrated density reduction, setbacks or transition zones.

The change in the original design as recommended at pre-lodgement stage is supported as a concept, where there has been a reduction in lot density at rural interface boundaries, allowing for a more stepped transition. However, it is considered that a clearer change between lot type sizes is required, with even larger lots at the Site boundary as it transitions into smaller lot sizes.

Improved design measures such as increased planting buffer from the original proposal, post-fencing and 50% planting requirements help to integrate these boundary lots into the surrounding context. The development is largely relying on the success of this planting to mitigate effects, therefore it is recommended that conditions of consent are specific around monitoring of landscape treatment at these identified lots.

It is therefore recommended that the boundary lots (proposed lots 837 to 845 and 846 to 853 along the northern boundary and lots 204-211 in the vicinity of End Farm Road on the southern boundary) continue to be increased in size for a clearer step-change in lot size transition between the boundary lots and the non-boundary lots to better address the significant change in urban form at the Site boundary.

Design measures and mitigation

A suite of mitigation measures is proposed, including planting, boundary treatment, building controls and earthworks design. These include:

- Boundary screening, implementation of nature based systems for stormwater (swales, wetlands, raingardens), and
- Native restoration planting (wetland buffers, dune planting).
- Building Controls - Building and structure heights are proposed to be limited in certain areas with height limits and colour controls (4.5 m on prominent dune lots; 8 m on less prominent dunes & external interfaces), All height-restricted interface lots are also subject to LRV $\leq 30\%$ and a requirement for recessive cladding materials
- Fencing Controls - rural style fencing on outer boundaries (≤ 1.5 m, permeable),
- Earthworks Controls - Earthworks design (avoid >1 m retaining, replant exposed faces within the first planting season)
- Implementation of an urban design panel to ensure consistency in application

There remains a stark transition between the urban and rural/rural lifestyle interfaces, which has been softened in some areas but still remains in others (in particular to the south). The effectiveness and proposed timing of such mitigation remains uncertain, and careful monitoring of these interfaces are recommended as part of consent condition.

Ms McRae's recommendation that controls are proposed around the height and steepness of exposed cut faces to ensure that cut faces can be planted as described in the LVA is supported.

Post-lodgement work with the applicant

Subsequent to the writing of the above report, a meeting was held with the WNDL Applicant team on 09/07/2026 to discuss outstanding matters.

In relation to the matter of the ground floor balconies for apartment buildings, the Applicant has identified this will only apply to only two apartment buildings that are proposed – so will have minimum effect across the Site as a whole. The Applicant has also provided some precedent imagery of this in practice, identifying design interventions that could be used to mitigate privacy implications, which include raising FFL and planting / planter boxes.

It is considered that such methodologies would be appropriate, and conditions should consider wording to ensure this matter is part of the scope of the Design Panel when assessing apartment typologies, or is incorporated into the wording of the outdoor living space standard.

Outstanding matters

In general, the proposal is a substantive application that has adequately addressed key urban design matters. The updated March 2026 Urban Design Assessment and MDR represents an improved revision of the October 2025 assessment, although some matters related to cut/fill and the impact on dune interfaces and retaining remain unresolved. There remains a concern that the Project as a whole will have limited successful integration into the wider urban environment due to its single point entry and immediate surrounding rural environment. However, multiple primary urban design concerns raised in 2025 have been addressed which will better contribute to an *internal* well-functioning urban environment, including:

- Introducing a second connection into the shared path along SH1 to allow for local active travel,
- Clarifying pedestrian safety treatments at key road-crossing points,
- Providing a small pocket park in the western flats,
- Providing a staging plan that supports active modes.

Further recommendations include:

- That the UDA is updated to clarify the design approach to mitigate the privacy effects of ground floor apartment units adopting the 1.8m/8m² balcony standards, so that there can be confidence this will not result in adverse privacy effects for these units.
- Increasing the lot size of boundary lots (proposed lots 837 to 845 and 846 to 853 along the northern boundary and lots 204-211 in the vicinity of End Farm Road on the southern boundary) to provide a clearer and more appropriate transition between adjacent rural properties and the boundary lots on the Site.

Proposed conditions

Council's feedback will be provided on the proposed consent conditions when the updated set is received, as per Minute 1 from the Expert Panel.

Other matters

There are no other matters to note.