# Milldale Fast-Track

29/07/2025 – Auckland Council Response

## Annexure 16:

## Landscape

04/07/2025

Dear Dylan,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposal for the subdivision and land use consent for Stages 10 to 13 and Stage 4C of the Milldale development, located within the Wainui Precinct under the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part).

2. The application seeks to authorise subdivision and development across a mix of residential and business zones, delivering approximately 1,155 detached and terraced dwellings, a compact Neighbourhood Centre, and a temporary wastewater treatment plant to support early infrastructure.

3. The site includes a mix of zones, including Residential - Single House, Mixed Housing Suburban, Mixed Housing Urban, Business-Neighbourhood Centre, and Open Space-Informal Recreation, and adjoins the Future Urban Zone to the south.

4. Please note that I was previously involved with this proposal and attended a pre-application meeting with the applicant and visited the site.

**Subdivision (Stages 10–13)**

**Block Structure and Urban Form**

5. Across all the stages, the proposed block structure was arranged and responds well to the site's natural topography and slope characteristics, resulting in a logical and legible layout. The block pattern follows a grid-based configuration while responding to landform constraints. This creates a connected and walkable street network. Longer blocks are supplemented by mid-block pedestrian connections, enhancing permeability across the neighbourhood.

6. Urban blocks are generally 50–60m deep, with some variation depending on slope and location. This approach enables a range of lot depths between 25–30m **(refer to Appendix 2L Figure 24, p.33**), supporting flexibility in residential typologies and future intensification opportunities.

7. The proposal adopts a mid-block level arrangement to manage changes in topography, concentrating slope transitions between lots rather than at the street edge. This approach is illustrated in the sectional drawings provided in **Appendix 2L (Sheets P24-128-UD301 to P24-128-UD304)**, which show retaining managed within the block. This strategy is supported from an urban design perspective, as it helps avoid tall retaining walls and abrupt level changes along street edges, resulting in positive open streetscape outcomes.

8. In some blocks, the integration of rear lanes reinforces the block structure and allows for the separation of vehicle access and services from primary street frontages. This contributes to a positive streetscape outcome, reduced vehicle crossing interruptions, and enhanced public realm outcomes.

**Connectivity and Access**

**9.** The proposal establishes a well-connected street and movement network that supports a legible and walkable neighbourhood structure. Collector roads, local streets, and pedestrian paths are arranged to provide clear access across all stages, to the town centre and enable links to future development areas.

**10.** The block pattern supports permeability through the inclusion of mid-block pedestrian connections. A series of five pedestrian bridges is proposed across the open space corridors within the subdivision to strengthen internal connectivity and support active mode movement. These are positioned where reserves or stormwater corridors create wider separations between blocks intended to shorten walking distances, provide mid-block connections.

**11.** From an urban design perspective, Bridge 2 is considered essential. It forms a key active mode route likely to experience high pedestrian and cycle demand, particularly for movement toward the town centre. The remaining Bridges 1,3,4, and 5, offer more localised connections. While potentially not fundamental to the legibility or primary function of the movement network, they enhance permeability between residential stages and provide mid-block access across long corridors (approximately 400–500 metres). Their inclusion supports walkability and more direct pedestrian movement through the neighbourhood.

**12.** Some of these bridges, particularly Bridges 1 and 5 has drawn some concern from other technical stakeholders due to potential long-term maintenance implications. Bridge 5 appears to duplicate access already provided by Bridge 3, which connects to the same collector road through the reserve path. The applicant has clarified that Bridge 5 is intended to serve a dual function as a pedestrian connection and to screen a proposed wastewater pipe bridge at this location. Similarly, Bridge 4 will assist in screening a stormwater pipe bridge. From an urban design standpoint, these dual-purpose bridges are a practical response that integrates utility infrastructure with connection outcomes. Their inclusion can be supported for the added value they bring to connectivity and visual amenity within the open space network.

**13.** The subdivision layout has been designed to support future connectivity with surrounding areas, including adjacent stages of Milldale and the land zoned Future Urban to the south. At the southern boundary of Stage 13, a pedestrian path connection has been provided following our earlier concern from the pre-application stage to enable walking connections across the interface. While the topography in this area presents challenges for vehicular integration, the inclusion of a pedestrian link supports options for further permeability and allows for long-term walkability options, subject to future planning and design of the adjoining land.

**14.** Overall, the proposal achieves a well-connected neighbourhood structure with a logical movement hierarchy and a high degree of internal permeability, supporting walkable access to key destinations and enabling future integration with the wider urban context.

**Density and Zoning Alignment**

**15.** The proposed distribution of densities is generally consistent with the underlying zoning pattern across Stages 10 to 13, with higher-intensity development located near parks, collector roads, and the Neighbourhood Centre, and lower-intensity lots positioned toward the edges.

**16.** Urban blocks with greater depth and more favourable topography, particularly those near open space and centre zones, are well-positioned to accommodate a range of typologies, including duplexes, terraces, and rear-lot formats. The typical block depths of 50 to 60 metres and lot depths of 25 to 30 metres provide flexibility to achieve these outcomes.

**17.** Superlots located near reserves, collector roads, and the Neighbourhood Centre are scaled to support medium-density housing typologies. Their placement reinforces walkable access to key amenities and reflects the compact form situated around amenities. The distribution of density across the site aligns with the underlying zoning and supports a staged, integrated growth pattern.

**18.** While the proposed density distribution generally aligns with the Wainui Precinct, there are some areas where the proposed built form may diverge from the anticipated zone character. In particular, the superlots located along the southern side of Wainui Road (Lots 1007–1013) and south of Cemetery Road (Lots 1017–1021) are zoned Residential – Single House. However, these superlots have been designed to accommodate a variety of dwelling typologies, including terrace and duplex housing up to two storeys. These will be subject to future land use consents.

**19.** Although this represents a departure from the traditional single-house character expected under the zone, the evolving context around Wainui Road provides justification for a broader mix of typologies in this location. These superlots were previously positioned at the rural edge of the urban area, but with recent and proposed urbanisation along Wainui Road, including a Private Plan Change to the north, this area is becoming more central within the emerging urban structure. In this context, the provision for more diverse housing forms may be appropriate and is likely to support a more integrated and efficient urban outcome over time.

**Lot Layout and Typologies**

**20.** The proposed lot layout demonstrates flexibility to support a range of housing typologies, including detached dwellings, duplexes, and terrace housing. Lot depths are generally between 25 and 30 metres, with lot widths varying to suit different housing formats. This allows for typologies that can respond to both the zoning and the surrounding urban context.

**21.** Where proposed, rear lanes would support the separation of vehicle access and services from primary street frontages, allowing for improved pedestrian environments, better

landscaping opportunities along the streetscape. This configuration also enables front yards and building entries to take precedence in the streetscape.

**22.** The proposed Superlots are considered to be suitable for an adaptable framework for future development and land use consents. The indicative layouts presented in **Appendix 2L (Sheets P24-128-UD101 to P24-128-UD117)** suggest practical and functional lot arrangements that can accommodate compact typologies while maintaining adequate outdoor space, privacy, and street frontage.

**23.** Superlots positioned along park edges and collector roads are particularly suitable for more intensive housing forms, such as duplexes and terraces. These locations benefit from direct access to open space and amenity, and are well-connected to transport corridors. Where possible, incorporating rear lane (JOAL) access, as illustrated in the worked example on **Sheet P24-128-UD102**, is the preferred outcome, as it reduces vehicle crossings along the street frontage and supports a stronger pedestrian realm. However, the superlots in these locations appear to be sized and configured to support both outcomes, with or without rear lane access, depending on future land use proposals. A range of suitable layouts is demonstrated in the reserve or reserve-edge road superlot examples on **Sheets P24-128-UD101, P24-128-UD102, P24-128-UD103, and P24-128-UD104**.

**24.** While future land use consents will determine the final built form outcomes, the current lot structure and superlot design provide a positive basis to support high-quality, medium-density residential development aligned with Auckland's housing expectations under the AUP and NPS-UD.

**Open Space and Green Network**

**25.** The proposal integrates a well-distributed and connected network of open spaces, including multiple Neighbourhood Parks and reserve corridors, supporting both ecological and recreational functions. These spaces are embedded within the block structure and framed by road frontages, which enhances their visibility, accessibility, and interface quality.

**26.** The proposed Neighbourhood Parks, as shown on **Figure 10: Land Use and Activity / Scheme Plan Overlay**, are generally located approximately within 400–700 metres (as measured from plans) of the surrounding proposed urban form, resulting in a walkable outcome.

**27.** Reserve-edge roads have been consistently applied across the subdivision to maximise the accessibility and outlook of adjacent dwellings, while also promoting safety and surveillance over public spaces. This contributes positively to the character and function of the green network.

**28.** The inclusion of active mode connections, including the proposed pedestrian bridges linking across open space corridors, further supports integration of the green network with the overall movement structure.

**Neighbourhood Centre Zone**

**29.** The proposal includes a small Neighbourhood Centre zone positioned at the northern end of Stage 12, approximately 1 kilometre from the southern end of Stage 13. While the primary destination for most residents is likely to remain the town centre, this smaller centre offers an alternative for local convenience and supports a more distributed, walkable urban structure. Its inclusion provides additional amenity options for residents in the southern stages and contributes to overall neighbourhood completeness.

**Conclusion (Subdivision Stages 10–13)**

**30.** Overall, the proposed subdivision for Stages 10 to 13 demonstrates a coherent and well-integrated urban structure. The block layout responds positively to the site's topography, supports a legible and permeable movement network, and allows for a variety of residential typologies aligned with the Wainui Precinct and broader growth objectives. The integration of open spaces, reserve-edge roads, and pedestrian connections, including bridges, supports high levels of amenity and walkability. While some superlots depart slightly from the anticipated zone character, these could be consistent with the evolving urban context and in my view, do not undermine the overall quality or intent of the development. From an urban design perspective, the subdivision layout provides a positive and adaptable framework for future development.

**Stages 4C (Landuse Consent)**

**Block Structure and Urban Form**

**31.** The Stage 4C land use consent seeks to authorise the detailed development of residential superlots previously consented through subdivision. The proposal includes the construction of terraced housing units across multiple blocks, supported by rear lanes (JOALs), internal open spaces, and associated landscaping. The area subject to the land use application is located immediately south of the main Milldale town centre, within walking distance to the centre.

**32.** The proposal presents a generally well-connected urban form and is integrated into the surrounding road network that defines the proposal site premises, Karapapa Road, Parish Drive, Parkiri Road, Dendro Ring Road and Honohno Avenue.

**33.** While the proposed development achieves an orderly and legible built form, the overall residential density appears relatively low considering the zoning context. The proposal site is zoned Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings (THAB), which enables significantly higher intensification potential than what is currently proposed. There are no minimum density requirements in this zone, so the application remains compliant. However, given the site's proximity to the Milldale town centre and its zoning, a greater variety of housing typologies and more intensive forms could have been explored. This may have enhanced housing supply and diversity outcomes, while remaining consistent with the zone's intended character.

**34.** The proposal adopts a perimeter block structure, with dwellings arranged to face public roads and rear lanes, supported by rear-access vehicle and service areas. This layout promotes clear definition between public and private space, supports active street edges, and enables efficient use of land within the superlots.

**35.** Most blocks incorporate dual-frontage arrangements, where dwellings have primary outlook and pedestrian access from the street and rear access for parking and services. This is a positive arrangement for streetscape outcomes, enabling passive surveillance on both directions.

**Site Layout and Street Interface**

**36.** Where dwellings front the street, setbacks allow for private outdoor space and landscaping, which supports visual amenity and reinforces a residential character consistent with generous front yards. The inclusion of recessed entry areas, variation in building alignment, and landscaped front yards will contribute to a positive streetscape outcome.

**37.** Predominantly, the proposed blocks utilise rear lanes to accommodate vehicle access and servicing, which enables the primary street frontages to be reserved for building entrances, front yards, and landscape treatment. This arrangement supports high-quality street interfaces and contributes to the visual amenity with landscaped front yards that include specimen tree planting.

**38.** There are some exceptions to this pattern, including Superlots 4005 and 4007, where dwellings are accessed directly from the street and also incorporate vehicular access via individual crossings. While this results in a higher number of vehicle crossings along the street edge, these lots have been arranged to maintain a reasonably frontage amenity. As shown in Appendix 3E (pages 17–19 and 25–28), these blocks still provide for landscaped front yards, tree planting, and defined pedestrian entries, which collectively support an acceptable interface outcome.

**39.** While the majority of dwellings are arranged with primary frontage to public streets and rear vehicle access via JOALs, a limited number of units are proposed to front directly onto JOALs without a conventional public street address. This condition is observed in Superlots 4004, 4008, 4018, units 463–465 within Superlot 4009, and Superlot 4021. Although not the dominant pattern across the development, these arrangements raise interface and legibility considerations, particularly where JOALs function as the sole address and entry point for dwellings.

**40.** In these instances, a pedestrian footpath access is provided, and the number of units per JOAL-fronting block is relatively low. Cross-sections of the JOALs profiles confirm that a separated pedestrian footpath is included within the access lanes, typically 1.5m wide as shown on Sheet P23-481-4C-0-2202-RD (Appendix 3C, Part 1b). For Superlot 4021, a combination of 1.5m and 1.8m footpaths is proposed, as illustrated in Figure 18 of the Urban Design Report (Appendix 3J), providing a relatively clear and legible path network for pedestrian movement.

**41.** From an urban design perspective, this outcome can be supported provided the shared access lanes are designed to a high quality and incorporate lighting, surface differentiation, planting, and dedicated pedestrian footpaths.

**42.** The units within Superlot 4021 are not directly accessed from Honohono Avenue, despite backing onto it. Instead, pedestrian access is provided via a side footpath that connects to the rear of the block, with the main unit entrances oriented internally. While no specific justification appears to have been provided within the Urban Design Report for why these dwellings do not front Honohono Avenue. It may be appropriate to consider whether direct access and a street address should be provided to improve integration with the public street network.

**43.** The proposed fencing strategy is generally supported from an urban design perspective. Low fencing is proposed along public street frontages to maintain openness and support passive surveillance, while taller fencing is applied to side and rear boundaries where additional privacy is needed. This approach is appropriate to the proposed housing typologies and supports a balanced interface between public and private space throughout the development.

**44.** The proposed layout supports key Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles by enabling passive surveillance, spatial legibility, and secure access. Dwellings are oriented to overlook streets, lanes, and pedestrian paths, with habitable rooms, such as ground-floor living areas, dining rooms, and kitchens, in some cases, providing ground floor surveillance, and bedrooms provide additional views from the upper levels. Pedestrian paths are visible and integrated. Front entries are legible and generally easily accessible from public or shared spaces. Fencing design reinforces this by maintaining openness.

**45.** Overall, the general layout is consistent with good practice urban design principles for medium-density development. In my view, the proposal aligns with the intent of the THAB zone, such as Objective H6.2(3), which seeks quality on-site residential amenity for residents and the street. The arrangement of units, use of rear lanes, and provision of front yard landscaping collectively support this outcome. The development also aligns with Policy H6.3(3), which encourages attractive and safe streets through passive surveillance, optimised front yard landscaping, and minimisation of garage door dominance. These elements are generally achieved in the current design.

**Architectural Response and Unit Design**

**46.** The proposed buildings demonstrate a reasonable level of architectural quality, with sufficient variation in materials, forms, and detailing to avoid monotony across the development. A mix of vertical weatherboards, timber shiplap cladding, lightweight concrete façade systems, and brick cladding is used across the units, supported by varied roof forms, colour schemes, and façade treatments. These elements generally help to distinguish individual dwellings and create legible typologies.

**47.** Entry canopies and privacy screening are included and contribute positively to visual articulation and residential amenity. However, in some instances, screening elements appear to be applied to less significant areas (e.g., bathroom windows or over cladding panels), rather than being strategically located to support privacy and modulation outcomes.

**48.** While most blocks successfully establish a clear identity for each unit, further refinement could be considered in certain locations, such as the front elevations of Superlots 4001, 4002, and 4004, where greater differentiation between units would improve the sense of individual address and reinforce a finer-grain residential character.

**49.** The proposed dwellings generally present functional internal layouts with positive orientation, access to sunlight and daylight. Living areas are typically positioned to benefit from natural light, and some units include dual aspects or generous openings to outdoor spaces. While the total kitchen–dining–living (KDL) areas are not confirmed, they appear to provide a workable configuration in most cases. Some units, such as the Type 3B typology, may offer more modest internal dimensions, but overall, the layouts support a reasonable level of residential amenity.

**Stage 4C Conclusion**

**50.** Overall, the Stage 4C land use proposal presents a generally positive urban design outcome. The proposal achieves a coherent and legible urban form, supported by a generally well-resolved layout and street interface. While the overall density is relatively modest for the THAB zone, the proposal delivers functional dwellings with appropriate amenity. The use of rear lanes to manage vehicle access, varied architectural expression, and integration of CPTED principles contribute positively to the character and safety of the development.

**Temporary Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)**

**51.** The proposal includes a temporary Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to service early stages of the Milldale development until connection to a permanent regional network is established. The plant is located on the northeastern edge of the development area and set back from residential blocks, reducing potential interface conflicts.

**52.** A dedicated landscape buffer is proposed around the WWTP site to mitigate visual and amenity effects, particularly as experienced from Lysnar Road (indicative landscape plan, Appendix 4O, Sheet 4672100-AL-S9-1000). The proposed planting, existing vegetation, and separation from residential areas by Lysnar Road will help reduce the perceived scale and operational presence of the facility in the interim. The proposed mitigation appears appropriate in principle; however, further assessment from the Council's landscape specialist is recommended to confirm the effectiveness of the planting strategy.

Should you wish to discuss anything further regarding this application or this memo, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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