

531 & 535 MILL ROAD, ŌHOKA DEVELOPMENT

CARTER GROUP LIMITED

Urban Design and Landscape Assessment

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531 & 535 Mill Road, Ōhoka Development

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Executive Summary

DCM Urban Design Limited has been engaged by Carter Group Limited (CGL) to provide an urban design and landscape assessment for the proposed Ōhoka Residential Development located at 531 and 535 Mill Road, Ōhoka, as part of approvals under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

An understanding of the receiving landscape, including the wider landscape, Ōhoka township and the proposal site was gained via information gathered through desktop studies, site visits and consultation with other specialists. This allowed identification of the physical, perceptual and associative features which underlie the area's unique landscape character and values, as well noteworthy features regarding urban design.

Once an understanding of the site and its surroundings was gained, the proposed masterplan (which includes several measures to avoid, remedy and mitigate adverse effects) could be assessed. To evaluate the anticipated urban design outcomes, the proposal was considered against the best practice urban design principles (seven 'C's) from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. The landscape character assessment focussed on evaluating the changes anticipated as a result of the proposal against the present-day landscape character and values identified. Possible visual effects were examined through the selection of key viewpoints in the proposal site's surroundings and identifying the expected impacts on visual amenity.

Through this process, the proposal was assessed to have Low-Moderate (adverse) effects on landscape character and values, and Low to Very Low (adverse) effects on visual amenity. The proposal aligned well with all aspects of the best practice urban design principles from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. Overall, the proposal is seen as a positive response to Ōhoka's existing landscape character and is anticipated to achieve a high standard of future residential development. No adverse impacts that reach the threshold of a "sufficiently significant adverse impact", such that they need to be considered in terms of assessment under s85 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024, were identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

DCM Urban Design Limited has been engaged by Carter Group Limited (CGL) to provide an urban design and landscape assessment of the proposed Ōhoka Residential Development. CGL is applying for approvals for the Ōhoka Residential Development under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA2024).

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – Context: Receiving Environment
- Section 3 – The Proposal
- Section 4 – Assessment against NZ Urban Design Protocol
- Section 5 – Effects on landscape character and values
- Section 6 – Effects on visual amenity
- Section 7 – Conclusions

The report should be read in conjunction with:

- Appendix A: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology
- Appendix B: Ōhoka Residential Development Urban Design and Landscape Master Plan

1.1 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This urban design and landscape assessment considers the likely effects of the proposal in a holistic sense. To achieve this, the methodology adopted for this assessment has applied the following three components:

1. Identification of the receiving environment and a description of the existing landscape character and values.
2. Urban design assessment against best practice urban design principles (seven 'C's from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol).
3. A landscape and visual impact assessment as per the methodology outlined in Appendix A.

1.1.1 LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION

To evaluate the proposal against the best practice urban design principles and to assess the potential landscape and visual effects expected to arise from the proposal, a thorough understanding of the existing landscape is required. To describe and characterise the receiving environment a desktop study and several site visits were undertaken, in order to identify the physical, perceptual and associative dimensions of the landscape, which are embodied in the relationship between people and place.

Physical features of a landscape include both natural and built components. In an urban design context, this includes taking note of any existing buildings, their height, associated heritage values and setbacks from street frontages, as well as surrounding streets, their functions, and where there are any active frontages.

The perceptual aspect of landscape focusses on how the landscape is experienced through the senses, this includes a consideration of all senses, not only sight which is typically the focus in landscape assessment. Associative attributes include intangible things from which meaning is derived, such as history, identity, customs, narratives and activities associated with a particular landscape.

Recognition and analysis of the above features was used to determine the overall character and values of the landscape (at varying scales) and used to understand what the landscape's 'sensitivity to change' may be. For example, a pristine natural landscape may have a higher sensitivity to change than a rural landscape which has undergone significant modification to suit agricultural purposes.

1.1.2 URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

As part of the design process, design principles are often developed to assist with a project achieving urban design best practice. Our office uses the seven 'C's from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol¹ as a basis for designing and assessing development proposals. These are:

1. **CONTEXT** - Seeing that buildings, places and spaces are part of the whole town or city.

Quality urban design sees buildings, places and spaces not as isolated elements but as part of the whole town or city. For example, a building is connected to its street, the street to its neighbourhood, the neighbourhood to its city, and the city to its region. Urban design has a strong spatial dimension and optimises relationships between buildings, places, spaces, activities and networks. It also recognises that towns and cities are part of a constantly evolving relationship between people, land, culture and the wider environment.

2. **CHARACTER** - Reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment.

Quality urban design reflects and enhances the distinctive character and culture of our urban environment, and recognises that character is dynamic and evolving, not static. It ensures new buildings and spaces are unique, are appropriate to their location and compliment their historic identity, adding value to our towns and cities by increasing tourism, investment and community pride.

3. **CHOICE** - Ensuring diversity and choice for people.

Quality urban design fosters diversity and offers people choice in the urban form of our towns and cities, and choice in densities, building types, transport options, and activities. Flexible and adaptable design provides for unforeseen uses, and creates resilient and robust towns and cities.

4. **CONNECTIONS** - Enhancing how different networks link together for people.

Good connections enhance choice, support social cohesion, make places lively and safe, and facilitate contact among people. Quality urban design recognises how all networks - streets, railways, walking and cycling routes, services, infrastructure, and communication networks - connect and support healthy neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Places with good connections between activities and with careful placement of facilities benefit from reduced travel times and lower environmental impacts. Where physical layouts and activity patterns are easily understood, residents and visitors can navigate around the city easily.

¹ <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/urban-design-protocol-colour.pdf>

5. **CREATIVITY** - Encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions.

Quality urban design encourages creative and innovative approaches. Creativity adds richness and diversity and turns a functional place into a memorable place. Creativity facilitates new ways of thinking, and willingness to think through problems afresh, to experiment and rewrite rules, to harness new technology, and to visualise new futures. Creative urban design supports a dynamic urban cultural life and fosters strong urban identities.

6. **CUSTODIANSHIP** - Ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy.

Quality urban design reduces the environmental impacts of our towns and cities through environmentally sustainable and responsive design solutions. Custodianship recognises the lifetime costs of buildings and infrastructure and aims to hand on places to the next generation in as good or better condition. Stewardship of our towns includes the concept of kaitiakitanga. It creates enjoyable, safe public spaces, a quality environment that is cared for, and a sense of ownership and responsibility in all residents and visitors.

7. **COLLABORATION** - Communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

Towns and cities are designed incrementally as we make decisions on individual projects. Quality urban design requires good communication and co-ordinated actions from all decision-makers: central government, local government, professionals, transport operators, developers and users. To improve our urban design capability we need integrated training, adequately funded research and shared examples of best practice.

1.1.3 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A detailed methodology for the landscape and visual impact assessment component of this report is attached in Appendix A. Note, this report includes a landscape description and characterisation section as described above, but does not include any commentary on statutory provisions (as this will be covered in the planning assessment).

2. CONTEXT – RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 WIDER CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Ōhoka is approximately 15 – 20 minutes from Christchurch, on the northern side of the Waimakariri River and in relatively close proximity to Kaiapoi and Rangiora. The village is well-positioned to access services like larger supermarkets, specialist shops, medical services, and secondary education, in Kaiapoi 7.5km away, and Rangiora approximately 9 km away. Recreational destinations such as the various beaches of Pegasus Bay, Bottle Lake Forest, Spencer Park, the Kaiapoi River and Waimakariri River are all destinations within the wider district which are also within a reasonable distance from Ōhoka. The plan shown on **Page 6 in Appendix B** highlights Ōhoka's proximity to existing settlements as well as its relative level of connectivity.

Originally, the settlement of Ōhoka was established at the location of the Mill/Whites Road intersection and serviced by a rail line (Eyreton Railway Line) which extended out to Oxford. Remnants of the early town

structure are still visible with further clusters at the old school site on Jacksons Road/Mill Road and on the Bradleys/Mill Road intersection. The clusters grew together over time forming a sizable rural settlement that provided services to the local industry, surrounding farming activities and was well established with churches, a community hall, a large public domain and a school with a roll of 200 students. This fast growth in the 1800s was followed by a decline which reduced the settlement to the historic remnants still visible.

Ōhoka started to slowly grow again in the mid-1900's from this historic nucleus with mainly residential additions. These were initially of a smaller scale, establishing along the length of Mill Road. The form of the settlement became elongated from Bradleys Road through to the local school on Jacksons Road and remained bounded by the Ōhoka North Stream to the north of Mill Road and Ōhoka Stream south of Mill Road for a long time. This original structure of the village, framed by two waterways, is still a key feature of the character of the village centre we see today.

Ōhoka remained mostly unchanged until two subdivisions on Keetly Place and Wilsons Drive were added in the 1990's, extending Ōhoka to the north and south. Each subdivision was designed around a cul-de-sac, as semi-isolated clusters with little connection to the heart of Ōhoka. Keetly Place extends development north of Mill Road and beyond by stepping over the Ōhoka North Stream. Throughout the early 2000s through to 2015 lifestyle blocks of varying sizes have started to surround the village core to the north, south and east. The most recent expansion of Ōhoka has been through Plan Changes 17 and 21 to the Operative Waimakariri District Plan (2005) (Operative WDP (2005)), adding potential larger areas of low-density development to the north of Ōhoka between Bradleys Road and Threlkelds Road, with some of this development already progressed.

The southern part of Ōhoka, east of Whites Road, beyond the Domain, south of Ōhoka Stream, is dominated by larger rural lifestyle blocks stretching all the way to Tram Road and Mandeville. This 4ha rural lifestyle development pattern dominates the rural landscape around Ōhoka, particularly to the east and south. The Waimakariri District – Rural Character Assessment prepared by Boffa Miskell (2018) provides the following description for the 'Lower Plains' Character Area which Ōhoka is situated in:

'This rural landscape is characterised by its changing character in relation to recent small lot development. Once predominantly rural, characterised by productive landuses, low density settlement and a sense of spaciousness, this area is now defined by its increasing finer grained settlement patterns and human induced characteristics that overlay the rural environment.'

It also states:

'While the rural roads and development contain limited 'urban' infrastructure, such as kerb and channel and street lighting, the regular spacing of letterboxes at driveways and linear hedgerow patterns, particularly where they follow the roadside, are indicative of the changing pattern of smaller scale subdivision into rural residential land use.'

2.2 ŌHOKA CONTEXT

Ōhoka is an established settlement in the Waimakariri District with a mix of residential zones as well as community facilities which provide the 'bones' to the settlement. Current development straddles both sides of Mill Road with the centre of the village considered to be the intersection of Mill Road and Whites Road, although the current zoned areas tend to be weighted more to the north (**as shown on Page 7 of**

Appendix B). The 'village centre' holds a mix of commercial and residential built forms, with vegetation often screening/softening-built development, limiting perceptions of its presence. The Ōhoka Domain is also located at this location in the village. The domain hosts a very popular and well-attended farmers market each Friday, often featuring over 50 stalls. This market regularly attracts many people visiting from across the broader Canterbury region.

The roads are typically slow speed through the village, more through side friction (parked cars), a lack of road markings and a narrow carriageway, rather than through posted speed limits. Roads are largely free of kerb and channel edging, with gravel shoulders typical and often used for informal carparking. **Photo 1** below shows how the existing service station has 'spread' across Whites Road.



Photo 1 - The existing service station on the corner of Whites and Mill Roads.

Figure A on Page 7 of Appendix B highlights the existing cadastral pattern of the land surrounding Ōhoka and Mandeville with the latter having been developed into large rural-residential properties. The road network in Mandeville is very fragmented with long cul-de-sacs. It is also segregated from Ōhoka's village centre by a high-speed road which limits the ability to combine these settlements into a rural town which is walkable and connected.

In terms of built form, the scale, character, form, and materiality of structures vary throughout Ōhoka. There are a number of existing dwellings along Mill Road and Whites Road, with character varying depending on the location. For example, Mill Road has an informal urban character proximate to the intersection with Whites Road, while Whites Road to the south of the Ōhoka Domain has a rural-lifestyle character. Dwellings have a varied layout, and irregular bulk and location characteristics. Dwellings are often supported by additional infrastructure (implement sheds, standalone garages) and are typically on larger lots and separated from neighbours by fields/extensive lawn areas and green belts. Generally, dwellings appear to be tidy with well-maintained landscaping.

Overall, Ōhoka is a quaint settlement with a pleasant and quiet atmosphere. The presence of heritage buildings, mix of local small businesses, the well-known farmers market, slower pace of living and established green corridors, all amongst a farming background, contribute to the village's sense of place.

2.3 THE SITE

The proposal site (Site) is bound by Mill Road to the north, Whites Road to the east and Bradleys Road to the west. The northeast boundary of the Site borders the edge of Ōhoka's village centre, where there is an increase in the number of dwellings, hard surface coverage, and infrastructure present in the landscape. The Site is located approximately 4.8km to the west of Kaiapoi West (Silverstream) where development has a typical suburban character with a mix of housing typologies (standalone, duplexes and terrace) supported by a commercial area; and 2km northeast of Mandeville where development has a typical rural residential character and density, also supported by a commercial area.

There are three main waterways which run through the Site, being Ōhoka Stream, the Ōhoka South Branch and an existing spring/waterway/pond which runs through the centre of the Site between the two stream branches. These waterways run in a west-east direction to eventually feed into the Kaiapoi River to the east. In addition, there are also several lesser waterways/drains that have been identified, which the majority run and discharge to the roadside drain along Whites Road. Within the Site the waterways are predominantly bordered by either exotic species in the form of shelter belts or individual trees, notably poplars and willows. Large portions of the waterways are open with no shade. The waterways have soil banks with a small degree of modification noted but in general have soft, as opposed to hard, edges visible with no timber or concrete channelling. Some localised signs of erosion are visible, highlighting natural processes, but not to a degree where they influenced the character of the waterways (refer to **Photo 2** below).

The stream corridor to the northeast of the Site (outside of the Site boundary), downstream of Whites Road in Ōhoka Bush, has been planted extensively with native species, although large numbers of weed species are also present (refer to **Photo 3** below).



Photo 2 – This image shows one of the waterways running through proposal site, depicting its typical form. No native species of note were identified to be growing in association with the waterways on site.



Photo 3 – This image shows the continuation of the stream corridor to the northeast of the site. Native riparian species have been planted in Ōhoka Bush, however several weed species are still present.

The Site has a relatively flat topography and has typical rural characteristics found within the Canterbury Plains, including shelterbelts, auxiliary structures, and rural residential dwellings. Overall, the topographical attributes of the receiving environment are relatively low with no other defining features to note.

In terms of built form, the proposal site holds three existing dwellings. One of the dwellings is located at 531 Mill Road, a large two-storey family home, separated from the road front by an established hedge and surrounded by various mature trees and plantings. The other two dwellings are located on the 535 Mill Road property. One of the dwellings which is of considerable size is positioned centrally, while the other more modest and older dwelling is positioned towards the southwestern corner. As part of the development the two larger houses (dwelling at 531 Mill Road and central dwelling on 535 Mill Road) will be retained and subdivided into smaller lots, and the dwelling located closer to the southwestern corner of 535 Mill Road will be demolished. Various farm sheds/ ancillary buildings are also found on Site, both on 531 and 535 Mill Road. These have a typical rural appearance, with walls and roofs comprised of metal sheeting. These are all planned to be demolished as part of the development.

Vegetation types in the receiving environment are predominantly exotic species, with small amounts of native species located near some waterways and paddock boundaries. Taller vegetation is used predominantly as shelter, running along various boundaries. Shelterbelt species include *Pinus radiata*, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, and Eucalyptus, varying in height between 7 – 15m. The shelter belts are orientated to block the prevailing winds and delineate property boundaries along small parts of the surrounding roads. Overall, the vegetation cover in the area has a low sensitivity to change, given the high level of fast growing introduced exotic species.

Site vegetation was confirmed by a survey undertaken by Tree Tech in June 2023, which identified no native species of note within the Site. A plan of the existing trees combined with the proposed scheme plan is shown in on **Page 55 in Appendix B**. The detailed tree survey by Tree Tech identifies the species and health of the trees present on the property. A total of 2,033 trees were surveyed on the site, with the

following breakdown of species (tree species with less than 10 specimens not shown except native species, which are listed in italics):

- 124 Birch species (Silver, Paper);
- 317 Eucalyptus species (Tasmanian Blue gum, gum);
- 472 Cypressus or Pine species;
- 218 Poplar species (Black, Lombardy, sp);
- 70 Oaks (Pin oak, English);
- 228 Willow;
- 1 *Cordyline australis*;
- 1 *Pittosporum tenuifolium*; and
- 1 *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides* (*Juvenile*).

In terms of sensory qualities, the flat open geometric fields of the Site are back dropped by the Southern Alps to the west. Views of the Southern Alps are possible intermittently across the Site from Whites Road but screened from some locations by existing established plantings and shelterbelts. The shelterbelts, though disrupting the continual views, form part of the rural aesthetic and identity. The atmosphere is generally still amongst a backdrop of a productive working landscape and distant traffic movements. The natural character of the Site is considered to be modified, with a rural character as opposed to a natural character.

Overall, the Site has a rural character on the southern edge of the existing Ōhoka settlement. There are pockets of land surrounding the Site which exhibit a high level of compartmentalisation (eastern side of Whites Road and to the south of the site) while other areas have an open character, including the Site itself. While the character of the Site is currently open, this would likely change if it were developed as anticipated under the Operative WDP (2005) and Partially Operative Waimakariri District Plan (POWDP), i.e. if the site were subdivided into four-hectare allotments, this is discussed further in Section 5 below.

2.4 LANDSCAPE VALUES

At a wider scale, the settlement of Ōhoka and adjoining rural/rural residential areas derive their physical, perceptual and associative landscape values from:

- Ōhoka as a smaller local hub clustered with historic buildings and tidy standalone dwellings on large lots, interspersed with greenery.
- Natural waterways which meander through and pond in the landscape.
- A predominance of open grassed paddocks surrounding the town, with paddock and property boundaries often delineated by tall exotic shelterbelts.
- The flat topography of the Canterbury Plains which enables expansive views, notably to the Southern Alps.
- A mixture of rural-residential lifestyle living, collection of small-businesses and productive farming activities at various scales.
- It's rural North Canterbury location, in close proximity to the facilities and businesses of Rangiora and Kaiapoi, and within commuting distance to the larger metropolitan area of Christchurch.

At a local level the Site currently contributes to the following landscape values:

Physical

The Site is positioned on the edge of Ōhoka village, and as such plays an important role at this interface, forming a prominent part of the village's rural surroundings. The flat topography and predominantly open paddocks, contributes to the sense of openness associated with rural landscapes in North Canterbury, interrupted only by shelterbelts and plantings. Built form and infrastructure is minimal, and where it does exist, is mostly farming related. Physically, the Site is typical of a modified rural landscape in the Canterbury Plains. Although waterways exist within the Site, these take on an exposed form, with no associated riparian plantings or enhancements.

Perceptual

The Site's perceptual values relate mainly to visual amenity, which is discussed in depth under the assessment of effects on visual amenity below. As most of the Site is vacant, consisting largely of grassed paddocks, a quieter atmosphere is generated through the distancing of built form and activities. The agricultural land use and presence of grazing stock, contribute to the area's background noises of farming operations.

Associative

The Site's associative values are derived from the agricultural use of the Site, which is consistent with the historic and the widespread use of land within the Canterbury Plains as rural pastureland. The associative values of the Site also relate strongly to the Site's land use, reinforcing a closer connection with the landscape and natural processes. Note, it is recognized that cultural layers exist which form an important part of how landscape is viewed and experienced, commentary on this aspect is not within the scope of this report.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 THE MASTER PLAN

The masterplan proposes approximately 875 residential lots (ranging in size from 425-4013m²) with a small commercial area along Whites Road adjacent to the existing village centre and domain (1.49ha of commercially zoned land). The masterplan also includes a proposed retirement village (7.5ha area, with approximately 250 units), to provide housing options for older generations, and a proposed Polo Ground with associated facilities, as a local destination and point of interest.

The proposed commercial area has been deliberately located as close as possible to the existing village centre, working to create a consolidated urban form. The provision for a local village square and greenspace within the commercial centre will allow for generous landscaping to provide amenity, while also breaking up hard surfaces and softening built form. Two road crossings are proposed for Whites Road from the commercial area towards Ōhoka Domain. This will improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists by integrating safe connections to this prominent existing green space.

Walkability and connectivity are key principles of the masterplan with a hierarchy of street types and connections provided throughout the area. The masterplan proposes a mix of primary and secondary roads

running north-south, and east-west from Bradleys Road through to Whites Road. The design of the local streets will encourage slow vehicle movements through their layout and design, which includes street trees and landscape planting, mountable kerbs, surface changes at crossing points and various pedestrian/cycle zones depending on the road typology.

The masterplan encourages active transport using an extensive shared pedestrian and cycle network throughout the Site. The primary routes through the Site (22m wide street corridors with/without a swale) include a 2.5m wide shared path, separate from the main carriageway. From the shared paths, further connections to the network of paths running through the site's green spaces are also available. **Figure A on Page 7 of Appendix B** show 500m and 1500m radii to highlight high level of connectivity the development will have in respect of the village centre. The proposed path network will allow residents to walk, scooter and cycle into the village in a relatively short time, as well as then being able to connect through to Ōhoka school and other amenities.

Additionally, Whites and Bradleys Roads are proposed to be upgraded to include 2.5m wide gravel shared paths, linking through to Mill Road and existing village amenities (refer to **Page 48-50 in Appendix B**). The shared paths proposed along Whites and Bradleys Roads will provide valuable pedestrian and cycling connections for existing and future residents in the area. To be noted, these paths also form part of Waimakariri District Council's (WDC) planned future cycling network.

Open green space is provided within 500m walkable catchments of all proposed lots, combined with the waterway (blue) network. The green spaces will provide public access to Ōhoka Stream and other waterways which is not currently possible. When combined with the existing walkways east of Whites Road within Ōhoka Bush, a new more comprehensive recreational network will be established.

Informed by a detailed tree survey of the site undertaken by Tree Tech (as discussed above), the plan on **Page 55 in Appendix B** indicates the trees that may possibly be retained. The retention of existing trees as part of the proposal will preserve an established feel. This will require working closely with ecologists, arborists and engineers to assess tree suitability, or whether tree removal/replacement will provide an improved long-term outcome.

As well as the retention of existing trees, a considerable number of new trees are proposed throughout the Site. An approximately 40m wide (20m each side of the stream) open space area is proposed along the banks of Ōhoka Stream between Whites Road and Bradleys Road. This area will include a minimum riparian enhancement setback of 10m (measured from the top of the bank on each side of the stream) to improve ecological values, provide shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists, support stormwater management, enhance amenity and provide recreational spaces. An approximately 30m wide (15m each side of the waterways) corridor is proposed along the two southern waterways, providing for similar activities and functions as proposed for Ōhoka Stream, including the minimum 10m riparian enhancement setback. (See further information in the Instream Aquatic Ecology Assessment)

Overall, the protection and enhancement of the waterways listed above results in the following public open spaces (areas include corresponding waterways):

- Ōhoka Stream: approximately 3.57ha;
- Pond and waterway running through the centre: approximately 4.35ha; and
- Ōhoka South Branch: approximately 5.32ha.

3.2 PROPOSED DESIGN MEASURES AND BENEFITS

The following design (mitigation) measures are proposed as part of the development to avoid, remedy or mitigate potential adverse effects on urban design, landscape character, landscape values or visual amenity, and to ensure that the proposed development contributes to a well-functioning local environment.

1. (MM1) Provision for a diversity of lot sizes to provide choice, with higher density development located close to existing residential areas, areas of high amenity and the village centre.
2. (MM2) The creation of streets which have a high level of amenity, provide for different modal allocation, and allow for an efficient use of land by having a hierarchy with different road reserve widths depending on their classification. Indicative cross sections are shown in **Section D (Pages 39-46) in Appendix B** to show how the street network can be developed to retain a safe and low-key village character.
3. (MM3) Creation of a well-connected walking and cycling network which combines with the green / blue network and existing facilities, featuring connections to key destinations such as Ōhoka Domain and Ōhoka Bush. Thereby prioritising walking and cycling with a mix of on-road, separate, and off-road facilities to promote active transport modes.
4. (MM4) Precluding vehicle access onto Whites Road and Bradleys Road from individual properties to allow for high-quality landscape treatments along these corridors, thereby minimising potential adverse visual/landscape effects on these public spaces and neighbouring properties along these roads.
5. (MM5) Provision of both quantity and quality green spaces and outdoor facilities, appropriate for the future population of the development. This includes green links which extend through the site and connect with adjoining recreation areas and networks, as well as protection of the existing waterways and their enhancement with riparian plantings. In total, the combined proposed green space area, associated with waterways, stormwater management areas (SMA) and reserves, makes up approximately 24.64ha.
6. (MM6) Internally, restrictions in the use of front fencing along the road boundaries of residential lots is proposed, along with setting back fencing from frontages in order to maintain an open feeling environment. Similarly, reserves will be separated from lots by open-style fencing, either post and rail or open-style pool fencing, to maintain permeability and passive surveillance across the site.
7. (MM7) **Landscape Treatment A** is proposed to retain a rural character along Whites and Bradleys Roads as shown in the boundary treatment details (**Pages 48-50 in Appendix B**). The landscape treatment proposed is a 10m wide planted strip, with post and rail fence or post and wire fencing along the boundary. The proposed landscape strip is further augmented with a 15m building setback from the current road boundary, to screen and offset domestic activity. A 2.5m wide shared gravel path is proposed, running the full length of both roads. Planting is to consist of the species listed in Appendix B, planted at 1m centres to achieve a minimum height of 5m once established.
8. (MM8) **Landscape Treatment B** focuses on containing and screening the proposed residential development from the south, to minimize landscape and visual effects on neighbouring properties (**refer to Page 48 and 50 in Appendix B**). This involves the retention of the existing shelter belts (Tree Groups 67, 69 and 78 identified in the Tree Tech Tree Report, refer to **Page 55 in Appendix B**) which run along the southern boundary of the Site, and planting an adjoining 6m wide landscape strip. Planting in the landscape strip is to achieve a minimum height of 5m once

established, with trees positioned at a maximum spacing of 2m. The landscape strip is to consist of the species listed in Appendix B, in a single species or mixed planting format

9. (MM9) **Landscape Treatment C** is generally located in the northern half of the Site to create a physical and visual softening between the Site and existing residential properties (290 Bradleys Road; 344 Bradleys Road; 507 Mill Road; 509 Mill Road; 547 Mill Road; and 401 Whites Road). The planting proposed consists of a single row of any of the species listed in Appendix B (**pages 50 and 62**) along the shared internal boundaries to achieve a minimum established height of 4m once established and a width of 2m, with planting at a maximum spacing of 1.5m.
10. (MM10) **Landscape Treatment D** is proposed along Whites Road as shown in the boundary treatment details (**Pages 48 and 50 in Appendix B**), where the Whites Road boundary adjoins a proposed SMA. Landscape Treatment D will be consistent with Landscape Treatment A, featuring a 2.5m wide gravel path, post and rail/ post and wire fencing, and a landscape strip. The proposed landscape strip will be 3m wide however (rather than 10m wide), and as it will adjoin to SMAs, no built form setback is required. Planting is to consist of the species listed in Appendix B, planted at 1m centres to achieve a minimum height of 5m once established.
11. (MM11) Creating a threshold/gateway on the Ōhoka Stream/bush alignment and the provision of two crossing (pedestrian/cycling) facilities along the proposed Whites Road commercial centre frontage. This will enable connections between the Site's pedestrian and green networks and key destinations/roads in the existing landscape. Similarly, several through routes and thresholds are proposed along Mill Road and Bradleys Roads to promote a well-integrated and connected site for future residents.

For MM7, MM8, MM9, and MM10 a three-year (36-month) maintenance period is proposed to ensure the successful establishment of all landscape areas. The exact breakdown and composition of the planting of Landscape Treatments A, B, and C will be submitted to Council for comments during the engineering approval stage of the subdivision process. The same applies for reserves and riparian margins developed as part of the green/blue network within the Site.

In association with the maintenance period, a detailed landscape management plan is required, preferably prepared by a Registered Landscape Architect. It is common for landscape management plans to be submitted at engineering approval stage. A management plan would provide direction on the establishment of planting, weed and pest control, replacement planting, irrigation and the like.

The maintenance of the landscape treatment/reserve areas proposed is an important part of the development, and will ensure a high-quality landscape outcome is achieved, and in doing so, will provide widespread amenity and integrate the Site with its setting.

4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST NZ URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOL

This section assesses the proposal against the seven 'C's' of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol as set out previously.

4.1 CONTEXT

In a wider development and urban growth context, the primary growth areas identified in the 2028 District Development Strategy (Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend and Pegasus) are all affected by development constraints. Three out of the four centres (Kaiapoi, Pegasus and Woodend) are affected by multiple natural

hazards including coastal inundation, liquefaction and flooding. With regards to providing growth areas that are resilient, which is a key requirement of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (see Policy 1(f)), exposure to natural hazards should generally be avoided. Any risk to the neighbourhood, the wider community, or the environment through natural hazards or hazardous installations is also required to be assessed under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. In terms of intensification and urban growth, Ōhoka benefits from sitting outside of these major growth limiting constraints in a more protected and elevated position, in close proximity to two of the main activity centres (Kaiapoi and Rangiora). Ōhoka is therefore considered to be a location which is well-suited and appropriate for residential growth.

The Site is located on the southern edge of the existing Ōhoka settlement, with the prospective development adjacent to the existing (but minimal) commercial activities concentrated around the T-intersection of Mill and Whites Road, and the domain. The proposed commercial area builds on and integrates with the existing village centre and is of a scale which will support day-to-day needs of existing and future residents. Buildings with active frontages are to be built to the street edge with carparking tucked behind to ensure streets have a positive built edge and sense of containment. It is the developer's intention that the scale and character of buildings will reflect the existing character of Ōhoka, with use of materials and forms sympathetic to the existing context and the rural vernacular.

The natural hydrological processes of the Site have been integrated into the layout resulting in significant 'green-blue' corridors running west to east. The corridors, once established, will provide a high level of amenity, for existing and future residents as well as enhancing the ecological value of the waterways.

Overall, the comprehensive and location-specific masterplan, will ensure the development is appropriate for its context.

4.2 CHARACTER

The design intent for the proposed development is to create a settlement with a high-level of amenity and character which reflects the existing identity of the village, while allowing for additional residents and businesses.

With the waterway corridors, large stormwater management areas and extensive areas of landscape planting, particularly the planting of large specimen trees in streets, the development will have a very 'green and leafy' character. The waterway corridors and stormwater management areas are proposed to be planted with a mix of native plants; the palette having been developed in consultation with the applicant's ecological advisors. Streetscapes, reserves, and Site boundaries are proposed to be planted with a mix of native and exotic species to provide seasonal variety, and to support the integration of the development into its surroundings (which features a mix of native and exotic planting areas). Where possible existing trees are to be retained to provide an established feel to the development from the outset, as noted above. The planting proposed will play an important role in enhancing the Site's natural features, while also expanding on the green networks interspersed amongst Ōhoka's existing built form.

I consider that the proposed commercial space combined with the domain, community hall, and existing commercial activities works well to concentrate the village centre around the Mill Road-Whites Road intersection. This design harmonizing with the existing layout of Ōhoka, rather than detracting or competing with it. As outlined in further detail below, the street environments are designed with mountable kerbs to create a low-key, un-engineered appearance, with large grass berms/swales and large trees. These design features replicate the existing streets in Ōhoka, such as Keetly Place, reinforcing Ōhoka's unique identity.

External boundary treatment controls are proposed to ensure fencing avoids a typical suburban appearance at the proposal's interface with Whites and Bradleys Roads, while open street frontages and permeable fencing around green spaces will promote a sense of spaciousness within the site.

The proposed Polo Ground is a prominent part of the development, which is anticipated to create a noteworthy attraction, likely to draw wider visitors to the area in future (similar to Ōhoka's Farmer's market), thereby adding value and interest to the development. The Polo Ground is an appropriate inclusion in the proposal as a nod to the site's location amongst North Canterbury farmland and the associated equine culture. Thus, the Polo Ground is expected to provide a fitting destination as part of the overall development, which will reinforce the area's unique culture and a sense of place. Furthermore, it provides an additional green space of approximately 8ha.

Overall, the development is anticipated to deliver a high-level of amenity, replicating, reinforcing and enhancing the features which create Ōhoka's distinct character.

4.3 CHOICE

The proposal provides for a mix of commercial, recreational and residential activities. A variety of lot sizes provide for diversity and flexibility, and subsequently support a range of housing options within a landscaped setting, amongst natural waterways and in the unique location of Ōhoka. This creates a choice for an attractive semi-rural lifestyle which will be unlike any other place in the district.

The proposal caters for a wide demographic, being particularly attractive to those wanting to live in a rural community, but do not have the means or the desire to own a lifestyle block. With the inclusion of a retirement village the proposed development is also equipped for older generations, and in future will provide people with the opportunity to age in their own community.

The commercial area proposed will function to support the day-to-day needs of residents, with the option of commuting to the nearby centres of Rangiora and Kaiapoi, or the larger centre of Christchurch for additional facilities, services and resources as needed/desired.

As discussed above, the proposed development is well designed to promote a choice in transport modes, including active transport through walking and cycling.

4.4 CONNECTIONS

The proposal has a well-connected street layout, supported by a network of on and off-road paths to support active transport modes and lessen walking/cycling travel times. Proposed paths which link through the waterway corridors via stream crossing points are shown on the landscape masterplan to allow walkers/cyclists to cross the site's natural features. Additional mid-block pedestrian/cycle links have also been added on longer blocks to increase site permeability and walkability.

The masterplan intentionally limits individual properties directly accessing both Whites and Bradleys Roads for amenity reasons, but also to allow the proposed 2.5m shared paths running along both roads to be largely free of vehicle crossings, thereby improving their functionality and safety for users. The paths will connect into both existing networks and the expanded village centre.

The roads are designed to be slow speed environments, with good sightlines and a high-level of legibility. Five different road types are proposed with cross-sections shown on **Pages 40-46 of Appendix B**. Overall,

the proposed development is well connected and promotes a high-level of connectivity to, from and within the site, as well as in the context of the wider Canterbury region.

4.5 CREATIVITY

The proposal will foster a high level of creativity, providing future opportunities for public art and installations. The spaces developed will continue to change over time as more 'layers' are added when people take up residence and businesses establish. The scale and nature of the development, particularly the commercial precinct, is such that it will promote creative and unique responses. The masterplan provides a flexible 'framework' for this to occur over time.

4.6 CUSTODIANSHIP

The proposal intentionally includes large areas of the Site, approximately 24.6ha, as 'public domain' via open green space. The waterway corridors which run through the site will become publicly accessible spaces, building on the existing ecological restoration work which has been undertaken on the eastern side of Whites Road, adjacent to the domain at Ōhoka Bush. This will protect (and improve) ecological systems and values while promoting stewardship and creating a quality environment for current and future generations to enjoy.

At a subdivision level, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles have been well incorporated into the design, creating a safer environment which discourages antisocial behaviour. A high-level of outlook is provided over footpaths, walkways and shared paths from carriageways and adjoining lots, supporting passive surveillance. The site also follows a well-connected and logical layout, supporting wayfinding and legibility for pedestrian and vehicular traffic, with clear routes provided for all types of traffic. Boundaries between public and private spaces will be clearly defined, this promoting a sense of ownership. The mix of activities provided in the development (residential, commercial, recreational, ecological) as well as special events (the Ōhoka farmers market, Polo events) will enable a high level of community engagement and connection. The anticipated development of a high-quality environment will increase 'responsiveness' and promote a sense of community pride, with a well maintained and managed environment expected, by both residents and WDC.

Overall, the development supports the principle of custodianship by proposing an environmentally responsive and considered design of the Site, particularly around ecological systems. Additionally, the consideration of CPTED principles, sets out to create an environment which is safe, cared for, and respected by both residents and visitors to Ōhoka.

4.7 COLLABORATION

The masterplan has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of disciplines and stakeholders including planners, ecologists, hydrologists, arborists, traffic specialists, engineers, surveyors, landscape architects and urban designers, as well as others.

4.8 URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOLS CONCLUSION

The proposed development appropriately incorporates each of the seven 'C's' of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. The proposed development is well-considered incorporating best practice urban design principles to ensure a highly functional, connected, aesthetically pleasing and well-integrated development.

5. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VALUES

The character and values of the receiving environment are discussed in depth in Section 2 above but generally centres around Ōhoka as a small historic settlement, with a mix of residential/ rural lifestyle dwellings and various small businesses, interspersed with greenery and waterways, all amongst the rural pasturelands and farming activities of the Canterbury Plains. The Site contributes to the landscape features of Ōhoka noted above, as a large extent of farmland on the southern fringe of the town. The physical form of the site generates openness, with the agricultural use of the site bringing about views, sounds and smells reflective of this use, reinforcing Ōhoka's quieter rural locale.

The proposed development will introduce a substantial difference in the Site's land use and landcover, and to the urban footprint of Ōhoka. The introduction of a high number of residential lots (relative to what is existing), road reserves, an expanded commercial area, retirement village, Polo Ground and more comprehensive blue/green network will increase the population and development intensity of Ōhoka.

Although the level of modification of the Site may be substantial, the changes proposed are not necessarily considered adverse and should be accounted for in the context of what is anticipated under the Operative WDP (2005) and POWDP, beneficial aspects of the proposal, the design of the proposal in regard to the existing landscape character and values, and the landscape/visual mitigation measures proposed. Possible temporary effects should also be considered.

The Site is zoned Rural in the Operative WDP (2005) and Rural Lifestyle Zone (RLZ) PODP, noting CGL's appeal on the PODP to rezone the site for urban use. Both plans have a minimum allotment size of subdivision of 4ha. It is therefore possible (and likely) that in the future, if not developed as per the proposal, the Site will be subdivided into multiple ~4ha rural 'lifestyle' lots. Accordingly, there would be a change in the character of the Site from the existing predominance of open pasture to a more compartmentalised landscape, with the anticipated form and appearance of the lots expected to be similar to the existing 'lifestyle blocks' on the eastern side of Whites Road.

Although subdivision into ~4ha lots would change the character of the Site, the introduction of additional 'lifestyle' lots is arguably more aligned with Ōhoka's existing development patterns than the proposed development, as this lot typology currently features prominently in Ōhoka's surrounds. However, development of 'more of the same', although creating 'consistency', would withhold a number of valuable benefits that the proposed development will introduce, including:

- The proposal provides a greater choice in lot sizes and potential housing typologies, providing greater opportunity for a range of individuals, families and age groups to live in Ōhoka. Whereas 4ha 'lifestyle' lots tend to be costly and have higher maintenance requirements and thereby excludes a reasonable proportion of society from owning/occupying them.
- The proposal will provide a local commercial hub, building on the existing Ōhoka village centre, to provide close by facilities and amenities, as supported by a sufficiently sized population (via the increased development density). With further lifestyle development, Ōhoka's population would be smaller (compared to the population that the proposal would support) and less likely to be able to support an expanded commercial centre, thus creating greater reliance on other centres and further travel.

- The proposal plans for a reasonable proportion of the site to be developed as public green and open spaces, with ecological enhancements and access to the site's waterways. It is highly unlikely that a lifestyle subdivision would comprise these features.
- The proposal includes a retirement village providing valuable housing/living options for the aging population. Lifestyle development is less compatible with the housing needs of many older people.
- The proposed higher density, smaller lots and varied layout supports a well-connected town, and promotes active transport. If developed under the rural provisions, development is likely to reflect existing patterns, with wider connections and active transport less of a priority due to greater distances to green spaces, commercial areas and neighbours and lesser developed infrastructure (making active transport less attractive).

Possible effects on landscape character and values have been evaluated against the landscape attributes identified in the landscape description and characterisation section above (Section 2). Effects on the physical, perceptual and associative values have been assessed as follows:

The proposed development is expected to have reasonable impact on how Ōhoka is perceived by locals and visitors. Although, despite an expansion in the area occupied by the town and increase in density, in a wider context, Ōhoka will still be considered a small rural town within the large-scale landscape.

Many of Ōhoka's positive landscape features have been carried through into the design, such as the integration and enhancement of waterways as key landscape features. The high level of greenery associated with Ōhoka will also be retained as part of the proposed development, with a large volume of trees and plantings to be implemented, across streetscapes, reserves, stormwater management areas, the waterways mentioned, and through site boundary treatments. Additionally, as noted, established vegetation on site will be retained where possible.

Some of Ōhoka's existing character features are further duplicated within the development through the proposed design, which reinforce a less engineered and more open rural town context. The character of existing housing is typically single storey detached dwellings, which the proposal intends to continue, albeit at a higher density and with the possibility of some two storey houses, and a retirement village.

Although the Site itself will no longer form Ōhoka's rural boundary, the town will still be surrounded by typical Canterbury Plains farmland to the north and east, with this boundary pushed out to the south. The development does not propose any noteworthy changes in topography, and glimpses to the southern Alps will still be visible along east-west road corridors, although overall the Site and views towards the Site from its surroundings will be more enclosed.

At a site level, effects have been assessed as below:

Physical

The proposed development modifies the landscape of the Site from one that is open and agricultural in character to one that is denser and more developed in nature, where infrastructure and amenities are more concentrated. Built form will prevail in large sections of the site, contrasting with the predominance of grassed paddocks currently present. With the development, planting will be integrated throughout the Site, rather than being limited to mostly sheltering purposes. On Site, at

present waterways reflect the existing agricultural practices with a lack of native riparian vegetation, an aspect which will be greatly improved with the proposed development.

Perceptual

Whilst the proposal does not physically modify the surrounding rural farmland and the surrounding lifestyle blocks, it changes the land use of the Site and brings with it changes to the visual amenity and rural outlook currently experienced by adjoining properties. This will be discussed in greater detail in the assessment of visual effects below. With a change to a more urban character and increased population, a greater level of activity is expected across the Site, generating scenes and sounds of everyday country-town living as opposed to that of farming and grazing stock.

Associative

The Site's associative values are expected to change to align with the Site's newly proposed land uses. This includes becoming a place of community for a number of new residents and business owners. The Polo Ground holds the possibility of becoming a local landmark, while the newly accessible and enhanced waterways are anticipated to generate ecological and recreational value. Although the Site will no longer operate as a farm, because of the proposal's emphasis on green and blue networks, and its rural neighbours, the development is still expected to hold an affinity to the land and natural processes.

As outlined above in Section 3.2 a number of design and mitigation measures have been integrated as part of the masterplan, in order to maximise positive effects and minimize adverse effects. Regarding landscape character and values (and visual amenity as discussed in Section 6 below), key mitigation measures include the proposed boundary treatments where the Site adjoins to existing Roads and properties (MM7-MM10). These planted buffers have been included in the design, to limit views into the development from the surrounding properties and roads (as discussed further below in regard to visual amenity), and to contain the various aspects of residential living (e.g. lighting, noise to some degree, residential gardens, washing lines, trampolines etc.). The proposed bands of greenery will help to limit the perception of the scale of the development, help to integrate it into the wider rural environment, and lessen future possibilities of reverse sensitivity effects.

Planted buffer strips, whether for shelter, privacy or another function, are commonly used in rural landscapes, and so the extents of boundary plantings proposed along the external roads/ Site boundaries, are not expected to appear out of place. The proposed planted buffer strips, being of a reasonable width (2-10m) and cumulatively containing a reasonable proportion of native species (Landscape Treatment A and D being all native, and Landscape Treatment B and C containing a mix of native and exotic species), will also contribute positively to the environmental values of the Site, particularly through the creation of a wildlife corridor.

Overall, the proposed development will shift the character of the Site from an open pastoral setting to a more compartmentalised character containing high amenity urban development. This change will be able to be observed from within the Site, and evident from locations external to the Site. Within the Site several design measures have been proposed to retain the village-like urban character of Ōhoka while some aspects will be enhanced to provide worthwhile benefits. From locations external to the Site, the landscape treatments proposed will delineate the development boundaries, and physically and visually enclose the

Site to a large degree to lessen effects on the surrounding environment. For the reasons above, effects on landscape character have been assessed as **Low-Moderate**.

Temporary Effects

The temporary effects of the proposal will centre largely around the construction stages of the proposed masterplan, including earthworks, roading works, installation of pedestrian/cycle paths, construction of buildings/dwellings, and installation of services. Temporary effects associated with the proposal are expected to be greatest initially, with effects becoming less over time as vegetation establishes, particularly the landscape treatments proposed along the Site boundary.

6. EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

6.1 VISUAL CATCHMENT AND VIEWPOINTS

The visual context of the receiving environment is considered to be a 1.5km offset from the edge of the proposed development. This distance has been used due to the receiving environment's flat topography, resulting in views from further away either not being possible or being ameliorated by distance. A series of key viewpoints were selected to show a representative sample of the likely visual effects that could result from the proposal (**refer to Appendix B, Pages 14-20, for the relevant photos**). Viewpoints are generally located on public land, and where possible, located as close as possible to existing or proposed residential dwellings/ groups of dwellings. In assessing the potential effect of a proposal, the quality and openness of the view is considered. The representative viewpoints selected were as follows:

1. View north from 268 Whites Road
2. View northwest from 324 Whites Road
3. View southwest from 401 Whites Road
4. View south from 536 Mill Road
5. View east from 301 Bradleys Road
6. View southeast from 301 Bradleys Road
7. View east from 205 Bradleys Road

In assessing the potential effects on visually sensitive receptors, the key viewpoints outlined above have been used as a reference point where it is considered that the effects are likely to be similar to the viewpoint for a group of viewers. The viewpoint is a representative view, as close as possible to the view likely to be experienced from a private residence or property but obtained from a public location. The following table outlines the potential visual effects each visually sensitive receptor might receive.

Table 1: Assessment of Effects on Visually Sensitive Receptors

Viewpoint	Visually Sensitive Receptors (VSR)	Distance from Proposal (m)	Type of View (open, partial, screened)	Effects before Mitigation	Mitigation Measures	Effects after mitigation
1	Residents at 241 and between 268 - 308 Whites Road	30	OPEN	Low-Moderate	MM4, MM5, MM7, MM8, MM10	Low
	Vehicle users along Whites Road	0	OPEN	Low	MM4, MM5, MM7, MM8, MM10	Very Low
2	Residents between 308 Whites Road and Ōhoka Bush	30	OPEN	Low-Moderate	MM4, MM5, MM7, MM10	Low
	Vehicle users along Whites Road	0	OPEN	Low	MM4, MM5, MM7, MM10	Very Low
3	Residents at 401, 505, 507 Whites Road	0	OPEN	Low-Moderate	MM5, MM9	Low
	Vehicle users along Whites Road	0	OPEN	Low	MM5, MM7, MM9	Very Low
	Ōhoka Domain	30	OPEN	Low	MM5, MM7, MM9	Very Low
4	Residents at 547, 544, 540, 536 Mill Road, and 344 Bradleys Road	30	OPEN	Low-Moderate	MM5, MM9	Low
	Vehicle users along Mill Road	0	OPEN	Low	MM5, MM9	Very Low
5	Vehicle users along Bradleys Road	0	OPEN	Low	MM4, MM7	Very Low
6	Vehicle users along Bradleys Road	0	OPEN	Very Low	MM4, MM7	Very Low
	Residents at 290 and 301 Bradleys Road	0	OPEN	Low-Moderate	MM7, MM9	Low
7	Residents at 187, 205 and 211 Bradleys Road	30	OPEN	Low-Moderate	MM4, MM7, MM8	Low
	Vehicle users along Bradleys Road	0	OPEN	Low	MM4, MM7, MM8	Very Low

6.1.1 VISUAL EFFECTS ON NEARBY RESIDENTS

The largest potential adverse visual effects are expected for the residents along Bradleys Road, Whites Road and Mill Road with their properties adjacent the Site, as well as those properties adjoining the Site immediately to the south. At present several of these residences have semi-open and open views towards the Site, although the majority of properties have existing plantings along their road frontages and boundaries, screening views towards the Site. Although these boundary plantings cannot be relied upon for mitigation (as they are outside of the Site), they are still likely to substantially lessen the visual impacts of the development on these properties.

As discussed above, extensive landscape plantings (with existing trees integrated where possible) are proposed along the Site's Whites and Bradleys Road boundaries, and at the northern and southern boundaries where the Site joins to private properties (MM7-MM10). This will create a green outlook from most vantage points, with views of urban development expected only when looking down the proposed access roads. This further supported by the site's green networks (MM5) and no provision for vehicle access to individual properties along Whites and Bradleys Roads (MM4), to maintain consistency in landscape treatments along these boundaries. Views of landscape planting, although different from the existing open views of farmland, are still generally accepted as pleasant, and is in keeping with the existing green views from many locations and roads in Ōhoka.

Given the scale, form and design of the proposal, including the proposed Site boundary landscape treatments, most residents along Whites and Bradleys Roads, and to the south of the Site, will experience minor adverse visual effects with an acceptable level of change. This is due to their separation from the proposed development by existing roads and/or by the proposed and existing landscape planting proposed on the Site. It should be noted that there will be a period where the visual effects and available views of the development is greater, with time required for vegetation to establish.

Visual changes experienced by residents living within the village centre on Mill Road are considered to be acceptable, despite views changing with the land use change. The effect of this change is considered minor as residential activities and dwelling orientation tend to be focused away from this southern view, while the landscape is already considered to reflect a residential character along Mill Road, and so a change to feature additional residential views is in keeping with the existing character. Further screening of the development will be provided by the proposed landscape planting (MM9), which is proposed where residences directly neighbour the site. Additionally, the landscaped waterways, stormwater management areas, and proposed/retained trees, will provide a backdrop for southern views from Mill Road, further reducing the visual impact of denser development.

6.1.2 VISUAL EFFECTS ON ROAD USERS OF WHITES AND BRADLEYS ROADS

Views of the Site are generally semi-open or open from the surrounding roads. Given the scale and character of the proposed development and combined with the already modified state of the landscape, adverse effects experienced from the surrounding public roads are likely to be less than minor.

For the sections along Whites Road and Bradleys Road, where potential adverse effects could result from the long stretch of development, vehicle access to the proposed development will be via proposed roads only (MM4), additionally dense/tall landscape planting is proposed (MM7 and MM10, **Refer Pages 48- 50 in Appendix B**). These measures will greatly limit views of urban form, as noted above, and will instead produce views of long stretches of planting along these roads. Although these boundaries will be

interrupted by the proposed road access points, these will only provide short glimpses into the site, further softened by street and landscape planting, and high-quality built form, to maintain a pleasant outlook. Road-side boundary plantings are common in rural landscapes, and so the planting proposed (MM7 and MM10, Landscape Treatment A and D) is not expected to appear out of place within itself.

6.1.3 VISUAL EFFECTS ON ŌHOKA DOMAIN AND USERS

The proposal locates a small commercial area directly west of the local domain across Whites Road. The new commercial area will be seen as a part of the village centre given its proximity to the existing commercial activity/denser development at the intersection with Mill Road. The provision of a local village square and plantings within the commercial centre will allow for generous landscaping to provide scale, context and visual amenity. Ōhoka Stream with its landscaped, tree-lined margins separates the proposed commercial node from residential development. This creates a landscaped foil which assists in visually integrating the commercial area into the existing village.

Overall, visual effects from the domain are expected to be less than minor. This being largely due to the commercial area being positioned as an expansion of the existing commercial area/ higher density development, visually assimilating this part of the proposal into Ōhoka's existing urban form. Furthermore, the domain visitors are only present for a relatively short period of time and therefore experience lesser effects given they do not reside there. Additionally, the proposed landscape coverage in this part of the Site will provide a great deal of amenity, providing for pleasant views from the domain.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed masterplan outlines a well-considered, integrated and comprehensive plan for the urban expansion of Ōhoka, which:

- Aligns well with the seven 'C's' of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and is thereby expected to result in a safe, connected and high-functioning urban environment.
- Is considered to form an appropriate extension of the existing Ōhoka settlement, building on and consolidating the existing amenities of the settlement while maintaining its current rural village character features.
- Protects the waterways throughout the Site, providing public access and enhancing them through the creation of reserves with walkways and native/ riparian plantings.
- In terms of the landscape character (including natural character) and values of the area, subject to the mitigation measures proposed, will result in an acceptable change to the existing rural landscape character and values, with benefits noted over the alternative future development of the Site as per the Operative WDP (2005) and POWDP.
- Despite the open character of the Site changing to a character which is denser and more compartmentalised, will successfully mitigate potential adverse effects by way of proposed landscape planting, augmented by additional design measures.

With consideration of the context and design of the proposal (including implementation of mitigation measures), there are no adverse landscape or visual impacts anticipated which reach the threshold of a "sufficiently significant adverse impact" such that they need to be accounted for in terms of an assessment under s 85 of the FTAA2024. Overall, the proposal is seen as a considered response to Ōhoka's existing



landscape character and is anticipated to achieve a positive urban design outcome and high standard of residential development.

APPENDIX A:

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The purpose of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is to evaluate how a proposal will affect the landscape and views within a particular environment. The assessment aims to understand any changes to the landscape character and visual amenity, identifying any adverse impacts and proposing ways to mitigate them. The methodology used for this assessment follows the guidelines provided in Te Tangi a Te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (July 2022). The process is often non-linear, but may typically consist of the following stages:

1. Gaining a thorough understanding of the proposal;
2. Identifying and describing the relevant landscape context;
3. Reviewing and assessing any relevant statutory provisions;
4. Assessing the landscape and visual effects on the proposal; and
5. Recommending changes to the proposal that will improve the proposal or lessen any adverse effects, including suggesting mitigation measures.

1.0 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

1.1 LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION

Landscape embodies the relationship between people and place. It is the character of an area, how the area is experienced and perceived, and the meanings associated with it. Landscape attributes can be broken down into three overlapping dimensions: Physical, Associative and Perceptual qualities or values.

'Physical' includes both natural and human features, and the action (and interaction) of natural and human processes over time. This might include anything from more 'natural' features such as topography and vegetation to human-made features such as roads or buildings.

'Perceptual' means both direct sensory experience and broader interpretation through the senses. While sight is the sense most typically applied to landscape assessment, direct sensory perception importantly includes all the senses.

'Associative' means intangible things that influence how places are perceived, such as history, identity, customs, laws, narratives, creation stories, and activities specifically associated with the qualities of a landscape. Such associations typically arise over time and out of the relationship between people and place, often referred to as 'sense of place'.

Landscape characterisation involves interpreting these elements to define the landscape's unique identity and to identify the existing landscape values. This step is essential for understanding how the landscape contributes to

the environment, community, and cultural heritage, providing a foundation for assessing the proposal's impact on these valued attributes.

1.2 STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Fast - track Approvals Act 2024: Under clause 6(1)(a) of Schedule 5, the assessment of an activity's effect on the environment under clause 5(4) must include an assessment of the actual or potential effect on the environment. Under section 85 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024, a panel may only decline an approval if there is an adverse impact in relation to the approvals sought, which are "sufficiently significant" to be out of proportion to the project's regional or national benefits, even after taking into account:

- any condition that the panel may set in relation to those adverse impacts; and
- any conditions or modifications that the applicant may agree to or propose to avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset, or compensate for those adverse impacts.

Planning and Statutory Context: The Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 requires an assessment of the activity against any relevant provisions of the relevant planning documents (listed in cl 5(2) of Schedule 5). The first step in identifying landscapes of significance involves reviewing these relevant planning documents to determine if any specific landscape values have been assigned to the site or its surrounding areas. This includes:

- **Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Features (ONL/ONF):** If the area is designated as an ONL or ONF in a district or regional plan, its value is legally recognised, often requiring special consideration and protection measures.
- **Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV):** Some planning documents identify areas with high landscape value, often in sensitive environments. These areas typically carry specific policies for preserving landscape quality and character.
- **Cultural and Historical Sites:** Statutory plans may identify significant cultural or historic landscapes, which could include areas of indigenous significance, heritage sites, or locations associated with important historical events.

District Plan and Policies: Where specific values relating to landscape are identified in local and regional planning documents, the objectives, policies, and rules are examined and assessed. These values form a baseline of landscape values against which the proposal is assessed to ensure alignment with local or national policies and objectives. The purpose for reviewing the provisions is not to undertake a planning assessment. It is to frame the landscape assessment and assist with identifying the relevant landscape values.

1.3 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VALUES

Following the descriptive phase of landscape assessment where existing landscape character and values are identified, the evaluative phase determines the impact the proposal might have on these landscape values. While the magnitude of change to the landscape is considered as part of the assessment, '*change itself is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change for a landscape's values that is the effect*'.² Effects are not always adverse and positive effects are also taken into account. Cumulative and temporary effects may need to be considered and assessed as part of the effects on landscape values. Cumulative effects are potential

² Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022. Page 135



impacts of the proposal when considered in conjunction with other existing or approved developments in the area. The assessment may include granted resource consents that are likely to be implemented in the future, influencing the overall landscape and visual environment. The degree of change allowed under current planning regulations also must be considered (permitted baseline), which may influence the landscape regardless of the proposal. This could include activities that are permitted under zoning rules or existing land use rights.

In this section, both the nature and the magnitude of the effects are described and assessed in terms of specific values and attributes identified within the landscape. The magnitude of effects is described using the 7-point scale outlined within Te Tangi a Te Manu, as below:



We would consider a sufficiently significant effect under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 to be greater than a 'high' or 'very high' effect under the Te Tangi a Te Manu 7-point scale.

The magnitude of effects is assessed in relation to the specific nature of the effect, with reasons provided as to why that conclusion has been drawn. This process is essential for understanding the potential impacts of the proposal on landscape character and values and provides a foundation for the visual effects assessments that follows.

Where recommendations or mitigation measures are suggested, a pre-mitigation and post-mitigation assessment on landscape effects may be required to understand the extent of the effects. Often these measures are discussed with the client before finalising the assessment and are included as part of the application, avoiding the need for a pre-mitigation assessment. As stated above, an assessment under section 85 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 takes into account the conditions or modifications that the applicant may agree to or propose to avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset, or compensate for those adverse impacts.

1.4 VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

The visual effects assessment evaluates the effects of the proposal on visual amenity and assesses how these effects may impact on the people who experience the landscape. Visual amenity values refer to the qualities of a landscape that contribute to people's appreciation of its visual appeal, aesthetic coherence, and cultural or recreational value. The visual effects are a subset to the landscape effects and contribute to understanding the landscape effects. The methodology used follows a systematic approach to evaluate the proposal's visual impacts, identifying the views affected, the different types of viewers (residents, workers, passersby etc), and the potential for visual impact. The following steps inform and influence the visual assessment:

- 1) Identification of the visual catchment and key viewpoints (where it may be seen from)
- 2) Identification of the 'audiences' (who will see it)
- 3) Assessment of the effects on landscape values from certain viewpoints

IDENTIFICATION OF KEY VIEWPOINTS AND AUDIENCES

Viewpoint Selection: Key viewpoints are chosen to represent a range of viewing audiences and locations. This includes public spaces, such as parks, roads, and recreational walkways, as well as residential areas where people may experience the visual impacts of the proposal on a regular basis. Viewpoints are selected based on:

- **Receptor Type:** Identifying where people are likely to experience the view (e.g., residents, visitors, and recreational users).
- **View Accessibility:** Selecting public locations where views of the proposal are accessible to a broad audience.
- **Diversity of Perspectives:** Ensuring the viewpoints represent different distances, angles, and elevations relative to the proposal.

Verification Process: The initial selection of viewpoints is based on a desktop study using tools such as GIS to review aerial imagery, topographic contours, and land use data. These preliminary viewpoints are then verified through on-site visits to ensure their accuracy and relevance to the assessment. Adjustments are made if necessary to reflect the most accurate and representative viewpoints. Not every receptor within the identified catchment area will be assessed, as it is considered sufficient to assess receptors who are more likely to be affected than others, with the other receptors considered to have a lesser effect than those assessed.

Viewshed Analysis: For larger or more complex projects, a Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (TZVI) may be created. This analysis uses digital modelling to identify the areas from which the proposal is likely to be visible. The TZVI mapping is conservative, as it does not account for existing structures, vegetation, or other obstructions that may block views. This data helps refine the selection of key viewpoints and assists in visualizing the potential impact on the surrounding landscape.

PHOTO SIMULATIONS

Photos are taken of the identified viewpoints following the methods set out within the 'Best Practice Guide 10.2 – Visual Simulations (2010)' from the NZILA. All photos are taken using a Sony ILCE-6000 (Alpha 6000) digital camera with a focal length of 35mm, which is the equivalent of an approximately 52.5mm focal length on a full frame sensor camera. In the case of stitched photos used as the viewpoint images, a series of 4 or 5 portrait photos are taken from the same position to create a panorama, providing a more representative horizontal field of view. The photos are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop to create the panorama presented in the figures. As set out within the best practice guidance, panoramas should not exceed the 124 degree horizontal primary field of view or the 55 degree vertical primary field of view. The field of view is calculated based on the lens, with the Sony ILCE-6000 having a 37.8 degree horizontal field of view and a 25.4 degree field of view when using the 35mm lens (in landscape). When the images are stitched together this creates a wider horizontal field of view.

IDENTIFICATION OF VISUAL EFFECTS

The assessment then identifies the potential sources of visual impact the proposal may cause to the existing view. The nature and degree of effect is described for each viewpoint, which may involve:

- **Defining Visual Changes:** Visual changes are described in terms of scale, contrast, and compatibility with the existing landscape. This includes the size, shape, colour, and materials of the proposed development relative to the surrounding environment.
- **Assessing View Composition:** The visual assessment evaluates how the proposal will alter the composition of the view. This includes consideration of elements such as:
 - Whether the proposal will block open views or reduce visual clarity.
 - Whether the proposal will dominate the view or blend with existing features.

- Whether the proposal aligns with the aesthetic qualities of the current landscape or introduces contrasting elements.
- **Analysing Cumulative Effects:** For areas already experiencing visual changes, the assessment considers the cumulative impact of the proposal in relation to other developments or existing structures, evaluating the potential for visual clutter or landscape character degradation.

It is important to note that *'a development that is in keeping with the landscape character (existing or anticipated) may have no adverse effects on landscape values even though it is highly visible and a noticeable change to the view'*.³

Where recommendations or mitigation measures are suggested, a pre-mitigation and post-mitigation assessment of the visual effects may be required to understand the extent of the effects. Often these measures are discussed with the client before finalising the assessment and are included as part of the application, avoiding the need for a pre-mitigation assessment.

As with landscape effects, visual effects are measured using the 7-point scale, with both the nature and magnitude of the effects considered. Operational impacts from a change in the use of the site and temporary effects, such as effects during construction or prior to vegetation establishing, may also need to be considered in this section.

RECOMMENDATIONS / MITIGATION MEASURES

Where potential adverse visual effects are identified, the assessment may explore mitigation measures to reduce or minimise these impacts. These may include:

- **Avoidance:** Changing the proposal's location, scale, or design to completely avoid adverse effects on sensitive areas.
- **Minimisation:** Reducing the magnitude of visual impact by refining design aspects, such as reducing the height or adjusting the colour palette to better integrate with the surrounding landscape.
- **Remediation:** Introducing elements to restore or enhance affected landscape values. For example, replanting disturbed vegetation or restoring habitats that are altered during construction.
- **Compensation / Offsetting:** In cases where direct mitigation is not feasible, compensatory or offsetting measures such as creating additional public open spaces, or enhancing nearby landscapes to offset the impact, may be considered.

Common examples of mitigation strategies include:

- **Design Modifications:** Adjusting the scale, location, or orientation of the proposal to reduce visibility from key viewpoints.

³ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022. Page 245



- **Landscape Screening:** Using vegetation, such as trees or hedges, to screen or soften views of the proposal. Native planting is often prioritised to enhance ecological integration.
- **Material Selection:** Utilising materials and colours that reflect the natural tones of the surrounding landscape, reducing visual contrast.
- **Lighting Controls:** Managing the intensity, direction, and timing of artificial lighting to limit light pollution and reduce visual impacts during nighttime.

The effectiveness of these mitigation measures is assessed to determine the extent to which they reduce visual impacts, aiming for a balance between development and landscape preservation. Often these measures will be included as part of the application, where work has been done with the client prior to or during the assessment.



APPENDIX B: URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN