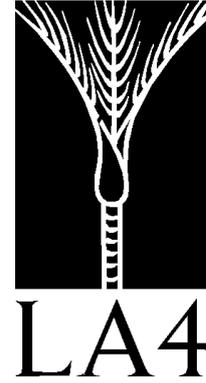


**Technical Memorandum
Brookvale Green: 174 and 176 Brookvale Road – Havelock North
Fast-track Referral Application**



To: Mr Ed Sundstrum
Vermont Street Partners

From: Rob Pryor
Registered Landscape Architect
LA4 Landscape Architects
Auckland

Date: 13 August 2025

1. APPLICATION DETAILS

Applicant's name: Vermont Street Partners (**VSP**).

2. INTRODUCTION

Qualifications and Relevant Experience

- 2.1. My full name is Robert James Pryor. I am a registered landscape architect and a Director of LA4 Landscape Architects (**LA4**), a position I have held since 1996. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Otago University (1980) and a post-graduate Diploma of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University (1984). I am a registered member of Tuia Pito Ora, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (**NZILA**), a member of the Resource Management Law Association (**RMLA**) and member of the Urban Design Forum (**UDF**).
- 2.2. I have over 36 years' experience undertaking landscape assessments for clients in both the public and private sectors on a wide variety of major projects within a range of landscape settings. I specialise in the preparation of landscape and visual effects assessments and have undertaken numerous assessments. I have been involved in an extensive range of local authority, public and private sector work. As landscape architect for the Wellington City Council, I was responsible for coordinating, designing, and overseeing the implementation of the city's landscape and urban development projects. Since becoming a Director of LA4, I have specialised in landscape assessment and landscape evaluation.
- 2.3. Prior to becoming a director of LA4, I worked for the firm for three years as a Landscape Architect (1993-1996). Prior to that, I was a Director of Bannatyne Pryor Associates in Wellington (1989-1993) and Landscape Architect for Wellington City Council (1984-1989).

3. PURPOSE OF THIS MEMORANDUM

- 3.1. This memorandum has been prepared to support a referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act (2024). The following sections provide a high level summary of the potential landscape character and visual amenity matters related to the Proposal. A Site visit of the Project area and investigations of the wider Havelock North environs was undertaken on 18 June 2025.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1. Brookvale Green provides a unique opportunity to deliver a comprehensive residential community comprising of 189 – 215 new homes within a well-connected, high-quality and distinctive living environment. The proposal is designed to create a defined rural/urban boundary while enhancing the site’s natural ecological features. A defining characteristic of the site is the two stream corridors, one meandering through the centre and the other forming the northern boundary. These features are central to the design approach, providing a strong landscape framework that has shaped the layout of streets, lots, and open spaces. The streams contribute significantly to the site’s visual amenity, support ecological values, and provide opportunities for walking, cycling, and passive recreation. Their integration into the development ensures a strong connection to the site’s natural character, while the northern stream establishes a soft green edge that reinforces the relationship with the wider rural landscape.

4.2. A Concept Masterplan has been prepared for the Site, illustrated in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: Concept Masterplan

4.3. The residential community of Brookvale Green is guided by a series of design principles focused on delivering a liveable, connected and green environment, with enhanced public spaces and diverse housing options. The development is structured around a central loop road that extends from Brookvale Road and runs through the heart of the site. This loop is supported by local streets and pedestrian and cycle connections to enable a legible grid structure. A variety of housing typologies and densities are proposed to meet the evolving and growing needs of the housing market, ensuring choice and flexibility for future residents. Together, these elements will support the creation of a diverse, visually interesting neighbourhood with a strong sense of place.

- 5.4. Vegetation within the Site is diverse with a number of semi-mature specimen trees located throughout the Site. Oriental planes (*Platanus orientalis*) extend along the southern side of the main access drive and beside a number of the metalled access tracks throughout the Site. Mature tree plantings of oriental plane, tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), oak (*Quercus spp.*) and willow (*Salix spp.*) are established in the north-eastern corner of the Site. A stand of gum trees are in the south-eastern part of the Site, contiguous with gum plantings in the adjoining site. (*Eucalyptus spp.*). Shelter belt plantings include she-oak (*Cassuarina cunninghamiana*), olive (*Olea spp.*) and macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) and pittosporum. Refer to **Annexure 1** – Site Photographs.

The Wider Landscape Context

- 5.5. The Site is situated between existing residential activities to the south-west, rural-residential activities to the north-west and rural land to the north and east. It adjoins the CDL site / Arataki Extension land to the west which is a fast-track listed project and included in the Napier Hastings Future Development Strategy. The Arataki residential area is characterised by predominantly standalone, single level dwellings typically on 400m² – 750m² sites. Arataki Honey is located on the eastern edge of the suburb with its factory, processing facility and visitors centre.
- 5.6. The rural area to the north comprises numerous orchards and vineyards, with industry based around its fruit and wine production, and a horticultural research centre. Te Mata Estate adjoins the Site to the east with its extensive production vineyard. Horticultural activities prevail further to the east with primarily orcharding activities on the fertile plains extending up from the Tukituki River.
- 5.7. The wider area around Havelock North, particularly the prominent peak of Te Mata o Rongokako (Te Mata Peak), holds deep cultural and spiritual significance to local Māori, especially Ngāti Kahungunu. Further to the north, the landscape opens up into the Heretaunga Plains, a fertile, flat agricultural area shaped by the Ngaruroro and Tukituki Rivers. These plains are characterised by a mix of farms, lifestyle blocks, and market gardens.

6. PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 6.1. The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of the potential adverse effects on the landscape values of the Site and surrounding environment resulting from the Proposal. The assessment responds to matters related to landscape character and visual amenity.
- 6.2. An assessment of landscape effects takes into consideration physical changes to the landscape as a resource which may give rise to changes to its character and quality and perceived landscape values. Visual effects are a consequence of landscape effects as this is how we mainly perceive effects on landscape values. Landscape and visual effects are therefore inextricably linked and are influenced by the sensitivity of the receiving environment combined with the type and magnitude of change associated with the proposal.
- 6.3. The objective of Landscape and Visual Effects assessments is not to assess change or visibility but the nature and magnitude of effect of change on the existing landscape values. With all assessments the objective is not to determine the proposal's extent of visibility, it is to determine how the proposal will impact on existing landscape values, including landscape character and visual amenity. Visibility of itself is not an adverse effect¹.

¹ Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 146]

- 6.4. The assessment methodology used is in accordance with the methodological framework of the Te Tangi a te Manu (**TTatM**) Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines 2022 and assesses whether the Proposal would have adverse effects on the landscape values and visual amenity of the Site and surrounding environment.

Landscape Effects

- 6.5. A landscape effect is a consequence of change in a landscape's physical attributes on that landscape's values. Change is not an effect – landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change for a landscape's values that is the effect². Landscape effects take into consideration physical effects to the land resource. Assessments of landscape effects therefore investigate the likely nature and scale of change to landscape elements and characteristics. Landscape effects are primarily dependent on the landscape sensitivity of a site and its surrounds to accommodate change. Landscape sensitivity is influenced by landscape quality and vulnerability, or the extent to which landscape character, elements/features and values are at risk to change.
- 6.6. Landscape assessments are based on the links between landscape character and values. Character is an expression of the landscape's collective attributes. Values are the reasons a landscape is valued but are embodied in attributes. Effects are consequences for a landscape's values of changes to the attributes on which the values depend. Landscape character results from a combination of physical elements together with aesthetic and perceptual aspects that combine to make an area distinct. Landscape values relate to people's aesthetic perception of the biophysical environment, including considerations such as naturalness, vividness, coherence, memorability and rarity.
- 6.7. Effects on landscape values are assessed against the existing environment, and the outcomes sought in the relevant statutory provisions. Whether effects on landscape values are appropriate will therefore depend both on the nature and magnitude of effect on the existing landscape values and what is anticipated by the provisions.

Landscape Effects Analysis

- 6.8. The existing attributes that contribute to the existing rural character of the area will become progressively less pervasive as the Site is developed with the future urbanisation of the area. Development enabled by the Proposal will inevitably transform the local rural character to that of more intensive and mixed urban development which will have an influence on the surrounding area.
- 6.9. It is important to note that although the Site and local area currently exhibit rural characteristics, neither display a high degree of 'ruralness' due to a combination of the size of landholdings, rural-residential activities, existing infrastructure, the Te Mata Mushrooms facility, plant nursery, storage yards, and light industrial activities, in close proximity to the urbanised Arataki settlement to the west of the Site. Consequently, distinctly urban influences are highly evident in the surrounding area, which further reduce the sensitivity of the Site and surrounding environment to change as anticipated by the Proposal.
- 6.10. Based on an analysis of the Site and surrounds it is clear that there are relatively low landscape values and sensitivity associated with the Site due to past and present land use. The Site is a relatively degraded, highly modified landscape lacking significant landscape values, in close proximity to Havelock North's existing residential area on the western side of the Site. Therefore, the primary negative outcomes in landscape terms will be the loss of the remaining rural

² Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 135]

character. Development enabled by the Proposal will result in a change in landscape character, but will ensure a suitable level of amenity, albeit an urban, rather than a rural character is achieved.

6.11. In my opinion development enabled by the Proposal will have low adverse landscape effects, particularly in relation to the character and quality of the Site and surrounding area given that:

- i) The Site does not contain, and development enabled by the Proposal will not adversely affect, any significant landscapes or features. The Site and surrounding area are a distinctly modified environment.
- ii) The landscape values associated with the Site itself are not high due to the modified nature of the Site and the activities and land uses within the Site and surrounding area. The landscape character of the Site is not high due to these characteristics. As such the landscape sensitivity of the Site to change as enabled by the Proposal is low.
- iii) The landscape character, amenity values and biodiversity values of the Site and surrounding area will not be adversely affected by development enabled by the Proposal. The form, scale and nature of the proposal will be similar to the pattern of residential development occurring within the surrounding environment further to the west and will therefore not appear out of character. The character, intensity and scale of the proposal will be in keeping with the local characteristics.
- iv) Development enabled by the Proposal will not introduce new elements or features that will adversely affect the landscape values and character of the Site and surrounding area with residential settlement being prevalent in the area.
- v) A number of the natural features within the Site including the streams, are to be protected and enhanced as part of the Proposal. The landscape character values of the Site and surrounding area will be significantly enhanced through the noxious weed clearance and ecological and riparian planting of the stream banks.
- vi) The vegetated open space corridor along the northern stream will provide a natural edge to the Site and a strong defensible boundary to the adjoining rural area.
- vii) Any potential landscape effects will be localised due to the type and scale of change and the existing settlement, landform, and vegetation patterns.

Visual Amenity Effects

6.12. The assessment of visual effects analyses the perceptual (visual) response that any of the identified changes to the landscape may evoke, including effects relating to views and visual amenity. Visual sensitivity is influenced by a number of factors including the visibility of a proposal, the nature and extent of the viewing audience, the visual qualities of the proposal, and the ability to integrate subsequent changes within the landscape setting, where applicable. As with landscape effects, visual effects relate to landscape values. Visibility and change are not effects in and of themselves³.

6.13. The assessment has been undertaken in terms of the following criteria:

³ Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 245]

- i) **Quality of the view** – the relative quality and sensitivity of views into the Site, including landscape character and visual amenity values.
- ii) **Viewpoint | perceptual factors** – the type and size of population exposed to views into the Site, the viewing distance to the Site, and other factors which indicate its sensitivity in terms of both viewing audience and the inherent exposure of the view towards the Site due to its physical character.
- iii) **Rural amenity** – the impact of future development on the wider surrounding rural amenity.
- iv) **Rural form** – the degree to which future development will fit into the rural context of the surrounding environs.
- v) **Visual intrusion | contrast** – the intrusion into, or obstruction of views to landscape features in the locality and beyond and the impact upon key landscape elements and patterns.
- vi) **Mitigation potential** – the extent to which any potential adverse effects of the Proposal could be mitigated through integration into its surrounds by specific measures.

Visual Amenity Effects Analysis

6.14. The visual effects of development enabled by the Proposal have been assessed from representative viewpoints within the visual catchment area that have potential for visual effects. The assessment has been undertaken by reference to the following:

- Adjoining properties
- Surrounding road network
- Wider surrounding area

Refer to: **Annexure 2** – Viewpoint Location Map and Viewpoint Photographs

Adjoining properties

- 6.15. The adjacent properties to the Site will be most affected by future urban development enabled by the Proposal. This will include the adjoining rural lifestyle properties to the north-west, the rural production properties to the north, Te Mata Estate vineyard to the east, and the rural lifestyle and Arataki extension land to the south. Views towards parts of the Site however will be moderated, filtered or partially screened by the proposed riparian plantings along the northern stream, existing vegetation patterns within the surrounding properties, buildings and structures, and orientation of the view.
- 6.16. **Viewpoint 1** is taken from Brookvale Road looking in a south-easterly direction towards the Site. **Viewpoint 2** is taken from the northern side of the road looking in a south-easterly direction into the Site and **Viewpoint 3** from the vicinity of the north-eastern boundary of the Site. The views are also indicative of potential views gained from the rural lifestyle properties on the northern side of Brookvale Road in the vicinity of the Site.
- 6.17. For the immediately adjoining properties, the existing outlook will change considerably from a relatively open rural scene characterised by horticultural and mixed use light-industrial activities, into a comprehensive urban view. Although this will constitute a distinctive change to the existing character and a loss of the spaciousness, the quality nature of the future urban development and the proposed landscape initiatives will ensure that a suitable level of amenity is achieved.
- 6.18. From these close viewing locations, the full effects of change brought about by the Proposal will be gradual as the land is retired from current use, modified, and staged built development extends across the landform. It is anticipated that the full progression from ‘rural’ to urban will

logically take a number of years, in line with similar urban development occurring locally. This will reduce the impact of the change to some degree, due to the incremental nature of the changes and a general conditioning of the audience over time as urban development progresses.

- 6.19. The protection and enhancement of the main natural features within the Site, including the streams, and the retention of a number of the mature trees throughout the Site will provide a vegetated framework within which future development will be viewed.
- 6.20. The lower elevation of the Site and the larger lots along the south-western boundary of the Site will be similar in character and scale, and provide an appropriate buffer to the Arataki residential settlement to the west. The vegetated open space corridor and proposed riparian plantings along the northern stream will provide a natural edge to the Site and a vegetated buffer to the adjoining rural properties to the north.
- 6.21. Development enabled by the Proposal will inevitably change the visual amenity currently experienced for the surrounding properties. Overall, the adverse visual effects from the adjoining properties will be moderate initially reducing to low-moderate following the establishment of the landscape initiatives.

Surrounding road network

- 6.22. The Site's location adjoining Brookvale Road, results in a high level of exposure towards the Site. For road users, in particular those who live locally, the future development of the Site is likely to result in noticeable visual effects. **Viewpoint 4** is taken from Brookvale Road looking in an easterly direction towards the Site and **Viewpoints 5-7** are a series of views taken from the road looking in south-westerly directions.
- 6.23. For general road users, the effects are likely to be of much less significance as development enabled by the Proposal will be seen as part of the wider pattern of land use change that has occurred in the past in Arataki. The proposed riparian planting along the stream corridor on the northern side of the Site will provide a good visual break and buffer when viewed from northerly directions.
- 6.24. Although a large audience, the road users are unlikely to be particularly sensitive to future development, as they will have fleeting views of only portions of the Site whilst moving through a landscape, which already exhibits diverse characteristics in close proximity to Havelock North's residential environs and the mixed horticultural and light industrial activities within the Site itself. The sensitivity and the effects of development enabled by the Proposal will also be reduced further by the fact that development will be gradual and staged over a number of years and will be buffered by the riparian planting of the streams and retention of a number of the mature trees within the Site.
- 6.25. Overall, the adverse visual effects from the surrounding road network will be low.

Wider Surrounding Area

- 6.26. Distant views towards parts of the Site will potentially be gained from parts of the wider surrounding area. **Viewpoint 8** is taken from the entrance to Te Mata Estate Winery at 337 Te Mata Road looking in a north-westerly direction towards the Site.
- 6.27. Where visible from the surrounding area, views of development enabled by the Proposal will be highly variable due to distance, orientation of the view, diversity of elements within the view and screening elements (buildings, landform, shelterbelts, and prevailing vegetation patterns). While

a noticeable level of built form will be introduced into the landscape, it will be viewed in the context of the surrounding residential settlement pattern to the west within the Arataki residential area.

- 6.28. Development enabled by the Proposal will integrate sensitively into the rural landscape due to the scale of the proposal relative to the Site context and appearance and visual compatibility with existing built development within the Arataki environs. Any potential adverse visual effects of the proposal will be localised and will have minor implications on the quality, character, and aesthetic values of the surrounding area.
- 6.29. While development enabled by the Proposal will be visible from parts of the wider surrounding area, I consider that the adverse visual effects will be low to very low and entirely acceptable within the context of the existing Havelock North environment.

Construction Effects

- 6.30. Construction effects are temporary in duration with the most noticeable changes and resultant effects on visual amenity arising from earthworks associated with roading and associated infrastructure. The construction stage includes impacts on the physical landscape, including vegetation removal and landform modification, and visual amenity from public and private locations. Due to the nature and scale of development, and the level of change it will bring to the existing landscape, the visual effects will generally be high during and immediately following construction. Earthworks within a rural environment are not out of context with ploughed land and disturbed earth being characteristic of the environs.
- 6.31. Overall, there will be low adverse construction effects given:
- i) The temporary nature of the construction works; and
 - ii) The context of, and the proximity to the existing Havelock North urban landscape.

Cumulative effects

- 6.32. The cumulative effects of the Proposal, in combination with the existing Havelock North settlement pattern, will not detract from the landscape values of the surrounding area. Overall, I consider that in the context of the established rural and urban environment, development enabled by the Proposal could be implemented without adversely affecting the landscape values, visual amenity, and character of the surrounding area.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. The proposed urbanisation of the Site resulting from development enabled by the Proposal will significantly change its current open and rural landscape character. The development will however be suitable due to its proximity to the Arataki settlement, will provide a choice of living opportunities, and represents an efficient, compact and comprehensive urban outcome.
- 7.2. Although parts of the subject Site are largely in pasture and horticulture interspersed and demarcated with shelterbelts and specimen tree plantings its semi-rural character is lessened to a degree by the existing land uses including the Te Mata Mushrooms facility, construction storage yards, office space, staff amenities, light industrial activities, warehousing, accessways and drives, in close proximity to the Arataki settlement to the west. The Site has limited productive land and is a highly modified Site with relatively low landscape values. In light of these considerations the Site is well suited to the type of urban development proposed.

- 7.3. The proposed urbanisation of the land will inevitably result in the transformation of the Site from a fringe rural area to one with urban residential characteristics. This will have implications on the surrounding rural land, with the urban development impacting on the 'rural' quality of this area. Nevertheless, this is a landscape in transition and the proposal will result in a comprehensively planned urban development.
- 7.4. While there will be a loss of rural landscape character, the key methods of mitigating for this loss are to retain and enhance where possible existing landscape features and create a quality urban development. Although development enabled by the Proposal will result in the loss of existing rural characteristics there are number of positive landscape outcomes associated with the Proposal including:
- i) enhancement of the streams including noxious weed removal, stream protection, riparian planting and ecological and walkway connections;
 - ii) protection of a number of the established trees throughout the Site;
 - iii) the provision of public access to and along the stream corridors;
 - iv) the vegetated open space corridor along the northern stream providing a natural edge to the Site, a strong defensible boundary to the adjoining rural area, and recreational opportunities for the community; and
 - v) lower density development along the Arataki Extension interface.
- 7.5. Because of the nature of development enabled by the Proposal, rather than trying to screen the development or create significant buffers, the approach has been to accept the change and develop the Site in accordance with well-designed and accepted urban design principles to create a quality residential development with a high level of amenity, albeit an urban amenity.
- 7.6. Development enabled by the Proposal will initially generate landscape and visual effects of some significance. These however are inevitable with urban development at the start of a process of urbanisation. In addition, the landscape character and visual effects of the development of the Site apparent from the early stages will decrease over time as the riparian plantings, street tree plantings and landscape plantings typically associated with the urbanisation of an area become established.
- 7.7. In my opinion, development enabled by the Proposal represents a positive and efficient transformation of environmental management and enhancement, landscape character, and physical/visual amenity of the existing environment, including the Site and its contextual setting.
- 7.8. In my opinion the Site represents an appropriate and logical extension to the future development of the Havelock North community and has the potential from a landscape character and visual amenity perspective to deliver a form of residential growth sensitive the location.
- 7.9. Development enabled by the Proposal will fulfil the need for residential and urban intensification and provide an opportunity for an innovative and environmentally sustainable urban development. I consider that in the context of the established environment the proposal can be visually accommodated without adversely affecting the landscape values, landscape character, natural character and visual amenity values of the surrounding Havelock North environment in the medium to long term.
- 7.10. In conclusion, I am of the opinion that there are no landscape character or visual amenity related reasons why the Proposal could not proceed under a Fast-track application process. A full

landscape effects assessment⁴ will be undertaken should this application be accepted, however at this stage no significant landscape effects preclude this Proposal occurring within the existing environment.



Rob J Pryor
Registered Tuia Pito Ora NZILA Landscape Architect



⁴ In accordance with the methodological framework of the Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines 2022

Annexure 1: Site photographs









Annexure 2: Viewpoint Location Map and Viewpoint Photographs





Viewpoint 1: Brookvale Road



Viewpoint 2: Brookvale Road



Viewpoint 3: Brookvale Road



Viewpoint 4: Brookvale Road



Viewpoint 5: Brookvale Road



Viewpoint 6: Brookvale Road



Viewpoint 7: Brookvale Road



Viewpoint 8: 337 Te Mata Road – Te Mata Estate Winery