

# URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

## *The Kilns* Proposed Housing Development

34-36 SANDSPIT ROAD, WARKWORTH 0982

31 March 2022



**Figure 1** Perspective of Sandspit Rd entrance to proposed development (also refer sheet A450).

## Executive Summary

The Kilns development proposes high quality medium density housing in Warkworth, on 36 Sandspit Rd. The proposal is supported in terms of meeting the Objectives and Policies of the proposed zone through well-articulated design and will provide a positive addition to the streetscape and neighbourhood.

The site is subject to a private plan change application from Future Urban Zone (FUZ) to Mixed Housing Urban (MHU) under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP). The design characteristics of the site are evaluated against the MHU zoning. The proposed internal site environment takes into consideration the opportunities and constraints of the site to provide a safe and functional, with good definition to the variety of outdoor spaces to all dwellings. It is found to meet the objectives and policies of the MHU zone, along with addressing the various unique constraints of the site and optimising the urban design opportunities presented by the location of the site in proximity to the town centre with a range of connections to be provided.

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## Introduction

The applicant is a locally based property developer and has also applied for a Private Plan Change (PPC) for this site.

This report provides an urban design assessment for the proposed housing development of an undeveloped site in Warkworth currently zoned FUZ. The private plan change seeks to rezone the site MHU and accordingly the proposal will be assessed against that proposed zone as the applicant is proceeding with both the plan change and this resource consent application concurrently. The plan change was lodged with Auckland Council last year (2021).

## Scope and Involvement

Pacific Environments NZ Ltd designed this proposal and provided an Urban Design Assessment for the plan change application. This report will be a description of the architectural proposal and contain our opinion on why it complies with the AUP MHU zone rules.

While the Warkworth Structure Plan (WSP) considers a different outcome for this site, this is dealt with in the Plan Change report allowing this report to focus on architectural and locational responses.

The author is a registered architect of over 25-years' experience, and a qualified urban designer who has lived and worked in the Warkworth area for over 20 years. We are familiar with the subject site and have visited it several times.

## Site

The site is zoned Future Urban with road access from Sandspit Rd (Secondary Arterial Road). It is 28,365m<sup>2</sup> in area and is topographically challenging in areas rising to a mount towards the centre of the site. The site is near (within 400m) to significant amenities in the surrounding neighbourhood, including the Warkworth town centre, reserves, sports fields, schools, and access to SH1. Its neighbouring sites are established single house zones one to two storey houses. (refer **Figure 2**). It is noted that these are likely to transition to a higher density over time with the implementation of the MDRS later this year.

The site has no pedestrian connection with Warkworth at present, despite its very close proximity, and it is noted that support for zoning the site MHU in the plan change report is contingent on a walkway connection being provided. That connection is proposed to be constructed as part of the subdivision consent being sought.

The Eastern edge of the site is bound by the Significant Ecological Area Overlay and there is a Historic Heritage Overlay on the Southern part of the site. The Historic Heritage Overlay has been attended to by the Historic Heritage report where they have identified an existing line of railway and kilns that should be retained (refer Historic Heritage report).

The Southern end of the site is also an Outstanding Natural Landscape when viewed from Warkworth, being part of the mature native bush backdrop to the Northern banks of the Mahurangi River when view from the town.

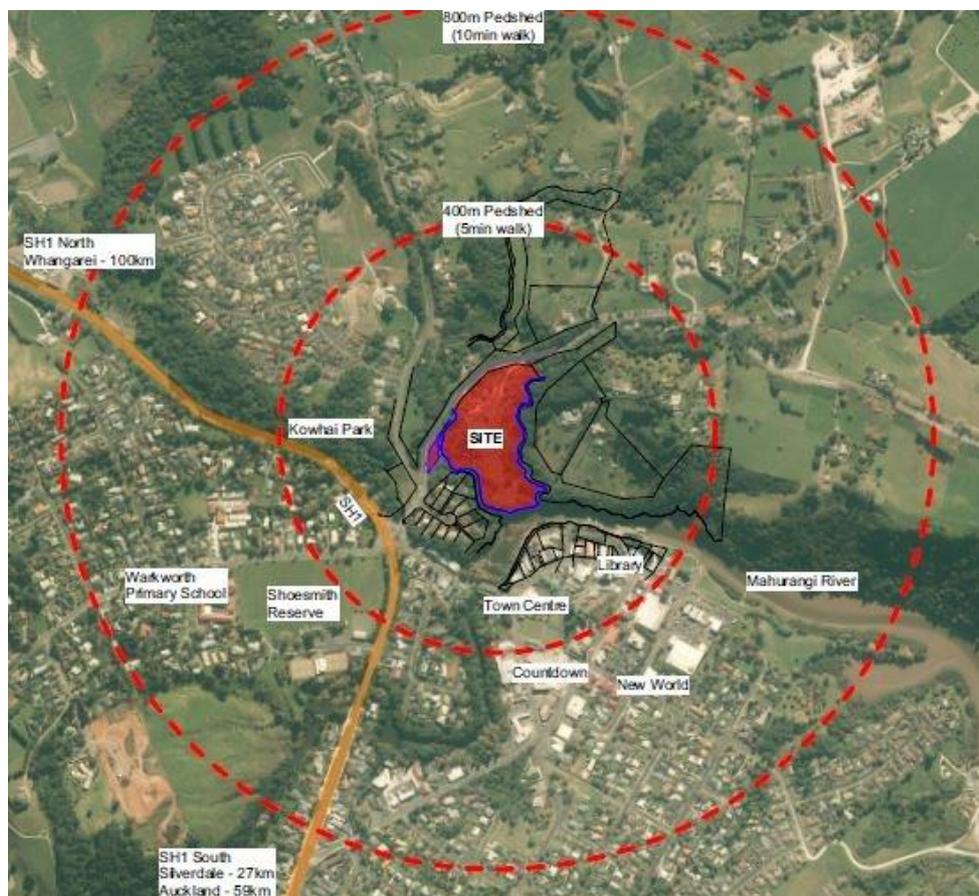
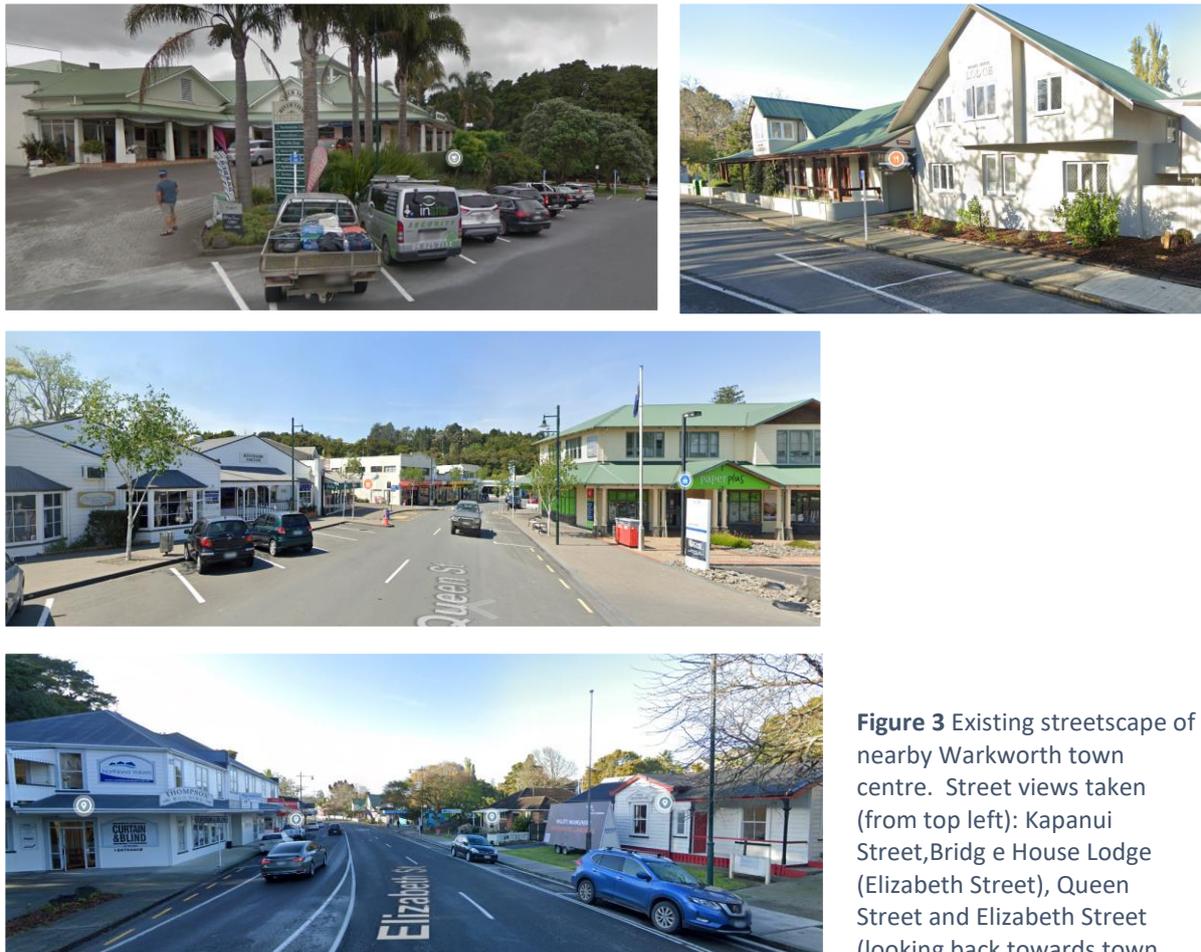


Figure 2 Wider Site Context Plan.

## Streetscape Character



**Figure 3** Existing streetscape of nearby Warkworth town centre. Street views taken (from top left): Kapanui Street, Bridge House Lodge (Elizabeth Street), Queen Street and Elizabeth Street (looking back towards town)

Within the vicinity of the Sandspit Road site houses are typically single to two storey weatherboard or brick veneer detached dwellings. A mixture of hipped, gable and mono-pitched roof forms can be seen throughout the neighbourhood. Roofing materials include concrete tiles, profiled metal roofing and asphalt shingles. The existing houses tend to have good street frontages with mature vegetation and are generally in accordance with single house zoning rules of the time they were constructed. There is a notable lack of residential options in Warkworth.

The town centre consists of various sized shops including large supermarkets. These commercial buildings are largely two-storey of fine scale except for the supermarket buildings and an apartment model retirement village in the town centre. The nearby commercial centre of Warkworth has a distinctive character with many of the main street buildings being a weatherboard type cladding with verandas and distinctive gable or pitched roofs.

Towards east of the site in terms of character is rural. The site frontage to Sandspit road has houses facing Sandspit Road giving it an ambiguous suburban residential character. It does not currently form a defined gateway to Warkworth.

## Site Analysis - Opportunities and Constraints

The site contains significant development constraints, these are summarised on the surveyor's drawing attached as appendix 1. The heritage areas are documented, as are other constraining overlays including bush and visual landscape areas. Preliminary geotechnical work has been completed and areas of land unsuitable for building is shown as orange hatched areas.

The site is also constrained by having a road only connection with the town centre, the existing bridge on Sandspit Road is too narrow to facilitate a pedestrian path and structurally challenging to append a path cantilevered on the side.

These constraints will inevitably shape the form of the development however many also present an opportunity to incorporate into a design and create a unique character to a development. There are clear opportunities to provide public access to the heritage areas and enhance access to site with a direct pedestrian and cycle connection separate from the road access.

An additional constraint nominated in the Plan Change Application is the imposition of height restrictions as mitigation of potential effects on the ONL (refer **Figure 4**). These have been determined by the Landscape Architect in the Plan Change application.



**Figure 4** Height Variation Control Planes (also refer sheet A221).

## Design Response - Site

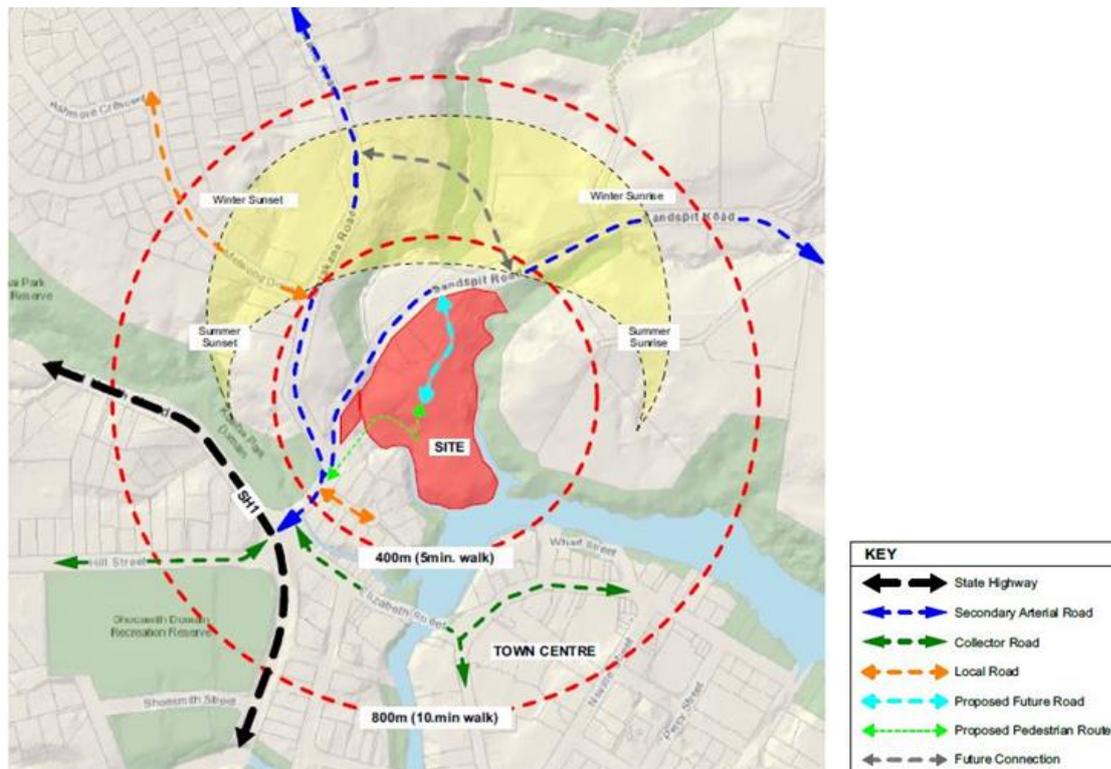


Figure 5 Design Response – Movement & Activity diagram for wider site context.

The site is proposed to be entered off Sandspit Road at a location determined by the traffic engineer as appropriate. It is also proposed to connect the site to Warkworth pedestrian network with a pedestrian and cycleway bridge (refer **Figure 5**).

The development is designed to MHU zone controls, to align with the Plan Change application. To achieve a site capable of achieving the density indicated by the MHU zone under the many various constraints including height restrictions (refer **Figure 4**), significant modification is proposed to the current land form, essentially it is levelled off at about RL16m.



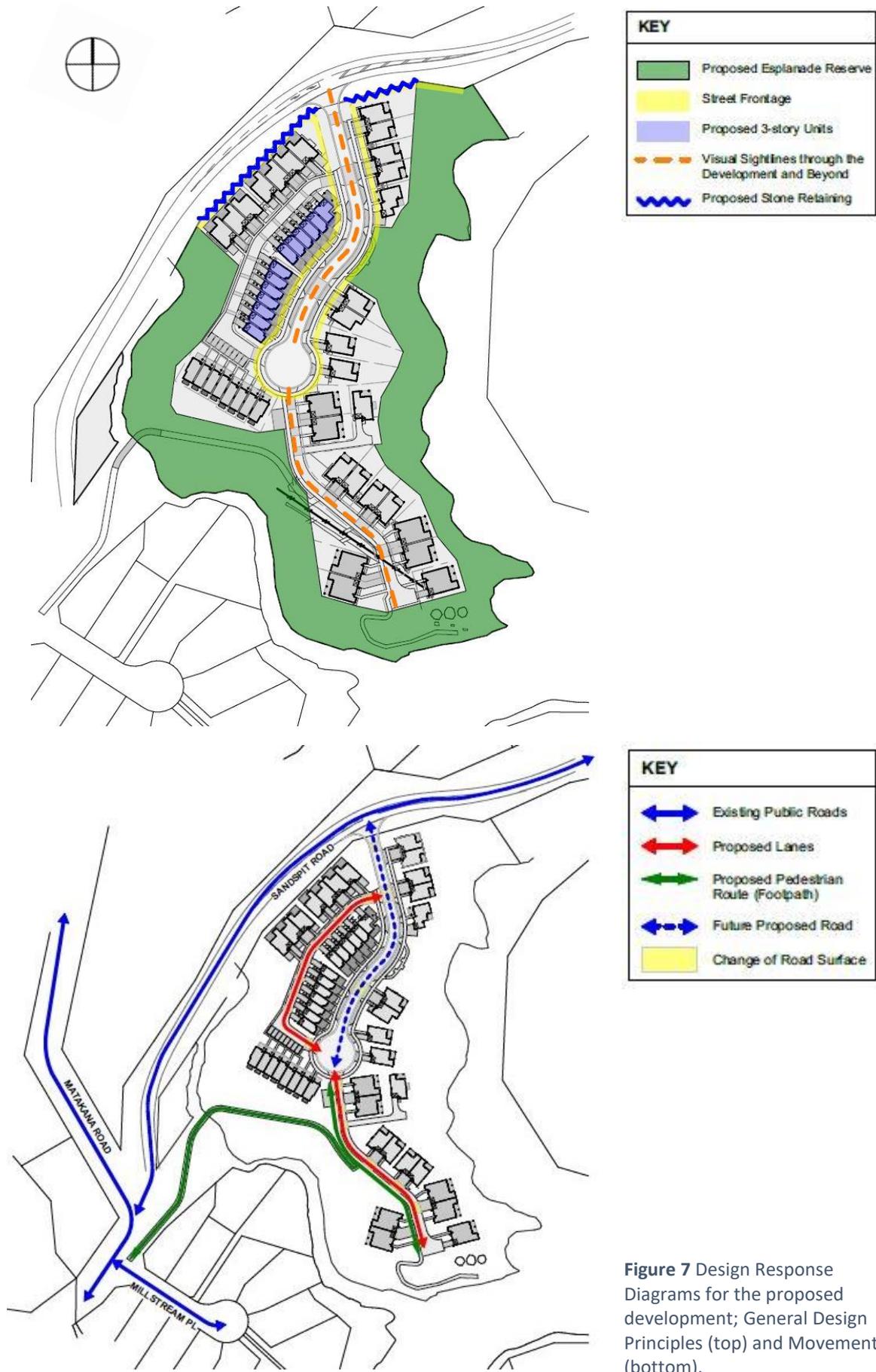
Figure 6 Proposed Overall Site Plan (also refer sheet A210).

The development consists of 49 units and is designed to cater for a variety of family types by providing a mix of different typologies with either 2 or 3 bedrooms (refer **Figure 6**).

The road layout within the site is designed with a main road that extends centrally through the site to a cul-de-sac head with two JOALS that allow access into smaller parts of the site to optimise yield and enable efficient development of the available land area (refer **Figure 7**). The loop JOAL also allows the higher density terrace blocks to be serviced off the public road, but still address it positively.

This overall arrangement allows a spatial approach that provides quality on-site amenity, both communal and private, with a focus on optimal solar orientation, function, and circulation. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is optimized by having all driveways, JOALS, roads and public areas including the walkway overlooked from the dwelling units by living room glazing or kitchen windows. The roads have been designed to provide clear sightlines (refer **Figure 7**).

Units along Sandspit Rd are designed with their outdoor living spaces facing north to the road to optimize daylight and provide good street frontage with a height difference to achieve privacy.



**Figure 7** Design Response Diagrams for the proposed development; General Design Principles (top) and Movement (bottom).

## Design Response- Building



**Figure 8** Artist impressions of the proposed development, (from top clockwise) view from Road toward Blocks F & G, view from JOAL 1 toward Block C, view from Road toward Block H and view from Road toward JOAL 1 toward Blocks A & C.

The proposed development consists of terraced, duplex, and stand-alone houses. The overall design aesthetic is derived from the architectural character of the existing town centre of Warkworth, using gabled roof forms, weatherboard and brick. The design of the houses is articulated using screening and framed vertical elements (refer **Figure 8**) to allow an appropriate residential scale to be achieved in the elevations, and not appear over scaled. While the building forms are positive and unambiguous in their articulation, it was a conscious decision for them not to be overtly architectural or over styled, as it is important the development sits respectfully in the local Warkworth context, and its vernacular forms, and not compete against it for attention as simply inserting a Hobsonville Point type of style driven, but ultimately arbitrary, type of visual response. The kiln heritage values of the site have been seen as an opportunity to add and enhance the quality, character and longevity of the development, by respecting those values through continuing the theme in the subdivision and built development.

The overall colour scheme of the development is understated and monochromatic with hints of warm coloured bricks, which is inspired from the heritage values. This enables the development as a whole to be cohesive, but also allow differentiation between each unit.

The diagrams below illustrate house design and the relationship of the buildings to the street in further detail.



Three Storey Terrace (Block C)

Figure 9 Design Response diagrams for three-storey terraced typologies.



Two Storey Terrace/Duplex (Block A)

Figure 10 Design Response diagrams for two-storey terraced typologies.

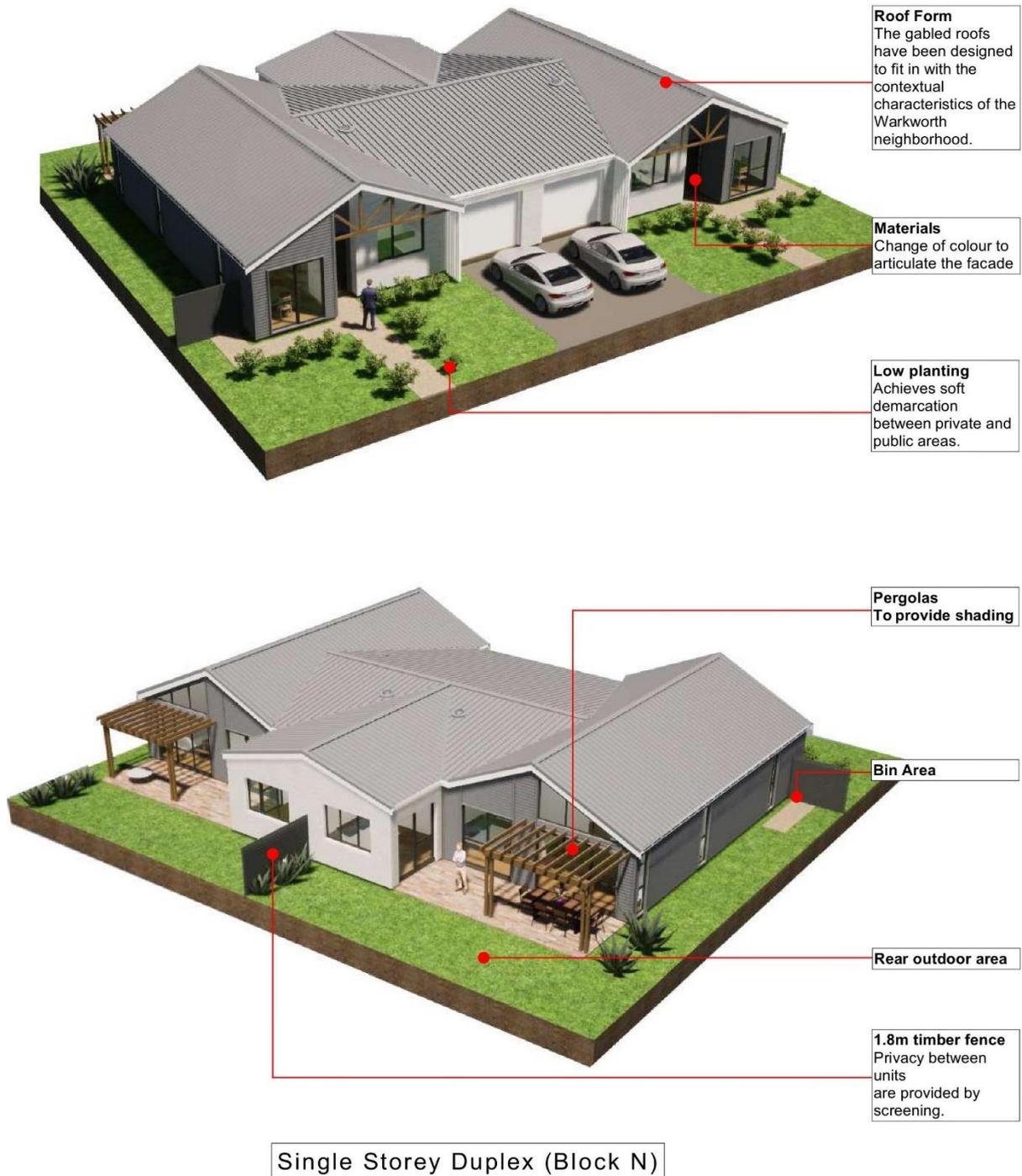


Figure 11 Design Response diagrams for single-storey duplexed typologies.

## Design Assessment against MHU zone criteria

### H5.2. Objectives

*(1) Land near the Business – Metropolitan Centre Zone and the Business – Town Centre Zone, high-density residential areas and close to the public transport network is efficiently used for higher density residential living and to provide urban living that increases housing capacity and choice and access to public transport.*

- The development is easily within 400m of the Warkworth town centre when connected by a pathway and bridge. It has been efficiently designed and used to maximise density in a way that is sensitive to both its many constraints, and its local context.

*(2) Development is in keeping with the neighbourhood's planned urban built character of predominantly three-storey buildings, in a variety of forms and surrounded by open space.*

- While the site does not have an immediately adjoining this area of MHU, it is responding to both the proximity and scale of the town centre.

*(3) Development provides quality on-site residential amenity for residents and adjoining sites and the street.*

- Its articulation of form, use of different materials and scale, along with the conscious effort to positively address the street with buildings, ensures it will be a quality development. Additionally, the retention of the native bush SEA and ONL provides a backdrop of significant amenity. The development notably facilitates public access to the heritage kilns area, something which is not possible at the moment as it is bounded by private property.

*(4) Non-residential activities provide for the community's social, economic and cultural well-being, while being compatible with the scale and intensity of development anticipated by the zone so as to contribute to the amenity of the neighbourhood.*

- Non-residential activities are in the immediate proximity (within 400m) of the Warkworth township. The town centre contains significant commercial amenity, social infrastructure, and transport options.

Consequently, it is considered the objectives for this zone have been met by this proposal.

### H5.3. Policies

*(1) Enable a variety of housing types at higher densities, including low-rise apartments and integrated residential development such as retirement villages.*

The housing types proposed contribute to and complement a diversity of residential dwellings both on-site and in the neighbourhood.

*(2) Require the height, bulk, form and appearance of development and the provision of sufficient setbacks and landscaped areas to achieve an urban built character of predominantly three storeys, in a variety of forms.*

- The proposed three-storey terraced blocks are designed to be stepped in form with articulated facades and the use of gable roofs and colour variations in breaking up the bulk of the building. Consideration has been given to northern outdoor living areas, optimising well-landscaped frontage to the streets with the privacy desired by the residents.

Units in the proposed development generally comply with yard setbacks, apart from minor infringements to Unit N1/Lot 10 and Unit D7/Lot and pergola projections to blocks H, C & D (refer *sheets A300-310*).

*(3) Encourage development to achieve attractive and safe streets and public open spaces including by:*

*(a) providing for passive surveillance*

- The design balances overlooking of the street with privacy for residents. Large windows for visual permeability with low fencing to the street are proposed (refer *landscape architect's design*) for maintaining passive surveillance of the public realms.

*(b) optimising front yard landscaping*

- The design provides for well landscaped front yard for trees and hedges, etc to provide a sense of community (refer *landscape architect's design*).

*(c) minimising visual dominance of garage doors.*

- Garages are designed to be set further back along the building façade to the street. For terraced blocks, the garages are accessed off JOALS to avoid visual dominance along the road frontages.

*(4) Require the height, bulk and location of development to maintain a reasonable standard of sunlight access and privacy and to minimise visual dominance effects to adjoining sites.*

- The proposed development complies with all HIRB and maximum height rules.

*(5) Require accommodation to be designed to meet day to day needs of residents by:*

*(a) providing privacy and outlook; and*

*(b) providing access to daylight and sunlight and providing the amenities necessary for those residents.*

- The design provides for north-facing private outdoor living spaces and outlook, with planting and fencing addressing private for the dwellings while contributing positively to the streetscape.

*(10(sic)) Recognise the functional and operational requirements of activities and development.*

- The proposal is well designed to cater for the functional requirements of the residential living activity including considerations for utilities, such as screening to all bin areas, particularly for Blocks C & D from JOALs, communal bin areas (Blocks M-S), and clotheslines to all units, etc.

*(6) Encourage accommodation to have useable and accessible outdoor living space.*

- The design provides for patios/decks connecting through ranch sliders directly off the main living area of each unit at ground floor and where applicable, also at first floor for the three-storey terraced blocks.

*(7) Restrict the maximum impervious area on a site in order to manage the amount of stormwater runoff generated by a development and ensure that adverse effects on water quality, quantity and amenity values are avoided or mitigated.*

- Proposed impervious area complies (refer *sheet A214*) also refer engineering reports.

**The assessment criteria used will be as the AUP H.5 Mixed Housing Urban chapter for restricted discretionary. Where relevant, commentary against assessment criteria will be given at the AUP section:**

*H5.8.2. Assessment criteria*

*The Council will consider the assessment criteria below for restricted discretionary activities to the extent relevant to the proposal:*

*(2) for four or more dwellings on a site:*

*(a) the extent to which or whether the development achieves the purpose outlined in the following standards or what alternatives are provided that result in the same or a better outcome:*

*(i) Standard H5.6.9 Maximum impervious areas;*

- Complies for the overall site (refer *sheet A214*) and for individual lot compliance, refer *sheet A215-217*.

*(ii) Standard H5.6.10 Building coverage;*

- Complies for the overall site (refer *sheet A214*) and for individual lot compliance, refer *sheet A215-217*.

(iii) *Standard H5.6.11 Landscaped area;*

- Complies for the overall site (refer *sheet A214*) and for individual lot compliance, refer *sheet A215-217*.

(iv) *Standard H5.6.12 Outlook space;*

- Complies for all units (refer *sheets A300-308*).

(v) *Standard H5.6.13 Daylight;*

- Complies

(vi) *Standard H5.6.14 Outdoor living space;*

- Complies for all units (refer *sheets A300-308*).

(vii) *Standard H5.6.15 Front, side and rear fences and walls;*

- Units generally complies, except for minor infringements shown on *sheets A300-310*, as summarised above, refer response to H5.3.2 above on page 15.

(viii) *Standard H5.6.16 Minimum dwelling size.*

- All dwelling units complies (refer *sheets A600-609*).

(b) *The extent to which the development contributes to a variety of housing types at higher densities in the zone and is in keeping with the neighbourhood's planned urban built character of predominantly three storey buildings (attached or detached) by limiting the height, bulk and form of the development and managing the design and appearance as well as providing sufficient setbacks and landscaped areas.*

The proposed development comprises a mix of terraced (two and three-storey), duplex and stand-alone housing contributing to a diverse housing types for Warkworth. Height restrictions nominated in the Plan Change Application limits the height of buildings, with the bulk further broken up by architectural elements and articulations to express individual dwellings within the duplex and terraced blocks (refer response to H5.3.2 above on page 15). The architectural design is appropriate to the surrounding context and character of Warkworth, refer section above 'Design Response – Building' on page 10.

(c) *The extent to which development achieves attractive and safe streets and public open space by:*

(i) *providing doors, windows and/or balconies facing the street and public open spaces*

- All units have front doors from the street for legibility. The units are all designed with open plan living, dining and kitchen with large windows to the public realms from either the living or kitchen end for passive surveillance of the street, proposed shared paths and open spaces, refer *sheets A300-308 and A600-609*.

(ii) *minimising tall, visually impermeable fences*

- The landscape design maintains low 1.2m fencing to the street optimising open, well-landscaped frontages to the streets. High 1.8m close-boarded fencing is limited to rear yards for ensuring privacy between dwellings, refer Landscape Architect's drawings.

*(iii) designing large scale development (generally more than 15 dwellings) to provide for variations in building form and/or façade design as viewed from streets and public open spaces.*

- The proposal achieves this with both variety in the housing types (refer response to H5.8.2.2b above) with feature building elements through articulations in in roof forms and façade treatment that is distinctive to each building blocks, while maintaining a consistent architectural language and style throughout the proposed development. Further, variations in materials and colour adds to the visual interest and diversity, contributing to a sense of individuality to the dwelling units, and sense of place for improving legibility. Refer *Block Elevations and Perspectives on sheets A500-528*.

*(iv) optimising front yard landscaping*

- The proposal achieves this, refer response to H5.3.3(b) above on page 15 and Landscape Architect's drawings.

*(v) providing safe pedestrian access to buildings from the street*

- All building blocks are designed to address the street with clearly defined direct pedestrian paths to the main entrances of each dwelling units. Pedestrian paths along JOALs are delineated by a change in surface finishes to provide for enhanced safety and connectivity to the street. Refer *sheets A300-302, Landscape Architect's drawings and also to the traffic engineering report*.

*(vi) minimising the visual dominance of garage doors, walkways or staircases to upper level dwellings, and carparking within buildings when viewed from streets or public open spaces*

- Garages are designed to be recessed on the building elevations to the street with parking and garages accessed off JOALs for the terraced blocks to avoid visual dominance along the road frontages, refer also to response to H5.3.3(c) above on page 15.
- Staircases are typically designed along intertenancy walls for the three-storey terraced blocks, and alongside garages for the two-storey terraces and duplexes. This allows for visual permeability with windows overlooking the street from living areas as well as bedrooms, refer *Block Elevations and Perspectives on sheets A500-528*.

*(d) The extent to which the height, bulk and location of the development maintains a reasonable standard of sunlight access and privacy and minimises visual dominance to adjoining sites;*

- All dwellings have north-facing outdoor living spaces, where these are to the rear yards on the ground floor, high 1.8m close-boarded fences maintains privacy between units. Where these are to the street side (i.e. Units H and J2), the design balances visual permeability overlooking of the public realm with privacy for the residents with low 1.2m fencing, and additional rear patios/decks provided for flexibility and functionality to these two units.

*(e) The extent to which dwellings:*

*(i) Orientate and locate windows to optimise privacy and encourage natural cross ventilation within the dwelling*

- Consideration is given to designing windows to overlook the street without compromising on the residents' privacy. Bedrooms are located on upper levels as much as possible. Where these are located on the ground floor (i.e. Blocks C and D), features such as pergolas with well-landscaped front yards balances addressing the street with privacy desired.
- All units, including the three-storey terraced blocks have open plan living/dining and kitchen with windows at both ends for natural cross ventilation.
- Particular attention has been given to units along the road to have kitchen window providing passive surveillance to the street with outdoor living to the private rear yards. With the exceptions of Units H and J2 due to orientation constraints, this also has pergolas and well-landscaped front yards to optimise privacy desired with overlooking of the street.

*(ii) Optimise sunlight and daylight access based on orientation, function, window design and location, and depth of the dwelling floor space*

- The proposal achieves this, refer responses to H5.3.5 on page 16, H5.8.2.2(d) and (e) above and typology plans on sheets A600-609.

*(iii) Provide secure and conveniently accessible storage for the number and type of occupants the dwelling is designed to accommodate.*

- Storage spaces are secure and easily accessible in cupboards located in corridors on each floor of the dwellings, generous wardrobe size in the bedrooms and spaces within garages (except for Block E), refer typology plans on sheets A600 to A609.

*(iv) Provide the necessary waste collection and recycling facilities in locations conveniently accessible and screens from streets and public open spaces.*

- Bin area are located to side yards and screened from streets and JOALs, including communal bin areas for Blocks M-S, refer Landscape Architect's drawings.

*(f) The extent to which outdoor living space:*

*(i) Provides for access to sunlight*

- All units have north-facing outdoor living spaces, refer sheets A300-302.

*(ii) Provides privacy between the outdoor living space of adjacent dwellings on the same site and between outdoor living space and the street.*

- Refer response to H5.8.2(d) above on page 18 and Landscape Architect's drawings.

*(iii) When provided at ground level, is located on generally flat land or otherwise functional*

- The proposal achieves this, refer detailed site plans with proposed contours from civil design overlaid on sheets A300-302 and site section on sheets A420-423.

(g) refer to Policy H5.3(7); and

- Refer Engineering reports.

(h) infrastructure and servicing:

(i) Whether there is adequate capacity in the existing stormwater and public reticulated water supply and wastewater network to service the proposed development.

- Refer Engineering reports.

(ii) Where adequate network capacity is not available, whether adequate mitigation is proposed.

- Refer Engineering reports

## Conclusion

The proposal achieves a visual effect, scale, density and form appropriate to the surrounding context and its proximity to the town centre. The proposal is in keeping and enhances the residential character, and ecological, landscape and heritage values on the site, as well as the quality of the Warkworth area. The site layout is fundamentally designed for optimal solar orientation, functionality and amenity for its residents while addressing the various unique site constraints. The street is well addressed by the buildings in terms of access and glazing to give optimal engagement and surveillance opportunity.

The internal site environment is considered safe and functional, with good definition to the variety of outdoor spaces and consideration given to privacy for the residents.

Although the current zoning of the site is FUZ, the design characteristics of the proposal are evaluated against the MHU Objectives and Policies as per the separate private plan change application to support Warkworth's future plan of intensification. The proposal is in line with the objectives and policies of the MHU zone through well-articulated design.

Accordingly, the application is fully supported.

Grant Neill

**B Arch, M Urb Des (1<sup>st</sup> cl. Hons)**

*For and on Behalf of*

**Pacific Environments NZ Ltd**

*Registered Architects*