

Smales Farm Proposed Plan Change

Landscape and Visual Assessment of Proposed Plan Change Provisions
Prepared for Smales Farm

21 March 2019



Boffa Miskell

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For A3 figures referenced in this document refer to the “Smales Farm Plan Change: Urban Design and Landscape Assessment Drawing Package” dated 21 March 2019. This drawing package contains 5 Sections and figures are numbered sequentially within each section (i.e. Part 1 - Figures 1-16; Part 2 – Figures 1-16; Part 3 - Figures 1-4, Part 4 – Figures 1-24; Part 5 – Figures 1-57).

1.0 Introduction

This Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) report has been prepared to accompany a Plan Change application to the Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in Part “(AUP”) to redefine the long term use of Smales Farm to accommodate an increased scale of development and greater diversity of activities on the site. This report should be read in conjunction with the Urban Design Assessment report also prepared by Boffa Miskell as the two assessments provide a complementary analysis of the proposed changes to the use, scale and character of the proposed development that would be provided for through the Plan Change and amended provisions.

Boffa Miskell has a long association with the development of Smales Farm, having been involved in the development of the original masterplan and associated landscape design for the overall site, as well as in the design and consenting of the staged development of the site.

In recent years Smales Farm has undertaken a strategic review of the current development plan for the site, including re-visiting the established development model, scale and form of development, and mix of activities. This has resulted in a new vision for the future of Smales Farm, together with a revised spatial concept masterplan, developed by BVN Architects Australia, that will guide the long term transformation of the site from a business park to a more diverse urban community, and enable a more vertical mixed use form of transit-oriented development. In late 2015 Boffa Miskell were engaged by Smales Farm to advise on the potential urban design, landscape and visual amenity issues and opportunities associated with the new future vision for the ongoing development of the property.

Boffa Miskell's involvement has been:

- international benchmarking of transit-oriented development opportunities and urban design and development outcomes against international best practice, particularly in Australian cities and Vancouver, Canada with respect to vertical mixed use development and transit-oriented development principles;
- a contextual urban design analysis of the site's locational attributes that inform suitability for transit-oriented development;
- testing of the concept masterplan prepared by BVN architects against an initial draft set of building envelope and other key development controls;
- 3-D modelling to test and analyse a range of potential building height, bulk and massing scenarios in terms of overall building envelopes on the Smales Farm site. These have been visualised contextually in relation to the existing environment and planned future built character in terms of development potential under the Auckland Unitary Plan;
- review and input into development of draft plan change provisions including precinct plans, objectives, policies, controls and assessment criteria;
- engagement with North Shore Hospital with respect to their future development plans and integration of these with the future vision for Smales Farm, particularly with respect to improving key pedestrian linkages between the Busway Station, Smales Farm and the Hospital across Taharoto Road;
- regular meetings with the Smales Farm plan change team as well as with planning officers of the Auckland Council and Ms Rebecca Skidmore, urban design and landscape consultant to Council with respect to the plan change request as the proposal has developed from 2016 to 2018.

2.0 Overview of Smales Farm

The original vision and masterplan for the Smales Farm Technology Office Park was created in the late 1990s. This vision was focussed on the site becoming a premier location on Auckland's North Shore for corporate offices, with an aspiration to become '*New Zealand's best place to work and do business*'. The masterplan that was developed at that time was based upon developing a campus-style development of medium rise commercial office buildings set within an open spacious landscape setting.

The development areas within the site were arranged in four quadrants separated by the axial structure of internal streets - The Avenue and The Boulevard – to provide for direct access through and into the site from each of the site's three public street frontages.

The masterplan has been progressively developed in stages, beginning with the distinctive curved form of the (now) Vodafone Building on the corner of Northcote and Taharoto Roads, first developed as the headquarters for Clear Communications. Due to its prominence and defining presence on this major intersection coming on and off the Northern Motorway at Northcote Road, the early development of this building quickly came to define Smales Farm as a major new location for commercial office activity on the North Shore with buildings of a scale and architectural quality with a landscape character markedly different from the scale and character of development in the surrounding area. This also marked the change from the site's previously undeveloped farm-like state as a remnant of a once rural part of the North Shore.

Further stages of development have now established four additional major commercial office buildings - the Air New Zealand building, Q4 building, Sovereign building and most recently, the B:HIVE building that opened for business in late 2017. These five buildings comprise approximately 58,000m² of commercial floor space (GFA) of between 4 and 6 levels up to RL51.8 or a height of 27.6m above ground level (a.g.l.).

The balance of future development areas across the site are currently utilised for either surface carparking, or open lawn and planting that provides on-site amenity for workers and visitors to Smales Farm. The original masterplan envisaged the staged redevelopment of these areas over time for additional commercial office buildings incorporating basement carparking, as demand enabled.

Ultimately, the masterplan, envisaged up to 17 standalone commercial office buildings of 105,000m² in Gross Floor Area (GFA) as depicted in Figure 1, Part 1 of the Urban Design and Landscape Assessment Drawing Package ("**drawing package**"). Buildings would vary in footprint, form and scale but typically be 4-6 storeys and up to approximately 27m in height. Each building would be located in a standalone manner with a degree of separation from others, thereby continuing to be set within an open landscape setting consistent with the desired campus style development pattern of office business parks, as depicted in the illustrative birds' eye view.

As of 2018 and the completion of the B:HIVE building, Smales Farm has completed approximately 55% of the total development envisaged by the first masterplan (as depicted in Figure 2 in Part 1 of the drawing package). This equates to 36% of the total theoretical 162,000 GFA cap on commercial floor space under the Smales Farm precinct planning provisions that had been incorporated within the former North Shore District Plan, and largely rolled over into the Auckland Unitary Plan.

Continued ownership of the land and buildings by the Smales family has enabled a comprehensive approach to the development on site and this is reflected in the consistently high quality of architectural and landscape design achieved in each stage of development, and the consistent ongoing upkeep of the property. This has maintained a strong identity for Smales Farm and its image as a high quality business park in an attractive setting that is highly

accessible are qualities that have served the development well as Auckland and the North Shore have continued to grow and diversify rapidly over the last three decades.

3.0 Site and Landscape Context

Smales Farm is a large 10.8 ha standalone site bound by public road corridors on all four sides – Taharoto Road and Northcote Road both primary arterial routes to the east and south respectively, Shakespeare Road extension (a link road to the Smales Farm Bus Station) to the north and the Northern Motorway/Busway corridor to the west. The site is largely flat but has maximum fall from Taharoto Road to the boundary with the Northern Motorway land of some 6 metres.

With reference to Figure 1: Site Context (Part 5 of the drawing package) it can be seen that most landholdings immediately surrounding the site are of a relatively large size and contain a mix of typically large-scale office, educational, health care and recreational uses. These include Westlake Girls High School to the northwest, The Poynton Metlifecare Retirement Village and North Shore Hospital to the north-east, Takapuna Normal Intermediate School to the south and the Northern Motorway, Onewa Domain / Smiths Bush and AF Thomas Park to the west / south west.

Around these largescale landholdings are a range of smaller scale commercial and mixed use residential sites, many of which have a change in zoning in the AUP to enable higher building densities and heights as depicted in Figures 11 and 12 in Part 1 of the drawing package. To the south-east the residential catchment is on land at a similar elevation to the site whereas to the north beyond Westlake Girls High School the land rises up to include Westlake Boys High School and residential use areas beyond.

While the Northern Motorway corridor and associated busway are solely used for vehicular transport, the other significant roading infrastructure surrounding Smales Farm, which includes Northcote Road, Taharoto Road and Shakespeare Road all provide for vehicular traffic (bus and cars), cyclists and pedestrians within their 20-30m road corridors. The Smales Farm Busway Station, accessed from the end of Shakespeare Road extension generates large amounts of traffic with the bus station parcel of land having an adjoining property boundary with the north-western corner of the Smales Farm precinct. Aside from the bus station, all other neighbouring land uses are separated from the Precinct by public road reserve or designated transport corridor.

Given the types of land uses in the area surrounding the Smales Farm site these road corridors service large volumes of all modes of transport related to commuter peak, school hour and hospital visiting times. One of the keys to understanding the landscape and visual context of Smales Farm is the extent to which these road corridors clearly define and separate the site from the land-uses beyond.

Taharoto Road has gradually evolved to become a more mixed use commercial corridor, with former residential dwellings being adapted to house a range of commercial business premises as well as new purpose built buildings for commercial office, healthcare and other service businesses uses making the most of the profile and proximity to the North Shore Hospital and Smales Farm as a more concentrated node of larger scale commercial and institutional / healthcare activity on the western side of Lake Pupuke between Takapuna and Milford centres.

To the immediate east across Taharoto Road from Smales Farm lies the North Shore Hospital, which occupies a large site which extends to Lake Pupuke with a long frontage to and principal points of entry from Shakespeare Road, and Shea Terrace. The hospital campus has developed incrementally over time, typical of such large and long-established facilities, and is identified contextually by the height and bulk of the main hospital block that is approximately

60m high (around 10 storeys) with rooftop plant above a three-four storey podium. The Hospital Precinct has considerable capacity to further develop under the Unitary Plan with height limits of 15m, 25m and a greater height area of 75m concentrated around the central core of the existing 60m hospital block.

Adjoining the Hospital on the corner of Taharoto and Shakespeare Roads is The Poynton Metlifecare Retirement Village and Aged Care Facility. This has been developed in stages to form a perimeter block development of 5 storey buildings which define this major intersection.

The main hospital block and the recently constructed standalone parking building near the Shea Terrace hospital entrance, are, together with The Poynton and the five main office building blocks constructed on Smales Farm, readily visible on the skyline from low level locations and also seen from a number of other more elevated locations within the wider area surrounding this node of commercial/health care/living activities.

To the immediate north lies the campus of Westlake Girls' High School across Shakespeare Road extension on a large site with over 2,000 students. Westlake Girls' has a large long site similar in orientation to Smales Farm although somewhat narrower to the north being sandwiched between the Northern Motorway / Busway corridor and Wairau Road that continues on as an extension of Taharoto Road before turning to pass under the motorway beside the Wairau Stream. Westlake Girls' has a zoning of Mixed Housing Urban with a building height of 11m + 1m roof allowance.

Beyond Westlake Girls' to the north, the land starts to rise in elevation up Forrest Hill Road towards Westlake Boys' High School and the undulating hill slopes of the Forrest Hill residential suburb. Aside from the Boys' High School, this is a largely residential area with properties along and in proximity to Forrest Hill Road zoned Mixed Housing Urban and the balance of the area Mixed Housing Suburban. Properties on the south-facing slopes afford views across the foreground of the Shakespeare and Taharoto Road areas including Smales Farm and the Hospital towards Lake Pupuke and Rangitoto Island as well as the high rises at Takapuna and the more distant City Centre skyline to the south.

The Northern Motorway, together with the Northern Busway and Northcote Road interchange, form a very wide transport corridor (between 80 and 130m wide) separating Smales Farm from areas further west and south-west. A F Thomas Park, an Auckland Council owned public reserve, borders the motorway corridor opposite Smales Farm and Westlake Girls'. The park is a designated reserve under the Reserves Act and zoned Open Space – Sport and Active Recreation and comprises the public 18 hole Takapuna Golf Course accessed from Northcote Road as well as the North Shore Events Centre and associated conferencing and carparking facilities at the northern end.

Takapuna Normal Intermediate School is situated to the immediate south of Smales Farm across Northcote Road, with a mix of residential properties to either side of its Northcote Road entrance and a commercially developed property, on the corner site at the eastern end of the block. This corner site forms part of the Taharoto Road commercial corridor zoned Business Mixed Use under the Unitary Plan. The school and other MHU zoned properties along Northcote Road can build up to 11m + 1m roof allowance stepping up to 16m + 2m roof allowance for the mixed use on the Taharoto Road corner.

This corner of Northcote and Taharoto Roads is defined by the landmark curved corner building on Smales Farm that is now the New Zealand headquarters for Vodafone. This building, at six storeys in height, has become a major feature of this large six lane intersection that provides an immediate built scale element to the surrounding street environment. This is in contrast to the smaller scale, suburban form and built character of development that still characterises much of the rest of the sites to the south along Taharoto Road.

Beyond these more immediate land uses are a mix of commercial, residential, recreation and education activities typical of the wider Takapuna and North Shore area as depicted in Figure 2: Landscape Context Part 5 of the drawing package. To the west these are located on rising land which include the large residential areas of Northcote, Hillcrest and Glenfield which extend up to

the catchment boundary along the north-south oriented Glenfield Road ridge. To the north-west lies Wairua Valley a large commercial/industrial area on flat land which separates the more distant residential area of Unsworth Heights from the Smales Farm area. To the north/north-east on rising land are the residential areas of Forrest Hill and Sunnynook while to the east on flat land which extends beyond Lake Pupuke to the east coast is the town centre of Milford. Milford has Town Centre zoning with height allowances of 18m and 32.5m.

To the south-east is Takapuna, located at a similar elevation to Milford and the Smales Farm site area and allowing for high rise development in the area of the Metropolitan Centre zoned for unlimited height (but subject to FAR and building in relation boundary standards). There is an existing cluster of three high rise towers, including the Sentinel at approximately 118m high, that mark out Takapuna within the wider North Shore context including from Smales Farm.

Further to the south is the Devonport Peninsula located on undulating landform across a series of ridges and coastal edges. Further to the south across the Waitemata Harbour is Auckland City and while this area and much of the other areas outlined above do not currently have a landscape or visual relationship with the site at present, the proposed changes to the height limits on Smales Farm will afford views from parts of these areas.

4.0 Proposed Plan Change

The purpose of the Proposed Plan Change (“PPC”) is to enable a greater density and diversity of development at Smales Farm in terms of the scale and form of built development and the mix of activities provided for. Planning provisions to provide for these outcomes are required to support the transition from its current relatively low intensity and single use focus as a suburban business park to a vibrant, mixed use transit-oriented development.

In essence the Plan Change seeks to intensify the Precinct by providing for residential activity, while maintaining the amount of commercial office space already provided for, and continuing appropriate small scale retail and commercial services in proportion to the total quantum of development across the site. This will be achieved by providing for taller more vertical forms of development within a greater maximum height limit on the site.

This new vision for the future of Smales Farm has been developed in collaboration with BVN Architects who have prepared a new concept masterplan for the site (refer to Figures 1 and 2: Proposed Concept Masterplan in Part 2 of the drawing package). BVN architects have an established connection to the development of Smales Farm, having co-designed the B:HIVE and earlier Sovereign Building, maintaining the high quality design consistent with the overall character of the development.

This concept masterplan, which was originally prepared for the strategic business planning purposes of Smales Farm Management, has as part of the preparation of this plan change request, been tested and updated to inform and reflect the proposed plan change provisions, particularly those that influence the overall scale and form of development in terms of building separation, building height and massing.

There are a number of new provisions in the PPC that are important in considering the potential landscape and visual effects and require review as part of this LVA. These are as follows:

- i. A new objective encouraging intensive development within a mixed use transit oriented development (Objective 1538.2(A1)).
- ii. A requirement for landscaped open space and pedestrian connections to be provided throughout the development to ensure an appropriate level of amenity for residents as well as workers and visitors (Policy 1538.3(1B)).

- iii. Delineation of the site into 2 maximum height areas (above an average ground level (a.g.l.) at the Taharoto Road frontage) – refer to Figure 1 Height Plan (in Part 3 of the drawing package). This plan depicts Height Area 1 up to RL50.4 or 27m above a.g.l. – a 50m wide area along the full Taharoto frontage, and along Northcote Road and Shakespeare Road Extension frontages between Taharoto Road and The Avenue; and Height Area 2 up to RL123.4 or 100m above a.g.l. within the balance of the site (Standard 1538.6.4(1)).
- iv. Enabling limited taller development up to 100m above a.g.l. is not to exceed 3,000m² in cumulative combined floorplate (Standard 1538.6.4(2)). This could reasonably correspond to up to 3 high rise towers above the RL98.4 (75m) height.
- v. Maximum tower dimensions (in plan) of 55m for buildings above 27m; and 35m for buildings above 75m (Standard 1538.6.5(1) and (2)).
- vi. A minimum separation distance of 20m between all buildings above a height of 27m (Standard 1538.6.5(4)).

In addition, the existing Height in Relation to Boundary Controls (“**HRB**”) for the zone apply which will continue to manage the interface with adjoining residential and open space zones (which include the schools and AF Thomas Park) as depicted in the Concept Masterplan Sections - Figures 3 and 4 in Part 2 of the drawing package.

The above objectives, policies and standards have been prepared to encourage residential living in a well-designed, mixed use environment with a good level of amenity. The above standards are proposed to provide a transition between the taller buildings located within the middle and southern part of the site and the other road frontages, to ensure a good level of amenity along public street frontages and neighbouring properties. The building footprint and tower dimension and separation standards are proposed to limit the number of tall buildings (particularly above 75m) and require these to be sufficiently slender and separated so they are generally seen as individual structures with their own identity rather than a mass of flat built form that merges together when seen from off-site locations. This is particularly relevant for closer proximity locations as it is acknowledged that from more distant locations the buildings will often merge together in views. It is also relevant to note that a height of 75m is consistent with the maximum permitted on the North Shore Hospital site and that 100m (the maximum permitted) is equivalent to the height of the Sentinel residential building in Takapuna, which also has an approximate 35m plan dimension consistent with that proposed for this precinct.

In addition to the above standards, for new buildings (including alterations and additions to existing) the assessment criteria are proposed to ensure their design is of a high quality with appropriate materials that are well modulated and articulated; and that the roof profile, plant and equipment is integrated into the building design.

Furthermore, any taller buildings over RL50.4m or 27m above a.g.l. will be assessed against criteria which requires buildings to:

- maintain the visual amenity of the overall site development as viewed from residential zones and public places beyond Smales Farm;
- make a positive contribution to the collective skyline of Smales Farm;
- respond and relate appropriately to the scale and form of adjacent buildings on the site; and
- be designed to mitigate off-site adverse shadowing, dominance and privacy effects.

5.0 Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology

5.1 Methodology - Guidance

This assessment has been undertaken with reference to the Quality Planning Landscape Guidance Note¹ and its signposts to examples of best practice, which include:

- *Best Practice Note 10.1, Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (2010).*
- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute (UK) and IEMA (2013).*
- *Auckland Council Information Requirements for the assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects (September 2017).*

5.2 Methodology – Effects Ratings

This assessment provides ratings, based upon the professional judgement of the author(s), in relation to the level of landscape and visual effects that would result from a maximum development on the Smales Farm site in accordance with the proposed plan change provisions.

These ratings are defined in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Effects Ratings

Effect Rating	Use and Definition
Very High:	Total loss to the characteristics or key attributes of the receiving environment and /or visual context amounting to a complete change of landscape character.
High:	Major change to the characteristics or key attributes of the receiving environment and /or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or a major effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Moderate- High:	A moderate - high level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have a moderate - high level of effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Moderate:	A moderate level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have a moderate level of effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Moderate - Low:	A moderate - low level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have moderate - low level of effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Low:	A low level of effect on the character or key attributes of the receiving environment and/or the visual context within which it is seen; and/or have a low effect on the perceived amenity derived from it.
Very Low:	Very low or no modification to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline or available views, i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation.

In combination with assessing the significance of effects, the landscape and visual effects assessment also considers the nature of effects in terms of whether this will be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which it occurs. Neutral effects can also occur where the visual change is considered to be benign in the context of the environment where it occurs. The nature of these are defined in **Table 2** below:

¹ <http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/index.php/planning-tools/land/landscape>

Table 2: Determining the Nature of Effects

Nature of Effect	Use and Definition
Adverse (negative):	The proposed development would result in a reduction in landscape and / or visual amenity values due to being out of scale, or at odds with the local character, pattern and quality of the environment.
Neutral (benign):	The proposed development would complement (or blend in with) the scale, character, pattern and quality of the environment maintaining landscape and / or visual amenity values.
Beneficial (positive):	The proposed development would enhance the landscape and / or visual amenity through restoration or enhancement of degraded environments and / or addition of elements that result in improvement to the character, pattern or quality of the environment.

In relation to the determination of minor (where this is relevant in relation to notification considerations or non-complying activities under the Resource Management Act) it is considered that adverse effects that are Moderate-Low would be Minor in nature. It is also the case that an adverse effect above Moderate-Low can still result in an overall Minor effect. This depends on the sensitivity of the landscape and viewing audience; and the scale and character of the proposal and its landscape context. While the determination of minor is not directly relevant to a plan change request the relationship between the landscape and visual effects rating used (i.e. very high to very low) and minor has been included to indicate the relationship of both scales.

A landscape assessment is carried out to determine effects on an environmental resource (i.e. landscape elements, patterns and character); whereas an assessment of visual effects considers how changes to the physical elements, features and character may affect the viewing audience and visual amenity.

Whereas it is usual to assess effects on both the landscape as a resource and visual effects on amenity and peoples' appreciation of the landscape, in this assessment for the PPC at Smales Farm, the focus is largely on the visual effects as the site is zoned for business activity and currently largely developed with virtually no natural elements, patterns or processes that could be affected by the proposed change to the use. With the exception of the Lake Pupuke Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF) this LVA concentrates on visual effects due to the nature of the site and surrounding environment. Changes to the urban landscape character are largely addressed in the Urban Design Assessment.

5.3 Methodology – Approach

Following a description and analysis of the wider landscape context and viewing audience within which the Smales Farm site is located, the assessment addresses the extent of visibility and depicts a range of views, discusses the change to the view from a selected number of representative viewpoints and evaluates the effects on visual amenity.

The assessment methodology has involved a ZTV Analysis² of the BVN 3-dimension model as a long term maximum development provided for in the PPC. The technical visibility analysis has been augmented through numerous site visits, a survey of publicly accessible surrounding viewing locations, photographic recording, and the use of visual simulations.

² A ZTV analysis, is a GIS tool which enables the extent of visibility of an object or location to be determined based on surface and above ground contour data.

5.4 Visual Amenity Effects

Visual effects result from changes to specific views and the visual amenity experienced by people. The level of change should be considered in relation to the sensitivity of the viewing audience, when evaluating the significance of an effect. In this context the sensitivity is also considered in relation to the future and progressive future scale and character of built form as enabled by the AUP as outlined above.

The change in relation to this proposal would derive from the introduction of new provisions within the AUP enabling additional height to built elements on the site which may potentially detract from (or positively add to) the existing features and character of the site and surrounding urban context, and may limit the range of visibility to more distant features.

In relation to the proposed plan change the degree to which visual effects are generated by the enabled development also depends on:

- The degree to which the proposal contrasts, or is consistent, with the qualities of the surrounding urban landscape.
- The predictable and likely known future character of the locality including the ongoing and progressive changes over the life of the AUP.
- The quality of the resultant development, its aesthetic values and contribution to the wider landscape character of the area.
- The proportion of the proposal that is visible, determined by the observer's position relative to the objects viewed.
- The foreground and background context within which the proposal is viewed.
- The wider area or extent of visual catchment from which the proposal is visible.
- The number of viewers, their location and situation (static or moving) in relation to the view.
- The reason for a viewing audience being at the viewpoint or looking at the view.

Change in a landscape does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways, these changes are both natural and human induced. In urban environments change is an everyday part of a city's development, and in Auckland's case where population growth has to be accommodated development of a greater scale is inevitable. What is important in managing landscape change in urban environments such as Smales Farm, where further development is anticipated both within the site and surrounding area, is that potential significant adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated through the plan change provisions to ameliorate the adverse effects of the change in land use. The aim is to enable a high amenity environment through appropriate design outcomes that can provide an adequate substitution for the currently experienced amenity.

An important factor in determining the level of effects in relation to the PPC, and the development it enables, is the timeframe that the change will occur over. Over the past 20 years approximately 36% of the maximum commercial GFA has been developed on the site. While there is no GFA cap on residential development the BVN model is based on 138,000m² which it is estimated would take 30 years to fully develop. As such the visible change on the site will occur gradually over time and this needs to be taken into account when reviewing the visual simulations (in Part 5 of the drawing package) and the predicted level of effects.

In this respect, in addition to the change in the scale and landscape character resulting from medium rise to high rise buildings, it is important how well the proposed development responds to and delivers on the expectations for that development over time, as set out in the PPC and the AUP.

6.0 Visual Catchment, Viewing Audiences and Visual Effects

6.1 Visibility Analysis – Immediate Context

With reference to Figure 1: Site Context (in Part 5 of the Drawing package) it can be seen that most landholdings immediately surrounding the site are of a relatively large size and contain a mix of typically largescale office, educational, health care and recreational uses. These include Westlake Girls High School to the northwest, The Poynton Metlifecare Retirement Village and North Shore Hospital to the north-east, Takapuna Normal Intermediate School to the south and the Northern Motorway and AF Thomas Park Onewa Domain to the west.

Around these largescale landholdings are a range of smaller scale commercial and mixed use residential sites, many of which have a change in zoning in the AUP to enable higher building densities and heights. In particular, (as depicted in the Figures 5 – 24: 3D Zoning Views in Part 4 of the drawing package), greater height and scale of development is enabled and anticipated over time within the immediate area surrounding the Smales Farm site, including along Taharoto Road, parts of Northcote Road, Shakespeare Road and within the Hospital site.

In addition to the Northern Motorway corridor and associated busway, the site is bounded on all other sides by significant roading infrastructure, which includes Northcote Road - a primary arterial route to the south, Taharoto Road - a primary arterial route to the east and Shakespeare Road Extension (a link road to the Smales Farm Bus Station) to the north. These road corridors and the large volumes of vehicle traffic define and separate the site from the land-uses beyond.

6.2 Visibility Analysis – Wider Context

In relation to the wider landscape context, Smales Farm (along with the North Shore Hospital) is located approximately equidistant from the Takapuna Metropolitan Centre and Milford Town Centre. These more intensive commercial land uses create a triangle of major land development surrounding Lake Pupuke and its tuff crater, which all provide for additional scale and height above that of the surrounding area (refer to Figure 2: Landscape Context in Part 5 of the Drawing package).

Beyond the more immediate surrounding land uses and the above development centres, Smales Farm is located in a wider landscape context which allows for a range of viewing audiences. Some of these currently have views of existing buildings within Smales Farm and will have views of buildings associated with the future development as provided for in the Proposed Plan Change. The following are the current key viewing audiences which are represented by photos as indicated in the Figures below in Part 5 of the drawing package:

- To the west beyond AF Thomas Park and Onewa Domain the land begins to rise up to the north south ridge that generally follows Glenfield Road. The eastern slopes of this area which encompass parts of the Northcote, Hillcrest and Glenfield residential areas enable views out to east and across the Smales Farm site (along with Milford and Takapuna) and from some locations towards the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto (refer to Figures 25-29).
- To the north and north-west the land also rises up towards Westlake Boys High School and beyond this to a high point at the intersection of Forrest Hill Road and East Coast Road where there is an underground water tank / skate park and seating area all set within Greville Reserve. To the northwest views from parts of Sunset Road and Rosedale look across to the city. These viewpoints offer views of the site's existing buildings, albeit at a much greater distance from Greville Reserve and Sunset Road (refer to Figures 30-34).

- To the east beyond the North Shore Hospital is Lake Pupuke set within lower lying land that extends out towards Milford Beach and Takapuna Beach. On the eastern shores of Lake Pupuke is Sylvan Park and Dickinson Park which have unrestricted views to the south and west towards the hospital and Smales Farm beyond (refer to Figures 35-37).
- To the south east around Killarney Park there are also views across Lake Pupuke to the hospital (refer to Figures 38-41). Beyond this area the land is also low lying and apart from high rise buildings within Takapuna CBD, and near views from Taharoto Road, existing development screens views of the site and its existing buildings (refer to Figures 17-19).
- In addition to the above, the Smales Farm site is viewed by thousands of commuters and visitors who travel on the Northern Motorway each day. When travelling south towards the city, as one approaches the Wairau Road overbridge, both Westlake Girls High School and Smales Farm site come in to view and Smales Farm can be seen at an oblique angle for approximately 800m (refer to Figures 43-45).
- When travelling north, Smales Farm comes into view beyond Smiths Bush for a short duration over a distance of approximately 200m (refer to Figures 46-48).

From this range of locations, the viewing audience consists of a mix of residents, office and other workers, commuters (by all transport modes on the motorway, busway and surrounding street network), travelling visitors, tourists and people recreating in the nearby and surrounding parks and reserves.

6.3 Visibility Analysis– Proposed Plan Change

The potential viewing locations of the proposal have been identified by a computer generated analysis (using ArcGIS 10.3.1) known as a zone of theoretical visibility ("ZTV"), and represented on the plans titled Visibility Analysis: ZTV – Site Context and Visibility Analysis: ZTV – Landscape Context (refer to Figures 3 and 4 in Part 5 of the drawing package).

This analysis utilises LIDAR³ data to determine the areas within which three of the tallest buildings (up to 100m high) depicted on the Concept Masterplan would theoretically be visible (taking into account existing vegetation and structures that may obscure the views), and therefore may have an effect upon the visual amenity experienced by people and the sensory qualities of the urban landscape. Importantly, theoretical visibility does not equate to visual effect, and to this extent the ZTV analysis is used as a guide only to aid identification of the potential maximum visual catchment and viewing audiences and assist with identifying photographic viewpoints.

Based on the ZTV analysis a number of potential viewpoints were identified, and reviewed by Auckland Council's urban design, landscape and visual effects reviewer, from which an agreed set of viewpoints were then visited to verify the visibility of the proposed facilities and to take photos to assist with this assessment. These viewpoints are depicted on Figures 5 and 6 in Part 5 of the drawing package, and photographs from these locations are also attached in Part 5 in the figures that follow. Of the 29 viewpoints, 13 have been selected to prepare a visual simulation of the BVN concept masterplan 3-D model. The locations of these 13 simulations are highlighted in green on Figures 5 and 6 and the photographic representations of the concept masterplan follow each of the photographs from these viewpoints. While there are a range of built scenarios that could be achieved through the PPC (differing from that depicted in the simulations) those shown and assessed are a realistic maximum development that could be achieved on the site over an estimated 30-50 year period.

³ LIDAR is a Light Detection and Ranging survey method that measures the distance to a target by illuminating the target with a pulsed laser light

6.4 Potential Visual Effects Resulting from Proposed Plan Change

The above viewpoints have been grouped into 4 geographic areas based on their distance and orientation in relation to the Smales Farm site for analysis and discussion of the potential effects on the visual amenity values of the public and private viewing audiences, with photos and simulations depicted in Part 5 of the drawing package. These are:

- i. Foreground Views (within approximately 1-1.5km of site)
- ii. Middle Ground Views (approximately 1.5 to 3km of site)
- iii. Distant Views (beyond 3km)

i. Foreground Views

- **Adjacent to Smales Farm** – Views from this area include those immediately adjoining the site (Taharoto Road, Northcote Road, Shakespeare Road Extension and the Northern Motorway); as well as those from nearby surrounding areas which include AF Thomas Park to the west, Takapuna Normal Intermediate and adjacent Mixed Housing Urban, Mixed Use Business land to the south-east, those across Taharoto Road, which includes North Shore Hospital, and the Metlifecare retirement village, and Westlake Girls High School to the north.

The change to the view within this context is represented in Part 2 of the drawing package. Development up to the additional height proposed in the plan change is set back within the site separated from the boundary by the 50 metre set back and/or the height in relation to boundary provisions. This will result in much of the higher level development within the site being obscured from nearby viewing locations (such as the surrounding street network) as can be seen in the Concept Masterplan Sections (Figures 3 and 4 in Part 2) of the drawing package. However, from many of the locations just beyond the immediate street network the development will appear at a greater height than is currently permitted and buildings will be of a height and scale where they will be more prominent. They would however not appear incongruous or out of scale with the currently permitted development as depicted in Figure 5 - Street Level View 1 (from the corner of Taharoto road and Northcote Road), Figure 6 – Street Level View 2 (from the corner of Shakespeare Road and Wairau Road) and Figure 7 – Street Level View 3 (adjacent to the Busway Station) in Part 2 of the drawing package. While the buildings appear tall they would be seen within the existing development on the site and adjacent properties. From these locations given the scale and nature of the existing urban context, along with the plan change provisions which require a high standard of development it is considered that the visual amenity effects would largely be neutral. However, it is recognised that some adverse visual effects could occur for some nearby residents who may have a clear view of the higher buildings which would extend further into the sky and being a more prominent element in their view. These effects could be up to a moderate adverse level. From the Northern Motorway/Northcote Road interchange (as depicted in Figure 8 – Street Level View 4 in Part 2 of the drawing package) the taller buildings would appear more prominent as they are seen close to the boundary without the transition of lower 27m buildings on the other boundaries of the site. Given the heavily trafficked nature of this area and the potential for a landmark character tall corner building as depicted in the Concept Masterplan, the visual amenity effects are considered to be Neutral to Beneficial from this location.

- **Takapuna – Northcote** – from other nearby locations within Takapuna and Northcote (but beyond the immediate site surrounds) there will be locations from where the upper parts of tall buildings on the Smales Farm site (beyond those already constructed or permitted up to 27m) would be visible. Viewpoints 10-14 (Figures 19-24) are representative of some of these low level locations around Fred Thomas Drive and Akoranga Drive and Northcote

Road. These locations would include the Lakehouse Arts Centre and Café, Rosmini College playing fields, AUT North Campus and Onewa Domain. Two viewpoint locations (10 and 14 – Figures 19 and 24) have been chosen to represent the building mass of the masterplan. From these nearby locations (within approximately 1km and 500m respectively) the buildings would be prominent in the view resulting in a new elevated skyline element. From Viewpoint 10 and other similar locations, it is anticipated that the additional building height provided through the Plan Change would result in largely Neutral effects, however from Viewpoint 14 at Onewa Domain which is currently characterised by open parkland framed by vegetation there could be up to Moderate Adverse visual effects for some users who value the existing enclosed vegetated context of the view.

ii. Middle Ground Views

- **Devonport Peninsula** - from some locations between Esmonde Road in the north and Devonport township in the south views of the proposed buildings would be visible from elevated locations (such as the Bayswater Peninsula, Takapuna Grammar, Takarunga (Mt Victoria) and Maungauika (North Head Historic Reserve), and coastal locations around Shoal Bay and Bayswater Marina. These locations are represented in Figures 13-17. From Viewpoint 8 (Figure 16) a simulation has been prepared of the building massing based on the BVN model. This depicts a group of buildings set above the middle ground landform within the context of the commercial buildings in Akoranga Drive and Barrys Point Road as well as the hospital and the taller buildings in Takapuna. It is considered that buildings in accord with the additional height provided through the Plan Change will generate Neutral visual effects from these locations due primarily to the distances involved and the foreground complexity of these urban views.
- **Glenfield and Hillcrest** – From the elevated slopes to the west and north-west of the site there is a large residential area with views out to the east over Takapuna, Milford and out to the Hauraki Gulf. From many of these locations the additional building height provided for in the Plan Change will be visible and from the more elevated locations the upper parts may be seen silhouetted against the sky and gulf islands. Viewpoints 11 (Figure 20) and 15-17 (Figures 25-29) represent the views from these locations. Simulations of the 3-D model from viewpoints 15 (Figure 26 from Ocean View Road) and 16 (Figure 28 from the upper carpark level of the Glenfield Shopping Centre) have been prepared. From these and similar locations, the more elevated buildings will be more prominent and will result in additional high-rise buildings in the wider view across the Takapuna shopping area and North Shore Hospital / Milford area. Despite the potential for some obscuring of distant sea views, given the expansive nature of the views from these sorts of locations it is considered that the adverse visual effects of the additional height provided by the Plan Change are likely to be low on the Glenfield / Hillcrest viewing audience. From a very narrow band of residential housing where the tall buildings could be seen in front of Rangitoto (and more particularly the summit) it is considered that there could be up to Moderate Adverse visual effects due to buildings potentially obscuring this Outstanding Landscape Feature (ONF). It should be noted that other buildings within the hospital site and Takapuna Metropolitan Centre could also have new buildings that obscure these view from similar locations.
- **Forrest Hill and Rosedale** – from some elevated areas within Forrest Hill and the more distant Rosedale area there are views to the south over the Smales Farm site with the tall buildings in Takapuna and the North Shore Hospital also part of the view, and with the Auckland CBD (including Sky Tower), volcanic landforms and wider city scene in the background. Viewpoints 18 to 20 (Figures 30-34) are representative of views from these locations. A simulated view of the 3-D masterplan from Greville Reserve (Viewpoint 19 - Figure 32) and Westlake Boys High (Viewpoint 10 - Figure 19) have been prepared. From this and other similar locations the higher buildings on the site and within the hospital will result in another area of more intensive built form similar to Takapuna. Within the context of the existing view it is considered that the additional building height provided for in the Plan

Change would generate Neutral visual effects from these locations due to the other large scale built form and range of distances that the Smales Farm development is potentially seen from.

- **Lake Pupuke** – from the northern, eastern and southern shores of Lake Pupuke clear views across the water are afforded towards the North Shore Hospital, Smales Farm and other urban/residential development around the lake edge. Viewpoints 21 to 26 (Figures 35-42) represent views from around Lake Pupuke with Figures 36 and 39 containing the simulated 3-D masterplan buildings, including up to 75m and 100m as provided for in the PPC. On the eastern shore of Lake Pupuke is Sylvan Park and on the southern shores is Killarney Park which rises up to Killarney Street. Near the water's edge of Killarney Park is the Pumphouse Theatre and a small café as well as parking and seating areas. From these locations, the taller buildings would be more prominent in the view as they extend above the existing Vodafone and hospital buildings. Further development of a similar nature is provided for and anticipated on the hospital grounds and this would be closer to the viewpoints and/or nearer to the lake. Based on the context of these views and the relative distance to the Smales Farm site, the currently expansive nature of the views and the North Shore Hospital development, it is considered that the additional building height provided for in the Plan Change would generate no more than Very Low Adverse visual effects.
- **Northern Motorway** – When travelling on the Northern motorway and busway (in either a northerly or southerly direction) motorists and commuters pass close by the southern boundary of the Smales Farm site. Photos from viewpoints 27 to 30 (Figures 43-48) represent these views and Figure 45 (travelling south) and Figure 47 (travelling north) have the 3-D buildings simulated on to the photo. From these locations, and others along this busy route, users are travelling at speed and sampling a wide range of built, open space and vegetative elements and are therefore a less sensitive viewing audience. Based on this and the landmark function and potential quality of the development it is anticipated that the additional building height provided for in the Plan Change would generate Neutral-Beneficial effects on this viewing audience.

iii. Distant Views

- **Auckland City Waterfront** – currently there are no views of the Smales Farm development from the northern shores of the Auckland CBD and adjacent suburbs. With buildings up to 100m on the site, as provided for in the Plan Change, the upper part of any buildings would be visible from a number of locations represented by Photos in viewpoints 1-5 (Figures 7-12). The visual simulation depicted in Figure 11 indicates how the bulk and massing of buildings would appear on the North Shore skyline. Buildings in this location would appear as a cluster of taller buildings similar to those within Takapuna, also visible from this location. Buildings up to 75m provided for on the adjacent North Shore Hospital site would also appear above the middle ground landform and buildings and would reinforce this area as a node of taller built development. It is considered that the additional height provided through the Plan Change will result in Neutral visual effects from these locations, largely due to the complex urban landscape in the view and the distance from the site.

6.5 Summary of Visual Effects

In considering the level of visual effects that the PPC allowance for taller buildings on the Smales Farm site could generate, the following considerations have been key:

- The proposed controls on the maximum tower dimension (width) of 55m above 27m high and 35m above 75m high which will reduce the building bulk and apparent scale of these tall structures;

- the minimum distance of 20m between buildings above 27m which will ensure there is adequate separation of the taller structures on site;
- the lower height of 27m around the perimeter of the site coupled with the height in relation to boundary controls;
- the assessment criteria that requires high quality building design, including attention to the profile of the roof (including plant and equipment) as part of the overall building form which will assist in ensuring that where buildings are a new prominent element in nearby views they will be well integrated in to the local urban landscape and contribute positively to the skyline character; and
- the gradual change to the view as development within the Smales Farm site and surrounding area occurs over a 30 year plus timeframe.

Taking this into account given the urban context of the Smales Farm site, the scale of the surrounding land uses (motorway, schools, hospital and parks), the additional height and density of built form currently provided for in the AUP for the site and surrounding area, and in particular the North Shore Hospital site, and the relative distance and existing visual context of the viewing audience, it is considered that adverse visual effects resulting from the additional building height provided for in the Plan Change will generally be Neutral. From some nearby locations, such as parts of Onewa Domain where the existing view is of parkland enclosed by vegetation, and nearby residential locations where taller buildings will be more prominent above the existing and permitted building scale, there could be up to Moderate Adverse visual effects. Also from a limited number of residential properties where, through the adoption of the PPC, tall buildings could be seen directly in front of Rangitoto there could also be up to Moderate Adverse visual effects.

From many locations, including the above and some nearby areas the higher buildings provided by the Plan Change are likely to result in Beneficial visual effects, as well designed buildings reinforcing this node in the Takapuna area are expected to add positively to the urban character and sense of place.

Overall it is considered that the PPC provisions that will manage the form and scale of buildings above the current permitted 27m will provide an appropriate mechanism to avoid significant adverse visual effects from the area surrounding the Smales Farm site.

7.0 Lake Pupuke ONF

Natural heritage is identified within the RPS as a significant resource management issue for the region (B 1.4 Issues of Regional Significance).

7.1 Natural Heritage (B4)

The relevant landscape objective under B4.2 Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes states “(1) *Outstanding natural features and landscapes are identified and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*” Policies B4.2.2(3) and (8) reinforce this objective.

Objective B4.2.1 also states “(3) *The visual and physical integrity and the historic, archaeological and cultural value of Auckland’s volcanic features that are of local, regional and / or international significance as protected and, where practicable, enhanced.*” Policy B4.2.2 (6) and (8) reinforce this objective.

7.2 Overlays (Chapter D)

As the site is located approximately 500m from the south-western edge of the Lake Pupuke Volcano there are a number of objectives and policies within Chapter D10 Outstanding Natural Features Overlay and Outstanding Natural Landscapes Overlay that may be relevant and should be considered.

Objective D10.2.1 states “*Auckland’s outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development* “. In relation to the ONF’s policies, there is a focus on protecting the visual integrity of the feature while taking into account the value of the ONF in its wider historic heritage, cultural, landscape, natural character and amenity context; the visual and experiential values that contribute significantly to the ONF’s values; and the location, scale and design of any proposed development.

The Lake Pupuke Volcanic feature is surrounded by urban development, including parks and reserves around the lake margins, residential development of various scales immediately beyond these areas of open space, and larger commercial and hospital land uses in Takapuna, and around Northcote Road. This includes the existing Smales Farm buildings which can be seen in the context of the lake from its eastern shores, including Sylvan Park. The key values of the Lake Pupuke ONF are the circular shape of the 104ha water filled crater, and associated tuff ring. While the taller buildings provided for by the Plan Change will be more obvious from many lakeside locations they are well set back from the lake to the west across Taharoto Road, separated from the more immediate lakeside environment and will relate to the existing and proposed development within the hospital grounds which are more proximate to the lake. As such the PPC and the additional height and scale of development it will enable is not considered to compromise to any more than a very limited extent the visual integrity or the experiential values that contribute to the feature and values of this ONF.

Appendix 1: Schedule of Outstanding Natural Features Overlay

74	Lake Pupuke volcano	Lake Pupuke	E	Pupuke volcano is large compound explosion crater (about 1500m diameter) partly filled with a fresh water lake covering 104 ha and 55m deep. Lava is mostly mantled with tuff, but has been quarried inside the crater. A lapilli knoll to the southwest forms the highest point. Lava chemistry supports two eruptions from this volcano.	a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h
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Introduction

The following criteria are used to determine the contents of this schedule, and will be used to consider any proposed additions to it:

- a) the extent to which the landform feature or geological site contributes to the understanding of the geology or evolution of the biota in the region, New Zealand or the earth (includes type localities of rock formations, minerals and fossils);
- b) the rarity or unusual nature of the site or feature;
- c) the extent to which the feature or site is an outstanding representative example of the diversity of natural landforms and geological features in Auckland;
- d) the extent to which the landform or geological feature or site is a component of a recognisable group of geologically associated features;
- e) the extent to which the landform or geological feature or site contributes to the aesthetic value or visual legibility of the wider natural landscape;
- f) the community association with, or public appreciation of the values of the feature or site;
- g) the potential value of the feature or site for public education;
- h) the potential value of the feature or site to provide additional understanding of the geological or biotic history of the region;
- i) the state of preservation of the feature or site;
- j) the extent to which a feature or site is associated with an historically important natural event, geologically related industry, or individual involved in earth science research;
- k) the importance of the feature or site to Mana whenua;
- l) the contribution of the feature to the more publicly valued groups of landforms and geological sites associated with the region's volcanoes, coastlines, the Hauraki Gulf Islands, and the Waitakere Ranges.

