



Ō W A I R A K A D W E L L I N G S

TWO PROPOSED DWELLINGS AT
22 & 22A SUMMIT DRIVE

A DESIGN STATEMENT

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By John Guise Mitford - Original publication: Purchased by Alexander Turnbull Library from Sotheby's, London, 20 June 1974. Immediate source: <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.89091>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=130355495>

INTRO: THE VISION



By Bhutt - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7541348>

Set upon two adjacent, vacant plots on the northwest edge of Ōwairaka, Mount Albert Domain, the two homes are designed to rise gently from the volcanic earth, while their forms echo the scale of the heritage character of the area. Aligned with the natural contours of the mount, they engage in a quiet dialogue with the land, responding thoughtfully to its topography and the surrounding special character.

Informed by the enduring principles of mid-century modern, the design is both a celebration of this architectural era and a careful response to the client's needs. The roofs fracture and shift, following the land's fall, creating a rhythm that mirrors the natural slope beneath. Crisp lines and the tension between horizontal and vertical elements break up the mass of the two large houses, weaving them into the contours of the site while maintaining a respectful distance from the surrounding neighborhood.



The above 3D artistic impression is for reference only, and may be outdated. For assessment purposes, please refer to appropriate plans and reports for accurate information.



3D rendering, 10x10. The above 3D artistic impression is for reference only, and may be outdated. Please refer to appropriate plans and reports for accurate information for assessments.

Cedar and brick anchor the homes in the landscape, their warm tones reflecting the spirit of the maunga. Cedar acts as a connective element, tying the building together from back to front and from top to bottom, creating a continuous thread throughout the structure. In contrast, brick grounds the building on the higher side of the site, rising vertically to anchor it firmly within the terrain. The living spaces are elevated on the first floor, opening up to the sweeping views that define the site. Here, the bold horizontality of mid-century expression is tempered by vertical accents, offering contrast without overpowering the form of the land. The scale of the houses is carefully modulated, resonating with the rhythm of the neighboring homes, and reflecting their intimate, human scale.

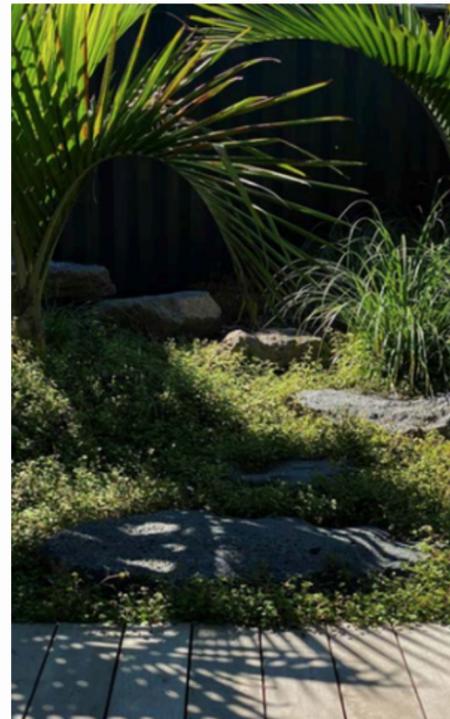
The result is a subtle, playful addition to the area—an architecture that is at once discrete and vibrant. A quiet but confident presence that acknowledges the past while embracing the future, it enriches the maunga, weaving together heritage, modernity, and nature into a harmonious whole.

THE BRIEF



01 At the heart of the client's brief was the creation of two family homes that would fully embrace the site's views and inherent qualities.

02 The main living spaces were to be positioned on the first floor, opening up to the panoramic vistas, while secondary living areas are set on the ground floor, leading directly to outdoor living spaces which would be surrounded to be lush native landscaping (refer landscape plans).



Project landscape design by BGLA. Please refer to the full plan and reports by BGLA.

SITE CONTEXT

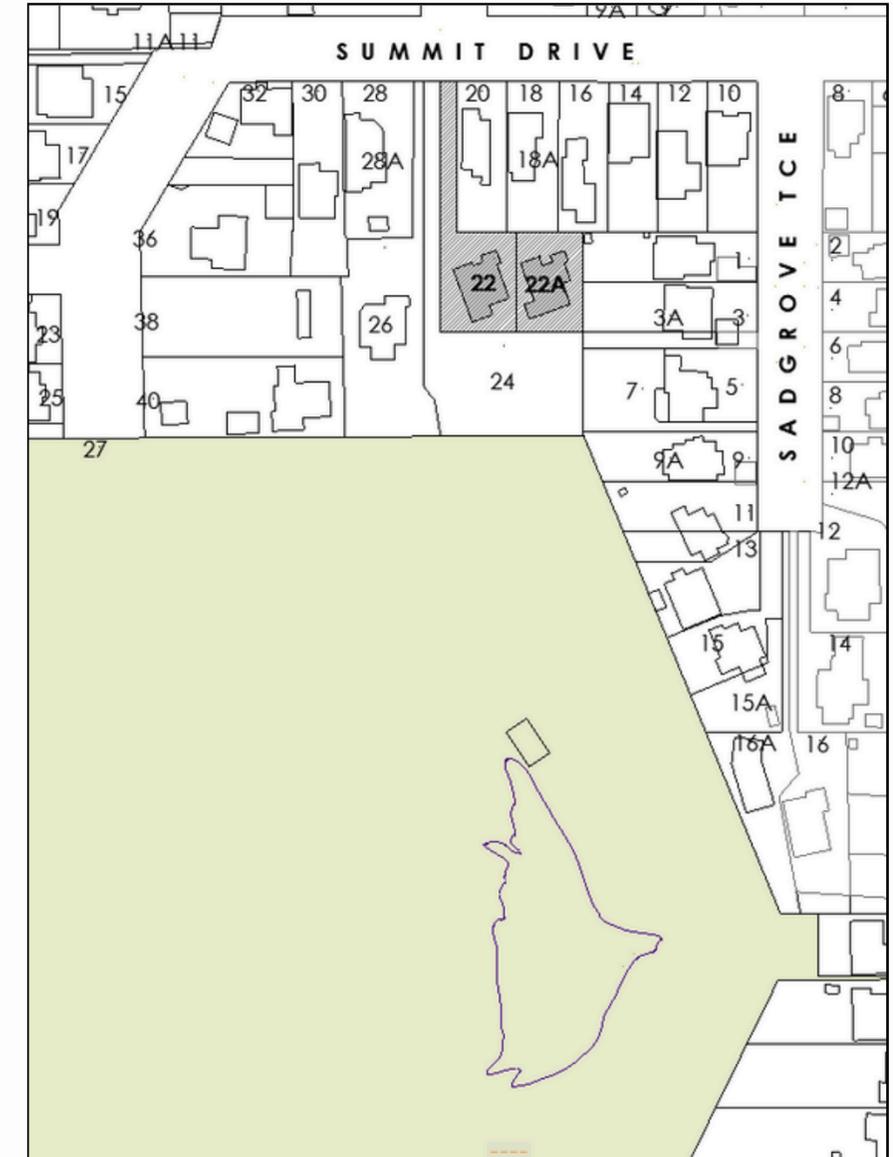
Natural Heritage

Outstanding Natural Features (ONF) Overlay
- Mt Albert (Owairaka)

Historic Heritage and Special Character

Special Character Areas (SCA) Overlay Residential and Business - Mt Albert, Residential Isthmus C

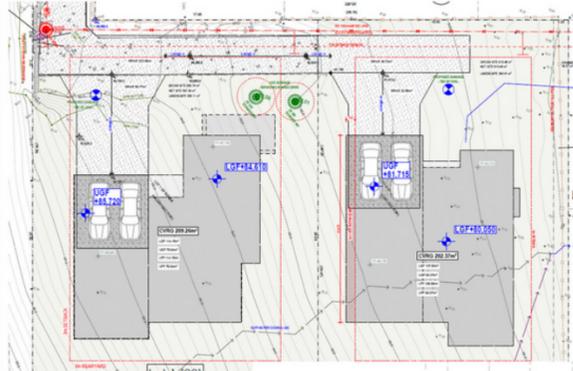
The Auckland Unitary Plan posed a range of complexities, to which the proposal responds with quiet grace. The tilt of the building form mirrors the natural contour of the land, while the deliberate fragmentation of mass creates a rhythm that speaks to the historic urban grain, allowing the architecture to feel anchored to the site's natural and historic heritage. Mitigation of the rolling height infringements, and the SCA height in relation to boundary (HIRB), the extent of infringements of the ONF average height, and the Single House Zone HIRB, as well as the earthworks are identified in the accompanying architectural and engineering plans.



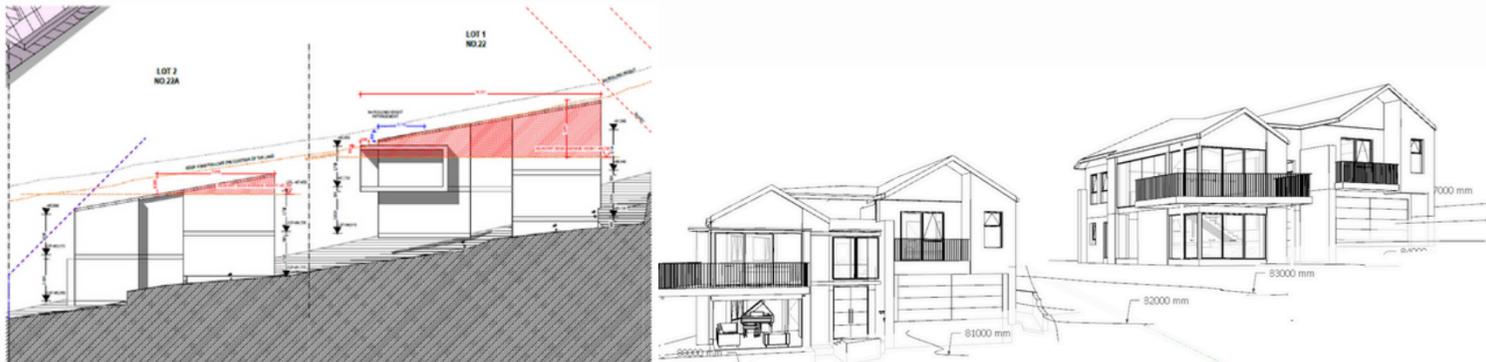
Map extracted from Auckland Council GeoMaps. 10x10.

PREVIOUS DESIGN ITERATIONS

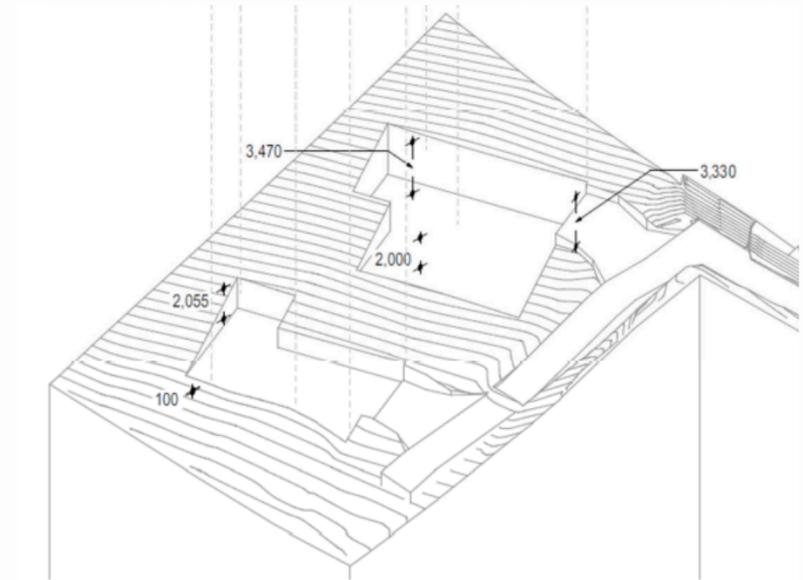
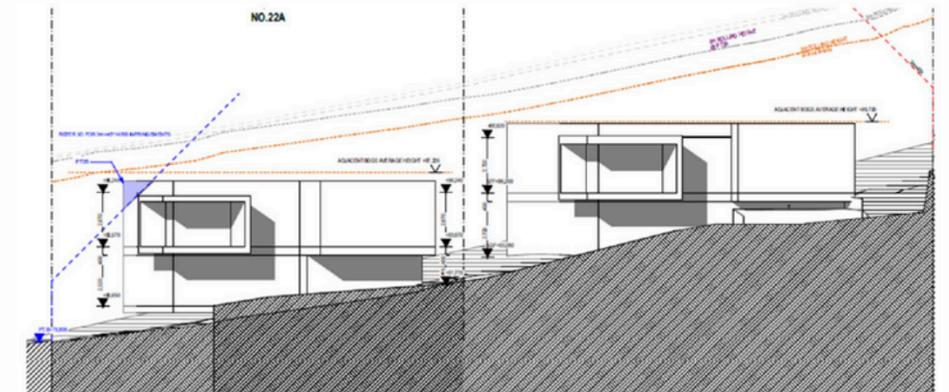
Prior to arriving at the current proposal, several design options were explored to strike a balance between building height and site excavation



01 The first iteration aligned the building with site boundaries. Although this maximised yard spaces (D18.6.1.3.1), it disregarded the natural topography, leading to significantly increased excavation for equivalent site coverage.



02 The initial design followed the site's natural contours through a monopitch roof form. While the continuous roofline followed the site's rolling height (D18.6.1.1, H3.6.6) its monolithic appearance lacked resonance with the scale and rhythm of the surrounding neighbourhood. A subsequent iteration introduced gabled roof forms, which better reflected the character of the area. However, this came at the cost of increased overall height and reduced sensitivity to the site's natural landform.



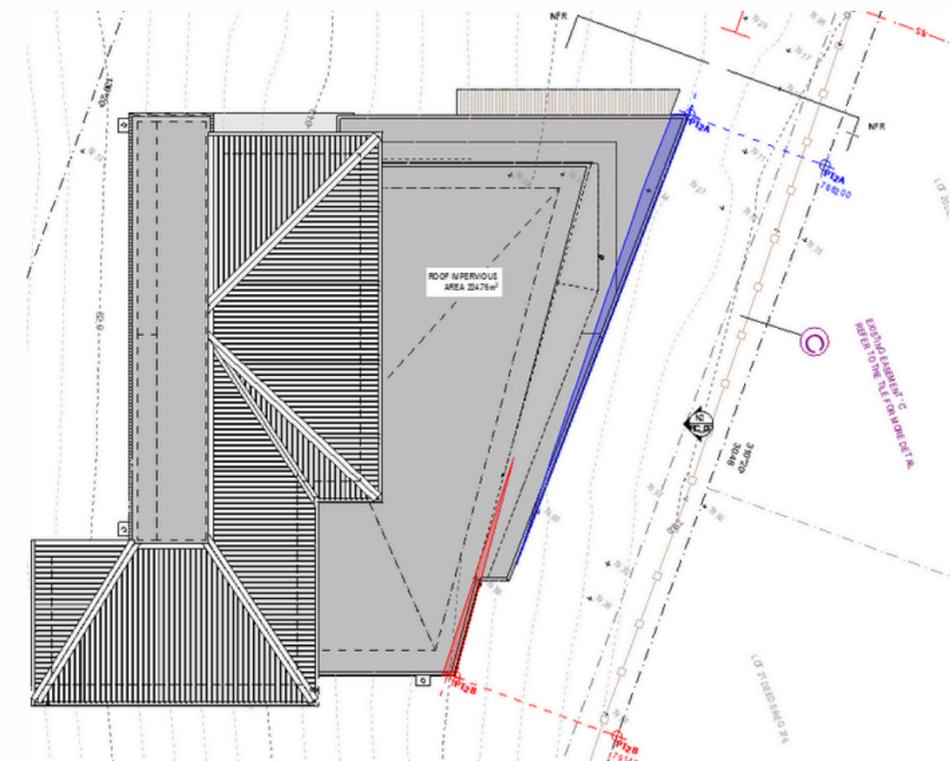
03 Rigidly adhering to the average height controls outlined in D14.6.3 resulted in earth cuts up to 3 metres deep to satisfy the client's spatial requirements, creating adverse impact to the site outcome in respect to the Maunga.

RESPONDING TO THE SITE

After carefully considering the outcomes of the previous design explorations, a series of refined architectural decisions have been thoughtfully integrated. These include tilting the building footprint to follow the natural contours, introducing stepped floor levels, incorporating recessed parapets, and strategically setting back facades to create a dynamic play of light and shadow. Together, these measures respond sensitively to the site's geographic significance and regulatory constraints while enhancing both functionality and visual harmony.



01 The elevations reveal the stepped foundation and earthworks, carefully calibrated to minimise height infringements while balancing the relationship between the earthcuts and the overall massing.



02 Roof parapet angles and setback have been designed to reduce height in relation to boundary infringements.

HUES AND TONALITIES

The selection of colours and tonal variations for the finishes and external cladding of the houses draws directly from the natural palette of the maunga. As illustrated in the earthcut sections on the right, the subtle shifts in colour reflect the variations found within the land itself. These recessive, earthy tones allow the homes to merge seamlessly with the surrounding landscape, grounding them in the environment while allowing the natural beauty of the site to take center stage.

RECESSIVE

- Colorsteel Flaxpod or alike for roofing, exposed steel, and powder-coated aluminium members
- Resene Charcoal or alike for vertical and flatsheet light-weight cladding



IMAGE FROM COLORSTEEL

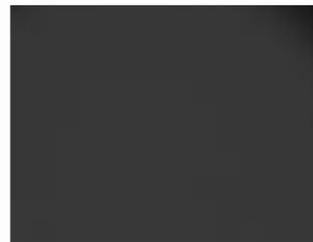


IMAGE FROM RESENE



IMAGE FROM RESENE WOODSMAN



IMAGE FROM BRICKWORKS



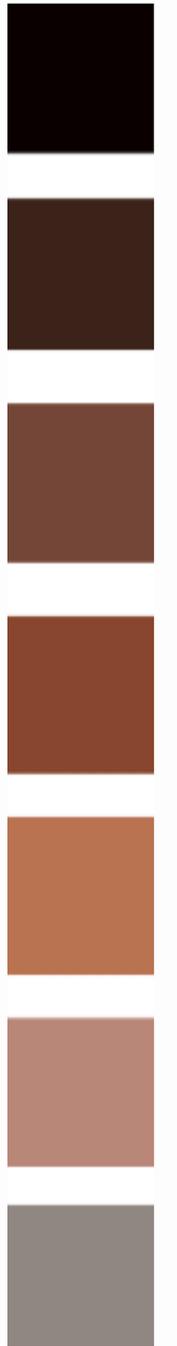
Smokey Grey GB Veneer Arcadia - tonal variations close up

EARTHY

- Resene Woodsman Cedar Natural Wood Oil - Ruataniwha™cc or alike for the cedar cladding
- Brickworks Smokey Grey GB Veneer Arcadia or alike



Hues extracted from photographic record of the site's earthcut section provided by Baseplan



PRECEDENTS

The precedent images on the right capture the dynamic interplay between horizontal and vertical elements, highlighting the playful contrast between warm, raw materials and the sharper, defining clean-edge members that serve to fragment the massing.



MATERIALITY

CEDAR

Hempac SV4 Vertical Series - random width and depth weatherboards, cavity fixed, or alike.



IMAGE FROM HERMPAC

BRICKS

Smokey Grey GB 10.01 390x90x40 GB Veneer Arcadia or alike. Delicate colour variations with subtle earthy texture.



IMAGE FROM BRICKWORKS

INFILL MEMBERS



Vertical or flatsheet lightweight cladding that will function as recessive planes, offering a subtle contrast to the natural warmth of cedar and brick.



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