



2

---

VOLUME 2



## **APPENDIX J**

Landscape and Visual Effects  
Assessment, R.A. Skidmore Urban  
Design Limited (2020)

# Proposed Comprehensive Care Retirement Village at 223 Kohimarama Road, Kohimarama

## Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment



Prepared for Ryman Healthcare Limited by:

**R . A . Skidmore**  
urban design | ltd

**February**  
**2020**

# Proposed Comprehensive Care Retirement Village at 223 Kohimarama Road and 7 John Rymer Place, Kohimarama, Auckland

---

## *Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment*

### Contents

1	Executive Summary .....	1
2	Introduction .....	3
3	The Proposed Village.....	3
4	The Site and its Context.....	5
5	Planning Context.....	6
6	Assessment of Effects.....	7
7	Conclusions.....	21
	Appendix 1: Factors Informing Visual Assessment	
	Attachment 1: Topography of Site and Surrounding Context	

*Cover image: From Beca architectural package*

# 1 Executive Summary

## The Site

- 1.1 The Site, located at 223 Kohimarama Road and 7 John Rymer Place, is located within an established neighbourhood. The large scale and currently undeveloped state of the land is quite unusual within an established suburban environment.
- 1.2 The particular characteristics of the Site and its surrounding context have been carefully considered and informed the design process for the Proposed Village.
- 1.3 The landscape and visual effects assessment is based on drawings and visual simulations contained in the sets of Resource Consent Drawings and Assessment Drawings. This report should be read in conjunction with the Urban Design Review report by Clinton Bird Urban Design Ltd.
- 1.4 The Site is located within the MHU zone as identified in the AUP. The provisions of the zone are detailed in the AEE. Together with an understanding of the zoning that applies to the surrounding environment, these provisions have provided the framework for my assessment.

## Assessment Methodology

- 1.5 The assessment set out in this report has been carried out from: analysing the architectural drawings, landscape concept plans and visual simulations; carrying out site visits; and reviewing relevant planning provisions. The methodology used is in accordance with the NZ Institute of Landscape Architect's 'Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management Best Practise Guide (10.1)'.

## Landscape Effects

- 1.6 I note that while the Site is currently undeveloped and appears as an open space within the established urban environment, the MHU zone that applies to the Site provides a framework for considerable change to accommodate a mixed residential use of an urban intensity.
- 1.7 I consider the configuration and form of the proposed buildings has been carefully considered in relation to the landform and the surrounding context. In my opinion, the landscape can successfully absorb the Proposed Village in the arrangement proposed to achieve the planned built character for the wider environment. The carefully considered and complex arrangement of differing building forms stepped into the

sloping land, together with the extensive and comprehensive planting proposed, will successfully embed the proposed buildings into their setting. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will sit comfortably with the established and anticipated future pattern of development in the surrounding context.

- 1.8 Overall, I consider the Proposed Village will create a considerable change in the landscape character of the Site. However, this change is appropriate for the outcomes sought for the MHU zone. The currently undeveloped and somewhat unkept Site will be transformed into a high amenity living environment for the elderly. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will integrate well with the surrounding neighbourhood.

## Visual Effects

- 1.9 The assessment identifies five groups that comprise the primary viewing audience in relation to the Proposed Village, being:
- Users of the surrounding street and open space network;
  - Residents of immediately adjoining residential properties;
  - Residents of the wider residential neighbourhood;
  - Users of the surrounding schools; and
  - Users of the shops on the corner of Kohimarama Road and Allum Street.
- 1.10 The visual change experienced will vary considerably depending on a number of factors. The assessment finds that this will range from very high to negligible. In the context of the planned urban character for the MHU zone, the resulting adverse visual effects are assessed as ranging from low to negligible.
- 1.11 Feedback on a preliminary concept scheme received from the Council's Urban Design Panel provided helpful input to the development of the final scheme. The Panel found that the Proposal presented was a good solution on a difficult Site. This report comments on the recommendations made that are relevant to landscape and visual effects considerations.
- 1.12 Overall, my assessment concludes that the currently undeveloped and somewhat unkept Site will be transformed into a high amenity living environment for the elderly. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will integrate well with the surrounding neighbourhood.

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 RA Skidmore Urban Design Ltd. has been requested by Ryman Healthcare Ltd. (“Ryman”) to carry out a landscape and visual effects assessment of the proposal to construct a comprehensive care retirement village (“Proposed Village”) at 223 Kohimarama Road and 7 John Rymer Place, Kohimarama, Auckland (“Site”).
- 2.2 The following assessment is based on architectural plans prepared by Beca, landscape concept plans prepared by Design Squared and visual simulations, prepared by Ryman (referred to as the Resource Consent Drawings and the Assessment Drawings in the AEE).
- 2.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the Urban Design Review report by Clinton Bird Urban Design Ltd. submitted with the AEE.
- 2.4 In carrying out the assessment, I have visited the Site and surrounding environs on a number of occasions.
- 2.5 I attended a number of pre-application meetings (both at Council offices, by teleconference and on Site) with Council staff. I also attended a meeting with Auckland Council’s Urban Design Panel on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019. The minutes from that meeting are contained in an attachment to the AEE.
- 2.6 I have provided feedback and input as the design approach for the Site has been tested and refined.

## 3 The Proposed Village

- 3.1 A detailed description of the Proposed Village is set out in Section 2 of the AEE. The proposed Site layout is shown in Figure 1 (noting that the building footprints vary at different levels across the Site). The following is a summary of key aspects of the proposal relevant to this assessment:
  - Land modification including approximately 52,874m<sup>3</sup> of cut and 5,750m<sup>3</sup> of fill, resulting in an overall balance of 47,124m<sup>3</sup> of cut;
  - A Village Centre building (B01), which contains the village amenities and care rooms and two basement carparks, stepping down the slope of the Site with components up to 5 levels;
  - Five apartment buildings (B02 – B06) clustered around a communal space podium with a basement carpark below;



- The apartment buildings are variously stepped with a maximum height of five levels (B03, B05, B06) and six levels (B02 and B04);
- Retention of some existing vegetation including mature Pohutukawa trees and an Oak tree along the Kohimarama Road street frontage and some areas of mixed native vegetation (with some weed infestation) within the Site. The Site layout will not disturb the prominent Oak tree located close to the Site boundary adjacent to Kohimarama Road;
- Realignment of an existing intermittent stream in the eastern area of the Site;
- A number of retaining walls up to a maximum height of 6.18m (located on part of the north-western boundary);
- Extensive planting as depicted in the Landscape Masterplan by Design Squared.



Figure 1: Proposed Site Layout



## 4 The Site and its Context

4.1 The Site location is depicted in Sheet A0-002 of the Resource Consent Plans. Key features of the Site are depicted in the 'Existing Site Plan' (Sheet A0-003 of the Resource Consent Plans). A detailed description and analysis of the Site and its surrounding context is set out in the Urban Design Assessment report.

4.2 In summary, the key features of the Site and its context in relation to an assessment of landscape and visual effects include:

- The triangular proportion of the Site with relatively short street frontages to Kohimarama Road and John Rymer Place;
- The Site has a steep slope generally falling from the northwest down to the southeast. Former land modification has created a relatively flat terrace area towards the centre of the Site;
- An overland flow path, in some parts in the form of an intermittent stream, is located close to the eastern boundary;
- The Site contains a mixture of vegetation. Most notable is the row of mature Pohutukawa trees also located along the Kohimarama Road frontage. The Site also contains stands of mixed vegetation, with some areas heavily weed infested. The southwestern area of the Site contains a concentration of native vegetation;
- The topography of the surrounding area is quite steeply undulating (see Attachment 1). To the northwest around to the northeast the land plateaus around the Kohimarama Road corridor before rising again to the southeast. To the north of Kohimarama Road the land falls steeply. Beyond the southeastern boundary of the Site, the land continues to fall to John Rymer Place before rising again further to the southeast around to the northeast. The rising landform creates an almost amphitheatre relationship to the Site;
- The Site is located in an established neighbourhood that contains a mix of activities including; a school to the northwest (Selwyn College, immediately adjacent to the Site) and a school across Kohimarama Road to the northeast (St Thomas's); residential dwellings particularly along the Kohimarama Road corridor and in the neighbourhood to the southeast of the Site; and a cluster of neighbourhood shops on the eastern corner of Kohimarama Road and Allum Street;
- Kohimarama Park is a small reserve bounded by Kohimarama Road and Hampton Drive. A broad, low-lying open space corridor is also located to the south of the Site running adjacent and to the north of the rail corridor.

## 5 Planning Context

- 5.1 A full description of relevant planning considerations is set out in the AEE. The following is a summary of key provisions that have guided this assessment.
- 5.2 The Site is located in the Mixed Housing Urban (“MHU”) zone as identified in the Auckland Unitary Plan (the “AUP”). The AUP identifies the purpose of the MHU Zone as being to provide for a reasonably high intensity zone enabling a greater intensity of development than previously provided for. Over time, the appearance of neighbourhoods within this zone will change, with development typically up to three storeys in a variety of sizes and forms, including detached dwellings, terrace housing and low-rise apartments. The zone is intended to increase the capacity and choice of housing within neighbourhoods as well as promote walkable neighbourhoods, fostering a sense of community and increasing the vitality of centres.
- 5.3 Key outcomes sought by the objectives and policies for the MHU zone that are relevant to the following assessment include:
- The efficient use of larger sites;
  - Recognising the functional and operational requirements of activities and development;
  - The efficient use of the land for higher density residential living and an increase in housing capacity and choice (e.g. low-rise apartments and integrated residential development such as retirement villages);
  - The achievement of the neighbourhood's planned urban built character of predominantly three-storey buildings, in a variety of forms, surrounded by open space;
  - Attractive streets and public open spaces, including by optimising front yard landscaping;
  - Maintaining a reasonable standard of sunlight access and privacy for, and the minimisation of visual dominance effects on, adjoining sites;
  - Quality on-site residential amenity for residents, including by providing privacy, outlook, daylight/sunlight and amenities;
  - Safe streets and public open spaces, including by providing for passive surveillance.
- 5.4 The Site abuts the MHU Zone to the north, east and west, and the Residential – Mixed Housing Suburban (“MHS”) zone to the south. Selwyn College adjoins the north-western boundary of the Site and is subject to Designation 4778, Minister of Education

- Educational purposes - secondary school (years 7 - 13). St Thomas's School is located to the north east of the Site adjoining Kohimarama Road and is subject to Designation 4783, Minister of Education - primary school (years 0 - 8).
- 5.5 The AUP makes provision for integrated residential development (which includes retirement villages) as a restricted discretionary activity if the listed standards are met. Non-compliance with these standards is a restricted discretionary activity. Relevant built form standards relate to building height; height in relation to boundary; and yards.
- 5.6 The MHU zone also contains a number of additional built form standards, which the retirement village is not required to comply with, but which do form part of the relevant matters of discretion and assessment criteria. These standards relate to: maximum impervious area; maximum building coverage; minimum landscaped area; maximum height of fences and walls.
- 5.7 The Site contains several overland flow paths. The overland flow path on the eastern boundary in parts take the form of an intermittent stream for the portion of it between the public stormwater outlets to its north and south.
- 5.8 Chapter 23 of the AUP includes relevant signage rules.
- 5.9 The overall activity status of the application is Discretionary.

## 6 Assessment of Effects

### Assessment Methodology

- 6.1 The following assessment has been carried out from: analysing the architectural drawings, landscape concept plans and visual simulations; carrying out site visits; and reviewing relevant planning provisions. The methodology used is in accordance with the NZ Institute of Landscape Architect's 'Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management Best Practise Guide (10.1)'.
- 6.2 *Landscape* is the cumulative expression of natural and cultural features, patterns and processes in a geographical area, including human perceptions and associations. The following assessment evaluates the effects of the Proposed Village on landscape character and amenity in relation to the landscape features of the area identified in Section 4 above.
- 6.3 *Visual* effects are somewhat different from many other environmental factors because their assessment requires information on perceptions as well as on resources. Because visual experience is a combination of physical stimulus and psychological response, some aspects of visual effects are undeniably subjective. To understand

and assess the visual effects of a project, we must therefore understand not only the project and its context, but also anticipate the probable responses of the people who will see it.

6.4 This assessment analyses the potential landscape and visual effects that may be generated by the Proposed Village. The visual effects assessment is based on:

- The background and context within which the Proposed Village will be viewed;
- The proportion of the Proposed Village that will be visible, determined by the observer's position relative to the objects being viewed;
- The number and type of viewers and their location in relation to the Site; and
- The ability to mitigate any identified adverse visual effects.

6.5 The following assessment identifies the groups that comprise the primary viewing audience and sets out an assessment of visual effects in relation to each of these groups.

6.6 There is a distinction between the magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Village when viewed by the various groups comprising the viewing audience and the effect resulting from that change. Whether the visual effect is seen as positive or adverse will depend on the perceptions of the viewers and may vary between different people that comprise the audience.

6.7 The magnitude of visual change resulting from the proposal will vary considerably for the different groups that comprise the viewing audience. Whether a view is transient or static influences the magnitude of change as well. While the magnitude of visual change may be high, the effect of that change may be viewed as positive or adverse depending on the perceptions of the viewer.

6.8 Appendix 1 includes a list of factors that inform the assessment of the magnitude of change and the effects arising from that change.

## Landscape Effects

6.9 While the Site is currently undeveloped and appears as an open space within the established urban environment, the MHU zone that applies to the Site provides a framework for considerable change (as set out in Section 5 above) to accommodate a mixed residential use of an urban intensity. I note that the MHU zoning that applies to the Site also enables a greater intensity of residential activity in the area adjoining the Site to the east. The school to the northwest is also located in the MHU zone.

- 6.10 The large scale of the Site, embedded within an established neighbourhood, is quite unusual and is suitable to accommodate the Proposed Village and enables a comprehensive approach to its layout and design. The steep slope of the land does present challenges to accommodating the proposed activity. However, it has also encouraged an innovative response and a comprehensive approach to integrating buildings into the landform, through benching and stepping of different building elements and use of landform and associated planting to integrate the various built elements.
- 6.11 The technical requirements of operating a retirement village determine some aspects of the Village layout and design. In particular, a certain clustering and configuration of activities and functions within the Village Centre (Building B01) does require a building of a suitable scale and layout. The design of this building has been considerably stepped both in the horizontal and vertical plane to embed it into the hill slope. The breakdown of the overall building mass and form is also achieved through variation in the building form and articulation. Careful consideration has been given to the breakdown in the façade articulation and the use of varied roof forms. The resulting building forms appears as a village cluster of buildings rather than a single building form. In my opinion this successfully responds to the residential neighbourhood character.
- 6.12 The Site planning also utilises verticality in the apartment buildings to enable generous areas of open space across the Site. The layout of the apartment blocks also utilises the slope of the land to configure the buildings around a concealed carpark with a central open space podium located over. Stepping of the building forms to create a varied roofscape, together with strong articulation and variations in the colour palette between apartments will create the appearance of a cluster of separate but related buildings. In my opinion, the design strategy will avoid the creation of an ‘institutional’ appearance. Rather, the proposal will appear as a village with a cluster of related buildings, embedded in a spacious landscape setting.
- 6.13 The comprehensive approach to the design of the Proposed Village enables a rationalised access strategy (see Pedestrian and Vehicle Circulation Plan, Sheet A0-010 of the Assessment Drawings). A singular vehicular route connects through the Site from John Rymer Place to Kohimarama Road. Carparking and service areas are well integrated within the buildings rather than dominating the Site.
- 6.14 The proposed Site layout requires a slight diversion of the existing intermittent stream adjacent to the eastern boundary. The stream currently adds little to the landscape values of the Site. Revegetation in association with the amended alignment (see Stream Ecology Assessment report) will enhance the natural character values of the intermittent watercourse and will create an amenity feature within the Site.
- 6.15 The proposal includes a comprehensive landscape strategy for the Site. This is set out in the Landscape Concept drawings by Design Squared and contained in the Resource Consent Drawings (SK100). In my opinion, the landscape concept, that comprises

extensive areas of native and exotic planting, will complement the built components of the Proposed Village and, as it matures, will assist to embed the buildings into the sloping landform. Four key strategies are important in achieving this outcome:

- Retaining existing vegetation around the periphery of the Site and over time removing weed species and supplementing with additional native planting;
- Contouring the ground plane adjacent to blank walls at ground level with associated dense shrub and specimen tree planting used to integrate the building forms with the ground plane and create a strong vegetated setting;
- Using planting to soften the appearance of retaining walls;
- Planting around and on the podium (in elevated planters) to create a pleasant focal amenity space for residents and assist to embed the structure in its sloped setting, so that as the vegetation matures, it seamlessly integrates with its vegetated setting.

6.16 The success of planting will be critical to ensuring the Proposed Village is suitably integrated into the landform with a strong vegetated framework. In my opinion, it would be appropriate to include conditions requiring detailed planting plans and implementation and maintenance strategies to be submitted to the Council demonstrating consistency with the submitted landscape concept drawings. Once established, the planting should be actively maintained in a healthy state.

6.17 The purpose of the MHU Zone is to provide for a reasonably high intensity residential environment, enabling a greater intensity of development than previously provided for. Provision is made for integrated residential development within the Zone, particularly on larger sites, with Policy 9 seeking to enable more efficient use of larger sites by providing for integrated residential development. Objective H5.2(2) also seeks to ensure that development is in keeping with the neighbourhood's planned built character of predominantly three storey buildings, in a variety of forms and surrounded by open space.

6.18 The Proposed Village will create a built focus within the established suburban landscape with elements projecting above three levels (up to a maximum height of six levels). As set out above, I consider the configuration and form of the proposed buildings has been carefully considered in relation to the landform and the surrounding context. In my opinion, the landscape can successfully absorb the Proposed Village in the arrangement proposed to achieve the planned built character for the wider environment. The carefully considered and complex arrangement of differing building forms stepped into the sloping land and set in a generous open space framework, together with the extensive and comprehensive planting proposed, will successfully embed the proposed buildings into their setting. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will sit comfortably within the established and anticipated future pattern of development in the surrounding context.



- 6.19 Overall, I consider the Proposed Village will create a considerable change in the landscape character of the Site. However, this change is appropriate for the outcomes sought for the MHU zone. The currently undeveloped and somewhat unkept Site will be transformed into a high amenity living environment for the elderly. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will integrate well with the surrounding neighbourhood.

## Visual Effects

- 6.20 The assessment of visual effects has been informed by a number of visual simulations from representative public viewpoints. It should be noted that, while technically accurate, visual simulations are a tool for understanding the way a proposal sits in its context. They do not replicate reality and should be viewed in combination with field observations. The method for viewing the full visual simulation images, is set out in the technical statement accompanying the images. These are also accompanied by single frame 50mm camera lens views. It should be noted that these images do not accurately represent the way people experience the environment, which involves taking in a wider field of view.
- 6.21 The primary viewing audience will comprise five groups:
- Users of the surrounding street and open space network;
  - Residents of immediately adjoining residential properties;
  - Residents of the wider residential neighbourhood;
  - Users of the surrounding schools; and
  - Users of the shops on the corner of Kohimarama Road and Allum Street.
- 6.22 An assessment in relation to each of these groups follows.

### *Users of the Surrounding Street Network*

- 6.23 The Proposed Village has a limited viewing catchment from the surrounding street network. For those travelling in the surrounding street network by foot, bicycle or car, views towards the Site will be transient. Therefore, this viewing audience is less sensitive to change than those that experience a static view.
- 6.24 Kohimarama Road is a busy street that carries high volumes of traffic. While the Site has frontage to the street, only a limited portion of the Village Centre (Building B01) will be visible from the street in the immediate vicinity of the Site. The steep topography falling away from the street reduces the elevation of the building above street level. Viewed with the foreground of retained mature trees adjacent to the street, the Proposed Village will not appear as a prominent feature (see Visual Simulations Viewpoints 1 and 2). While not protected by AUP provisions, the retention of mature

trees along the street edge will retain a strong vegetated quality to the streetscape, making a positive contribution to its amenity). Fencing along the boundary will be discrete with the visually permeable 'pool-style' fence punctuated by solid brick elements. Lower level planting will also assist to reduce the visual prominence of the fencing and will add a residential character to the frontage. The brick entry walls and small, integrated signage suitably mark the secondary entrance without being overly prominent (see A3-010 and Sheet L102 of the Resource Consent Drawings). The fencing and signage strategy is consistent with the main entrance frontage treatment at John Rymer Place.

- 6.25 From the street, glimpses will be obtained of the retaining wall on the north-western side of the accessway (along the boundary with Selwyn College) in the vicinity of the entranceway. However as the driveway drops relatively steeply, the wall will not appear as prominent. The exposed piles with a shotcrete finish will create quite a utilitarian appearance. However, as the planting at its base becomes established, the finish will be effectively screened.
- 6.26 Further to the south (in the vicinity of Kohimarama Park), the street rises. When travelling down the hill glimpses of the Proposed Village will be obtained. It will be viewed within a framework of the existing urban environment, including the ridgeline behind with more distant views of the CBD skyline behind that. Kohimarama Park has a long frontage to Kohimarama Road. The sloping park is grassed and creates a distinctive open aspect within the neighbourhood. From here a number of buildings within the Proposed Village will be viewed collectively (see Visual Simulation Viewpoint 9). In my opinion, the Proposed Village will sit comfortably in this setting, visually contained by buildings and vegetation in the foreground and the vegetated ridgeline and CBD skyline behind.
- 6.27 Further to the south, expansive views across the open space corridor adjacent to the rail corridor are obtained towards the Site (see Visual Simulation Viewpoint 10). From this considerable distance, the Proposed Village will be viewed as set within a strong vegetated framework of the open space corridor in the foreground and the vegetated ridgeline behind. In my opinion, it will not appear as a prominent feature in the urban landscape.
- 6.28 John Rymer Place is a local street that is a long cul-de-sac so has relatively few users. From Kohimarama Road the street slopes down to the southwest. The main entrance to the Proposed Village is located at the top end of the street and drops relatively quickly from the street down into the Site (see Visual Simulation Viewpoint 4). The entranceway is defined by stepped brick feature walls with planters integrated with the wall and a small sign placed within the wall framework. In my opinion, the entry treatment is suitable for the residential setting. The proposed signage is discrete, integrated with the boundary wall and will not appear obtrusive.
- 6.29 From John Rymer Place in the vicinity of the entranceway the Village Centre building (B01) will be viewed in combination with the apartment buildings. The layering of buildings will appear as a relatively dense collection of building forms creating a Village appearance. The differing height and use of different roof forms, with the higher

buildings some considerable distance away from the street, makes a particular contribution to the collective profile and visual interest created. While the Proposed Village will create a strong, built skyline, it is considerably stepped, both in plan and elevation and the buildings are well articulated to create a visually rich and fine grained pattern. As the specimen tree planting either side of the main entrance matures, views into the Village will be filtered. In my opinion, rather than being incongruous, the Proposed Village will complement the established residential character along John Rymer Place.

- 6.30 As one descends down the street, the Proposed Village will be largely obscured from view by the intervening dwellings and associated vegetation. When travelling along the street glimpses will be variously obtained of the higher apartment building forms (see Visual Simulations Viewpoints 5 and 6). While they will be readily apparent as a different form, given their distance and the foreground of large established dwellings, I consider they will not appear as overly dominant or incongruous.
- 6.31 From more distant locations in the street network, glimpses of the Proposed Village will be obtained from a limited number of locations between intervening dwellings and vegetation (see Visual Simulations Viewpoints 7 and 8). In my opinion, the Proposed Village will not appear incongruous in its setting.
- 6.32 Overall, I consider the establishment of the Proposed Village will result in moderate visual change when viewed from the surrounding street network and the effect of that change, in the context of the planned neighbourhood character for the MHU zone, will be very low adverse to positive.

#### *Residents of Immediately Adjoining Residential Properties*

- 6.33 A number of residential properties have a direct interface with the Site (see Sheet A0-004 of the Resource Consent drawings). Given the current undeveloped nature of the Site, the establishment of the Proposed Village will result in very high visual change when viewed from many of these neighbouring properties. However, the MHU zone provides a framework for a change to a mixed urban residential environment. The following assessment is made in the context of that framework.
- 6.34 The properties at 249A Kohimarama Road, 3A John Rymer Place and 5 John Rymer Place contain two-storey dwellings that are elevated above and oriented to overlook the Site. These dwellings will have a clear visual connection to the Village Centre building (B01). While this building has a large overall footprint, with portions of the upper levels extending above the 11m height standard (see Sheet A3-040 of the Resource Consent drawings) the building is considerably stepped in both plan and elevation. Together with the use of a varied roof profile and detailed façade articulation the stepping of the building form reduces its visual mass.
- 6.35 Given the elevation of these neighbouring properties above the Site, the separation of Building B01 from the boundary and the design features outlined above, I do not consider the Proposal will appear as overly dominant. I also note that while sitting below the ground level of the neighbouring properties, the realignment of the

intermittent stream and associated revegetation will create a pleasant vegetated interface. In my opinion the adverse visual effects resulting from the Proposal will be low when viewed from these properties.

- 6.36 The accessway from the entrance off John Rymer Place is retained on its northern side with a wall that extends up to 4m high. The property at 5 John Rymer Place will obtain oblique views towards this wall. As the proposed planting becomes established the wall will be increasingly screened. It is recommended that taller species are planted adjacent to the base of the wall.
- 6.37 Existing dense vegetation in the north eastern area of the Site currently screens views into the Site from the dwellings at 245 and 247A Kohimarama Road. The landscape strategy proposes to retain this vegetation and gradually replace weed species with suitable native vegetation over time. In my opinion, this will maintain an effective visual buffer and adverse visual effects resulting from the Proposed Village when viewed from these properties will be very low.
- 6.38 The property at 257 Kohimarama Road is separated from the Site by the accessway to 5 John Rymer Place and the single-level dwelling has a primary orientation away from the Site. Building B01 will not be visually prominent when viewed from this property. In my opinion, adverse visual effects will be very low to negligible.
- 6.39 The Site has a long southern boundary that interfaces with numerous properties accessed from John Rymer Place. Many of these properties contain large, two-storey dwellings located in very close proximity to the Site boundary. Due to the sloping topography and additional excavation, the ground floor level of some dwellings is almost a full storey below the ground level at the Site boundary. Careful consideration has been given to the Site planning and distribution of building mass to set buildings away from this boundary as far as possible, with higher apartment building concentrated in the north western area of the Site.
- 6.40 At the south western end of the Site, dense vegetation will be maintained with weed species removed and replaced with suitable native species over time. This vegetation provides an effective visual screen to the Proposed Village buildings for all dwellings adjoining the western portion of the Site boundary, including 27, 29 35A, 35, 45, 47, and 49 John Rymer Place. In my opinion, the visual change experience from these properties will be very low and the visual effect resulting from the change will be very low adverse to negligible.
- 6.41 The properties at 27A, 19A and 19 John Rymer Place will have a more open visual connection to the apartment buildings from their upper levels. Buildings B05 and B03 have a generous setback from the boundary. I note that the buildings forms sit well within the height in relation to boundary standards in relation to this boundary. The orientation of the buildings maintains a clear separation to appear as two distinct elements. Building B03 has a stepped profile with four levels presenting downhill to the neighbouring properties. Building B05 is also stepped up the slope and presents as a 3-level building to the neighbouring property below. These front portions of Apartment Buildings B03 and B05 will largely obscure views towards the taller buildings behind; Buildings B02, B04 and B06. The landscape strategy includes mixed native

planting immediately adjacent to the boundary with a grassed open area maintained to the north of this planting. Mixed specimen tree and mixed native planting closer to the apartment buildings and associated podium structure will create a strong vegetated framework for the building forms. In my opinion, the introduction of building forms to the outlook from these properties will result in high visual change. However, due to the various design strategies for both the buildings and the landscape treatment, I consider the adverse visual effects will be low.

- 6.42 The dwellings at 17 and 17A John Rymer Place have an orientation toward the Village Centre Building (Building B01). The southern portion of the Building extends to 3 levels and is well articulated with a distinctive roof from that breaks the building down into a series of domestic scaled elements. The south-eastern face of building B01 is not parallel to this boundary, so that it is an oblique view of the building that is obtained from these properties. This reduces its visual prominence. The main accessway and associated footpath passes in close proximity to the boundary with this property. A dense hedge exists along the boundary screening views towards the Site from the lower level and for a length extending to the upper level. It is proposed to retain this hedge. As they mature, specimen trees along the accessway will also filter views towards Building B01. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will not appear as overly prominent when viewed from these properties. In my opinion the magnitude of visual change will be moderate and the resulting adverse visual effects will be low.
- 6.43 The dwelling at 9 John Rymer Place is slightly elevated above the ground level of the Site. The main Site accessway is set back from this boundary and slopes down to the ground level at the southern end of the Village Centre building (Building B01) with mixed native planting proposed between. This building has a generous setback from the boundary and will extend approximately 2 levels above the ground level of the property at 9 John Rymer Place. Oblique views will also be obtained towards the cluster of apartment buildings to the west. In my opinion the visual change experienced from this property will be moderate and the resulting adverse visual effects will be low.
- 6.44 While I consider that the adverse visual effects resulting from the Proposed Village will be low when viewed from a number of properties adjacent to the Site's southern boundary, I consider that the outcome will be better than could be anticipated from a hypothetical development that includes a collection of lower buildings in close proximity to the Site boundary. Such scenarios could locate dwellings as close as 1m from the boundary, albeit with HRB recession plane requirements, and buildings configured with overlooking of adjacent properties. I also consider that the comprehensive approach to the Site design and the on-going landscape management will result in a more cohesive visual outcome than would be expected if the land were subdivided and subsequent residential sites developed on an individual basis, with varying boundary treatments and disparate planting strategies or no planting in association with buildings.
- 6.45 Overall, the visual change experienced by immediately adjoining residential neighbours will vary considerably depending on their locational relationship to different components of the Village (including elevation), their site layout and configuration of their dwellings and location of intervening vegetation. As set out in the assessment above, the visual change will range from very high to very low and the resulting adverse visual effects,

in the context of the planned urban character for the MHU zone, will vary from low to negligible.

### *Residents of the Wider Residential Neighbourhood*

- 6.46 As noted above, the topography of the Site's context rises to the south of John Rymer Place. Within this neighbourhood, extending around to properties fronting Kohimarama Road, properties will gain various views towards the Site with an intervening foreground of other dwellings and vegetation. The whole Village will not be visible from any single location. From different locations, different parts of the Proposed Village will be seen. From some locations, the taller apartment buildings will be seen against the sky, creating a modified, built skyline.
- 6.47 As noted for other groups in the viewing audience, the Proposed Village has been designed to appear as a cohesive cluster of different buildings, rather than as a single 'institution'. In particular, variations in building heights and varied roof forms, together with a varied palette of materials and colours contribute to the visual complexity. The creation of a series of apartment buildings with a limited footprint and vertical emphasis enables generous space around the buildings. In my opinion, this results in a more responsive built pattern compared to a hypothetical lower form that extends across the Site with a more consistent, albeit lower, profile (e.g. terrace housing).
- 6.48 In addition to the spacing and stepping form of the buildings in relation to the landform, the proposed extensive planting will create a cohesive vegetated framework to embed the building forms into their setting. As the vegetation matures, this will make a positive contribution to the overall Site character as it appears from surrounding residential properties.
- 6.49 Overall, I consider that the visual change experienced by residents of surrounding properties in the neighbourhood to the south and east of the Site will vary from moderate to very low and the resulting adverse visual effects will vary from very low to negligible.

### *Users of the Surrounding Schools*

- 6.50 Selwyn College adjoins the long north-western Site boundary. The ground level is elevated slightly above the Site and a high fence creates a clear demarcation of the boundary. The school has a vehicular access point to Kohimarama Road adjacent to the Site with an accessway running long the boundary. A series of single level classrooms are located to the north-west of the accessway. Further south is a carpark, garage and playing fields.
- 6.51 The secondary accessway to the Proposed Village slopes down from its entrance from Kohimarama Road so that it will not be visually prominent from the school classrooms.
- 6.52 While Building B01 has a large footprint, given the slope of the land, it will present a one to two-level (with generous roof height) form to the school (see Northwest Site elevation, Sheet A2-010 of the Resource Consent drawings). The length of the façade



is considerably varied with stepping in plan, variation in roofline and articulation using varied materials and colours. The building will appear as a number of adjacent, distinct buildings.

- 6.53 The taller buildings (B02, B04 and B06) are located further south-west adjacent to the less visually sensitive carpark and playing fields. The buildings exceed the 11m height standard. The roof eaves of Buildings B02 and B04 also project through the height in relation to boundary plane off the school boundary. The placement of these higher building forms has been carefully considered to avoid visual dominance effects. There is a generous separation between the buildings, enabling clear sightlines to the wider landscape from the school grounds between the buildings. The buildings are well articulated, avoiding the appearance of blank walls. The buildings are well set back from this boundary (with the MHU having a 1m side yard standard). As they mature, specimen trees, together with lower level planting that is proposed along the boundary, will also filter views towards the buildings.
- 6.54 When viewed from Selwyn College I consider the magnitude of visual change will be moderate. However, given the use of the school site and its low sensitivity to change, I consider the resulting adverse visual effects will be very low.
- 6.55 St Thomas's School is located on the south-eastern side of Kohimarama Road and extends to the corner of Allum Street. While glimpse of the Proposed Village will be obtained from the street front of the school over dwellings on the other side of the street, it will not be visually prominent (see Visual Simulation Viewpoint 2). The vegetated quality of the street edge created by the established Pohutukawa along the Site boundary will be maintained and will filter views towards Building B01. In my opinion the magnitude of visual change will be very low and the adverse visual effects will be negligible.

#### *Users of the shops on the corner of Kohimarama Road and Allum Street*

- 6.56 A small retail commercial centre is located on the south-eastern corner of Kohimarama Road and Allum Street. Due to intervening dwellings and vegetation, from here the Proposed Village will not be readily discernible (see Visual Simulation Viewpoint 3). The magnitude of visual change will be negligible and I consider the resulting visual effects will be negligible.

## Summary

- 6.57 Following is a summary of the magnitude of change and the resulting effect of that change when viewed by the various groups identified as comprising the viewing audience (see Appendix 1 for a list of factors that contribute to the magnitude of visual change and the effects arising from that change) using the following terminology:
- Magnitude of change: extreme, very high, high, moderate, low, very low, negligible.

- Effect of change: very high adverse, high adverse, moderate adverse, low adverse (minor in terms of RMA test), very low adverse (less than minor in terms of RMA test), negligible, positive.

Viewing Group	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effect	Notes
<b>Users of surrounding street network</b>	Moderate	Very low adverse to positive	Transient nature of views reduces the sensitivity to change
<b>Residents of immediately adjoining residential properties</b>			
249A Kohimarama Road, 3A John Rymer Place and 5 John Rymer Place	High	Low	Varies for different properties depending on locational relationship to different components of the Village (including elevation), site layout and configuration of dwellings and location of intervening vegetation
245 and 247A Kohimarama Road	Very low	Very low	
257 Kohimarama Road	Low	Very low - negligible	
27 John Rymer Place to 49 John Rymer Place	Very low	Very low - negligible	
27A, 19A and 19 John Rymer Place	High	Low	
17 and 17A John Rymer Place	Moderate	Low	
9 John Rymer Place	Moderate	Low	
<b>Residents of wider residential neighbourhood</b>	Moderate to very low	Very low to negligible	Depends on distance, relative elevation, and location of intervening buildings and vegetation
<b>Visitors to /users surrounding schools</b>			
Selwyn College	Moderate	Very low	Use of Site and particularly the area adjacent to the proposed apartment buildings reduces the sensitivity to change
St Thomas	Negligible	Negligible	Use and separation from the Site reduces sensitivity
<b>Users of neighbourhood shops</b>	Negligible	Negligible	

## Urban Design Panel Feedback

- 6.58 As the Proposed Village was being developed, an earlier concept was presented to the Council's Urban Design Panel (at the meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019). The meeting minutes are contained in the AEE. The Panel found that the design concept was a good solution on a difficult site. They considered that:

*the effective site coverage and the spatial arrangement of buildings in combination with the proposed building heights represents a good outcome. This and the generous provision of well- scaled landscape will create a feeling of spaciousness within the site and to neighbouring properties.*

- 6.59 The meeting minutes highlighted a number of factors for further consideration in progressing the Proposed Village. I address the matters relevant to landscape and visual effects considerations in the following sections.

### *Treatment of Exposed Carparks and Retaining Walls*

- 6.60 The UDP minutes noted that there will be a number of exposed faces of carparks and retaining walls and it will be critical to the success of the scheme to ensure that these are appropriately designed to minimise their visual impact.
- 6.61 While the benching of buildings into the hill slope minimises the requirements for exposed retaining structures, given the steep slope of the land, the creation of exposed retaining walls is unavoidable. The location, scale and material finish of proposed retaining walls is shown on Sheet A0-020 of the Assessment Drawings. As shown in the perspective images contained in Sheet A0-030 the landscape strategy includes softening of vertical retaining walls through planting above and below with climbers, shrubs and specimen trees (see Section D, SK103 of the Assessment drawings). At the detailed design phase it will be important to ensure suitable planting conditions are provided to enable the proposed planting to be achieved and maintained effectively.
- 6.62 For the lower level blank carpark walls, it is proposed to contour the ground plane up the wall and to use a mix of trees and shrubs to screen the blank walls (see LS04 Elevation on Sheet SK106 of the Assessment drawings). As the planting establishes and matures, it will seamlessly integrate with the wider open space setting of the buildings.

### *Podium Landscape Treatment*

- 6.63 In relation to the proposed podium, the Panel considered that the quality of the landscape to be important, given the large scale of the space.
- 6.64 The Panel's observations are noted. Further detail as to how the proposed planting strategy for the podium will be achieved is shown in Sheet SK102 of the Assessment

drawings. This should be carried through the detailed design phase to ensure a suitable environment for establishing and maintaining the planting proposed can be achieved.

### *Landscape General*

- 6.65 The Panel supported the retention of the Oak tree and Pohutukawa trees on Kohimarama Road as well as the southern bush. They considered the extent of planting shown elsewhere on the Site to also be important to the overall amenity of the proposal.
- 6.66 The overall design strategy for the Site has been carefully considered in relation to other disciplines. The proposed landscape strategy is an important aspect of the Proposed Village; contributing to the amenity of the Site for its future residents and the wider neighbourhood and assisting the building forms to successfully integrate with their setting. As the project progresses through to the detailed design phase and implementation it will be important that the landscape strategy is achieved and maintained over time.

### *Accommodating Building Plant*

- 6.67 The Panel noted that it's important that the location and design of building plant does not adversely affect the roofscape or balconies.
- 6.68 The requirements for and location of rooftop plant has been determined and is shown on the architectural plans (and included in the model used for generating the visual simulations). It is discretely located to integrate with the overall roofscape and will not appear as incongruous additions to the roof form. As the Proposed Village progresses to the detailed design phase, any changes to the plant requirements (either on the ground plane or rooftop) should ensure that it is screened from public view.

### *Visual Simulations*

- 6.69 The Panel noted the importance of producing technically accurate visual simulations in the resource consent documentation.
- 6.70 The visual simulations contained in the Assessment drawings in the AEE have been prepared in accordance with the NZILA Best Practice Guide. A technical statement setting out how the images have been produced and how they should be viewed is provided with the package of visual simulations. As noted in the introductory statement to the visual assessment, these images provide a useful tool but do not fully replicate reality. In particular, the single frame 50mm focal length images should be viewed with caution, understanding their limitation.

## 7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The Site is a large, undeveloped property within an established urban environment. The surrounding context, while predominantly residential in character, does contain a range of activities including two schools and a neighbourhood retail centre.
- 7.2 The AUP sets out a planning framework that enables considerable change both on the Site and in the wider environment. The MHU zone anticipates that over time the appearance of the neighbourhood will change, with a higher intensity residential environment containing typically up to three-storey buildings in a variety of sizes and forms.
- 7.3 Overall, I consider the Proposed Village will result in a considerable change in the landscape character of the Site. However, this change is appropriate for the outcomes sought for the MHU zone. The currently undeveloped and somewhat unkept Site will be transformed into a high amenity living environment for the elderly. In my opinion, the Proposed Village will integrate well with the surrounding neighbourhood.
- 7.4 My assessment has identified five groups that comprise the primary viewing audiences in relation to the Proposed Village. The visual change experienced will vary considerably depending on a number of factors. The assessment finds that this will range from very high to negligible. In the context of the planned urban character for the MHU zone, the resulting adverse visual effects are assessed as ranging from low to negligible.

## Recommendations

- 7.5 Based on the above assessment, it is recommended that the following matters are considered as the Proposed Village progresses to the detailed design phase. These should be addressed by the conditions of the resource consent:
- Site earthworks ensure the protection of existing vegetation that is shown as being retained on the Landscape Masterplan (Sheet SK100 in the Resource Consent Drawings);
  - The detailed design of the podium should ensure a suitable environment for establishing and maintaining the planting proposed can be achieved;
  - Detailed planting plans are prepared that are consistent with the landscape concept set out in the Resource Consent Drawing, together with an implementation and maintenance strategy to ensure good growth and on-going health of planting, as well as with gradual weed removal from retained stands of vegetation and replacement with suitable native species;

- Any amendments to plant currently depicted on the architectural drawings is screened from public view;
- A final schedule of building materials and colours is generally consistent with the concept set out in the architectural drawings contained in the Assessment drawings.



Rebecca Skidmore

Urban Designer/Landscape Architect  
February 2020



## Appendix 1

### Factors Informing Visual Assessment

#### *Magnitude of Change*

1. Geographical extent/proportion of view – from a small proportion of a wider view (low) to a high proportion of a view obtained (high).
2. Distance from viewer – far (low) to close (high).
3. Duration of view – transient and fleeting (low) to static (high).
4. Contrast between the proposal and the existing view from similar (low) to highly contrasting (high)

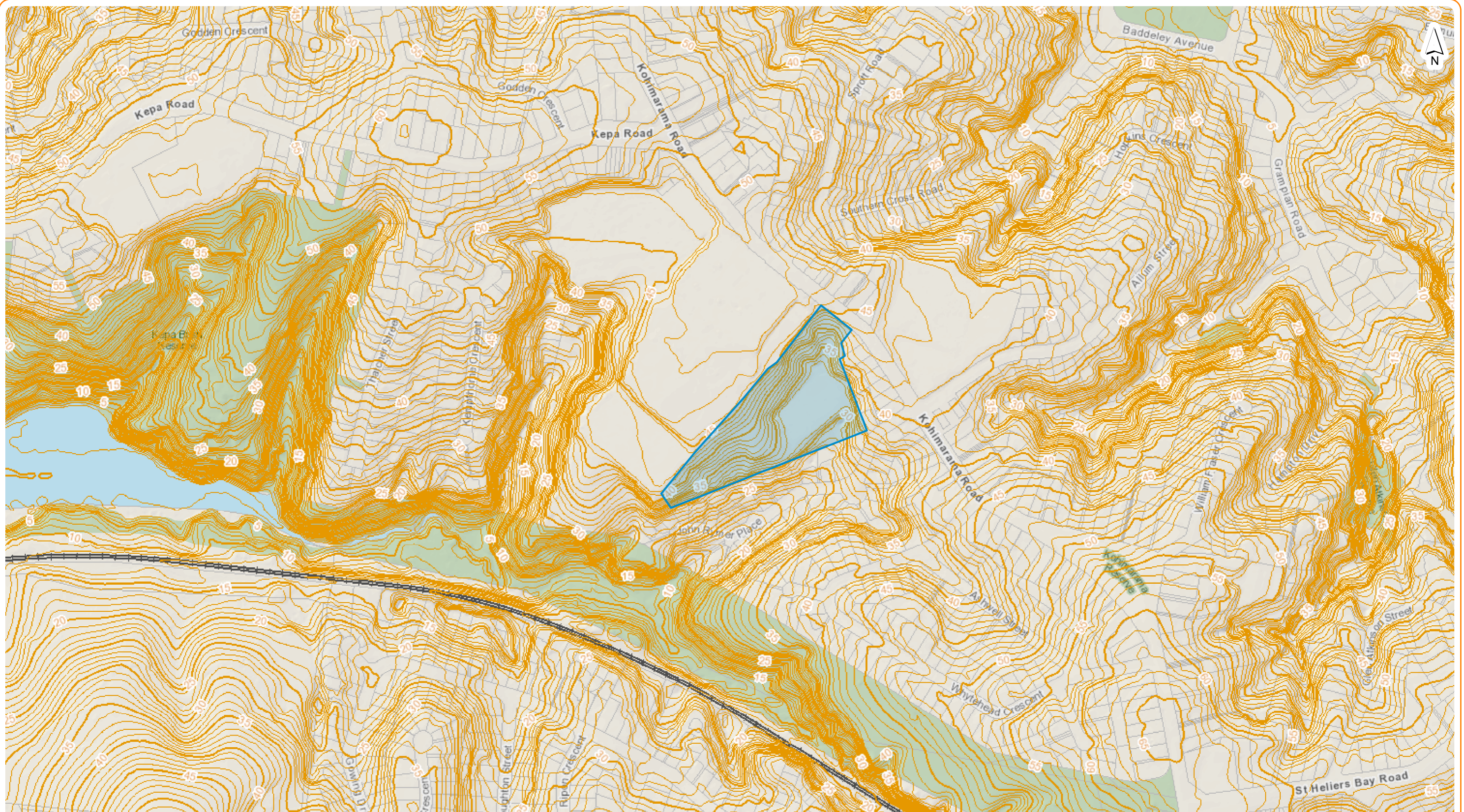
The summary contained in Section 6 combines a consideration of these factors and applies a 7-point scale of magnitude from negligible to extreme.

#### *Effects of Change*

1. Sensitivity of view to change including its visual quality, and visual absorption capability.
2. Number of viewers affected by the change.
3. Characteristics of the viewing group. For example, residents and people visiting an area to enjoy its visual characteristics will likely be more affected by visual change than people passing through an area or working in an area.
4. Viewer's values and attitudes towards the proposed activity (this may be negative, benign or positive).

The assessment contained in Section 6 considers these factors in combination and the summary at the end of the section applies a 7-point scale from very high adverse to positive.





Source: Auckland Council GeoMaps <https://geomapspublic.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/viewer/index.html>  
 Scale @ A3 1:5,000

The Site