



## LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE/STRUCTURE PLAN AREA

**2 Johnston Street**  
Lot 3 DP 446773

**Waitara**

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A world of difference

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report details a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment undertaken by blue**mar**ble for the Johnston Street Private Plan Change (PPC) / Structure Plan, 2 Johnston Street, Waitara.

The location of the application site is shown in **Graphic Appendix GA1.0 - Site Location Plan**.

A description of the PPC/Structure Plan area is contained within Section 1.1.

The purpose of this report is to identify and assess the significance of, and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right, and on people's views and visual amenity.

This report also addresses matters pertaining to character and amenity as outlined in the New Plymouth District Plan, and the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

Where effects are considered potentially significant, recommendations are provided to avoid, remedy or mitigate these potential effects in Chapter 8.

### ***Key Definitions used in this report:***

#### **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)**

A tool used to identify and assess the likely significant effects of change resulting from development both on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.

#### **Landscape**

An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

#### **Landscape character**

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

#### **Landscape effects**

Effects on the landscape as resource in its own right.

#### **Visual effects**

Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

#### **Landscape receptors**

Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

#### **Visual receptors**

Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

## 2. METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

This assessment of landscape and visual effects is based on the following aspect of best practice.

The purpose of the LVIA is to assist decision makers by providing an assessment that addresses the relevant Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) issues, specific to the project. The level of detail corresponds with the scale and significance of the effects the activity may have on the environment (following the principles set out in RMA s88).

The methodology for this assessment is guided by the relevant objectives and policies of the New Plymouth District Council, the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects, "Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management" Practice Note 1 and the draft New Zealand Transport Agency Landscape and Visual Assessment Guidelines (LVA) 2. Both represent accepted practice in the assessment of landscape and visual effects under the RMA.

The assessment of landscape and visual effects are separate, although linked. The existing landscape and its existing visual context or visual envelope all contributes to the existing 'baseline' for landscape and visual assessment studies. The assessment of the potential effect on the landscape is carried out as an effect on an environmental resource (i.e., landscape features or character). Visual effects are assessed as one of the interrelated effects on the surrounding viewing audience. The differences between these types of effects can be summarised as follows:

Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape.

Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

To determine the overall nature and significance of landscape and visual effects, an understanding of the sensitivity of the landscape or viewing audience has been combined with an assessment of the magnitude of change resulting from the proposal to determine the overall significance of effects. This assessment has been undertaken with reference to the Quality Planning Landscape Guidance Note and its signposts to examples of best practice which include the recently published UK guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment and the New Zealand Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape Assessment.

Descriptors for assessing landscape and visual effects are included within Appendix i & ii.



### 3. PROPOSAL

The proposal is to create a Structure Plan area within a 11.34 hectare area of land that is currently 'zoned' Rural Environment Area. The site is also subject to a Future Urban Development overlay (FUD), as shown in District Plan Map B40, (see **Graphic Appendix GA2.0 - District Plan Map**).

The Structure Plan includes four character types:

• 'Road Frontage Lots'	lots averaging 600m <sup>2</sup>	1.63 ha
• 'Larger Lots'	averaging 1000m <sup>2</sup>	1.91 ha
• 'Internal Lots'	ranging 500m <sup>2</sup> to 700m <sup>2</sup>	3.54 ha
• 'Smaller' Lots	ranging 350m <sup>2</sup> to 550m <sup>2</sup>	0.72 ha

In addition there are the following areas of land use:

• Open Space	Gully/Reserve	1.54 ha
• Roads	E11/E12	1.98 ha

Note: These areas are based on the Structure Plan (**Graphic Appendix GA6.0 - Structure Plan**), which will generally guide future development. **Graphic Appendix GA5.0 - Landscape Plan**, illustrates how a completed development could be configured, based on the Structure Plan.

A Structure Plan is considered an appropriate mechanism by which to undertake the PPC, as it provides greater certainty over infrastructure and environment outcomes. Structure Planning is also currently favoured by council for the rezoning of land, as evidenced by a number of Structure Plans undertaken in recent times.

### 3. SITE CONTEXT AND CHARACTER

The site is located on the southern fringe of Waitara, in a triangular shaped piece of land bound by Johnston Street to the south-west and Raleigh Street to the south-east. Residential Waitara is located immediately adjacent to the site in its north-eastern corner, at the intersection of Raleigh and Ranfurly Streets. The north-western boundary flanks open farmland. Contextually, the site is located within a strip of land alongside both sides of Raleigh Street that possesses rural-residential landscape character on a connecting road into Waitara.

The fact that the site is currently subject to a FUD overlay is illustrative of its potential suitability for residential activity.

The site itself is currently grazed and contains no buildings except for a couple of sheds. The land is predominantly open except for half a dozen shelter belts that are oriented more or less east/west. The defining landscape characteristic of the site is shallow meandering gully that runs through centre of the site, parallel with Raleigh Street. This gully contains a stream and broadens into ponds in two places, created by low farm crossings. The gully also contains stream-side vegetation, mostly adventive species such as pine and willow. The gully provides a legible 'natural' (despite some modification) landscape element to the site that provides a sense of place and connection into Waitara. Apart from the gully/waterway, the site is predominately flat, particularly on its outside edges.

Both Johnston and Raleigh Streets have experienced rural-residential subdivision in recent times, resulting in a framework of landuse that is in transition to greater intensification. This type of development is typical in peri-urban areas such as this. The site is atypical of the area in that it has not yet been subdivided into rural-residential style allotments, despite a landscape that suggests this type of development could occur. It is presumed that this lack of development is due to its FUD overlay, which prevents subdivision that could affect future residential development. Given this, the site's development into residential land via a PPC is not surprising, and on the face of it (given the FUD and its proximity to Waitara) would seem appropriate.

## 4. STATUTORY CONTEXT

The key statutory and policy considerations that inform this landscape assessment are contained in the following:

- Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA);
- Taranaki Regional Policy Statement;
- New Plymouth District Plan.

### Resource Management Act 1991

The overarching framework of the RMA is set out in Part 2, including the purpose of the Act set out in section 5. Matters of national importance are set out in section 6. Those that are particularly relevant to landscape matters for the project include:

- section 6(b): the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development;
- Section 7 of the RMA sets out matters which the Council must have particular regard to in achieving the purpose of the RMA.

These include:

- (c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values, and
- (f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.

The RMA defines amenity values as *“those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to the people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes”*.

The following assessment of both landscape and visual effects inform the overarching assessment of the effects of the proposed Structure Plan on amenity values.

## Taranaki Regional Policy Statement

The Taranaki Regional Policy Statement (Taranaki RPS) provides an overview of the resource management issues in the Taranaki region. Section 10 of the Taranaki RPS ('Natural features and landscapes (NFL), historic heritage and amenity value') includes policies and methods in relation to landscape and visual amenity. The RPS does not identify or map any outstanding natural landscapes, but states that 'outstanding' refers to *"those natural features or landscapes of exceptional value or eminence or distinction on a national regional or district level"*.

A summary of the key relevant landscape objectives and policies in the Taranaki RPS relevant to the Project is set out below.

NFL Objective 1: To protect the outstanding natural features and landscapes of the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and to appropriately manage other natural areas, features and landscapes of and landscapes of value to the region to the region.

For this proposal there are no outstanding natural features and landscapes in the above context.

NFL Policy 2: Recognition shall be given to the appropriate management of other natural areas, features or landscapes not covered by Policy 1 above, but still of value to the region for one or more of the following reasons:

- d. natural character amenity and heritage values and scientific and educational significance;

NFL Policy 3: The protection of outstanding and where appropriate, other natural features and landscapes of value shall be achieved by having regard to the following criteria in determining appropriate subdivision, use and development:

- a. The protection of outstanding and where appropriate, other natural features and landscapes of value shall be achieved by having regard to the following criteria in determining appropriate subdivision, use and development:
  - the degree and significance of actual or potential adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes or other important natural
  - features and landscapes, including cumulative effects, and the efficacy of measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate such effects;

- the benefits to be derived from the use and development at the local, regional and national level;
- the need for use or development to occur in the particular location;
- the sensitivity or vulnerability of a natural feature or landscape to change, and its capacity to accommodate change, without compromising the values of the feature or landscape;
- the degree of existing modification of the natural feature or landscape from its natural character;

Regard has been given to these matters in this landscape and visual impact assessment.

## **New Plymouth District Plan Issues 1, 4 and 5.**

### **CHARACTER AREAS**

*Objective 1: To ensure that activities do not adversely affect the environmental and amenity values of areas within the district or adversely affect other activities.*

*Policy 1.1: Activities should be located in areas where their effects are compatible with the character of the area.*

*Policy 1.2: Activities within an area should not have adverse effects that diminish the amenity of neighbouring areas, having regard to the character of the receiving environment and cumulative effects.*

### **RURAL CHARACTER**

*Objective 4: To ensure that subdivision, use and development of land does not adversely affect those elements that define the rural character while recognising the diverse nature of rural land and land uses.*

*Policy 4.1: Subdivision within the rural environment should not adversely affect the open space or visual elements of rural character.*

*Policy 4.2: Activities should be designed, located and/or of such a density that the visual and open space characteristics of rural character is maintained.*

*Policy 4.3: Vegetation should be retained and planted to maintain and enhance rural character.*

### **URBAN ENVIRONMENTS**

*Objective 5: To maintain and enhance the character and coherence of the urban areas so the New Plymouth District.*

*Policy 5.3: The positive contribution vegetation makes to urban amenity should be recognised maintained and where possible, enhance.*



Table 1

<b>RELEVANT POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES - NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT PLAN</b>	
<b>CHARACTER AREAS</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT SUMMARY</b>
<i>Objective 1: To ensure that activities do not adversely affect the environmental and amenity values of areas within the district or adversely affect other activities.</i>	The Structure Plan area will maintain and enhance visual amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site and wider environment. The Structure Plan area contains site specific mitigation that will manage the adverse effects of activities on the receiving environment.
<i>Policy 1.1: Activities should be located in areas where their effects are compatible with the character of the area.</i>	The Structure Plan area is located adjacent to an existing residential area therefore effects on character and amenity are appropriate. Effects on rural and open space areas can be managed with recommended mitigation.
<i>Policy 1.2: Activities within an area should not have adverse effects that diminish the amenity of neighbouring areas, having regard to the character of the receiving environment and cumulative effects.</i>	Potentially adverse effects on the amenity of neighbouring areas is limited to a small number of properties within the adjacent rural environment area. Effects on these areas can be managed with recommended mitigation.
<b>RURAL CHARACTER</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
<i>Objective 4: To ensure that subdivision, use and development of land does not adversely affect those elements that define the rural character while recognising the diverse nature of rural land and land uses.</i>	The Structure Plan area will maintain and enhance visual amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site and wider environment, albeit the character of the site itself will change.
<i>Policy 4.1: Subdivision within the rural environment should not adversely affect the open space or visual elements of rural character.</i>	The Structure Plan area will become a residential subdivision. The effects on its rural character are limited due to the characteristics and qualities of the site.
<i>Policy 4.2: Activities should be designed, located and/or of such a density that the visual and open space characteristics of rural character is maintained.</i>	The effect of the Structure Plan area on visual and open space characteristics of the surrounding rural environment are largely avoided by the location of the site. Recommended mitigation measures will assist in softening the effects of the residential subdivision at the rural interface.
<i>Policy 4.3: Vegetation should be retained and planted to maintain and enhance rural character.</i>	Vegetation along the riparian areas will provide a transition from residential to rural areas.
<b>URBAN CHARACTER</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
<i>Objective 5: To maintain and enhance the character and coherence of the urban areas so the New Plymouth District.</i>	The Structure Plan area represents a contiguous and logical extension to the existing Waitara Residential Environment Area.
<i>Policy 5.3: The positive contribution vegetation makes to urban amenity should be recognised maintained and where possible, enhanced.</i>	The Structure Plan area contains landscape provisions that will soften the urban/rural interface.

Table 1

<b>RELEVANT POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES - NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT PLAN</b>	
<b>AREAS FOR FUTURE URBAN DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT SUMMARY</b>
<i>Objective 1A: To ensure that activities within and adjacent to the Future Urban Development OVERLAY do not adversely affect the ability to rezone and subsequently develop areas identified as FUTURE URBAN GROWTH AREAS.</i>	The Structure Plan area is able to be undertaken within the FUD area as no activity has been undertaken on the site which adversely affects the ability to rezone and develop the land.
<i>Policy 1A.1: Activities within the Future Urban Development OVERLAY should be located and undertaken in a manner that does not have any actual or potential adverse effects on the future rezoning and subsequent development of land identified as a FUTURE URBAN GROWTH AREA.</i>	The proposal is to rezone the site as a residential environment area. This is consistent with Policy 1A.1.
<i>Policy 1A.2: Subdivision of land within the Future Urban Development OVERLAY should be located and undertaken in a manner that does not have any actual or potential adverse effects on the future rezoning and subsequent development of land identified as a FUTURE URBAN GROWTH AREA.</i>	The land has not been subdivided in a manner that affects its ability to be rezoned.
<i>Policy 1A.3 Activities within the RURAL ENVIRONMENT AREA should be undertaken in a manner that does not have any actual or potential adverse effects on the future rezoning and subsequent development of adjacent FUTURE URBAN GROWTH AREAS as identified by the Future Urban Development OVERLAY.</i>	There are no on-site activities that affect its ability to be rezoned.

Issue 1A states that the Future Urban Growth Areas provide the council with the necessary direction and context for assessing any urban growth related private plan changes. Therefore, this private plan change proposal is entirely appropriate in terms of council objectives. The District Plan states that identification of FUD areas should take into consideration the key principle of compact urban form. This assessment of landscape and visual impacts agrees with the council's assessment that this site is therefore suitable for future urban development.

The Structure Plan area is essentially seeking to convert open and rural farmland to residential land-use. Contextually, this is a logical expansion of urban Waitara to which the site abuts at its northern tip. This change in land-use is anticipated by council with the Future Urban Development (FUD) overlay, which applies to the entire site as well as to an area of land opposite on Raleigh Street.

This assessment notes that the FUD overlay does not apply to the site within the Draft New Plymouth District Plan. (DNPDP). There is no discussion within the DNPDP as to why it has been removed from this area, only to state that;

*Urban growth areas are areas where growth will be directed to occur in the future. Until such time as the land is required for growth purposes, the underlying zone provisions (typically, Rural Production Zone) apply. Additional controls also apply to ensure that activities do not occur in these areas which might compromise the ability of the area to be used for intended future growth purposes.*

*To help achieve good quality subdivision and development outcomes in urban growth areas, the Council will require the land to be rezoned before it can be developed for urban use. It may also require that a structure plan be prepared. Structure plans will be put in place, where appropriate, to ensure development occurs in a holistic manner, with adequate consideration given to key infrastructure, open space elements, cultural areas of significance, key features and site-specific opportunities/constraint.*

In assessing the landscape and visual impacts of the Structure Plan area, effects are considered within the context of the local receiving environment, which in this case includes residential and rural land.

It is assumed that the character and amenity impacts of the Structure Plan on the existing Waitara urban area, particularly those properties closest to the site along Raleigh, Ranfurly, Stratford Streets, are largely self evident, and anticipated by the FUD. Few (if any) of these urban properties rely on the site's rural qualities for their amenity, as the site narrows at the Waitara end, thereby limiting the area of noticeable change from the adjacent urban area.

Significant effects are more likely to occur from the proposal on the neighbouring rural environment, including the rural-residential type allotments that are located on Johnston Street, and along Raleigh Street. Therefore, this assessment primary considers effects of the Structure Plan on these areas, as well as effects on Raleigh Street as an entrance road into Waitara.

The Operative District Plan provides a description of the character of the Rural Environment Area and also the Residential A Environment area. The potential effects of the proposal plan change in relation to the character of the rural environment area are largely anticipated by its FUD status. The site was chosen as a FUD area due to its proximity to Waitara, thereby meeting the district plan objective of compact urban form. The rural land around the site will experience little perceptual change in character, as the site is a discrete landscape unit bound by Waitara's urban area to the north, FUD to the east, open pastoral land to the east, and rural-residential allotments to the south. The proposal represents the logical anticipated expansion of urban Waitara.

With regard to Residential Environment areas, the Operative District Plan states the density of development and the amount of space occupied by buildings is particularly relevant to the residential areas within the district, noting that there is a demand for a variety of housing types such as detached and semi-detached dwellings, family, flats, apartments, housing for the elderly and rural/residential development. The residential environment areas are described in the plan as follows;

*The RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AREAS are located in urban areas and represent those areas where the majority of people choose to reside. They are characterised by a medium to high density built form, low to medium traffic movements, low levels of environmental nuisance (such as noise) and high levels of visual and aesthetic amenity. Small-scale businesses are often part of and contribute to the RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AREA fabric. Within the district there are three distinct RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AREAS - RESIDENTIAL A, B and C.*

*The RESIDENTIAL A ENVIRONMENT AREA is representative of the typical ALLOTMENTS found in developed residential areas where connection to reticulated sewerage is available. Many homes are set back from boundaries, well landscaped and are one or two storeys in HEIGHT.*

The proposal is consistent with the objectives and descriptors for Residential A Environment areas. Further, the proposal includes additional measures (such as design controls) and roading typologies that meet current council standards and objectives. The roading pattern and its relationship to the highway has been undertaken to ensure that users of Raleigh Street are not faced with a row of rear fences, and the main central reserve area includes a lane to ensure that allotments don't 'back onto' the reserve in this area. The mixed lots sizes go some way to meeting council objectives for efficient use of residential land, albeit it is anticipated that the site will consist of detached housing.

## 5. ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

### Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.

Landscape effects derive from changes to the physical landscape which in turn affects its underlying character and how this is experienced. The description and analysis of effects on a landscape resource relies on the analysis of whether changes are positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse). A landscape's 'resilience', or ability to adapt to change whilst retaining its particular character and values depends on its 'capacity' to absorb change without substantially altering or compromising its existing character or values. A landscape's resilience and capacity will vary with:-

- existing land use;
- degree of naturalness and topography;
- the pattern and scale of the landscape;
- visual enclosure / openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;
- the scope and opportunity for mitigation which is in keeping with the existing landscape;

*For the methodology of assessing landscape effects see Appendix ii.*

The potential landscape effects created by the Structure Plan Area are two fold:

- There will be a change in landscape character as the site changes from rural to residential. Whereas the landscape is currently dominated by open pastoral farmland, this will change to a landscape predominantly occupied by residential land-use. These effects will be permanent.
- There will also be a change to landscape character through land modification. Earthworks will occur with the creation of roads and allotments, although these are anticipated to be minimal give the flat nature of the land, and the maintenance of the existing gully through the site for stormwater retention and a walkway. Any changes in topography will, with time, not be recognisable as houses are built and sections modified. Amenity and riparian vegetation will also soften and re-render the modified landscape.

While the overall landscape change is significant and permanent, the effect of this change (character effect) is appropriate, given the site's proximity to residential Waitara. This assessment does not assess the land supply provisions for Waitara, but assumes the appropriateness of the site as a resource to meet residential demand.

Notwithstanding the appropriateness of the site to meet demand, consideration must be given to how the Structure Plan area integrates with its receiving environment, in particular in order that the urban/rural interface is commensurate with existing landscape qualities.

The proposed development will have little influence on the wider landscape. The site is located in a discrete area whereby landscape effects are predominately limited to the site itself. Constituent elements of the broader landscape, both aesthetic and perceptual, will experience little change. Raleigh Street is undergoing landscape change, becoming increasingly urbanised. The Structure Plan area intensifies this change, providing a legible extension to the Waitara Urban Area on land that is conspicuous by its lack of development, given its context. The broader rural landscape to the north-west is currently less fragmented than along Raleigh Street. The Structure Plan area will marginally impact on the character of this broader rural area. Impacts on the rural-residential styled rural area of Raleigh and Johnston Streets will be greater, as these areas will experience landscape change 'in their back yard'. However given the semi urban nature of many of these properties, the landscape effects of the Structure Plan area, while permanent, are not significant given their scale and location .

As a resource, the site will change from rural to urban, thereby resulting in a loss (albeit small in area) of rural land. The Operative District Plan states in its Policies and Objectives that subdivision should not adversely affect those elements that define the rural character, while recognising the diverse nature of rural land and land uses. Policy 4.1 states that subdivision within the rural environment should not adversely affect the open space or visual elements of rural character, and Policy 4.2 states that activities should be designed, located and/or of such a density that the visual and open space characteristics of rural character is maintained. Specifically, the NPDP identifies elements that help to distinguish the differences between those areas that are urban, from those that are rural. These elements are listed below.

**Spaciousness:** *Areas of open space used for grazing or growing crops. Although there are a variety of landscapes and uses in the rural area, it has an overall feeling of spaciousness.*

**Low Density:** *Widely spaced built form with dwellings dispersed in the wider landscape and some limited lifestyle opportunities. Historical clusters of development either as small towns or isolated developments.*

**Vegetated:** *Areas of vegetation (in a natural state or managed, indigenous and/or exotic) such as pasture, crops, forest and scrub, riparian margins, lakes and wetlands, stands of trees, shelter-belts or gardens.*

**Production Oriented:** *Land uses of a predominantly 'production' orientated nature such as farming and related farm storage sheds, stock yards, farm animals and houses supporting the principal productive land use. These include intensive farming activities.*

**Working Environment:** *A generally highly modified and managed landscape including the widespread use of machinery and chemicals to control and enhance plant and animal growth and production resulting in 'rural noises' and 'rural smells'.*

**Rural Based Industry:** *Associated with the land or its associated natural assets. Incl: sawmills, quarries, agricultural manufacture, transport yards, bulk stores, airports, pipelines, petroleum industry activities, and exploration.*

**Rural Infrastructure:** *Generally has a lack of urban infrastructure such as reticulated water and wastewater...a road transportation network of many narrow roads with low traffic volumes, un-kerbed, without footpaths and urban structures such as street lighting.*



However, the Operative District Plan also recognises that as with other environment areas, change is constant in the rural environment and states: *“Beyond the annual cycle of the seasons, regional, national and international forces act on the rural economy, and land uses frequently change as a result. Different crops, different management regimes, and different lifestyles bring change to the rural landscape and to the people who live there” (P26a).*

Part of the nature of the landscape resource for this site is its status as FUD. It is reasonable to assume that in applying the FUD, council have considered the site as an important future urban resource, protected for such use by its FUD overlay. It is therefore anticipated that there will be landscape change - from the existing rural resource to urban. As described above, it is self evident that there will be a change in landscape character as the site transitions from rural to residential. The site as a rural landscape resource does not possess qualities that suggest it ought not be subject to change (reinforced by the FUD overlay).

Landscape mitigation measures are described in Chapter 9 to ensure that although the site will change from rural to urban, the change will appear commensurate with its context - rural on the one hand, urban on the other.

## 6. ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

### Effects on the specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

Representative viewpoints have been identified by on-site investigation as being views that represent various receptors; that is, people who may experience that view (or broadly similar). The **Viewpoint Location Plan** and associated **Viewpoint Photographs - Graphic Appendices, GA3.0 & GA4.0**, shows the location of each viewpoint with respect to the site.

Because of the relatively flat nature of the site, the visual envelope is limited to the adjacent and surrounding landscape. Representative viewpoints have been identified for each of the surrounding character types which were determined by on-site walkabout, albeit access to some adjacent private properties was not available. The viewpoints represent five viewpoint (receptors) types:

These are:

1. Rural landowners on Johnston Street.
2. Rural landowners on the eastern side of Raleigh Street opposite the site.
3. Rural landowners north-west of the site
4. Urban residents north of the site
5. Users of Raleigh Street

Effects on viewpoints/receptors are examined using “worst case” scenarios and take account of the uncontrolled elements of the proposal and their flow-on effect on landscape character. These activities include, but are not exclusive to, building location, building form, earthworks, roads, driveways, and fences.

The location of the viewpoint photographs are shown on the Viewpoint Location Plan GA3.0 in the Graphic Appendices.

The **viewpoint photographs** illustrate the visibility that these groups currently experience.

**Panorama 1** : View from within the site towards Raleigh Street. This illustrates the openness of the site to views from Raleigh Street and sites opposite.

**Panorama 2**: View from within the site towards Johnston Street. This illustrates the openness of the site and the rural character of the southern side of Johnston Street.

**Panorama 3:** View along the north-western boundary that shows the open rural land that lies north-west of the site.

**Panorama 4:** View along Johnston Street showing the open visibility into the site.

**Panorama 5:** View from Raleigh Street looking into the site showing the interface with the road.

**Panorama 6:** View into the northern end of site from Waitara residential area.

**Panorama 7:** View towards the site from opposite the corner of Raleigh and Johnston Streets.

**Panorama 8:** View into site from Raleigh Street near its northern end.

**Table 2 over** summarises the assessment of visual effects with respect to the visual effects methodology outlined in Appendix i. Within the table, each viewpoint is listed with a description of who it represents, with the degree of visibility, sensitivity and effect rated using descriptors from high to low. The overall effect on the viewpoint is rated both before and after mitigation, with mitigation measures specifically described to reduce the visibility of dwellings through design controls, and riparian and street planting to limit the dominance of urban form. The nature of the change is implicit in the matrix, as the landscape change from rural to urban applies to the whole site - all viewers will essentially experience the same nature of change - open paddocks will become suburban houses and roads, with an enhanced waterway and environs running through the site.

Table 2: Visual Sensitivity &amp; Effects Matrix

Representative Viewpoint	Description of View	Degree of Visibility Existing	Visual Sensitivity	Effect of Change (no mitigation)	Overall Effect of Change (with mitigation)	Post Mitigation and Design Controls
View into the site from landowners on Johnston Street. Panoramas 2 & 4	There are two properties on the eastern side of Johnston Street and four on the western side that have views into the site.	High degree of visibility due to proximity and orientation	High due to orientation	High Adverse	Medium Adverse	<b>Mitigation Discussion:</b> Minimum lot sizes of 1000m <sup>2</sup> along road boundary. Height controls. Recessive exterior colours schemes on roofs to minimise visibility. Fencing controls. Planting of gully to reduce dominance of built form.
View into the site from landowners on Raleigh Street. Panoramas 1, 5, 8	There are six properties located on the eastern side of Raleigh Street between Johnston Street and Ranfurly Street.	High degree of visibility due to proximity and orientation	Medium due to setback & vegetation	High Adverse	Medium Adverse	<b>Mitigation Discussion:</b> Minimum lot sizes of 1000m <sup>2</sup> along road boundary. Height controls. Recessive exterior colours schemes on roofs to minimise visibility. Fencing controls. Planting of gully to reduce dominance of built form. Street tree planting.
View into the site from rural land north-west of the site. Panorama 3	There are three rural properties located on the north-western side of the site. There are no dwellings on these properties.	High degree of visibility due to proximity and orientation	Low due to nature of the land (no dwellings)	Medium Adverse	Low Adverse	<b>Mitigation Discussion:</b> Minimum lot sizes of 1000m <sup>2</sup> along site boundary. Height controls. Recessive exterior colours schemes on roofs to minimise visibility. Fencing controls. Planting of gully to reduce dominance of built form.
Urban residents north of the site. Panorama 6	There are a small number of residential properties that have views into the site.	Low degree of visibility due to orientation and extent of site visible.	Low due to residential character	Low Adverse	Low Adverse	<b>Mitigation Discussion:</b> Height controls. Recessive exterior colours schemes on roofs to minimise visibility. Fencing controls. Planting of gully to reduce dominance of built form. Street tree planting.
Raleigh Street users. Panorama 7	Views into the site approaching and leaving Waitara	High degree of visibility, but transient view	Medium due to transient view but important entrance road to Waitara	Medium Adverse	Low Adverse	<b>Mitigation Discussion:</b> Driveways onto road to create orientation to Raleigh Street. Height controls. Recessive exterior colours schemes on roofs to minimise visibility. Fencing controls. Planting of gully to reduce dominance of built form. Street tree planting.

### **Summary of Visual Effects**

The rezoning of the site will create permanent landscape change for all of the surrounding neighbours. However, the amenity effects vary depending on the viewing audience. Rural land to the north-west contains no dwellings and the site rezoning creates little actual adverse amenity effect.

Residents on Johnston Street are oriented towards the site and their current rural outlook will change. This change can be managed to reduce adverse effects, but it is this group that are most at risk of experiencing a loss of rural outlook.

Residents on Raleigh Street will also experience change, although these residents are generally set well back from Raleigh Street and they currently adjoin a busy road. The site will change the ambience of the road, and once fully developed vehicle speeds may well reduce.

Urban residents of Waitara on Ranfurly and Raleigh Streets will view the Structure Plan area as an extension of their existing environment.

Overall, the site has a low number of neighbouring properties. The shape and location of the site mean that relatively few properties have views into the site, and fewer again with direct lines of sight. There are no elevated views or situations where structures would be seen against the skyline, and there are no views across the site to important viewpoints beyond.

With mitigation, the effects of structures along the rural edges of the subdivision can be managed to ensure that the character of the landscape interface is integrated appropriately. Larger lot sizes, and design controls will reduce the impact of an urbanised site, and the planting of the central gully and internal street trees will (given time) create an attractive visual backdrop to external views.

## 8. MITIGATION

The purpose of these recommendations is to mitigate any likely, or potential, adverse effects created by the Structure Plan area. The previous sections have analysed and outlined the likely effects the proposal will create on the receiving environment's amenity. Mitigation recommendations have been developed in response to these effects and aim to ensure the development can occur with no more than a minor effect.

Mitigation measures have been developed in liaison with the client and are intended to optimise landscape outcomes. Following expert landscape architecture advice, the client has committed to using a variety of character types as the principal mechanism to creating an holistic urban subdivision that acknowledges its partly rural setting, and utilises the waterway as the central recreational and ecological space.

The use of character types (as shown on the **Structure Plan & Landscape Plan**), forms an important part of the site's mitigation. These character types have been deliberately and strategically designed to create a legible transition from intensive internal lots to larger lots on the rural margins. The internal gully is heavily planted to create a 'green' axis through the middle of site, thereby mitigating the adverse density effects than can occur with residential development.

The character types are described and summarised below:

### Road Frontage Lots

These lots average 600m<sup>2</sup> and will be accessed directly from Raleigh Street. This will reduce perception of a 'gated' community and avoid Raleigh Street appearing as the 'back' of a development with tall rear fences and the like.

### Larger Lots

These lots are located along the Johnston Street Road boundary, and the north-western boundary that interfaces with open farmland. These lots will average 1000m<sup>2</sup> and thereby reduce density along these rural margins.

### Internal Lots

Within the perimeter lots described above, the internal lots will range from 500m<sup>2</sup> to 700m<sup>2</sup>. These lots are larger than the current Operative Res A minimum controlled lot size of 450m<sup>2</sup>.

### Smaller Lots

In the middle of the site there is an area where smaller lots could occur. These will range from 350m<sup>2</sup> to 550m<sup>2</sup> and are designed to meet demand for those seeking affordability and or 'smaller living'.

The purpose of having four distinct lot size types is to provide a range of housing options and to create a residential area that has legible transition from urban to rural.

In addition there are the following areas of land use:



### Open Space

An important component of the development in terms amenity and liveability, is the protection and enhancement of the existing gully, which induces pathways. This provides recreational opportunity and potential linkages through to Waitara. The gully which also acts as stormwater retention, provides a green corridor through the site, thereby mitigating potential effects from urban density without green space.

### Roads

The roading pattern contains two types based on NPDC Roading guidelines. A narrow E11 road within the site will follow a portion of the gully. This will provide a lane type feel and create a positive connection between the properties on one side and the gully on the other.

The second road type is an E12 which is the predominant roading type in the Structure Plan. This road has two access points onto Raleigh Street as best practice dictates. This road assumes a reserve width sufficient to accommodate a footpath on both sides, and street tree planting, both of which provide for residential amenity (as shown on the Landscape Plan).

The Landscape Plan also indicates tree planting on Raleigh Street to provide an attractive entrance into this end of Waitara, and to soften the built form adjacent.

### **Additional Mitigation**

While the creation of character areas are designed to ameliorate effects, specific addition mitigation measures are also proposed.

### Habitable Buildings

To avoid visual clutter and maintain a sense of appropriate building density with the adjacent rural area, the maximum number of habitable buildings able to be located on any site is one.

### Building Height

To avoid a dominance of built form over open space and to maintain visual permeability, the maximum permitted height of any habitable or non-habitable building should be 6 metres.

### Roof Colour

To create a subdivision that blends with its rural context, it is recommended that colour controls be placed on roof colours for dwellings that are along the Johnston Street Road boundary, and the north-western boundary that interfaces with open farmland. This report recommends a maximum light reflectivity value (LRV) of 25% for all roofs in these areas.

### Cladding Colour

To create a subdivision that blends with its rural context, it is recommended that colour controls be placed on cladding colours for dwellings that are along the Johnston Street Road boundary, and the north-western boundary that interfaces with open farmland. This report recommends a maximum light reflectivity value (LRV) of 40% for all exterior cladding materials.

#### Front Yard

To allow for small lot sizes in the area labelled 'Smaller' lots it is recommended that the front yard requirement be 1.5m.

#### Fencing

Tall solid fencing has the potential to create an unacceptably harsh boundary between residential and rural environment areas, as well as road frontages. Therefore it is recommended that solid fencing taller than 1.2m should not be allowed on any properties. In addition, no fencing should be located on any property between the street and front elevation of its associated dwelling. This will provide an open streetscape and reduce urban clutter.

#### Planting

In order to ensure that the Structure Plan Area integrates harmoniously with its neighbouring rural environment by screening and filtering views of structures, it is recommended that planting of trees and shrubs should be established along the central gully and stream, using predominantly native species representative of the local area.

#### Landform

In order to ensure that likely changes in topography appear natural over time, it is recommended that cut and fill batters, where visible from rural environment areas, should be battered at a gradient to match gently and smoothly into existing contours. This is most likely to be relevant at the northern end of the site along the north-western boundary, where the landform drops towards the stream.

#### Walkways

In order to maximise a sense of rural context, walkways should be included within the riparian planted areas and gully. This should link through to Waitara if possible.

#### Amenity Vegetation within Lots

In order to reduce a dominance of built form over the receiving environment, there should be no restrictions on amenity planting (type or height) within lots. Amenity vegetation is encouraged.

#### **Mitigation Summary**

The Structure Plan area has been developed to avoid effects. The location, size, and orientation of the various character types have been carefully considered and designed to create varied but integrated development. This approach reduces the need for a long raft of mitigation measures, as amelioration of effects is built into the Structure Plan layout. The mitigation measures described above cover those matters not able to expressed either through the Structure Plan layout or where Operative Plan rules require amendment.

## 9. SUMMARY OF EFFECTS

The assessment of both Landscape and Visual Effects inform the overarching assessment of Amenity Effects.

The creation of a Structure Plan area will convert open farmland to residential land-use. This will create potential effects for the receiving environment; namely, a change in landscape character. These effects will be permanent but are appropriate given the site's context. While the site is overtly pastoral, it is nonetheless in close proximity to Waitara, and within an area that is experiencing increasing density through subdivision. The FUD overlay anticipates that this land is potentially suitable for future residential development.

Despite the proximity to Waitara and the FUD overlay, the site is nonetheless bound on three sides by rural land. Therefore, mitigation measures are proposed to create a residential area that respects its rural context. It is for this reason that mitigation measures over and above Operative District Plan permitted residential rules are proposed.

The change in landscape character is greatest on properties on Johnston Street. However, with mitigation, these effects can be reduced. In particular, the requirement for a minimum lot size of 1000m<sup>2</sup>, fencing controls and cladding and building colour.

In conclusion, using a Structure Plan to guide the site's development avoids potential adverse landscape and visual effects, as the Structure Plan creates and locates various character types. The combination of these areas, in conjunction with amenity facilities such as walkways, ecological enhancements, and infrastructure avoids a haphazard approach to development. The creation of character types provides variety, and the provision of design controls (such as fencing controls and building height) provides amelioration of effects for the receiving environment.

There is significant benefit in using this site for urban development as it abuts an existing residential area and therefore offers a logical and coherent extension to Waitara. The landscape effects of the proposal, both within the site itself and its receiving environment, are limited in scale and intensity. With mitigation, the essential character of this urban/rural landscape can be retained.

**Richard Bain**  
Landscape Architect



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## **APPENDICES**

- i Landscape Effects Assessment - Methodology
- ii Visual Effects Assessment - Methodology

## **GRAPHIC APPENDICES (A3)**

GA1.0	Site Location Plan
GA2.0	District Plan Map
GA3.0	Viewpoint Location Plan
GA4.0	Viewpoint Photographs
GA5.0	Landscape Plan
GA6.0	Structure Plan
GA7.0	Staging Plan

## Appendix i - Landscape Effects - Methodology

### What is Landscape?:

‘Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ (Council of Europe,2000).

Landscape is about the relationship between people and place, providing the setting for day-to-day lives. Landscape is everywhere and may comprise natural landscape, rural landscape, urban landscape (or townscape), peri-urban landscape, coastal landscape, seascape , etc. However, human perceptions of place also include things that cannot be seen but which add to the appreciation of places; these are:

- feelings generated by other senses – touch, hearing, smell, taste,
- feelings generated by a knowledge of the place (its cultural & historical associations with people, events, etc.),
- feelings generated by past experience of the place, or similar places – life experience.

These combine to give an experience of landscape perceived by all the senses – sight, sound, smell, touch, taste – and by knowledge. What is experienced is influenced by:

- the current use and management of the land by humans,
- the result of the historical use and management of the land,
- cultural associations,
- human activity,
- natural character.

### Nature of Effects:

There is no standard methodology for the quantification of the magnitude of effects. However, it is generally based on the scale and/or degree of change to the landscape resource, the nature of the effect, and its duration. The following categories outline the scale with which we assess the proposed subdivision and its effect on the receiving landscape resource.

Landscape Effect – Nature or Capacity

<u>High</u>	Landscape areas with particularly distinctive or positive characteristics or with valued landscape features. The areas may be sensitive to relatively small changes.
<u>Medium</u>	Landscape areas with reasonably positive character, but with evidence of alteration or degradation of the character or features. Potentially tolerant of some change.
<u>Low</u>	Landscape areas with a weak character or relatively few features of value, potentially tolerant of significant change.

Nature of Landscape Change

<u>High adverse</u>	Total loss of, or major alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
<u>Medium adverse</u>	Partial loss of, or alteration to, the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
<u>Low Adverse</u>	Minor loss of, or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
<u>No change</u>	Very minor loss or change to the landscape characteristics or features of the area, compensated by landscape improvements or enhancements.
<u>Low beneficial</u>	Minor improvements to the key characteristics or features that outweigh any adverse landscape effects of the proposal. Removal of minor incongruous features
<u>Medium beneficial</u>	Notable improvements to the key landscape characteristics or features, or improvements resulting from removal of inappropriate land uses or features.
<u>High beneficial</u>	Major landscape improvements, through the creation of a new landscape structure, or the removal of large-scale inappropriate features.



## **Appendix iii - Visual Effects - Methodology**

### **Nature Of Visual Receptors:**

The Nature Of Visual Receptors And Views Is Dependent On:

- the location and context of the viewpoints;
- the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor;

The extent to which the subject site is visible is based on a grading of the degree of visibility from an identified receptor. The continuum of the degrees of visibility ranges from no view, through partial views to full open views:

- a) No View: no view of the site or the site is difficult to perceive;
- b) Partial View: a view of part of the site, or a filtered view of the site, or a distant view where the site is perceived as a small part of the view;
- c) Open View: a clear view of a significant proportion of the site within the wider landscape.

### **Nature of Visual Effect**

In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude or scale of visual change is described by reference to:

- the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture;
- the duration and nature of the effect, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous, etc;
- the angle of view in relation to the main activity or orientation of the receptor;
- the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

### **Visual Sensitivity**

For this aspect of the assessment the following criteria apply:

High	Occupiers of residential properties with views affected by the development. Users of outdoor recreational facilities including pathways where interest may be focused on the landscape.
Medium	People travelling through the area with sustained periods of view; Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities being undertaken; People at places of work - including neighbouring farms; Occupiers of residential properties with obscured views of the property.
Low	People travelling through the area; people at places of work (including neighbouring farms); Occupiers of residential properties with distant and limited views of the development.

### Magnitude of Change

High Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a significant deterioration in the view.
Medium Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the view.
Low Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a minor deterioration in the view.
No Change	Where the scheme overall would not form a noticeable deterioration or improvement in the view.
Low Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a minor improvement in the view.
Medium Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable improvement in the view.
High Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a significant improvement in the view.

### Visual Significance of Change

Visual Significance of Change refers to the overarching visual effect created as a result of the proposal. It is determined by combining the outcome of the receptor's 'sensitivity' to change and the 'magnitude' by which the change will occur. Professional judgment is used to determine the overall significance of change. Significance is classified as either **substantial**, **moderate**, **minor** or **negligible**, and the effects can be **adverse** or **beneficial**.

# GRAPHIC APPENDICES

## Private Plan Change / Structure Plan 2 Johnston Street, Waitara

GA1.0	Site Location Plan
GA2.0	District Plan Map
GA3.0	Viewpoint Location Plan
GA4.0 - GA4.2	Viewpoint Photographs
GA5.0	Landscape Plan
GA6.0	Structure Plan
GA7.0	Staging Plan





PROJECT: Raleigh Street  
Proposed Subdivision

DRAWING TITLE: **SITE LOCATION PLAN**

DRAWING NO: GA1.0  
REVISION: 01

SCALE: 1:10,000@A3  
DATE: 14.01.19  
FILE NO.: 3077

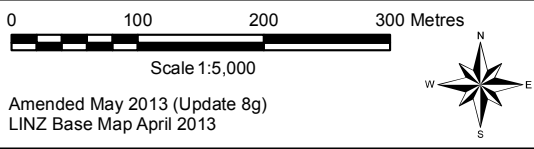
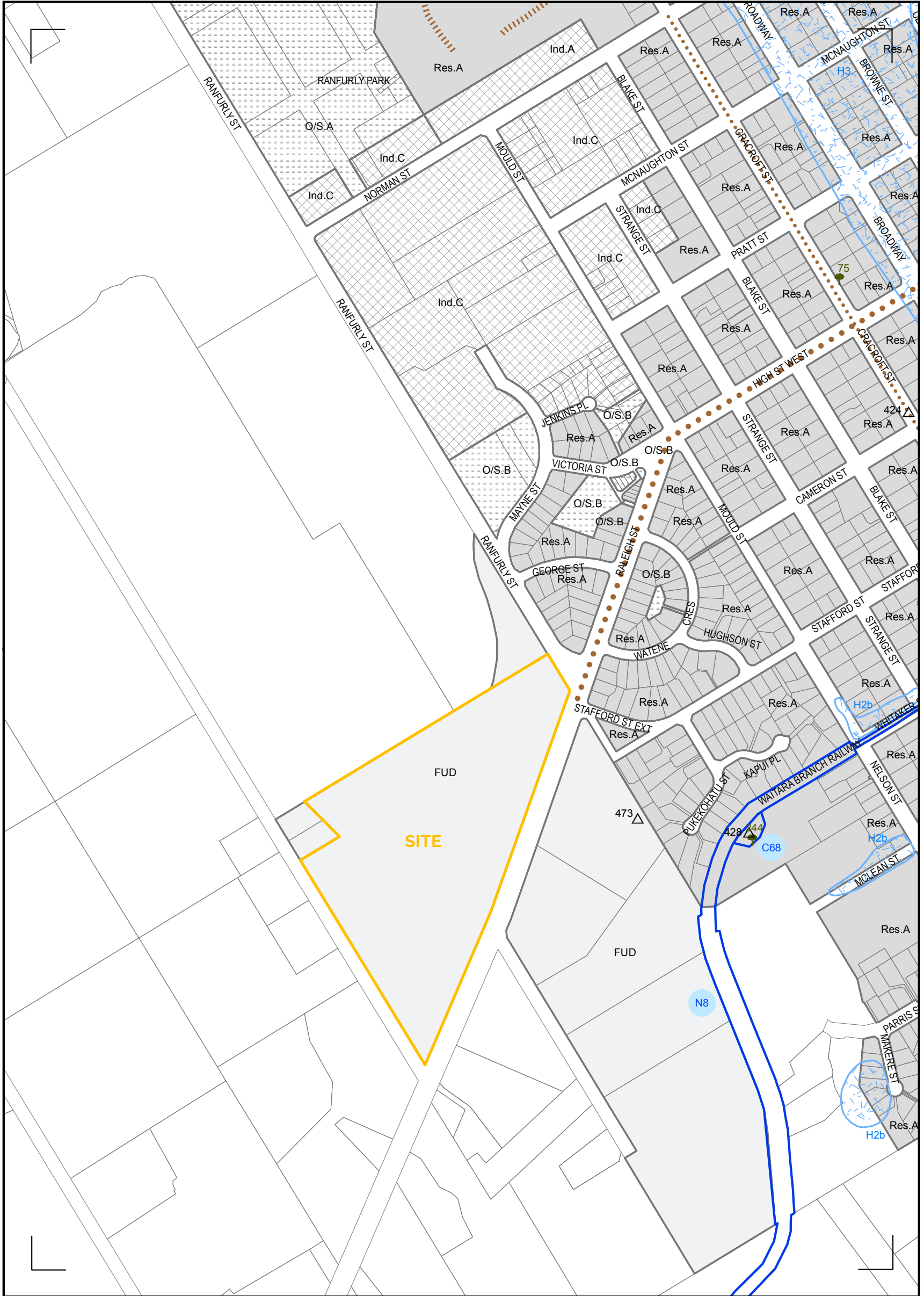


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**NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT PLAN**

A40 A41 A  
C5 B40 B41  
D6

**PLANNING MAP**  
**B 40**  
**WAITARA**

PROJECT:

Raleigh Street  
Proposed Subdivision

DRAWING  
TITLE:

**DISTRICT PLAN**  
**MAP**

DRAWING NO: GA2.0  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: NTS  
DATE: 24.09.18  
FILE NO.: 3077



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PROJECT:

Raleigh Street  
Proposed Subdivision

DRAWING  
TITLE:

VIEW POINT  
LOCATION PLAN

DRAWING NO: GA3.0  
REVISION: 01

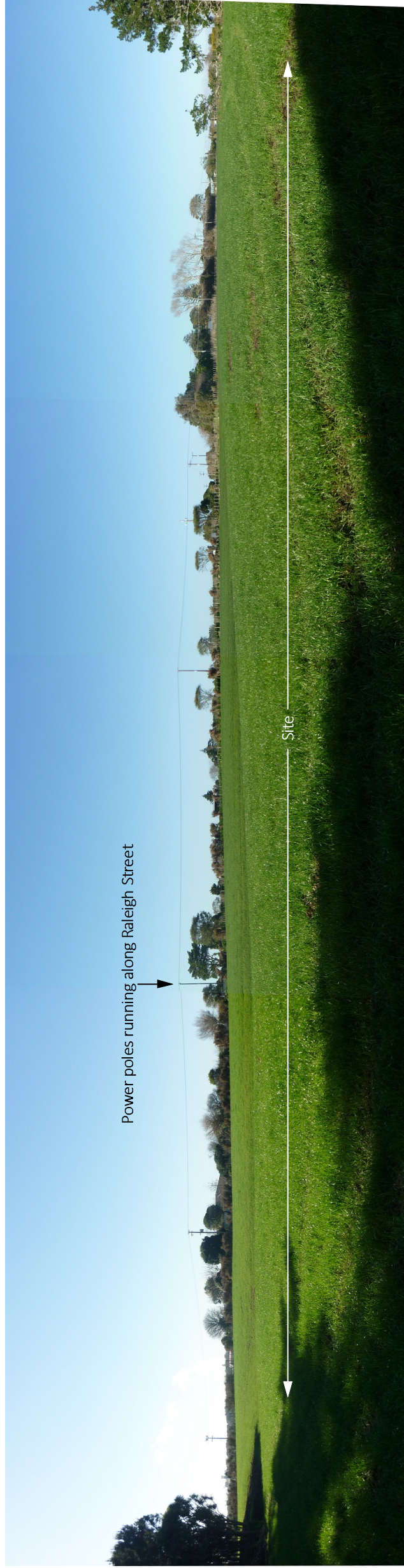
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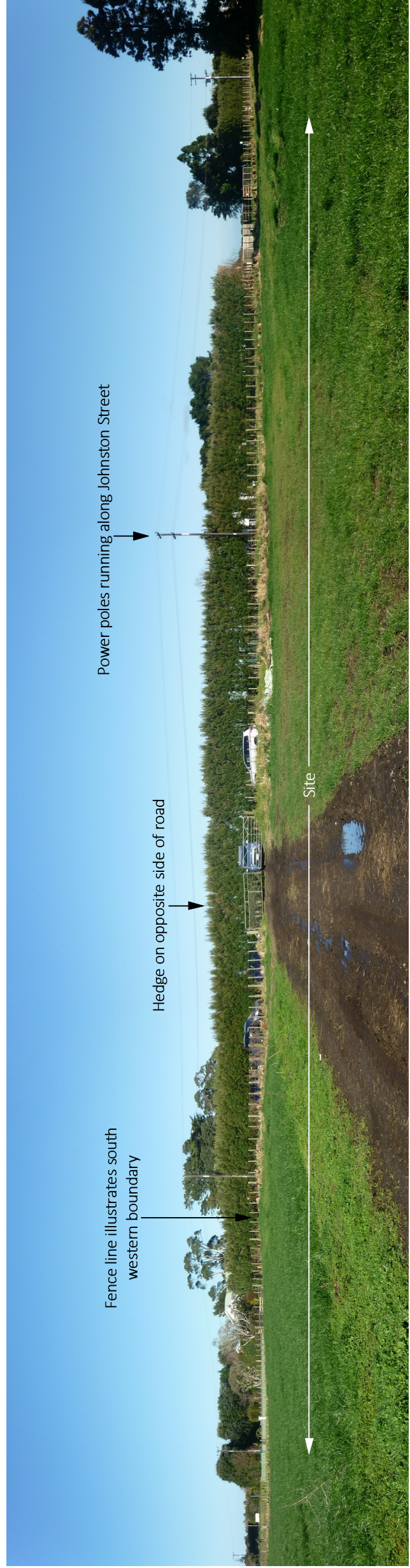
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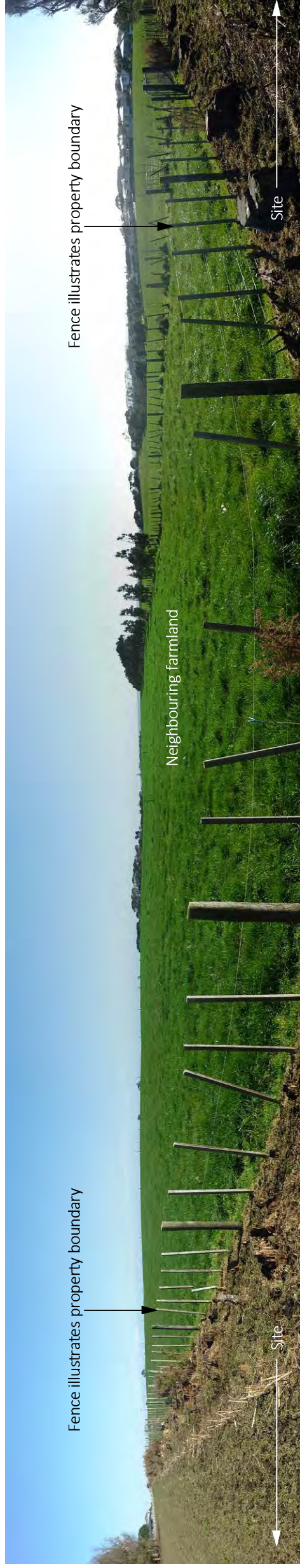


**Panorama 1**

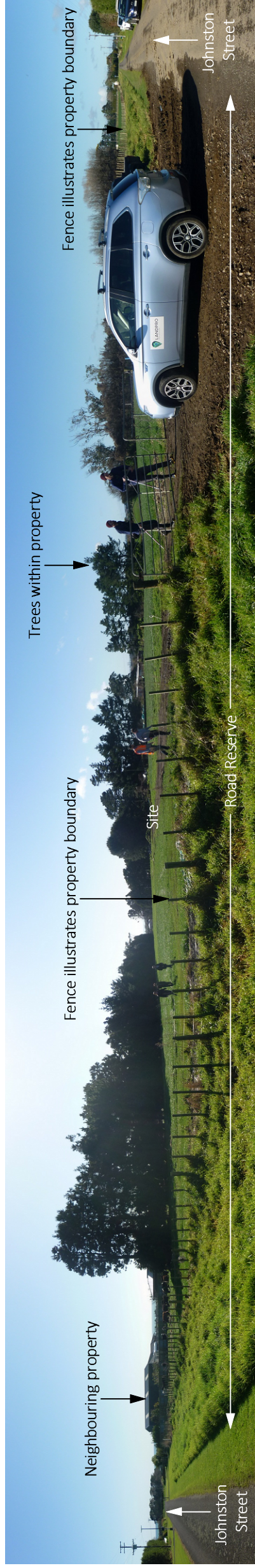


**Panorama 2**

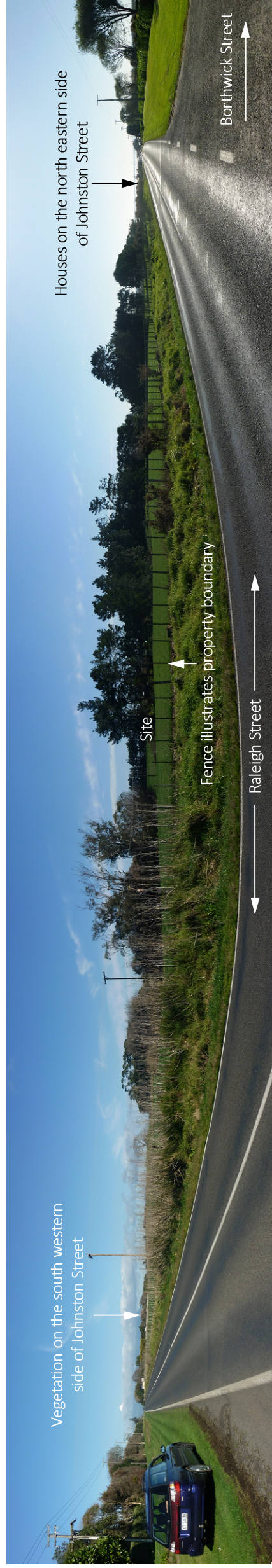




**Panorama 3**

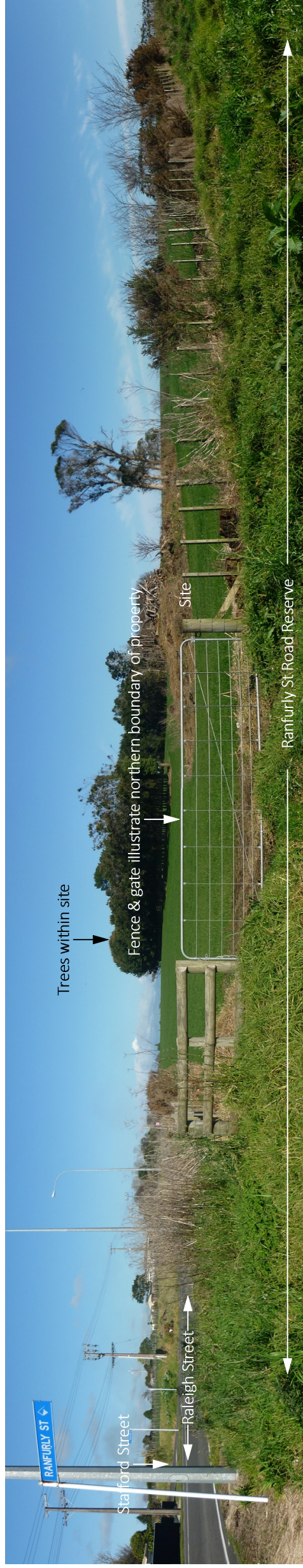


**Panorama 4**

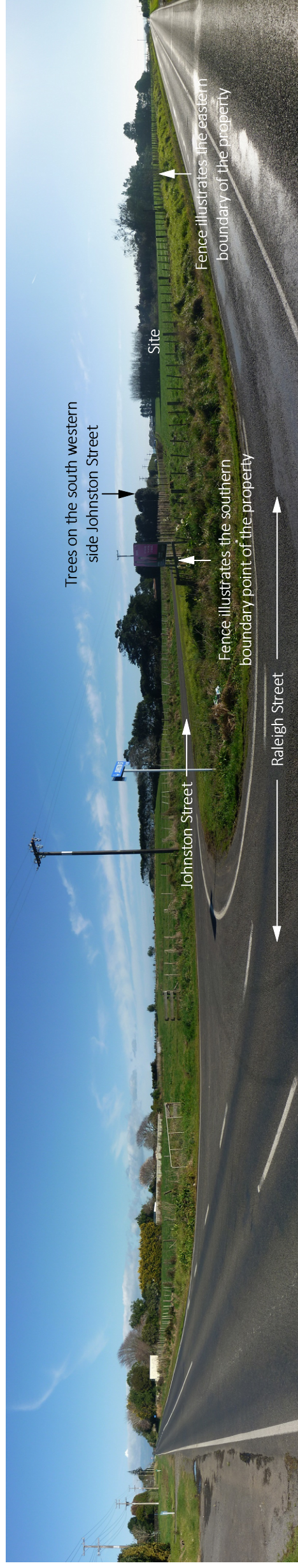


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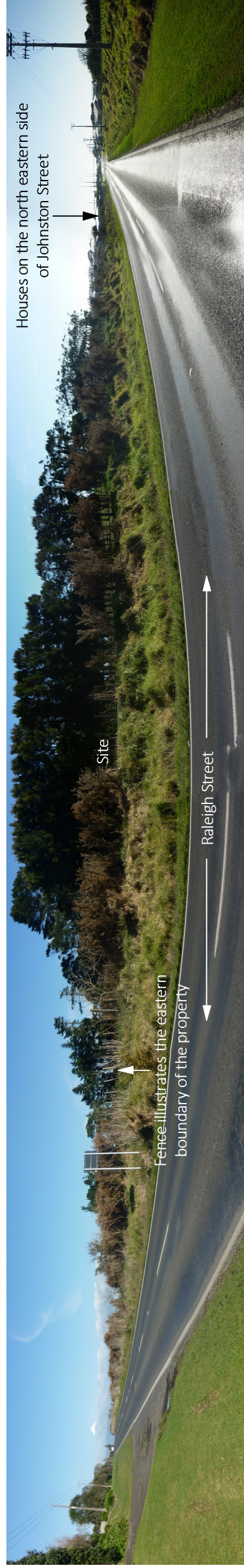




**Panorama 6**

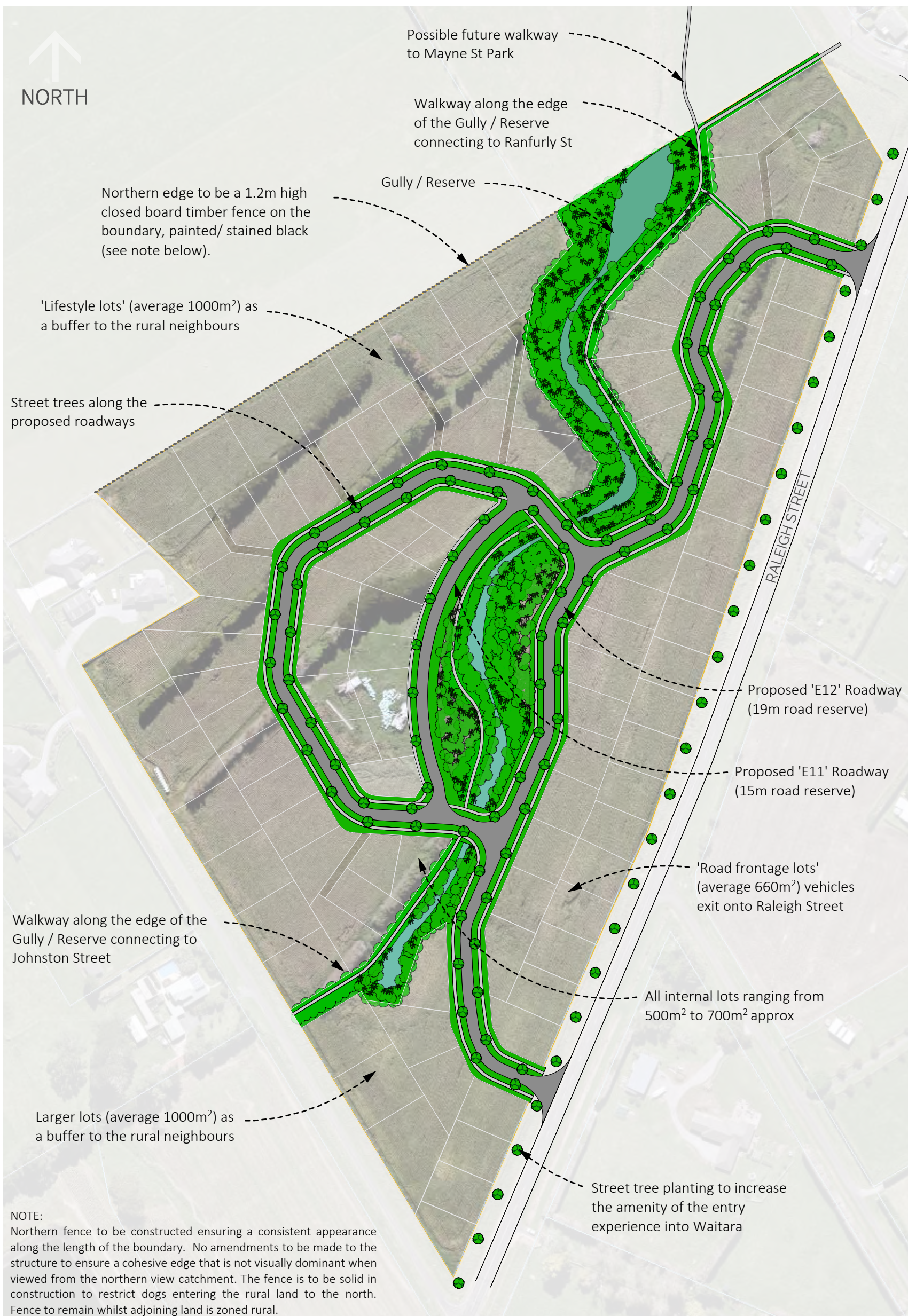


**Panorama 7**



**Panorama 8**





Possible future walkway to Mayne St Park

Walkway along the edge of the Gully / Reserve connecting to Ranfurly St

Northern edge to be a 1.2m high closed board timber fence on the boundary, painted/ stained black (see note below).

Gully / Reserve

'Lifestyle lots' (average 1000m<sup>2</sup>) as a buffer to the rural neighbours

Street trees along the proposed roadways

RALEIGH STREET

Proposed 'E12' Roadway (19m road reserve)

Proposed 'E11' Roadway (15m road reserve)

'Road frontage lots' (average 660m<sup>2</sup>) vehicles exit onto Raleigh Street

Walkway along the edge of the Gully / Reserve connecting to Johnston Street

All internal lots ranging from 500m<sup>2</sup> to 700m<sup>2</sup> approx

Larger lots (average 1000m<sup>2</sup>) as a buffer to the rural neighbours

Street tree planting to increase the amenity of the entry experience into Waitara

NOTE:  
Northern fence to be constructed ensuring a consistent appearance along the length of the boundary. No amendments to be made to the structure to ensure a cohesive edge that is not visually dominant when viewed from the northern view catchment. The fence is to be solid in construction to restrict dogs entering the rural land to the north. Fence to remain whilst adjoining land is zoned rural.

PROJECT:

Raleigh Street  
Proposed Subdivision

DRAWING  
TITLE:

LANDSCAPE PLAN

DRAWING NO: GA5.0

SCALE: 1:2000@A3

DATE: 26.02.19

REVISION: 02

FILE NO.: 3077



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PROJECT:

Raleigh Street  
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DRAWING  
TITLE:

**STRUCTURE PLAN**

DRAWING NO: GA6.0

SCALE: 1:2000@A3

REVISION: 01

DATE: 14.01.19

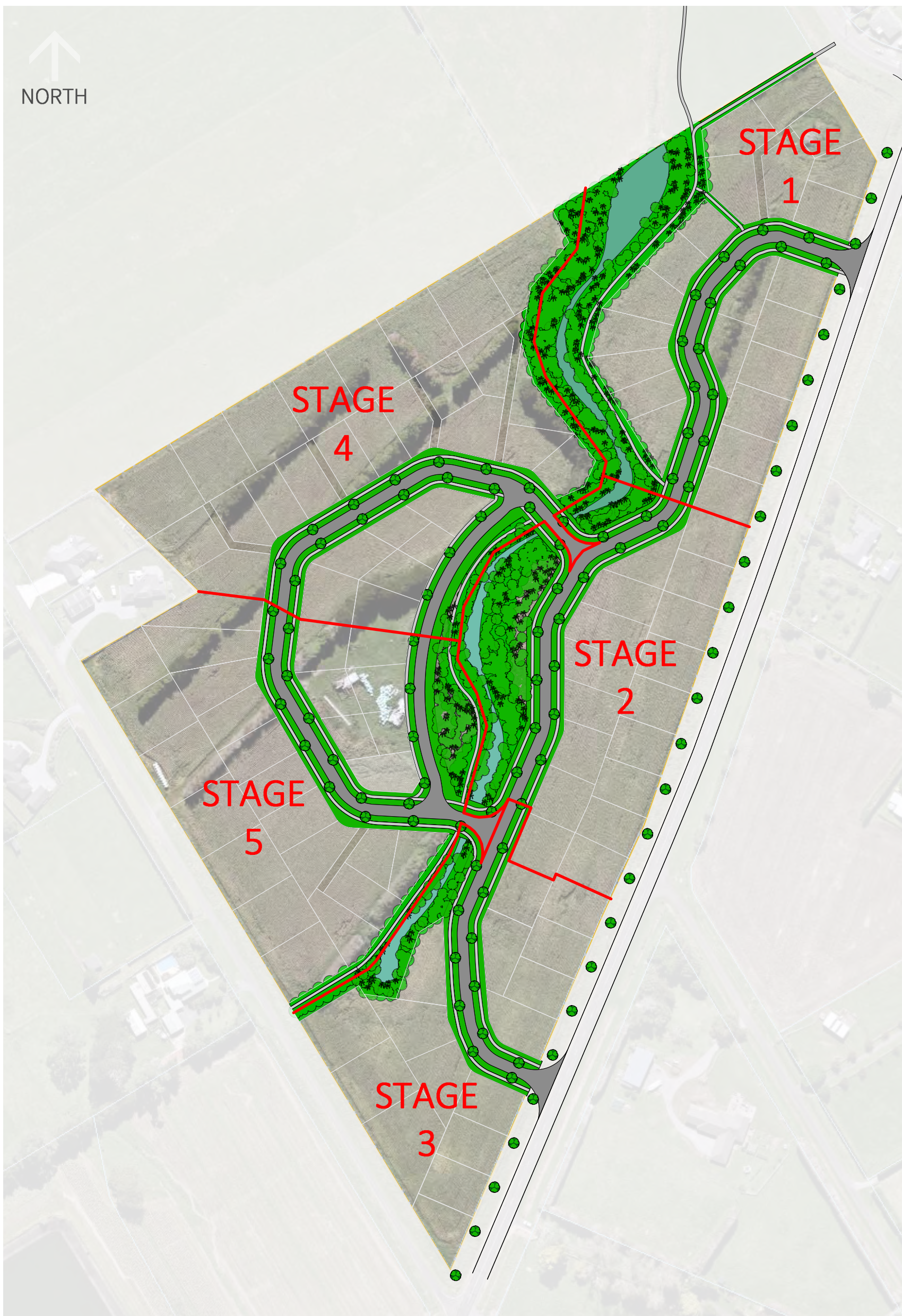
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PROJECT:

Raleigh Street  
Proposed Subdivision

DRAWING  
TITLE:

STAGING PLAN

DRAWING NO: GA7.0

REVISION: 01

SCALE: 1:2000@A3

DATE: 14.01.19

FILE NO.: 3077



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