



Memorandum

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Message Ref: Waitara Private Plan Change – Landscape Advice

Project No: W18100

Introduction

This memo provides landscape advice relating to a private plan change application by Hareb Investments Ltd. The plan change seeks to rezone land at 2 Johnstone Street, Waitara, from the Rural Environment Area with a Future Urban Development Overlay to Residential A Environment Area and Open Space B zoning. It is intended to develop the 11.34ha land parcel within 5-10 years across 4-5 different stages. A Structure Plan has been prepared for the site which proposes to develop 110 residential lots. Lots range in size from 350-1000m² and a reserve along an existing stream and an associated walkway.

Boffa Miskell prepared a peer review of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the site in December 2018. The peer review concluded that overall the assessment provided an analysis of the level of effects, but that further information was required in order to provide a robust assessment which has the potential to mitigate the adverse landscape and visual effects of the proposed plan change. This further information included explanation of the assessment methodology and discussion of relevant statutory matters. This information was provided in the revised LVIA issued in January 2019 (dated September 2018 revision 5), and the revised Landscape Plan dated March 2019.

This memo provides landscape advice in relation to the following:

- Scale and extent of rezoning/development area
- Effects on existing waterways/natural features and suitability of reserve area
- Variety and formation of character types (intensification transition into rural);
- Suitability of alternative layouts 1 and 2 (as opposed to what is proposed);

Within the application, Appendix H1 provides the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA, September 2018 Revision 5) for the site, with Appendix H2 the revised Landscape Plan (Dated 26.02.19), Appendix H3 Alternative Layout Options (26.02.19), and Appendix H4 the Landscape memo discussing the alternative options. The LVIA contains within it a Structure Plan, dated 14.07.19.

Scale and extent of rezoning/development area

The LVIA describes the site as “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 proposed plan change would form a triangular shaped extension of the existing residential settlement of Waitara to the west of Raleigh Street. Retention of 1.54 ha of the stream area as open space will assist with breaking up the form of the development and allow for pedestrian connections with the existing settlement.

Effects on existing waterways/natural features and suitability of reserve area

The Landscape Plan proposes a 'gully/reserve' area along the existing stream which runs through the site. The reserve ranges from 10 to 53m in width. In the pre-hearing meeting, residents did not raise any immediate concern over loss of ecological values associated with the development and creation of open space. The current waterway has low amenity value, with weed species and pine trees forming the dominant vegetation cover.

No detail has been provided on the reserve area, apart from a proposed walkway connecting Johnson Street to Mayne Street Park. The reserve illustrated on the landscape plan appears to be heavily planted. Some grassed open space within the reserve would be desirable for local residents' use. The proposed accessway through the northern part of the reserve could be relocated adjacent to the road to the north, allowing this area to be densely planted, with grassed open space and access to the stream area to be retained only on the southern side.

It is recommended that a detailed landscape plan is developed for this reserve area illustrating areas of open space and proposed planting, including details of plant species and proposed trail surfacing, furniture and any other features. The reserve area should measure a minimum 8m from the top of the stream bank to allow for maintenance of the stream corridor. The reserve corridor adjoining the southwest boundary will require widening to achieve this.

Proposed planting within the reserve should aim to shade the stream which will avoid the growth of nuisance aquatic vegetation. Planting will also ensure that banks are stabilised. Based on the Ecological Assessment provided with the request documents, this is expected to improve aquatic fauna and flora habitat. The planting will also provide a riparian buffer that will mitigate effects of overland flow discharges and overall water quality in the waterway.

The proposed road layout crosses the area of open space, and hence the stream in two locations. Further detail is required to understand what form these crossings will take and how they will satisfactorily be integrated into the open space. It is recommended that detailed plans and sections of the stream crossings are provided at subdivision stage to clarify how the stream banks will be remediated and to create an attractive crossing point when viewed from within the reserve area.

Variety and formation of character types

The development proposes a range of lot sizes, with an average of 660m² lots facing onto Raleigh Street, while lots on the south-eastern and northern boundaries are proposed as larger lots of 1000m² which adjoin the rural zoned areas. Smaller lots within the development are also proposed, with lot sizes ranging from 350-600m².

LVIA identifies that residents on Johnston Street and Raleigh Street will experience a change in outlook, from a rural to a residential view. The LVIA states that:

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

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.

New properties on both Raleigh and Johnston Streets will face out onto these roads, creating a new urban edge. The lot sizes proposed along these two streets are slightly larger at 1000m² than others within the site, however they are much smaller than the surrounding rural lifestyle properties. The 1000m² lots have an average frontage of 20m, while the adjacent rural lifestyle properties on Johnston Street are around 50m, with those on Raleigh Street being even larger. The proposed lot sizes do not provide any form of mitigation

to the development. It is however agreed that the proposed street tree planting along Raleigh Street will assist with integrating the development into the surrounding area, and this is the most effective mitigation measure in separating the proposed development from the adjacent rural lots. It is recommended that similar tree planting is carried out along the Johnston Street boundary to assist with filtering views of the development from the adjacent rural area.

In the pre-hearing meeting, residents raised concerns over potential loss of views, particularly ocean views to the north and west of the site. The applicant advised that concerns over loss of views could be mitigated/avoided through setting standards for housing to ensure they do not block views (e.g. houses in the northern boundary are restricted to one story). A single storey house would likely still obscure views towards the coast, and there are both single and two storey homes in the vicinity of the plan change.

Suitability of alternative layouts 1 and 2

Issues raised by the Waitara Community Board concerned property access onto Raleigh Street and the need for fencing along the northern boundary of the site. In response to this, two alternative layouts for the proposed development were prepared and are included in Appendix H3 – Layout 1 which generally retains the original layout of the roads, but all properties adjacent to Raleigh Street are accessed from the internal roadway via right of ways. Layout 2 retains the original layout of the roads to the north of the stream, with an internal road realigned along the back of the properties on Raleigh Street.

Both these options effectively turn around the properties on Raleigh Street, creating 'backs' of properties and a continuous fenceline along Raleigh Street. This is undesirable as it would create an unattractive road frontage along Raleigh Street which would be out of character with the adjacent rural area. Figure 17 in the Plan Change request document illustrates an example of such a fence. The original development layout is preferred as it creates a better urban form with more attractive street frontages, than either alternatives 1 and 2.

In the pre-hearing meeting, residents questioned whether there could be changes to the accessways to move from two road entrances on Raleigh Street to one on Raleigh Street and another road entrance on Johnston Street. The preference for this was varied, with the Johnston Street residents supporting the current design for road entrances. In the meeting, the Applicant noted that alternative accessways have been considered, including an access from Johnston Street and it was identified that the current roading arrangement is optimal in terms of other potential effects.

The Landscape memo in Appendix 4 discusses the fenceline along the northern boundary of the subdivision, which will be a visible element from the area to the north of the site, including from properties on Ranfurly Street. Concern was raised about reverse sensitivity effects of pets within the development entering the adjacent rural land. In response, the memo proposes a closed board timber fence structure of 1.2m high, finished in a black paint or stain.

This form of fenceline is again considered inappropriate as it would create a continuous solid fenceline along this boundary which would be a visible and potentially unattractive feature in the wider landscape to the north. As an alternative, it is suggested that a more visually permeable fencing solution is employed, in the form of timber post and rail fencing (see Attachment 1). This would fit in with the surrounding rural character, maintain views for residents north towards the coastline, while securing the property boundary. This fencing could also be constructed to a height of over 1.2m, which would be more effective in securing dogs with the habit of jumping and is more difficult to climb. Planting could be employed within individual properties if privacy was desired by residents.

Conclusions

The LVIA provided an understanding of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed plan change, and with the additional information provided following the peer review supplying a complete assessment which has the potential to mitigate the adverse landscape and visual effects of the proposed plan change.

The proposed Landscape Plan and Structure Plan provides some sense of the landscape framework developed for the site and how this can effectively mitigate landscape and visual effects. The original development layout is preferred as it creates a better urban form with more attractive street frontages, than either alternatives 1 and 2.

In order to create an effective and appropriate landscape framework for the development, further detail is required at subdivision stage in relation to tree planting, road crossings and development of the reserve area, as outlined below.

Recommendations:

Proposed street tree planting along Raleigh Street will assist with integrating the development into the surrounding area, and this is the most effective mitigation measure in separating the proposed development from the adjacent rural lots. It is recommended that similar tree planting is carried out along the Johnston Street boundary to assist with filtering views of the development from the adjacent rural area.

Fencing along the northern boundary of the site should be timber post and rail fencing (see Attachment 1 for example of fencing types) to fit in with the surrounding rural character, creating an attractive boundary, maintaining views from properties towards the coast, and securing the properties for pets.

The proposed reserve area should be a minimum 8m from the top of the stream bank to allow for maintenance of the stream corridor.

The following items should be required to accompany any resource consent application at the subdivision stage of the development:

- A detailed landscape plan is developed for the reserve area illustrating areas of open space and proposed planting, including details of plant species, trail surfacing, furniture and any other features.
- Detailed plans and sections of the proposed road crossings of the stream, illustrating the treatment of any culverts and abutments, areas of proposed planting (including species) to remediate the stream banks and any other features required to create an attractive crossing point when viewed from the proposed reserve.
- A species list for tree planting along the Raleigh Street and Johnston Street boundaries and for the main accessway within the site.
- Typical street cross section details for the E11 and E12 roadways, illustrating how the proposed tree planting is accommodated within the road corridor.

Attachment 1: Examples of timber post and rail fencing for northern site boundary

