



Integrating nature and culture

Landscape Effects Evaluation Report

30-40 Sandspit Road & 2-4 Reydon Place
Howick 2014

Document Quality Assurance

30-40 Sandspit Road, Howick – Landscape Effects Evaluation Report Greenwood Associates Landscape Architecture Ltd Report prepared by Greenwood Associates Landscape Architecture Ltd for Box Property Investments Ltd.		
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Greenwood Associates has been requested by Box Property Investments Limited ('the applicant') to prepare a Landscape Effects Evaluation report in respect of a proposed residential development on a 5417m² site (Refer architectural drawing RC0.01) located across three existing residential sites (30 Sandspit Road, 40 Sandspit Road and 2 Reydon Place) the long axis of the site fronts Sandspit Road. This evaluation provides high level support from a landscape and Visual effects perspective for the project to be identified as a referred project under the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) Act 2020. Should the project be successful in entering the Fast-Track pathway for resource consent a full Landscape Effects Assessment, including visual effects, will be prepared (if required) at the EPA stage.

The 5417m² site is currently zoned 'Residential - Single House Zone' under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP). The site is not subject to any volcanic viewshaft overlays, Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape overlays (ONFL) nor is it subject to any special character overlay that heightens the identified sensitivity of the site from a Landscape Effects perspective. The site also does not sit within a precinct.

The Site has also been notified under Plan Change 78 (PC78) as being re-zoned to Mixed Housing Urban Zone (MHUZ) and subject to the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS). These standards provide for significantly greater bulk and location form in response to the requirements of the RMA Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters Act 2021 and will allow for three dwellings on sites of 300m² minimum as a permitted activity where the MDRS can be fully complied with. The proposed design has been premised around the MDRS, and the following assessment includes consideration of this.

Greenwood Associates has been involved with this project since early 2020 and prepared a series of landscape plans in August 2020 for the previous scheme.

Assessment Process

- 1.2. Should the project be successful in entering the Fast-Track pathway for resource consent a comprehensive Landscape Effects Assessment will be prepared for the proposal. This proposal will be undertaken as per the Tuia Pito Ora / The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, which were approved at 5th May 2021 NZILA AGM and published in August 2022.

During the assessment the significance of effects are based upon a seven-point scale ranging from very low; low; low-moderate; moderate; high; very high; ratings.

As per section 6.21 of the Te Tangi A Te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape Assessment the following ranking scale will be used for the assessment of landscape effects (both physical and visual).

Table 1: Seven-Point Rating Scale

very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
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low	moderate	high
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As per section 6.22 of the Te Tangi A Te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape Assessment no descriptor of these ratings is given in this report based on the summation of the following environment court decision;

*"We think that [people] are likely to be able to understand qualitative assessment of low, medium and high, and combinations or qualifications of those terms without the need for explanation. We do not consider rating of that kind to constitute a fully systematic evaluation system in a field as complex as landscape: in this context, the system **depends far more on the substantive content of the assessment**, especially the identification of attributes and **values**, than on the fairly basic relativities of low-medium-high..."* ('Matakana Island' [2019] NZEnvC 110, paragraph 25) (emphasis added)

However, to provide some context below (sourced from section 6.37 of the Te Tangi A Te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape Assessment) aligns the seven-point rating scale listed above in against the 'less than minor' to 'significant' ratings scale of the Resource Management Act (RMA).

Table 2: Seven-Point NZILA Rating Scale Measured Against the RMA Rating Scale

very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high
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less than minor	minor	more than minor	significant
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"Effects are identified by establishing and describing the prevailing landscape character by identifying the landscape values of the site and the perception of the site within the wider landscape, (reference may be made in this regard to existing statutory documents and previous landscape assessments undertaken by others) and assessing the effects of the proposal in either enhancing or degenerating from these values. These effects will be measured using the seven-point rating scale given above in Table 1 and Table 2."

2. Site Context

The subject site is large in the local suburban context being approximately 5417m² and sitting across three titles, 30 & 40 Sandspit Road and 2-4 Reydon Place, 30 Sandspit Road contains a single storey commercial building, 40 Sandspit Road contains a double-storey standalone dwelling and 2-4 Reydon Place contains a single dwelling separated as two flats. All three lots sit directly opposite Howick College.

The western boundary of the site directly fronts Sandspit Road, the northern boundary directly fronts Trelawn place and the southern boundary directly fronts Reydon place.

The site slopes downwards from its western boundary at Sandspit Road towards its eastern boundary.

In addition to Howick College the western boundary of 30 Sandspit Road sits opposite Cockle Bay School. The site also sits in close proximity to Shelly Park Primary School.

Sandspit road is a key transport corridor linking the suburb to key commercial and educational facilities and providing links to both the CBD and the eastern areas of the Auckland region (Beachlands, Maraetai)

The surrounding area is characterised by a series of standalone dwellings of varying bulk and style. A strong vegetative framework comprising of established trees located in private lots is present across the wider area. This is supplemented by a series of public open spaces varying in size and function. The closest open spaces to the site are Meadowland Reserve and Paparoa Park.

Whilst there is a strong vegetative network across the private lots, the surrounding public realm features haphazard tree planting set within lawn beds.

At its closest point the site sits approximately 930m ('as the crow flies') from the coastal edge.

3. Proposal

The proposal is clearly illustrated in the set of architectural plans prepared by the project architects (drawing ref RC0.01 - RC3.02, RC4.03-RC4.05, RC4.08-RC4.10) The architects have also prepared a number of 3D renders to illustrate the proposed development (drawing ref: RC4.03-RC4.05, RC4.08-RC4.10)

The development consists of three, four-storey apartment buildings (identified as 'Residential Building 1', 'Residential Building 2' and 'Residential Building 3' as per drawing RC0.02) and twelve two-storey terrace houses arranged in two blocks(ref drawing: RC0.02). The development is serviced by a combination of basement car parking (beneath the apartment blocks) and on-grade car parking, the majority of the car parking sits within the basement area.

The apartment blocks sit at the western boundary with Sandspit road and hence sit at the higher elevations of the site. The proposed terrace houses sit at the lower elevations of the site. As a frame of reference the upper floor of the terrace houses will sit at the same approximate level as the first floor of the proposed apartment buildings.

The architects have presented, in their drawing package, a series of elevations and 3d renders outlining HIRB infringements and penetration of the 8m height plane. The sole

penetration of this plane occurs at the 4th storey of the proposed apartment building (ref drawings: RC2.01-RC3.02, RC4.04-RC4.05, RC4.09)

The architects have also provided, in their drawing package a 'baseline' that has been established through a mock proposal (ref drawings: RC4.01-RC4.02, RC4.06-RC4.07, RC4.11-RC4.14) in the 'anticipated consentable environment', this being the environment anticipated by the implementation of the MDRS (refer section 1). This 'baseline' has been overlaid on the proposal in 3d format to illustrate the variance with the proposal (ref drawings: RC4.02, RC4.07, RC4.12).

The variances in the 'baseline' proposal are essentially limited to the upper storeys of the proposed apartment buildings, this variance from the permitted baseline (under the MDRS) would form the basis of the visual component of any future landscape effects assessment.

Greenwood Associates has previously prepared a landscape architectural proposal for a previous scheme from the applicant for this site. Whilst there is some variance between the current proposal and the previous proposal it is anticipated that the previous landscape scheme will largely be able to be applied to the revised scheme with minor adjustments.

Greenwood Associates landscape architectural response to the site is focused on integrating the proposed building forms into the landscape, accentuating façade articulation, providing high amenity onsite spaces for future residents, maintaining amenity values of the street and wider neighbourhood context. As a new feature in the streetscape, it is important that the proposed landscape both enhances and maintains the character of the area by unifying landscape elements with the existing neighbourhood landscape character features. This relationship with the street will be a key component of any future landscape effects assessment.

Within the front yards lining Sandspit Road, exotic Japanese maple, Birch and Cornus trees have been proposed to create variety and a high level of amenity to the streetscape while allowing light to windows of the proposed apartments. Various flowering and fragrant ground covers complete the theme. To add variety and articulation to the front yards planter boxes and climbing plants are specified to visually soften the building bulk and ground the architectural forms. To assist this, *Mehulenbeckia complexa* and *Tecomanthe speciosa* have been specified. The deciduous nature and form of the proposed trees will allow light to apartment windows and passive surveillance to the street while visually softening the built form.

Open planted podium gardens bisect the apartment building form, these gardens are visually appreciable from Sandspit Road towards the coastal views. These are important aspects of the site that add to the amenity values for people using Sandspit Road. These vegetated open podium areas provide spatial separation between the three buildings.

The proposed on-site landscapes bordering Reydon Place offers a generous front yard landscape where existing mature trees have been proposed to be retained (ref drawing: RC0.02) and Plagianthus trees are proposed to great effect as a softening of built form at the ground plane. These will assist to maintain the street character with the proposed

apartment building set behind trees. Towards the south-eastern quadrant a garden area has been set aside with large grade Flowering Pear trees. This generous set out of landscape space will feel part of the streetscape as it is not bound by high fences and is open to the street. The effect of this is that the corner of the development area will be softened and creates a vegetated space between the street and proposed buildings, while the tree placement and specification inform some appreciation of the built form. The proposed additional street trees, *Metrosideros Excelsa* Maori Princess enhance the streetscape amenity.

The proposed on-site landscape bordering Trelawn Place includes an access driveway. There is landscaped garden area open to the street with Flowering Pear trees similar to that of Reydon Place. This area includes a climbing plant *Stephanotis floribunda* and the landscape feature of a high-quality bladed fence and pergola.

4. Visual Catchment and Viewing Audiences

This proposal will be seen within its immediate urban context from Sandspit Road, Trelawn Place and Reydon place. The proposed apartment buildings will receive the greatest degree of visual exposure from outside of the site, with visibility to the proposed terrace houses limited to the upper portions of Trelawn place and to neighbouring lots to the east of the site.

Outside of the immediate surrounds of the site, the proposal will receive its greatest exposure from the east of the site, where the land follows the general slope of the site, hence the proposed apartment buildings will sit at higher elevation than those lower areas to the west. Views from these lower areas will be primarily limited to the upper portions (fourth storey) of the proposed apartment buildings.

Therefore the potential public and private audiences can be identified as follows;

Public

- Users of Sandspit Road, with those travelling northwards having greater visibility to the site due to less obscuration from existing built form.
- Users of Trelawn place and Reydon Place, the further from the site views will be limited to the upper portions of the portion proposed apartment buildings.
- Users of Alexander Street have the potential for views to the upper reaches of the proposed apartment buildings when in close proximity to the intersection with Trelawn place.
- Users of Lastel Place have the potential for views to the upper reaches of the proposed apartment buildings when in close proximity to the intersection with Sandspit Road. There is also the potential for views to the aforementioned upper reaches of the proposed apartment buildings from the lower reaches of the street.

- Users of Sunnyview Avenue have the potential for views to the upper reaches of the proposed apartment buildings when in close proximity to the intersection with Sandspit Road.

Private

- Visitors to Howick College
- Visitors to Cockle Bay School
- Residents to the immediate east of the site, specifically those located at 3/3A, 5 and 7 Trelawn place and those located at 6/6A, 8, 10 and 12 Reydon Place
- Residents to the west of the site, specifically those at 39-71 Sandspit Road.
- Residents to the south of the site, specifically those at 1, 5, 7 and 9 Reydon Place and 48 and 50 Sandspit Road.

5. Preliminary Landscape and Visual Assessment

Whilst the current prevailing landscape character of the areas surrounding the site can be considered to be a traditional suburban environment dominated by a series of standalone residential dwellings with an eclectic architectural signature and appreciable variance in height and bulk, the implementation of the MDRS will lead to a change in character with larger, bulkier built form becoming part of the prevailing suburban fabric.

The areas to the north / west of the site can be considered highly likely to be developed within the directives of the MDRS / MHUZ due to the prevailing views to the Hauraki Gulf, which a three-storey dwelling would be able to capture far greater than a single or two storey dwelling. Appendix A provides a panoramic photograph taken from within the northern portion of the site (30 Sandspit Road) highlighting these views.

Therefore it is plausible that, in time, the proposed development will be sitting within a neighbourhood where three elements of three storied built form a single residential lot is an expectant visual outcome and that the sole infringement of the proposal, and thus the main area of landscape and visual assessment would be the upper portions (i.e: the fourth storey) of the three apartment buildings.

The fourth storey of these proposed apartment buildings will be the most prominent elements of the proposal visible from the surrounding areas, these elements will not obscure any significant natural features nor be visible in conjunction with the prevailing coastline. However they will provide an additional element to the skyline, which dependent on the position of the viewpoint may be viewed with a sky backdrop or set against a backdrop of existing built form. When viewed against a backdrop of existing built form any potential visual impact could be considered minimal. When viewed

against a sky backdrop this could be considered to have a greater potential visual effect, however when assessed in the context of a skyline punctuated with three storey dwellings the potential for adverse effects lessens.

The greatest potential adverse impacts in this future environment (as allowed by the MDRS/ MHUZ) relate to the local prevailing character and amenity values regarding the relationship of the built form to the street and adjoining lots, as this affects perceptions of the prevailing character at a human scale. This is reflected in objective (3) of the H5 Residential - Mixed Housing Urban Zone (note emphasis added);

'Development provides quality on-site residential amenity for residents and adjoining sites and the street.'

The proposed apartment buildings have been arranged in a manner that allows for set back from the streetscape and provides alcoves and openings for landscape planting that allows for softening of the vertical-horizontal interface of the building to the prevailing ground plane.

The separation between the apartment buildings at the street frontage also allows for the creation of 'breathing space' that can be utilised for planting but also to allow for views through the development to the surrounding areas.

The proposed facade finishes have a degree of variety and ensure that there is a lack of repetition at the street frontage, which can be considered congruent to the varied street frontages of the surrounding area.

These well-articulated built forms, combined with various specimen trees in front yards celebrates the variety and random nature of residential landscapes in the surrounding streets.

The landscape architectural response to the site ensures that neighbourhood and street amenity is maintained and enhanced through landscape enhancement of front yard setback and improved amenity. This is achieved through the specification of large grade specimen trees and landscape materials like stone walls and the inclusion of publicly visible and partially accessible open landscaped spaces on Reydon and Trelawn Place.

The landscape architectural response to the site accentuates the articulation of the apartment building adding to the differential between built forms from the public viewpoints. The planting specification of using mature grade Nikau Palms at the podium points helps to accentuate the three built forms rather than one continuous building maintaining existing character of the wider area, being single homes or clusters of varied built forms like the school buildings nearby.

The development opens to the street on the north and south with visually accessible planted open space and has a vegetated sightline between the apartment buildings and town houses from north to south and in two places bisects between apartments from Sandspit Road looking seaward to the established residential area to east of the

site, creating viewshafts that presently do not exist due to existing buildings and vegetation.

6. Conclusion

The proposal has the potential to become the initial architectural statement in an area poised to undergo a change in its prevailing character with the potential of numerous three storey buildings present throughout the area upon the adoption of the MDRS / MHUZ.

The areas to the north and west to the site have the greatest potential for the rapid adoption of the MDRS / MHUZ due to the views towards the Hauraki Gulf.

The relationship to the street and neighbouring properties provides high quality amenity through a proposed high level landscape response comprising dense shrub and varied tree planting.

Appendix A - View to north / west (from within site) of surrounding built form with views to Hauraki Gulf

