

The Hill
Ellerslie Racecourse
Preliminary Urban Design Assessment

by

Brewer Davidson

For

Fletcher Residential

Auckland Thoroughbred Racing

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Fletcher Living

BREWER
DAVIDSON



Figure 01: Extent of Project Area

The pink fill on Figure 01 shows the land that Auckland Thoroughbred Racing are proposing to sell to Fletcher Residential (FRL) for housing development. Auckland Thoroughbred Racing will be making an application for the project to be recognised as a referred project under the Covid 19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) Act 2020.

The proposed site is the hill along which a section of the steeplechase track is currently located. The project is called The Hill for this reason.

The Hill is highly suited to residential development due to the visual and recreational amenity offered by Ellerslie Racecourse. This combines with accessibility to Ellerslie Town Centre, bus routes, Greenlane and Ellerslie rail stations to allow the development of a quality residential neighbourhood.

Kevin Brewer from Brewer Davidson Architects is part of the design team for The Hill. He has prepared this Preliminary Urban Design Assessment to form part of the registration package for the Covid 19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) process. This preliminary assessment is restricted to key urban design issues. A full assessment will be prepared to accompany a consequent resource consent application should the referral be successful.

Contents

- Physical Context Section outlining topographic, solar orientation and views that influenced the design proposal
- Planning Context outlining urban design issues from the two Precinct Overlays covering Ellerslie Racecourse and how the design responds to adjacent Single House and Mixed Housing Suburban Zones
- Outlining the design decisions in locating the apartment buildings.
- Outlining where housing is proposed in response to smaller scale neighbours
- Preliminary assessment of important effects of the proposal



Figure 02: Contour Plan from Auckland Council GIS

Figure 02 is a contour plan of Ellerslie Racecourse taken from Auckland Council’s GIS system. This plan shows the two different topographic conditions around the site periphery. To the north and west the flat land of the racecourse extends across neighbouring properties and then slopes up toward Remuera Road ridge. Houses in this area look south and west across the racecourse area.

Along the northeast boundary the racecourse land climbs up the Hill and extends to the Ladies Mile ridgeline. Importantly, houses on the opposite side of Ladies Mile generally look north and away from Ellerslie Racecourse. The contour plan shows the land falls steeply on the other side of Ladies Mile and the racecourse is not visible from properties to the northeast of the ridgeline. Figure 03 shows the topography and existing pohutukawa trees on the site.

The south and southeast boundary rises up from Derby Downs Place up to the Ladies Mile ridgeline. Neighbouring houses enjoy north views across the Hill to the racecourse, but houses behind are at similar ground levels and their views are restricted.

Houses in the Derby Downs Place and Lonsdale Street look across Derby Downs Domain toward the Hill but their views are restricted by the large trees in the open space (Refer Figure 04 and 05 on page 4).



Figure 03: left; Google Earth view looking north along Ladies Mile showing ground falling to the north, centre; view looking south from Abbotts Way and right; looking from Abbotts Way to the site



Figure 04:

View from 18 Lonsdale Street across Derby Downs Domain. 15 Derby Downs can be seen on the right. The tall trees are approximately 12 –15 metres high and are on the open space land



Figure 05:

View from end Lonsdale Street across Derby Downs Domain. The Hill is visible in the back-ground and the large trees in the open space are visible on the left.

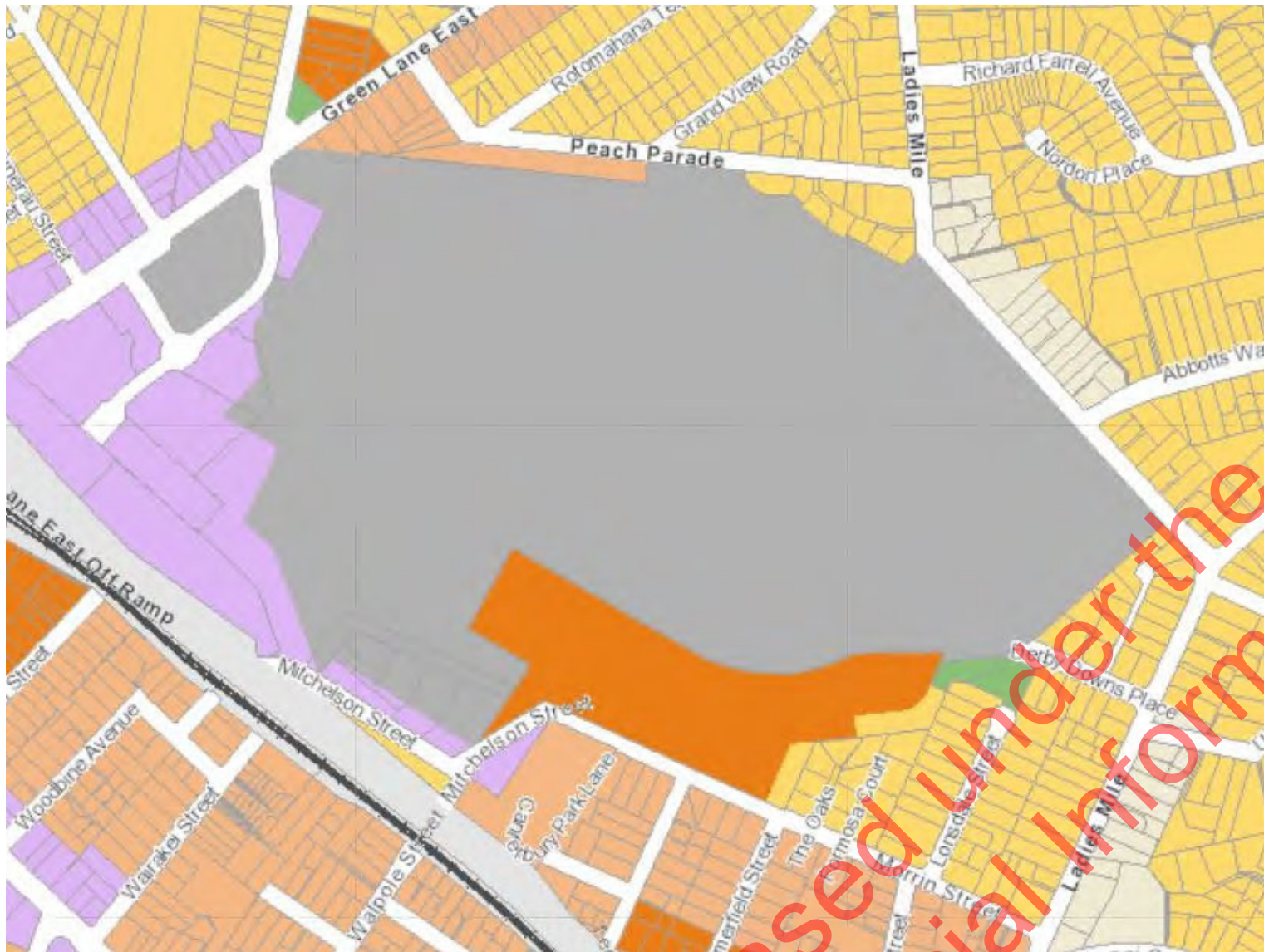


Figure 06 shows the Unitary Plan Zones for Ellerslie Racecourse and surrounding land.

There is a strip of Single House zoning on the northern side of Ladies Mile and to the north of Abbotts Way. This is presumably in place to protect the character houses on some of these sites. Analysis of Ladies Mile will show that these houses generally look away to the north and are screened by substantial front yard planting. Given apartments are proposed along the Ladies Mile ridge then this separation is important in assessing dominance and privacy effects.

The housing inside the Peach Parade/Ladies Mile corner and to the south/southeast of the Hill is zoned Mixed Housing Suburban. The housing in these areas varies in age but is all detached and one or two levels high.

Terrace and Apartment Housing (THAB) zoning is in place along the southern edge of the racecourse and abuts the Hill site near Derby Downs Domain. Sub precinct E in this area which is immediately next to houses to the south of Derby Downs Domain was zoned Mixed Housing Suburban. No housing development has taken place on this land.

Derby Downs Domain provides a good connection between Lonsdale Street and Derby Downs Place with a line of established palm trees emphasising the connection. There are large trees along the north boundary which combined with the open space provide good separation to the Hill site for southerly neighbours.

Figure 06: Unitary Plan Zone Map

1313.10. Precinct plans

1313.10.1. Ellerslie Racecourse: Precinct plan 1



Figure 07: Unitary Plan Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct Plan

The Hill site is located within the Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct. The AUP Ellerslie Racecourse Precinct provisions which apply to the Site enable buildings up to 25m as a permitted activity as long as they are located outside the 20m interface control area which applies along the external boundary perimeter of The Hill site. Any buildings need to comply with a 2.5m + 45 degree height in relation to boundary control that applies along adjoining MHS zone boundaries.

Compliance with the interface control would achieve compliance with the height in relation to boundary standard. These provisions were intended to permit a 25m high grandstand or function centre potentially around the full perimeter of the racecourse track.

Detached or duplex housing within the Interface Control Area is something not anticipated in the existing provisions so the proposal will design houses that generally comply with the neighbouring Mixed Housing Suburban standards to provide an appropriate transition.

There are some three level houses in the central areas that respond to steeper slopes and will generally comply with the Mixed Housing Urban standards. They are separated from existing houses by a street and a row of two level houses as described above. Overall, the two types of houses will create spacing and setbacks consistent with the MHS zone along the boundaries and MHU in the centre of the site.

The housing analysis on pages 10 and 11 highlight these areas.

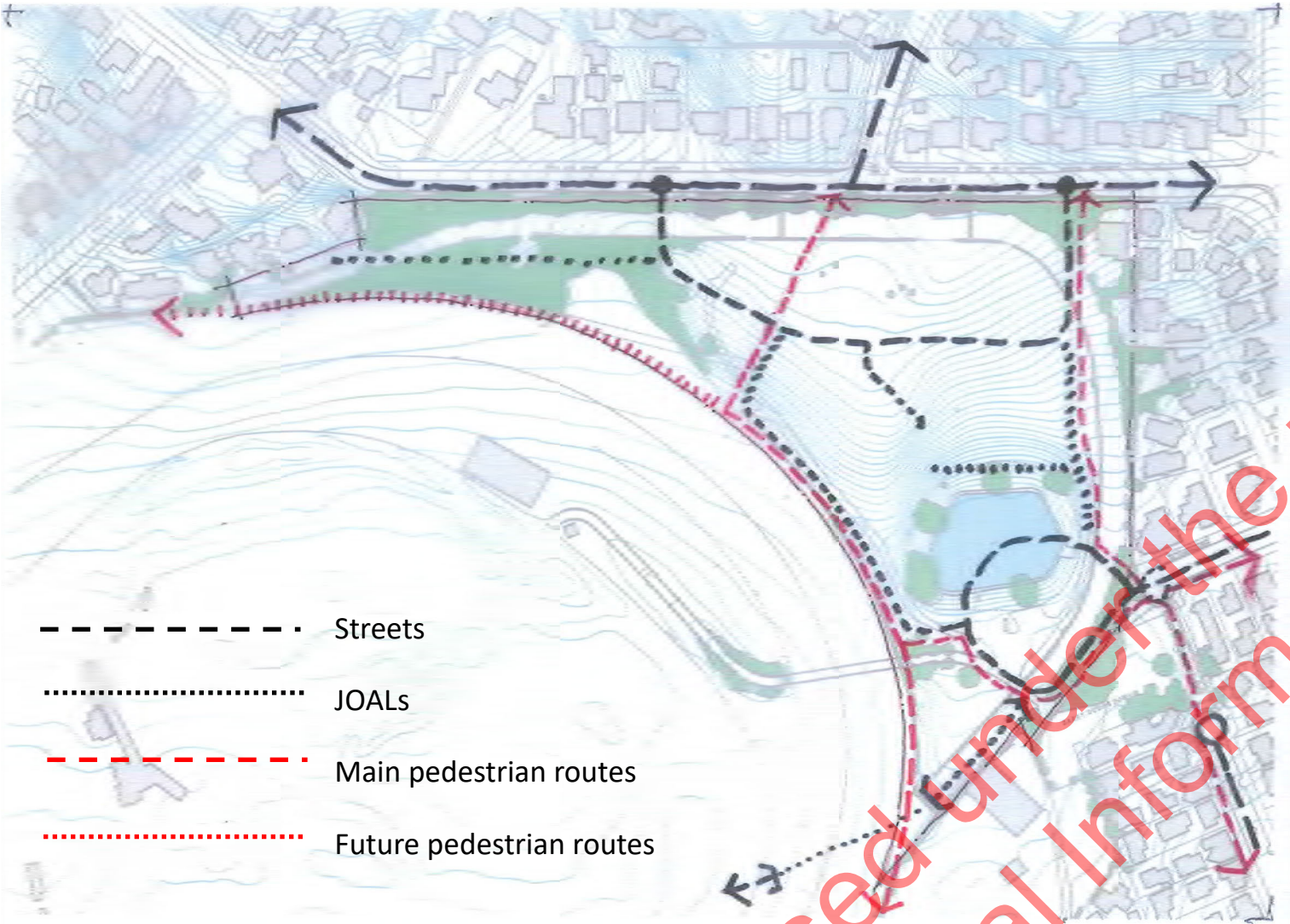


Figure 08: Proposed Movement Network

Movement Network

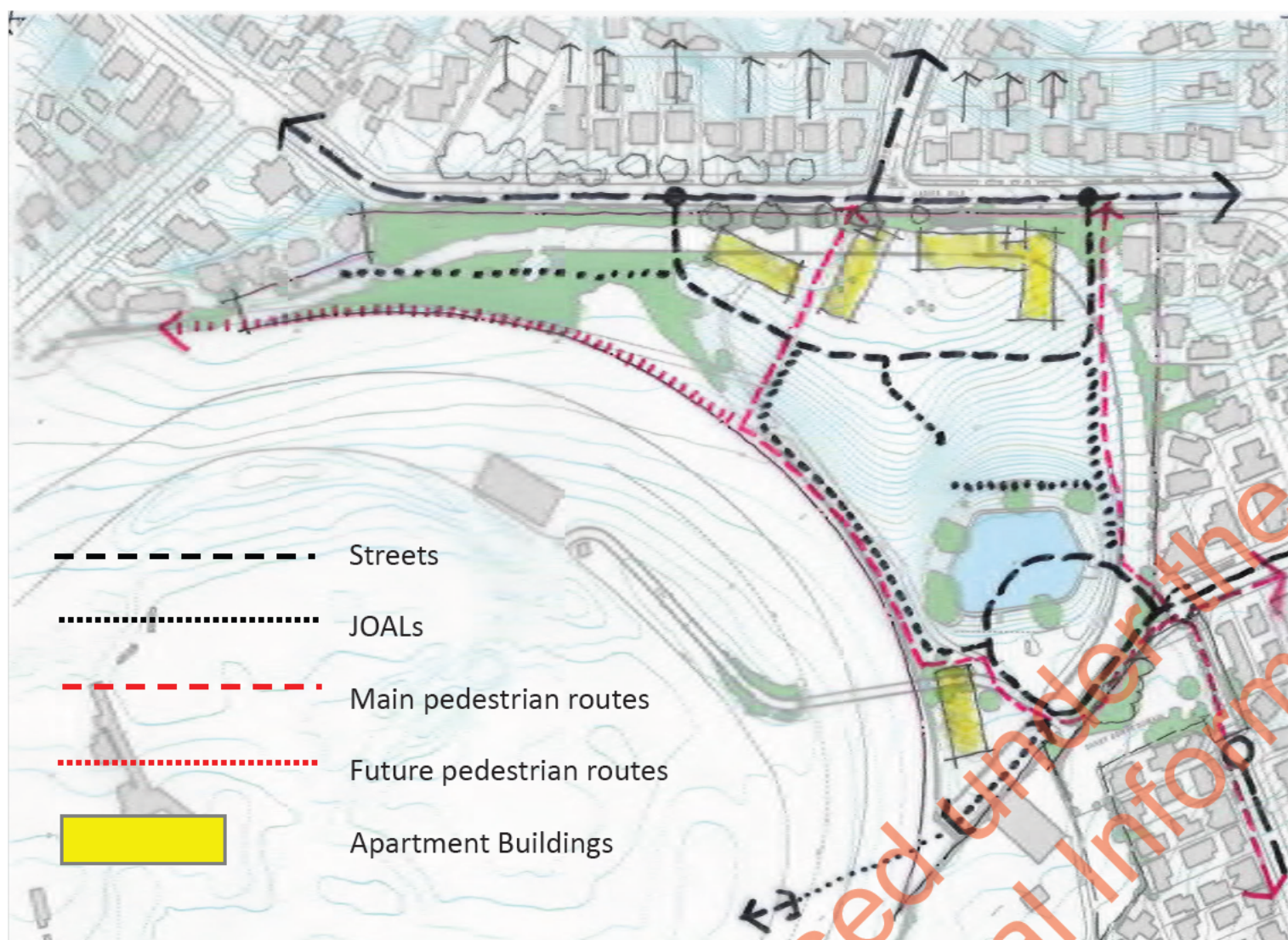
Access from the Abbotts Way/Ladies Mile intersection is not possible because of traffic volumes and intersection sightlines. Therefore a 'U' shaped street links across the top of the site north and south of the Abbotts Way intersection. The southern intersection is restricted to left in/left out movements.

Derby Downs Place is extended with a loop road (Figure 08 shows the proposed movement network) to create a street frontage and active northern edge to Derby Downs which will improve the usability of the open space.

Transport planning advice is to avoid a full street connection from the top street to Derby Downs Place as the 'rat running' volume will be prohibitive. A JOAL connection near the south-eastern boundary is intended to allow residents to walk, cycle or drive through the Hill, but discourage through traffic. The JOALs alongside the track and connecting the loop road to Derby Downs Place will be designed as 'living lanes'.

A trackside walking/cycling path is part of the Racing Club brief and extends from the Derby Downs Area along the racecourse edge through to the north-western end of the project. Space for the northern section (dashed in the plan) is allowed but will not be constructed until the Peach Parade connection is possible. The formed path will stop at the steps connecting to Abbotts Way. As the pathway is level with the track 5 metres is allowed for screening planting. A 3 metre shared path is placed alongside a JOAL in this area for surveillance benefits.

There is a no-build designation above a 1950mm diameter Council stormwater pipe which extends from Abbotts Way into the site and turns along the racecourse toward Peach Parade. This constraint has been turned into an opportunity for public steps opening up this side of the racecourse. The architectural description discusses how buildings have been placed around this designation to frame a view from Ladies Mile which then opens out at the internal street to reveal a vista of the racecourse and views to the maunga of the central isthmus.



Apartment Buildings

Three six level apartment buildings are proposed along the southern end of Ladies Mile to obtain views both across Ellerslie Racecourse and north across Ladies Mile. The houses on the opposite side of Ladies Mile generally look away to their north rear yards and away from busy Ladies Mile so privacy and dominance effects are reduced. The apartments are grouped in a precinct which is separated from neighbouring houses by the internal street and detached houses placed along that boundary.

The northern pair of apartments are aligned parallel to Abbotts Way and the stormwater pipe designation. This sets the buildings back from Ladies Mile and allows retention of significant pohutukawa trees along the street boundary. This is important to maintain the established streetscape when looking along Ladies Mile. The offset buildings frame the public steps leading down to a lookout belvedere located at the internal streets southern edge.

The Ladies Mile location minimises the visual effects from a basement parking podium. This is flatter ground, but the podium edge to the internal street still ranges from 3 to 6 metres. Stepping the apartments down at the podium corners and terraced gardens are included to address this street edge. However, apartments located further down the steeper slope would have larger excavation requirements and higher podium edges to visually mitigate.

An eight level* independent living retirement block is included at the southern corner adjacent to the Ellerslie 1 Precinct THAB zoning. This maximises the separation from existing housing on Derby Downs Place and Lonsdale Street. The large trees in Derby Downs Domain will screen views from housing along the southern edge of the open space.

* seven apartment levels and a partial basement parking level

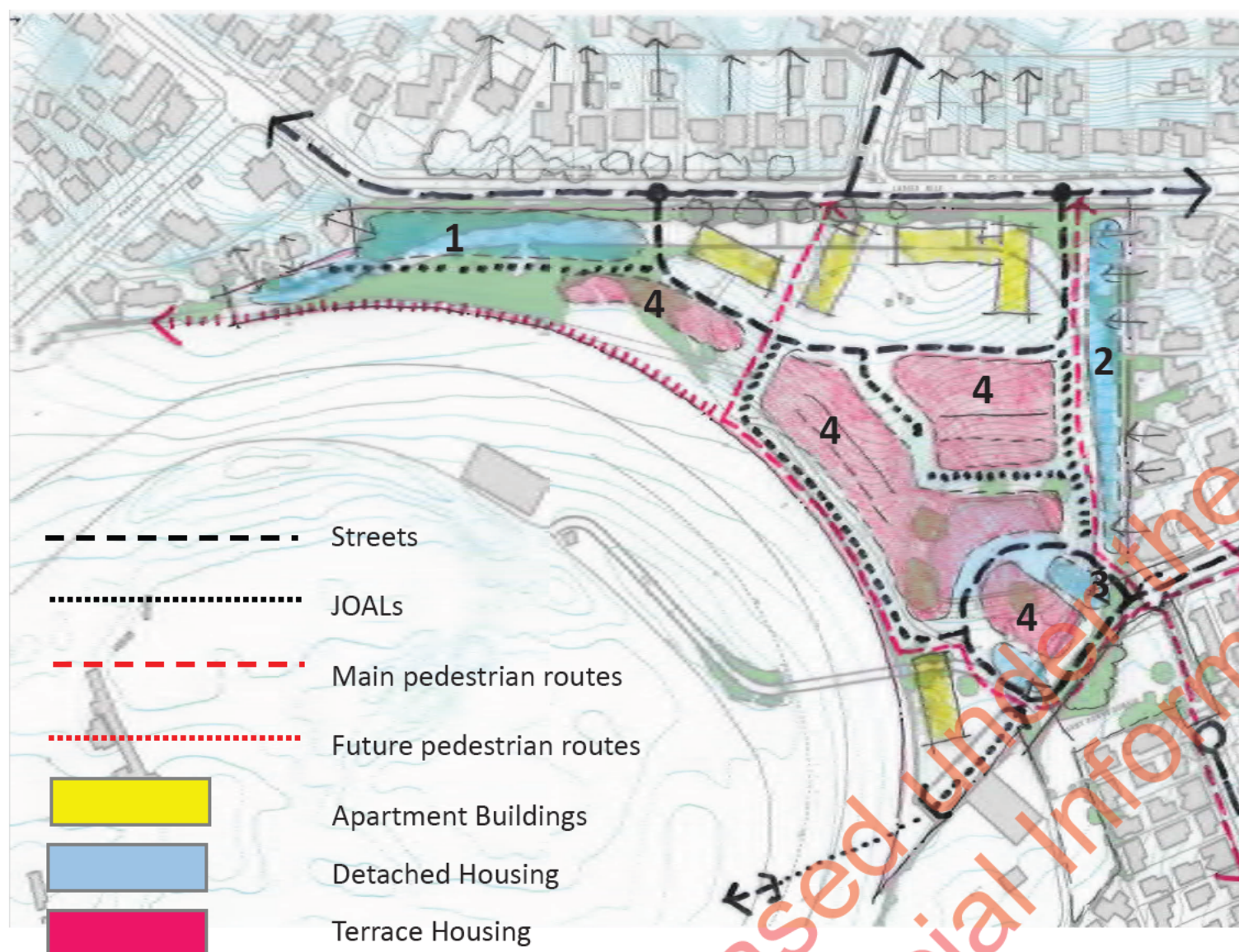


Figure 11: Housing Option 1

Housing

1. Detached housing is located along the northern end of Ladies Mile to respond to the Single House Zone across the road and detached houses to the north. The houses on Ladies Mile are a split level design with garaging and some bedrooms at the lower level of the rear lane. Living areas face north to a mid site courtyard and minimise traffic noise. As the house designs develop one and two level designs along Ladies Mile will be evaluated to provide streetscape interest. The houses at the north end of the site are detached and placed to allow views between them toward the racecourse.
2. Detached housing is located along the south-eastern boundary to match the neighbouring Mixed Housing Suburban type development. Landscaped rear yards and setback second levels are being evaluated in the house designs to avoid shading and dominance effects toward the rear neighbours. Some duplex houses are included where the levels allow and to provide variation of house forms.
3. Detached houses are placed on the corner lots at the end of Derby Downs Place to match the existing street appearance. These houses will be visible at the end of Derby Downs Place so are important to respond to the existing street character.
4. Terraced, duplex and some detached housing is located in the centre of the Hill further from existing neighbours. These include split level houses to accommodate the steep slope and avoid visual dominance of retaining walls by building the house around a mid-site level change. Where retaining walls are visible from internal streets and JOALs they will be stepped and planted. Planted batters will be used to avoid walls where possible.

Existing Site



1. Single House Zoning with contours showing steep falls to rear yards
2. Stormwater pipe designation
3. Existing pohutukawa trees. The northern five trees will be retained with further assessment of the building interface with the southern group to be determined
4. Flatter plateau at top of the slope for apartment location
5. Existing irrigation pond to be removed
6. Trees along north edge of Derby Downs Domain
7. Existing tunnel to be relocated to the south

Figure 13: Existing Site: NOT TO SCALE

Indicative Concept Plan



1. Single House Zoning with contours showing steep falls to rear yards
2. Stormwater pipe designation with public steps and viewing belvedere beside internal street
3. Six level apartment buildings with existing pohutukawa trees to Ladies Mile street frontage.
4. Split level detached houses
5. Detached two level houses adjacent to south-eastern boundary
6. Detached corner house at end of Derby Downs Place
7. Trees along north edge of Derby Downs Domain
8. 8 level Retirement Lite building
9. New tunnel location

Figure 14: Option 1 Indicative Concept Plan: NOT TO SCALE



Ladies Mile

These are preliminary assessments of locations where the proposed development has impacts on public streets or neighbouring properties. The photographs are not taken with a 50 degree view angle and therefore the computer model views are approximate at this stage.

The photograph is taken outside 68 Ladies Mile looking toward Abbots Way intersection. The height of the pohutukawa tree has not been surveyed so is a judgement by eye. It shows the relative relationship between the six level Apartment Building B behind the tree.

Further assessment work is required but as the design team judged the retention of as many of these pohutukawa as possible will be critical to retaining the existing streetscape character. The apartments buildings will be taller than the pohutukawa but not overly dominate the streetscape proportions

Further work will assess how to best retain trees or plant new trees in the front yards of the detached houses in the foreground. This view also confirms that a variation of one and two level houses will improve the streetscape variation.



Figure 16: Existing View outside 68 Ladies Mile top and preliminary computer model view bottom



Derby Downs Place

Views along Derby Downs Place look to planting along the edge of the racecourse. The top photograph is the view from the centre of the street outside 11 Derby Downs Place.

The bottom image shows the same view with the proposed buildings. The houses inside the extended loop road are visible in the foreground, confirming the importance of the corner house being a well-designed detached house to complement the existing streetscape.

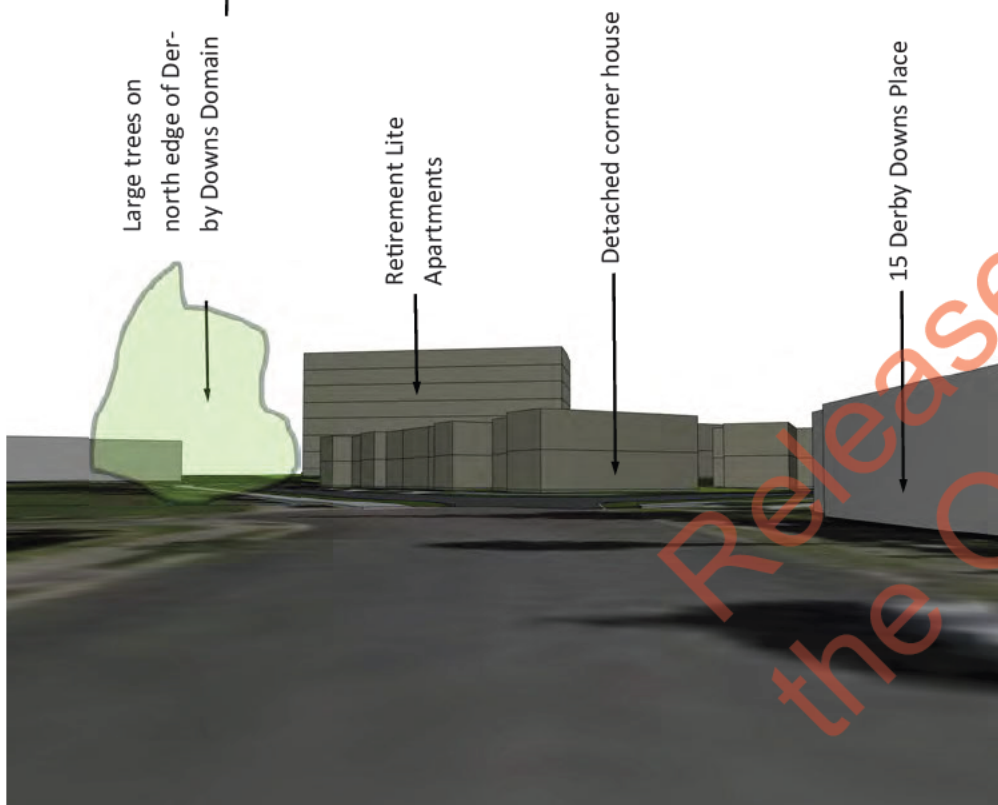
The eight-level Retirement Lite building is clearly visible from the street but is separated by some distance. This building should also be considered with the adjacent THAB zone. The Retirement Lite Building will be approximately 24 metres high and the approved zone has an 18-metre height limit. Developed design will include the THAB envelope in these views for assessment.

Figure 18:

Top: Existing view from outside 11 Derby Downs Place

Bottom Left: Option 1 View

Bottom Right: Option 2 View





Derby Downs Domain

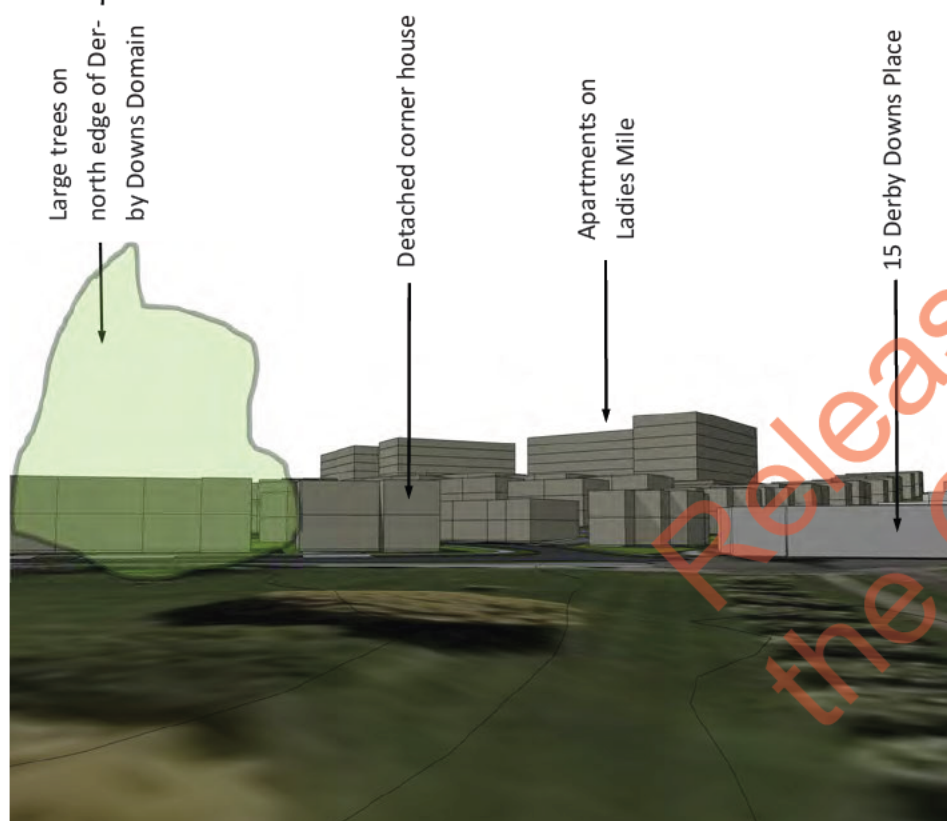
The top photograph is taken from the end of Lonsdale Street looking north across Derby Downs Domain. The footpath linking Lonsdale Street to Derby Downs Place can be seen through the line of palm trees. The Hill and trees on Ladies Mile can be seen to the left of the palm trees. The large trees in Derby Downs Domain are visible on the left of the photograph.

The bottom image shows the proposed buildings from the same viewpoint. The detached and terrace housing in the foreground is similar in scale to the existing houses on Derby Downs Place. The houses climbing up the south-eastern boundary to Ladies Mile can be seen on the right side of the image. The apartments on Ladies Mile are clearly visible but are some distance from this viewpoint.

Figure 19:

Top: Existing view from end of Lonsdale Street

Bottom: Option 1 View



Residential development on the Hill is a logical use of surplus land at Ellerslie Racecourse. Views across the racecourse and from the Ladies Mile ridge to the north will provide outstanding amenity for the residents. Proximity to Ellerslie Village, bus routes, Greenlane and Ellerslie rail stations provide sustainable transport options.

The design proposal also provides pedestrian walkways which will open up the racecourse for the benefit of people in the wider area. The views from the public steps off Abbotts Way will afford a magnificent vista of central maunga across the racecourse.

Detached housing similar in scale to existing neighbours is placed along the northern and southern edges of the site. Taller apartment buildings are placed along the Ladies Mile ridge-line where neighbouring houses generally look away from the site. The 'retirement lite' building is located along the racecourse edge again at a reasonable distance from existing housing. This pattern of development responds to the existing neighbours to address urban design effects. These effects will be assessed in more detail as the design is developed.

There are urban design effects to consider, but overall my opinion is that The Hill will provide attractive housing options as well as opening up the attractive open space of Ellerslie Racecourse to Aucklanders.

Kevin Brewer