



Kepa Road Apartments

Landscape Effects Evaluation
Prepared for Sanctum Properties Limited

4 March 2022



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Cover photograph: Architectural Render, Monk Mackenzie

1.0 Introduction

Boffa Miskell Limited has been requested by Sanctum Properties Ltd to prepare a Landscape Effects Evaluation in respect of a proposed residential development on a, 2,255m², site on the corner of Kepa Road and Kurahaupo Street in Ōrākei (the Site). 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 at the EPA stage.

The 2,255m² corner site is located at 182-184 Kepa Road and 8 Kurahaupo Street, Ōrākei. The site is split zoned under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) with Business - Mixed Use (B-MU) Zone to the southern part of the site, fronting Kepa Road and Residential - Terrace Housing and Apartment Building (THAB) Zone to the north. 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.

Boffa Miskell's involvement in the project commenced in late 2021 following initial master planning and design by project architects Monk Mackenzie. Since joining the project team, Boffa Miskell has provided feedback in relation to the scale, built form and modulation of the proposal. Boffa Miskell Urban Designers have also been engaged to undertake an independent Urban Design Assessment of the proposal.

1.1 Assessment Process

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. Tuia Pito Ora / The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects has recently endorsed (May 2021) new draft guidance for the assessment of landscape under the RMA context in Aotearoa / New Zealand. The interim / draft guidance replaces earlier guidance and landscape architects' reliance on other international best practice / guidance. The draft guidance, *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines [Final draft subject to final editing, graphic design, illustrations, approved by Tuia Pito Ora / NZILA 5 May 2021]*, will be used to guide the methods adopted in this assessment.

In assessing the scale of landscape effects, a seven-point scale of effects will be applied, as recommended in Te Tangi a te Manu, comprising: very low, low, moderate low, moderate, moderate high, high and very high. Effects will be assessed in terms of the values of the landscape having first understood its characteristics in terms of the physical, associative and perceptual realms of the landscape.

A number of visual simulations will also be prepared to support the full Landscape Effects Assessment. For the purposes of this evaluation we have relied upon the 3D renders and architectural drawings prepared by Monk Mackenzie. In to this, a study of the AUP (OP) permitted heights and potential development on the adjoining sites have also been undertaken to better establish how the proposal might appear in a fully developed context. It should be noted that this study has determined the permitted height using the 'rolling height method' and

rules such as setbacks and height in relation to boundaries have not been determined. The method for the analysis has involved using a 3D model of the existing landform and 'extruding' the landform up to the maximum permitted height associated with the height variation control indicated in the AUP (OP) refer **Graphic Supplement**.

2.0 Site Context

The subject site is large in the context of the suburban locality being approximately 2,255m² comprising three titles 182 & 184 Kepa Road and 8 Kurahaupo Street, Ōrākei. The two sites on Kepa Road form a rectangle shape with the site on Kurahaupo Street forming a rough triangle shape to the north and extending behind the residential property at 180 Kepa Road. The site has generous street boundaries to Kepa Road to the south and Kurahaupo to the east. To the west / south-west the boundary interfaces with a single storey residential building (180 Kepa Road) and to the north shares a common boundary with a single storey duplex building (10 Kurahaupo Street)¹. The three sites presently include single storey residential houses with associated residential landscape.



Figure 1: Site Context Plan. Site boundary identified in red.

Kepa Road is historically and remains a key transport route connecting the eastern suburbs of Kohimaramara, St Johns and Meadow Bank to the central city of Auckland. The road generally follows the ridgeline. Along Kepa Road there is a mixture of residential (predominately two storey) residential with a number of businesses, small neighbourhood centres and the Eastridge Shopping Mall. To the west of the site, located at the corner of Kepa and Kupe Streets there is a small Local Town Centre comprising an open surface car park on the corner with one, two and three storey commercial development, on the opposite side of Kupe Street at this

¹ As part of this application the part of the duplex that is located on 8 Kurahaupo will be removed with temporary cladding applied to the house at 10 Kurahaupo.

intersection with Kepa Road there is a long established five storey apartment building, also with its parking fronting Kepa Road, at 160 Kepa Road.

There are a number of examples of new, larger scale residential apartment development occurring along Kepa Road and in the Ōrākei area, these include developments such as 'Outlook Mission Bay' at 236 Kepa Road and 'Horizon Apartments' at 250 Kepa Road. There are also a number of apartment buildings consented and soon to be developed e.g 'The Ridge' at 243 Kepa Road.

Directly across Kepa Road to the south of the site the land drops away steeply from the Kepa Road ridge to Purewa Creek. This land is currently open space and used for a number of activities including horse grazing, and the Pourewa Community Hub. The land to the south is identified as Kepa Road landslip ONF (ID 63), this extends south to the Purewa Estuary ONF (ID 171) within the estuary itself and the Ōrākei volcano forms a basin landscape to the south of the site (ID 143) (refer figure 2 below). Together these result in a memorable natural landscape alongside an established urban context.



Figure 2: Auckland Unitary Plan Map Overlay. Site identified with red boundary. Kepa Road landslip ONF and Purewa Estuary ONF to the south of the site.

Figure 3 below shows the site in relation to its wider surrounding area. The site is located to the north of Kepa Road with an elevated position adjacent to the Kepa Road ridgeline. The site is well connected to a variety of transport modes, including walkable access to multiple bus stops on Kepa Road which is an arterial route. The Ōrākei train station is located approx 1.4km downhill to the west.



Figure 3: Wider Site Context Map. Site boundary identified in red. Ōrākei train station to the south of the image, the large footprint of East Ridge Shopping Mall can be seen to the east (right) and the open space on the southern side of the ridge to the bottom of the photograph.

The suburb of Ōrākei is located approximately 5 kilometres to the east of Auckland's city centre and has strong public transport connections to key urban centres. The urban characteristics of the local context is principally dominated by residential land use containing detached residential buildings typically one or two storeys. Ōrākei contains a number of neighbourhood centres of relevance in respect of the subject site are the newly developed Ōrākei Bay Village, adjacent to the Ōrākei train station, East Ridge shopping mall to the east of the site on Kepa Road and the smaller walkable Local Centre commercial area at the corner of Kepa Road and Kupe Streets to the immediate west of the site.

For a city fringe suburb, Ōrākei contains a large proportion of open space. Bordered by Tamaki Drive, open space includes Paritai Reserve, Watene Reserve, Okahu Bay Reserve, Ōrākei Domain, Whenua Rangatira and Michael Joseph Savage Memorial which form a prominent northern green edge to the suburb. This green edge wraps around the western and southern sides of the suburb and includes Ngapipi Cliff Reserve before leading into Pourewa Reserve². In a wider context, Kepa Bush Reserve, Macpherson Street Reserve and the Ōrākei Basin Reserve³, continue the green edge of Pourewa Reserve to the north. There are also numerous other smaller open space areas within the suburb including Nehu Triangle, Kupe Reserve, Kupe North Reserve, Te Arawa Reserve and Aotea Reserve.

Given the established nature of the suburb, mature tree planting occupying the road corridors and private properties remain a legible element alongside the built environment. Kepa Road in particular, features a number of established Pohutukawa⁴.

² Note that this is privately-owned land (Ngāti Whatua). There is no legal access mechanism that permits public access.

³ Collectively includes Ōrākei Basin West Reserve and Ōrākei Basin East Reserve

⁴ Many of those located to the south of the site

3.0 Proposal

The proposal is clearly illustrated in the set of architectural plans prepared by the project architects Monk Mackenzie. The architects have also prepared a number of 3D renders to illustrate the proposed development.

The proposal is for two apartment buildings orientated broadly east / west. The buildings have their short ends to Kurahaupo Street with the southern portion of the development fronting Kepa Road. In total 45 apartments are proposed with a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. All units are proposed to be sold to market.

The buildings step in height with the landform, the building to the north being five storeys and that to the south seven storeys. The proposed buildings have a maximum height protrusion of 5127mm above the THAB/B-MU zone enabled height of 16m. This height protrusion is almost completely contained within the southern apartment building, adjacent to Kepa Road with a height protrusion ranging from 3104mm – 5290mm. The northern building protrudes through the height plane by between 195mm and 1113mm. The overall building bulk and mass has been carefully distributed within the site providing generous building separation, boundary setbacks and a range of interface conditions. Additional height, comprising additional storeys is located towards the south of the site fronting onto the wide Kepa Road, road reserve and placed with consideration of the site's two adjoining residential neighbours.

The development makes use of the site topography - low to the north – with the height of the buildings responding to the underlying landform.

The road reserve immediately adjoining the site to the south on Kepa Road is unusually wide with the road reserve to the west accommodating a slip lane from the adjacent local shops. The portion of footpath adjacent to the site therefore also accommodates a wide planted berm within the road reserve. The proposal does not modify the configuration of this street frontage, with vehicle access provided from Kurahaupo Street. Existing trees within the planted road reserve berm will be retained providing an established vegetated frontage to the site. Enhancement planting is proposed within the road reserve berm to improve the amenity of this frontage.

As noted above vehicular access to the site is from Kurahaupo Street with a single entry / exit to a basement carpark. The location of the basement entrance and basement itself make use of the sloping contour of the site.

The design of open space within the development comprises a varied mix of spaces with access to residents. There are pedestrian laneways and generous amenity planting to the site boundaries. The lower apartments Unit B1 and B2 have access to an area of patio and lawn open space to the north. Overall, the provision of onsite open space and associated landscape treatment will create a quality amenity for the residential development.

The architects have been cognisant of the way in which this larger scaled apartment building will be seen in the wider suburban landscape of Ōrākei adopting an architectural style that has a strong vertical emphasis. The building presents more solid facades to the south wrapping around the corners with a more highly glazed façade facing toward the northern aspect and views. Attractive views to the south will also be available for the southern building with windows giving vertical emphasis to this façade. The buildings are designed as a pair, stepping down the slope in height with the upper levels of the southern building overlooking its 'neighbour' to the north. The building sits on a plinth at the Kepa Road frontage with the building set back providing space for a street front garden. There are pedestrian entrances to the street frontage here.

Façade materials are of a quality expected of the location and consistent with the nature of a 'high end' apartment development in this prime residential location. The materials support the architectural strategy of 'solid and light'.



Figure 4: View from Kepa Road. 3D Render prepared by Monk and Makenzie Architects.

As illustrated in Figure 5 below. The southern building, fronting Kepa Road, exceeds the height control for B-MU zone, being 16m + 2m for roof, with its additional 6 - 7th floors fully above the height plane. The architects have used the rolling height ground level to measure the building height – as illustrated in the cross sections and elevations – using this method the 16m rolling height sits approximately 2/3rds of the way up the 6th floor of the façade to the southern building. Measured by the rolling height method the southern building infringes the height between 3104mm and 5290mm.

Measured by the rolling height method the building at the north infringes the height control for the THAB zone, being 16m, between 195mm and 1113mm. The upper-level is setback on the northern interface to reduce potential dominance in respect of the residential neighbour to the north.

This figure also illustrates the sloping nature of natural ground and how the buildings respond to this topography.

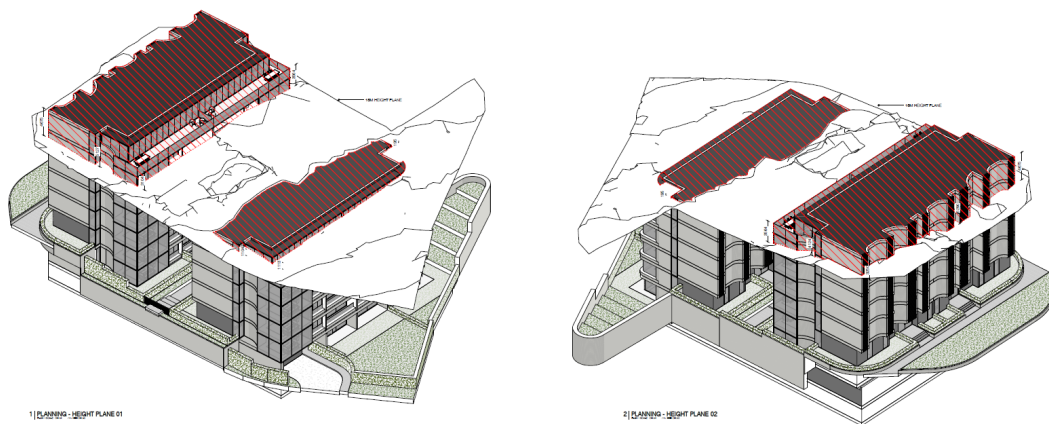


Figure 5: 3D illustration showing maximum and minimum height infringement from the 16m height. Refer Monk Mackenzie RC706

The Proposal generally complies with the height in relation to boundary control (including the alternative control) on all frontages with the exception on an infringement of the Standard HiRB control to the north western boundary (the development complies with the alternative HiRB control). Figure 6 below illustrates the infringement in an elevated axonometric view from above Kurahaupo Street.

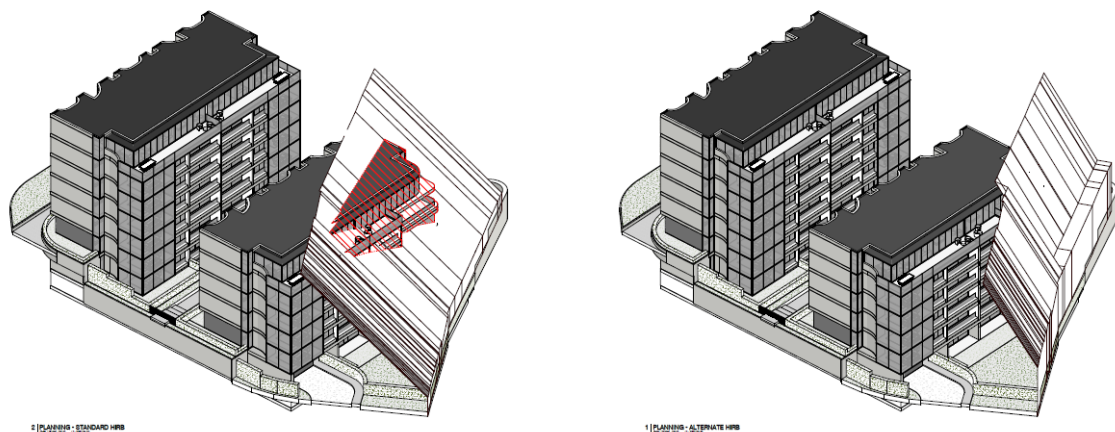


Figure 6: 3d Axonometric elevated view from Kurahaupo Street. Standard HiRB exceedance (left) and HiRB alternative compliance (right).

In summary, the proposal is for the type of more intensive, urban, residential apartment development envisaged in the THAB / B-MU zone. The proposal incorporates an additional 7th storey to the southern apartment building fronting onto Kepa Road.

The proposal is for quality, apartments that are generous in size to meet the market expectation for permanent apartment homes within the locality. Quality, enduring materials are proposed suited to the Ōrākei context. The development has a strong architectural qualities and is designed to establish apartments with a quality amenity within a development that is recognisable as a local landmark and makes a quality architectural statement.

4.0 Visual Catchment and Viewing Audiences

The proposal will be seen within its immediate urban context from Kepa Road, and the surrounding Ōrākei area. The site is located on the ridgeline that results in it being visible from a wider area including locations to the south due to the falling topography toward Purewa Creek. The nature of the topography north of the site, in combination with the developed nature of the suburb results in more limited visibility of the site from locations to the north. The closest neighbouring residential properties, and the only two adjoining residential neighbours are the single storey property at 10 Kurahaupo Street to the north and the single storey property at 180 Kepa Road to the west.

Distant views of the site will be attainable from locations within the suburb of Meadowbank due to the rising topography away from Purewa creek to St Johns Road and Remuera Road. A large number of private viewing audiences around the site are located in single and two storey dwellings within vegetated lots.

The primary public and private viewing audiences can therefore be identified as:

Public

- People using the adjacent streets as pedestrians or in vehicles on the road network from within approximately 200m of the site. Users⁵ of surrounding local roads such as Kepa Road, Kurahaupo Street, Kupe Street, Godden Crescent and Colenso Place.
- Users along the Glen Innes to Tamaki Shared Path (Te Ara ki Uta ki Tai) – eastern Meadowbank end
- Visitors and users 105-111 Kepa Road (referred to by landowner Ngāti Whatua as “Pourewa Reserve”), Ōrākei Basin (south East); and
- Visitors to Meadowbank Railway Station

Private:

- Visitors to St Joseph’s School
- Residents to the north particularly those in the immediate vicinity along Kurahaupo Street and Kepa Road; and
- Residents at distant locations to the south in Meadowbank such as those along Meadowbank Road and Meadowbank Retirement Village.

⁵ Including people walking, cycling and traveling in vehicles

5.0 Preliminary Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

Landscape Effects

The Proposal is sited on Kepa Road within the Ōrākei suburban neighbourhood and in close proximity to the Eastridge Shopping Centre and Kupe Street / Kepa Road local shops. The site is within an area zoned for Auckland's most intensive residential landuse, Terrace Housing and Apartment Building Zone (THAB) and Business Mixed Use (B-MU). This area can be expected to transition over time to a more intensive, urban residential character and amenity. The conversion of what is a now a site with a number of single storey residential dwellings to one that is occupied by an apartment building will result in a significant change to the landscape. Such change and urban residential intensification on significant road corridors such as Kepa Road is not, however unexpected.

Similar scaled apartment development already exists in the locality including in respect to the 'Outlook' and 'Horizon' Apartments to the 400m to the east along Kepa Road. The nature of the development is not therefore unexpected in this part of Ōrākei. The proposal will respond to the Auckland housing demand by utilising a large suburban residential site which has been highly modified and is able to accommodate high-quality housing at a greater level of urban intensity in support of a key transport route to the city.

The building has a strong architectural aesthetic with a solid and strongly vertical articulation to the south and the building corners with a more highly glazed and lighter northern elevation. The architecture although somewhat uncompromising is a distinctive and quality statement designed to capture and respond to the urban context of the site and its relative adjacent amenity. The building has a more solid façade to the open vehicle dominated corridor of Kepa Road with glazing to capture southern views. The northern façade is designed to capitalise on the site's elevation and the amenity of the northern outlook to Rangitoto and the Hauraki Gulf.

The height of the proposal exceeds the 16m and 16m (+2m) height control but in a way that seeks to reduce the potential impact or dominance of the additional storeys. The additional height fronts Kepa Road and positions the mass of the building away from the more sensitive residential area to the north. Kepa Road is a wide two-lane arterial road with a wide road reserve that provides a good balance to the scale of the proposed development. The site also has an adjacent wide planted berm in the road reserve that assists in moderating the height of the building on its immediate street frontage.

The site occupied by the Proposal is elevated on the Kepa Road ridgeline the new apartment building will form part of the urban ridgeline but not in a way that is overtly prominent. An additional new, larger building will occupy and give emphasis to the ridge and form part of the skyline in a way that is consistent with the emerging established and anticipated nature of this urban ridgeline landform and skyline. The proposed development will consolidate ridgeline apartment development in the locality and will appear similar to the other apartment buildings along the ridgeline.

The physical effects to the landscape would principally be due to bulk earthworks and vegetation removal. The proposal will work with the topographical characteristics of the gently sloping site. Earthworks will be required to provide for a suitable ground plane, but no basement excavation is proposed with the proposed basement using the natural topography. It is entirely plausible that earthworks to a comparable volume would be required and allowed for

under a compliant development scenario derived from the AUP. Moreover, over time, the site has been modified through prior subdivision and development.

There is no identified significant or scheduled vegetation on the Site. The proposed planting will otherwise complement the street frontages and provide for a high level of onsite amenity with the provision of amenity planting, tree planting, and areas of lawn.

The proposal is located with good separation distance from the ONF landscape associated with Pourewa Creek and the Ōrākei Basin to the south. Whilst prominent it will not compromise the presence or significance of this urban landscape feature.

In summary therefore the Proposal will signal the progressive urban residential intensification of this part of Ōrākei as anticipated by the area's intensive residential THAB and B-MU zones. The high-quality, distinctive and architecturally designed development will complement the character of the locality and positively address the site's street frontages. The two buildings will have a presence in the landscape and be seen both as part of the adjoining streetscape and in wider views of the Kepa Road ridgeline, however the scale of the development is not such that it will particularly stand out or be incongruous within the existing or future anticipated built form, character and amenity of the locality. The proposal has been positioned within its site relative to neighbours to retain setbacks and avoid an overbearing scale or form. The corner site also enjoys a relatively wide-open streetscape and open space context to the south giving space to the larger scale of the development.

The proposal, whilst introducing a substantial change, will, given its strong, quality architectural statement provide an overall positive contribution to the evolving urban landscape of this part of Auckland.

Effects on the ONF

In terms of landscape effects on the proximate ONF, the site is not located within the identified overlays of this feature nor is the proposal of a nature that will detract from this feature, there will, therefore be no direct effects on the values of the ONF.

When experiencing the ONF from a wider context the building is set back from the ONF and separated from it by the arterial corridor of Kepa Road which already enjoys an established urban context. The building will not visually compete with the ONF's legibility. Furthermore, due to the size and scale of the feature, its established urban context and in relation to the zoning of the locality, it is considered that the proposal will sit comfortably in the wider higher density residential context on the ONF. The height and scale of the proposed development will in the future be seen in the context of an ongoing incremental intensification of neighbourhood character in this part of Ōrākei as foreshadowed by the more intensive residential and mixed used zoning of the locality. The juxtaposition of protected volcanic natural features – cones and basins - and an increasingly urban, intensified, quality compact, urban form can be anticipated across the city and forms part of the inherent character of urban Auckland.

Overall, it is considered that any effect on the ONF will be very low / negligible due to the site being outside of the ONF boundary, separated by the road corridor and set down from Kepa Road. The proposal will reinforce the existing juxtaposition of the natural feature with its urban context and the evolving character of the wider urban landscape context of Ōrākei. The ONF will remain as a recognisable and memorable feature.

Visual Effects

When seen, the development comprising two component buildings will be of a height and scale that is clearly taller than the surrounding one and two storey traditional suburban buildings in the established residential environment. However, the development will be seen in the context of

the developing urban nature of Auckland and other newer more intensive urban re-development along the Kepa Road ridge. In the context of this emerging urban landscape the proposal will sit more comfortably and relate strongly in terms of height and scale. The associated legible height of the proposed development will relate to the more intensive THAB and B-MU zoning of the site and wider locality.

Buildings of a similar nature and scale are emerging in the inner suburbs of Auckland, particularly on the fringe of local centres on major transport routes and in proximity to transport centres / rail stations in line with the city's aspiration for urban intensification. This is also in line with national direction in respect of urban intensification. Examples of these forms of more intensive and apartment style development are noticeable already on Kepa Road within 400m of the site⁶.

The majority of houses in the residential catchment to the north, west and east are orientated with their primary aspect and outdoor living areas facing north and / or in rear gardens facing away from the development. The wider residential area is well treed and this together with the existing topography generally limits long distance views from the predominantly one and two storey houses. Whilst the proposed development will sit above the height of its existing suburban residential neighbours the extent to which it will be visible in the everyday amenity of this housing will be limited with very little change to the established residential character or amenity of the neighbourhood.

Some more proximate properties including those directly adjacent to the development at 180 Kepa Road and 10 Kurahaupo Street will have clearer views of the proposed development. However, taller scale mixed use development can be expected along the Kepa Road corridor and the form of the development on this large site has been carefully considered to avoid an overbearing appearance or effects on privacy / residential amenity. These more proximate houses will experience a new medium density residential development which is residential in its character and amenity and of a strong architectural aesthetic. The proposed architecture, façade materiality as well as the compliance with HiRB controls along the adjoining residential boundary assist in reducing perceived bulk and dominance of the development.

The site is not located within a volcanic view protection area (view shaft or height sensitive area), nor will the proposed development result in any loss of important public views towards the surrounding maunga or crater landforms.

6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion the proposed development will make an architectural statement on the Kepa Road ridgeline with an apartment building comprising two forms stepping down the northern slope of the ridge. The taller 7 storey building sits adjacent to a locally widened and planted footpath / berm. This part of the development is essentially just over one storey over height addressing the corner. The 5-storey component is less than a full level over height and is set back to maintain the amenity of neighbouring properties, noting also their higher density THAB zoning.

The development will signal the anticipated intensification of a key arterial corridor in a location with attributes that enable the greater height of the proposal to be accommodated. The development overall is of a high quality and amenity with all parking accommodated in a

⁶ Refer 'Outlook Mission Bay' at 236 Kepa Road and 'Horizon Apartments' at 250 Kepa Road

basement and the residual site area developed with quality landscape treatment and spaces for residents to enjoy as outlook and or to be physically accessed.

The proposal will join other recent Kepa Road ridgeline mid-rise apartment development, continuing the urban intensification trend of this high amenity residential corridor. The proposal takes advantage of the locational attributes of the site whilst seeking to avoid and / or mitigate potential adverse effects including in respect of landscape and visual effects.

About Boffa Miskell

Boffa Miskell is a leading New Zealand professional services consultancy with offices in Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Queenstown. We work with a wide range of local and international private and public sector clients in the areas of planning, urban design, landscape architecture, landscape planning, ecology, biosecurity, cultural heritage, graphics and mapping. Over the past four decades we have built a reputation for professionalism, innovation and excellence. During this time we have been associated with a significant number of projects that have shaped New Zealand's environment.

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