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31 January 2020

## 109 BEACHLANDS ROAD, BEACHLANDS

# PRELIMINARY GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION

REPORT

Neil Construction Limited AKS2020-0001AB Rev.0

AKS2020-0001AB			
Date	Revision	Comments	
24 January 2020	A	Initial draft for internal review	
31 January 2020	0	Final report for client	

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the results of a geotechnical investigation and geohazards assessment for the block of land at 109 Beachlands Road, Beachlands and is intended for due diligence purposes.

The approximately 16.3 hectares of land is characterised by an incised gully that originates beyond the north eastern corner and exits across the southern boundary. Several short tributaries extend into it from the north west and another in the south eastern corner. The majority of the gullies are covered in thick gorse and vegetation. The contour grades moderately gently from the north west and the eastern boundary down to gully flanks, from where it falls moderately steeply into the gullies. Along the eastern boundary between a farm fence and the site boundary is a strip of land with various small stockpiles and evidence from the aerial photographs of previous earthworks. An existing house, associated sheds and stock yards are located in the north-eastern corner.

- Based on the investigation results, the site is underlain by East Cost Bays Formation deposits, possibly
  overlain in places by Puketoka alluvium.
- In general, the site is considered suitable for the proposed residential sub-divisional development.
- Should purchase of the property proceed, addition site investigations should be undertaken, as part of detailed design.
- Review of historic photographs reveals previous activities on the site have included the formation and subsequent filling of a pond in the south-eastern corner, earthworks that include stockpiling and filling inside the eastern boundary and removal of a building adjacent to Beachlands Road;
- Boreholes encountered topsoil overlying stiff to very stiff natural clays silts and sands, including in the gully areas where no significant organic or soft deposits were identified. No significantly organic natural deposits were identified anywhere on the site and groundwater levels were found to be beyond 3m depth. Some of the soils were identified as being sensitive, particularly in the (anticipated) cut areas to the west of the gully system;
- Liquefaction is not expected to be a significant hazard on this site;
- Where gully areas are to remain, additional investigations and analyses will be required for the design
  of retaining walls or to assess the need for subsoil drains and/ or building line limitations to limit the
  proximity of development to the steep slopes. These issues are not expected to be difficult to address
  during earthworks development, although care will be needed to assess stability conditions in the south
  eastern corner where a pond has been backfilled in the past.
- The site soils are expected to be suitable for normal bulk earthworks operations, although the surface silt deposits over the western site areas should be expected to be sensitive to water content and therefore difficult to compact unless mixed with other clay soils.
- Aerial photographic evidence shows that earthworks have been undertaken along a strip approximately 30m wide inside the eastern boundary, including filling a gully feature that previously extended into the north eastern corner. The quality of any previous filling in this area will need to be assessed by review of any geotechnical reports relating to it and most likely by further investigations. Similarly, the backfilling of the pond in the south eastern corner may require further investigation, depending on the extent of development proposals for this area.
  - It is expected that the sensitive nature of some of the soils on the site has contributed to the gully erosion / formation processes. These soils can be sensitive to tomo formation and may be more sensitive than many sites to erosion and sedimentation during earthworks. These soils may also be problematic for building excavations, losing significant strength when disturbed.
- The soils comprise a range of sand, silt and clay mixtures expected to provide a range of expansive soil conditions. Testing should be undertaken in the future to confirm the expansive Class(es).
- Groundwater levels were low where encountered and therefore groundwater is not expected to pose any uncommon issues at this site unless combined with sensitive soils in excavations.

# **Table of Contents**

EXECUTIV	/E SUMMARY	. <b></b>
1 INTRO	DDUCTION	
1.1 Pr 1.2 Sc	roject Brief cope of Work	1
2 SITE D	DESCRIPTION	
2.1 Sit 2.2 La	ite Location	
3 PROP	POSED DEVELOPMENT	
4 INVES	STIGATION SCOPE	2
4.1 De 4.2 Fie	esktop Study	2 2
5 GROU	JND MODEL	3
5.1 Pu 5.2 St 5.2.1 5.2.2 5.2.3 5.2.4 5.2.5	ublished Geology tratigraphic Units Topsoil Gully Deposits (HA02-20, HA03-20, HA04-20, HA06-20, HA09-20, HA10-20) Fill Natural Soils Groundwater	3 4 4 4 4 4 4
6 PRELI	IMINARY GEOTECHNICAL COMMENTS	4
6.1 Se 6.2 Lio 6.3 Sk 6.4 Se 6.5 Ea 6.6 Fx	eismicity iquefaction lope Stability Assessment ensitive Soils arthworks	
6.7 Gr	roundwater	5
USE OF TH	HIS REPORT	6

Drawnigs

Drawing 01: Site Investigation Plan

Appendices

Appendix A: Possible Scheme Plan (Neil Constuction)

Appendix B: Hand Auger Boreholes Logs

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

## 1.1 Project Brief

CMW Geosciences (CMW) was engaged by Neil Construction Limited to carry out a preliminary geotechnical investigation at 109 Beachlands Road, Beachlands, which is being considered for the construction of a 141 lot residential subdivision.

The scope of work and associated terms and conditions of our engagement were detailed in our services proposal letter referenced AKS2020-0001AA Rev.0 dated 9 January 2020.

We understand that this report will be used for due diligence purposes. The proposed scheme plan by Neil Construction Limited referenced Possible Subdivision – Rev3 (draft only) can be found in **Appendix A**.

## 1.2 Scope of Work

The purpose of this report is to describe the investigation completed, the ground conditions encountered and to provide recommendations with respect to geotechnical aspects of the proposed development.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

#### 2.1 Site Location

The site comprises an area of approximately 16.3 hectares and is located at 109 Beachlands Road, Beachlands legally described as Lot 1002 DP 512674 as show in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (Google Maps)

## 2.2 Landform

The current general landform, together with associated features located within and adjacent to the site is presented on the attached Site Plan as *Drawing 01*.

The site is relatively square in shape with the majority of the land in open pasture. Historic aerial photographs illustrate that the site was historically and is currently used for agricultural purpose. The site is bound to the north by Beachlands Road, to the east and west by recent residential subdivisions and commercial lots and to the south by a gully and a partially developed subdivision. The approximately 16.3 hectares of land is characterised by an incised gully that originates beyond the north eastern corner and exits across the southern boundary. Several short tributaries extend into it from the north west and another in the south eastern corner. The majority of the gullies are covered in thick gorse and vegetation.

The site grades moderately gently from RL 45m in the north west and RL 36m on the eastern boundary down to gully flanks, from where it falls moderately steeply into the gullies, reaching the lowest point at approximately RL 22.5m in the gully in the centre of the southern boundary. Along the eastern boundary between a farm fence and the site boundary is a strip of land with various small stockpiles and evidence from the aerial photographs of previous earthworks. An existing house, associated sheds and stock yards are located in the north-eastern corner of the site.

## 3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The preliminary design scheme in **Appendix A** depicts the possible creation of 141 large residential lots and associated roading that would incorporate filling most of the gully features and would likely require retaining walls to support some portions of roads and lots.

## 4 INVESTIGATION SCOPE

## 4.1 Desktop Study

A desktop study was carried out before commencing fieldwork. This included online research through Auckland Council Geo Maps, Dial Before You Dig and aerial photographs.

A review of historic aerial photographs between 1996 and 2017 indicated the following activity:

- Formation of a pond in the south eastern corner between 1996 and 2010;
- Removal of a building adjacent to Beachlands Road between 2008 and 2010;
- Filling of the pond in the south eastern corner between 2010 and 2015;
- Filling of the gully in the north eastern corner between 2010 and 2015;
- Earthworks activities inside the eastern boundary since 2015.

## 4.2 Field Investigation

Following a Dial Before You Dig search the field investigation was undertaken on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020. All fieldwork was carried out under the direction of CMW Geosciences in general accordance with the NZGS guidance<sup>1</sup>. The scope of fieldwork completed was as follows:

Undertook a walkover survey of the site to assess the general landform, site conditions, geomorphology and adjacent structures/infrastructure;

12 hand auger boreholes, denoted HA01-20 to HA12-20, were drilled using a 50mm diameter auger to target depths of up to 4.0m below existing ground levels to visually observe the near surface soil profile and to facilitate in-situ vane shear strength testing. Engineering logs of the hand auger boreholes, together with peak and remoulded vane shear strengths are presented in *Appendix B*;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> NZ Geotechnical Society (2005), Field Description of Soil and Rock, Guideline for the field classification and description of soil and rock for engineering purposes.

The approximate locations of the respective investigation sites referred to above are shown on the Site Plan as **Drawing 01**. Test locations were measured using a hand-held GPS and elevations were taken from the current contours on Auckland Council GIS.

## 5 GROUND MODEL

## 5.1 Published Geology

Published geological maps<sup>2</sup> for the area depict the regional geology for the area as comprising mainly sedimentary rocks of the East Coast Bays Formation (ECBF) of the Warkworth Subgroup (Waitemata Group) as illustrated in Figure 2 below. The map also indicates the site sits just south of a boundary with Puketoka Formation alluvium and therefore alluvial deposits may overlie the ECBF in some areas of the site, particularly low-lying areas.



#### Figure 2: Regional Geology (Auckland Council GIS)

The historic turbidite flows of the ECBF consist of residual soils comprising stiff to very stiff clays and silty clays underlain by alternating sandstone and muddy siltstone with variable volcanic content.

Puketoka Formation alluvial deposits are characterised by pumiceous mud, sand and gravel with possible muddy peat and lignite.

## 5.2 Stratigraphic Units

The ground conditions encountered and inferred from the investigation were considered to be generally consistent with the published geology for the area. Sand, silt and clay mixtures of alluvial and Waitemata Group origin can be difficult to distinguish in the absence of organic or pumiceous deposits so our appended borehole records have included geological units where we have been confident to make the distinction and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Edbrooke, S.W. (complier) 2001, Geology of the Auckland Area, 1:250,000 Geological Map 3, GNS Science

have not been labelled where uncertainty remains. In practice these units that are difficult to distinguish have very similar behaviour characteristics.

Our findings can be generalised according to the following subsurface sequences.

#### 5.2.1 Topsoil

Topsoil was encountered in all hand auger boreholes from approximately 0.15m to 0.4m below current ground level and was generally dry.

#### 5.2.2 Gully Deposits (HA02-20, HA03-20, HA04-20, HA06-20, HA09-20, HA10-20)

Other than topsoil deposits that were similar in depth to the boreholes drilled outside the gully areas, no specific soft or organic gully deposits that would require specific / additional undercutting were encountered in our borehole locations. Although allowance should be made for such deposits to be present in gully areas not investigated, this finding suggests that the gullies have been formed by erosion of the original ground surface.

Minor landslide movement was only identified in the gully head upslope of HA02-20.

#### 5.2.3 Fill

No fill was identified in our site investigation, but it is evident that filling has taken place around the existing house site and during construction of the earth-worked strip along the eastern boundary.

#### 5.2.4 Natural Soils

The natural soils encountered were typically stiff to very stiff, grey, orange and brown mixtures of clays silts and sands. Typically in the gully areas they became more consistently grey and higher strength (often unable to be penetrated) towards the bases of the boreholes, indicating less weathering. All boreholes extended to their target depth of 4m. No significant organic or puriceous deposits were encountered.

Of note, a dry silt layer was encountered immediately beneath the topsoil horizon in nearly all the hand augers drilled to the north west of the gully system and extended to depths up to 1.6m below existing ground levels. This silt material is expected to be extensive in surface cuts taken from this area. Typically strengths were beyond the upper limit of our shear vanes and soil sensitivities were not able to be measured. However where it was able to be measured in elevated HA01-20, it was found to be sensitive. Measurements in this soil in the gully areas (HA02-20 and HA06-20) also showed it to be moderately sensitive to sensitive albeit that the dryness of the soils would also have affected the readings. Isolated readings of sensitive to extra sensitive buried clay soils in the gullies were also made in HA03-20 and HA09-20, again in dry soils.

#### 5.2.5 Groundwater

Standing groundwater was only encountered in boreholes HA04-20, HA08-20 and HA10-20 drilled near the eastern boundary and located in a combination of elevated and gully areas. Depths ranged between 3.0m and 3.6m below the existing ground level. It should be noted that these levels are indicative only and may vary seasonally and with rain fall.

## PRELIMINARY GEOTECHNICAL COMMENTS

## 6.1 Seismicity

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Based on the findings of our preliminary investigations the seismic site subsoil class is provisionally assessed to be C (shallow soil) in accordance with NZS 1170.5 section 3.1.1

## 6.2 Liquefaction

On the basis of the geological age of the natural soils at this site, their composition that typically incorporates clay mineralogy, their high strength and the supressed groundwater levels, our preliminary assessment is the soils at this site are not a significant liquefaction risk.

## 6.3 Slope Stability Assessment

Shallow, rotational type instability has been noted in some gully head areas, particularly upslope of HA02-20. Based on the scheme plan provided to us, we anticipate that any associated risks will be remediated during normal earthworks across most of the site. Where gully areas are to remain, additional investigations and analyses will be required for the design of retaining walls or to assess the need for subsoil drains and/ or building line restrictions to limit the proximity of development to the steep slopes. Based on the high strengths of the soils, the low groundwater table and the relatively large lot sizes, these issues are not expected to be difficult to address during earthworks development, although care will be needed to assess stability conditions in the south eastern corner where a pond has been backfilled in the past.

## 6.4 Sensitive Soils

The sensitive surface silts mentioned above should be considered in terms of their performance in finished building excavations as they may prove difficult for foundation contractors to work, losing significant strength when disturbed or wet back from their current dry state. This can be addressed during earthworks if desired by over-excavation and mixing with other soils.

The sensitive clay soils encountered at depth in some of the gully boreholes are not expected to significantly impact on development works. Dryness of these soils during testing is expected to have impacted on the sensitivity results.

It is expected that the sensitive nature of some of the soils on the site has contributed to the gully erosion that has occurred here. These soils can be sensitive to tomo formation/ tunnel erosion

## 6.5 Earthworks

Evidence to date suggests that the gully features will be relatively straightforward to clean out and prepare for filling due to low volumes of organic deposits and the absence of soft soils.

The site soils are expected to be suitable for normal bulk earthworks operations, although the surface silt deposits over the western site areas described in Section 5.2.4 can be expected to be sensitive to water content and therefore difficult to compact unless mixed with other clay soils.

Aerial photographic evidence shows that earthworks have been undertaken along a strip approximately 30m wide inside the eastern boundary. Much of this work may have been surficial and/or stockpiling, but it is evident that a gully feature that previously extended into the north eastern corner has been filled. The quality of any previous filling in this area will need to be assessed by review of any geotechnical reports relating to it and most likely by further investigations. Similarly, the backfilling of the pond in the south eastern corner may require further investigation, depending on the extent of development proposals for this area.

It is expected that the sensitive nature of some of the soils on the site has contributed to the gully erosion / formation processes. These soils can be sensitive to tomo formation and may be more sensitive than many sites to erosion and sedimentation during earthworks.

# 6.6 Expansive Soils

The soils encountered in the investigations comprised a range of sand, silt and clay mixtures expected to provide a range of expansive soil conditions, depending on exposures at finished levels in cuts and the mix of soils achieved in fills. Testing should be undertaken in the future to confirm likely outcomes.

## 6.7 Groundwater

Groundwater levels were low where encountered, although it is noted that our fieldwork was undertaken during a dry summer period. Nevertheless, given these findings, groundwater is not expected to pose any uncommon issues at this site unless combined with sensitive soils in excavations.

## **USE OF THIS REPORT**

Site subsurface conditions cause more construction problems than any other factor and therefore are generally the largest technical risk to a project. These notes have been prepared to help you understand the limitations of your geotechnical report.

#### Your geotechnical report is based on project specific criteria

Your geotechnical report has been developed on the basis of our understanding of your project specific requirements and applies only to the site area investigated. Project requirements could include the general nature of the project; its size and configuration; the location of any structures on or around the site; and the presence of underground utilities. If there are any subsequent changes to your project you should seek geotechnical advice as to how such changes affect your report's recommendations. Your geotechnical report should not be applied to a different project given the inherent differences between projects and sites.

#### Subsurface conditions can change

Subsurface conditions are created by natural processes and the activity of man. For example, water levels can vary with time, fill may be placed on a site and pollutants may migrate with time. Because a report is based on conditions which existed at the time of subsurface investigation, the conditions may have changed, particularly when large periods of time have elapsed since the investigations were performed.

#### Interpretation of factual data

Site investigations identify actual subsurface conditions at points where samples are taken. Additional geotechnical information (e.g. literature and external data source review, laboratory testing on samples, etc) are interpreted by geologists, engineers or scientists to provide an opinion about overall site conditions, their likely impact on the proposed development and recommended actions. Actual conditions may differ from those inferred to exist, because no professional, no matter how gualified, can exactly predict what is hidden by earth, rock and time. The actual interface between materials may be far more gradual or abrupt than assumed based on the facts obtained. Nothing can be done to change the actual site conditions which exist, but steps can be taken to reduce the impact of unexpected conditions.

#### Your report's recommendations require confirmation during construction

Your report is based on the assumption that the site conditions as revealed through selective point sampling are indicative of actual conditions throughout an area. This assumption cannot be substantiated until project implementation has commenced. For this reason, you should retain geotechnical services throughout the construction stage, to identify variances, conduct additional tests if required, and recommend solutions to problems encountered on site. A geotechnical designer, who is fully familiar with the background information, is able to assess whether the report's recommendations are valid and whether changes should be considered as the project develops. An unfamiliar party using this report increases the risk that the report will be misinterpreted.

#### Interpretation by other design professionals

Costly problems can occur when other design professionals develop their plans based on misinterpretations of a geotechnical report. Read all geotechnical documents closely and do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have. To help avoid misinterpretations, retain the assistance of geotechnical professionals familiar with the contents of the geotechnical report to work with other project design professionals who need to take account of the contents of the report. Have the report implications explained to design professionals who need to take account of them, and then have the design plans and specifications produced reviewed by a competent Geotechnical Engineer.

Drawings: Site Investigation Plan



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# Appendix A: Possible Scheme Plan (Neil Construction)

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Appendix B: Hand Auger Borehole Logs

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