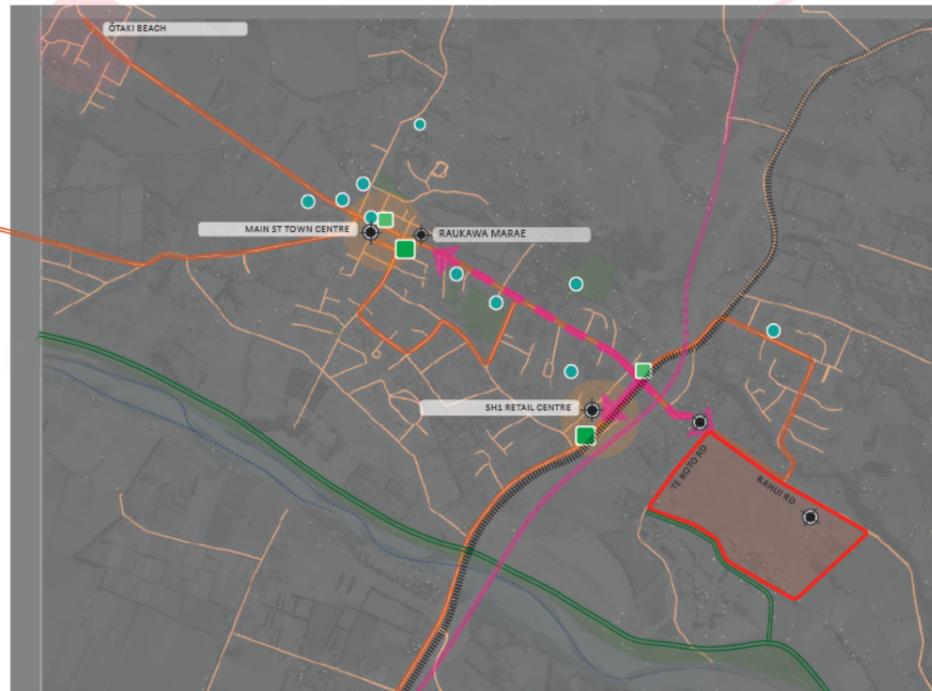


ŌTAKI MĀORI RACECOURSE

LANDSCAPE MEMO

Wraight + Associates have been engaged by Ōtaki Revisited Limited to provide landscape architectural advice and design with regard to the proposed village development at Ōtaki Racecourse.

Located approximately 300m east of Ōtaki's commercial zone on State Highway One, Ōtaki Māori Racing Club (Ōtaki Racecourse) forms a 56ha block extending from the intersection of Te Roto Road and Rahui Road eastward.



A rectangular section with its long axis running parallel to Rahui Road the site is situated on the northern side of Te Awa Ōtaki's (Ōtaki River's) broad flat valley just south of the Waitohu Plateau. The broad flat valley, running in an east-west direction, affords distant views of the Tararua Range to the south and south east framed in the midground by grassed foothills and layerings of shelter-belt planting on the OMRC site and adjacent farm holdings to the south. To the north, a mixture of residential dwellings and lifestyle blocks characterise the foreground views along Rahui Road north, with the densely planted escarpment of Waitohu Plateau providing a distinctive landscape back drop. The residential development on the east side of State Highway One, situated on top of the plateau, is largely screened from views by planting on the escarpment. Existing rural properties comprising dwellings, pastureland, shelterbelt and orchards typify views to the west.

The site, of which the racing precinct comprises approximately 39.5ha has a north-easterly aspect, with boundary planting articulating portions of the northern, western and southern property boundaries. Beyond the fenced racetrack proper, the land accommodates two grandstand buildings (located on the southern side of the track) the old totaliser building (now the Ōtaki Pottery Club), stables, training and associated facilities and a small number of leased lots concentrated within the site's eastern extremity.

The existing site derives its landscape character from the broader Ōtaki environs, (the River, the Tararuas and Waitohu Plateau) as well as the more immediate rural development on site and on neighbouring properties. The OMRC site itself is characterised by the largely flat green paddock of the racecourse the periphery of which is punctuated by

- racetrack fencing
- plantings of exotic and native tree species,
- a variety of buildings and structures (grandstands, the old totaliser building, viewing towers, stables, farm sheds, exercise carousels and residential cottages)
- a network of un-kerbed chipseal, gravel and sanded access ways and parking areas
- a series of constructed water / drainage channels, small dam and stream corridors



Prepared for:
Ōtaki Revisited Limited

Prepared by:
Wraight + Associates Limited
s 9(2)(a)
office@waal.co.nz

Along Te Roto and Rahui Roads the racecourse is partially screened by windbreak planting of exotic trees (willows). Gaps in the windbreak planting at the intersection of Te Roto and Rahui and the eastern end of the Rahui Rd boundary afford cross site views from the road. A mixed windbreak of poplars and other exotic species forms the site's southern boundary. The eastern end of the site comprises a number ancillary racetrack buildings, horse exercise carousels and small holdings, some of which are defined by perimeter planting of fast growing exotic tree species such as elders. Whilst most of the site's vegetation comprises exotic grass and tree species, two notable stands of mature Tōtara trees (one in close proximity to the site's Te Roto Rd entry and the other south east of the Grandstands) afford a degree of natural character in terms of the informality of the planting and connection to the site's ecological heritage.

Within the broad-scale context of Ōtaki, the site can be considered relatively flat sitting on the flat expansive terrace immediately north of the Ōtaki River corridor. Upon closer inspection, small variations in elevation are evident, for example the racetrack and 'shoots' are slightly elevated above the surrounding grounds by 1 to 2m.

The proposed new Ōtaki Revisited housing scheme harnesses the site's flat land, excluding beyond the racing precinct (the south east corner of the site [Zone G] which is to be retained for racing and training purposes). Offering a range of housing types including stand alone, semi-detached, terrace co-housing and apartment dwellings, the proposed development is characterised by pockets of dwellings set within a new landscape structure that harnesses the site's cultural and natural heritage. The racing precinct, Zone G, will continue to provide public access and parking to race clubs, grand stands and Ōtaki Pottery club. Stables, agistment and training areas along with ancillary race buildings will remain in the southeast corner of the site. Recognising the site's existing 'green' and rural character, the proposed new landscape overlay will be configured to afford a balance of public open space and private open space comprising:

- a visually cohesive language of native planting,
- 'soft' edges to paved surfaces,
- low level fencing, strategically located privacy screens/fences, and
- water sensitive urban design elements [WSUD] (rain gardens, planted swales, on site water detention and restorative planting to existing water channels).



The development offers an opportunity to tap into the broader districts natural heritage to create a new and complementary garden aesthetic for the grounds that employs species that are native to the local area and can provide habitat for native fauna as well as perform important water treatment functions.

The circulation network will harness the site's two existing chip-sealed drives (off Te Roto and Rahui Rds). These two drives will form the site's Primary Roads and are proposed to be linked via a new Connecting Road that will traverse the public grounds south of the Club's two existing grandstands. From the two Primary Roads a network of Connecting Roads and Shared Lanes will provide multimodal access to the site's residential precincts and individual dwellings. In keeping with the site's rural character road edges are proposed to be either kerbless or constructed with flush kerbs. Compositions of chipseal, exposed concrete, unit paving, grass-crete and compacted gravels are anticipated to define vehicle and pedestrian circulation paths in both the public realm and private lots. In unison with private garden areas, the street network will be characterised by native garden beds, productive gardens, water treatment gardens and informal tree planting. On street and off-street parking spaces will be clearly demarcated and where feasible surfaced with permeable materials such as reinforced grass, stabilised gravel or permeable paving.

A continuous loop path is proposed to circumnavigate the racetrack, providing pedestrian/cycle access to each of the site's residential precincts. An informal path, across the race track, is proposed from the southeast corner to the north west corner of the site, affording cross site access for residents on non-racing days.

Public recreational spaces (in addition to the Racing Precinct) are proposed in the form of parklets and larger park zones. Located to afford equitable access to the new residential community, parks will be designed to accommodate complementary compositions of soft and hard surfacing, seating and natural play elements. Along with the network of streets and the Racing Precinct, new open spaces will afford opportunities for interpretation and celebration of the collected cultural and racing histories pertinent to the OMRC and the broader Ōtaki district.

The existing perimeter plantings along Rahui Road, Te Roto Road and the site's southern boundary are planned to be retained largely intact albeit with a small number of removals to accommodate road connections and driveways on both Rahui and Te Roto Roads.

Planting within public open space and private lots will be configured to afford amenity as well as demarcation between public and private outdoor space, in some instances this will be supplemented with low level fencing and screen fencing to afford security and meet the needs of families with young children and / or pets. In broad terms the landscape for the developed zones whilst different to the existing large tracts of grass and paddock will be a visually cohesive and complementary composition of mass planting, tree planting, open lawns and 'stream edge' typologies intersected and punctuated by the new circulation network and dwellings.

Planting selections will focus on species native to the Manawatu Plains Ecological District (historically Kahikatea-Pukatea-Tawa Forest) supplemented by the site's existing retained trees (some of which are exotic) and new fruit trees and food growing gardens.

In concert with a sitewide planting strategy, Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) will be integrated into the development, where feasible, to manage stormwater attenuation and quality whilst promoting biodiversity and expressing the site's historical natural heritage. The WSUD strategy for the site is likely to comprise

- rain gardens and planted swales integrated into street corridors to filter and convey storm water run off
- planted sunken gardens within parklets and parks to temporarily detain and treat run-off on site
- 5m landscape offsets either side of existing channels and waterways to protect corridor
- new riparian mitigation planting along margins of existing channels and waterways.

Improving the site's environmental outcomes with regard to biodiversity, habitat for native fauna and improved water quality, WSUD interventions also afford a high level of visual amenity and opportunities to recognise and express cultural connections to whenua.



Conclusion

The large green paddock zone denoted by the racetrack will continue to be the dominant landscape feature on site by virtue of its sheer scale and slightly elevated condition in relation to the proposed development areas. That said, the proposed development will visually and physically transform portions of the site, namely the northwest, northeast, southwest and eastern sectors. Whilst some sections of the development will be visible from the surrounding public streets and neighbouring properties, the retention of existing boundary planting will provide a level of visual screening.

The location and orientation of elements within the development zones has been carefully considered to afford

- a high degree of community connectivity,
- retention of the site's key defining landscape feature, the Racetrack
- retention of the site's existing stands of Tōtara trees
- retention of much of the existing boundary planting
- retention of the site's distinctive racing towers
- retention and protection of the site's existing open water channels and streams
- a logical and succinct network of underground services
- siting of new dwellings within an articulated landscape that harnesses native species
- equitable access to public open space
- opportunities for the integration of WSUD
- enhancement of the site's natural character and biodiversity
- an expression of the site's cultural and racing histories

The above noted measures will provide for a village development that is sensitively integrated into the existing rural racecourse landscape, ensuring potential landscape character and visual effects can be adequately avoided, remedied and mitigated. With consideration to the above, it is therefore concluded that adverse visual and landscape effects will not be significant.

As further development of the design is undertaken, key consideration should be afforded to

- the articulation of private gardens and dwelling frontages along Te Roto and Rahui Roads,
- the integration of permeable surfacing where feasible for parking and footpath areas
- park and parklet design to incorporate a balance of openness, planted amenity and active spaces
- enhancement of existing waterways and channels in terms of planting and potentially softening of edges
- private lot boundary demarcation comprising combinations of low height fencing and planting.
- site views across the race track from the corner of Te Roto & Rahui Rd



Artist impression of the proposed development (interface between private lots and the public street network)