

**Park Island Master Plan, Napier**

Napier City Council

Park Island Master Plan – Plan Change

Visual Assessment Report

October 2017

**Isthmus.**

Client Name: **Napier City Council**  
Project Name: **Park Island Master Plan - Plan Change**  
Document Name: **Visual Assessment Report**  
Document Status: **Final**  
Date: **October 2017**  
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### **Appendix A - Graphic Attachments (Separate Document)**

Figure 1 – Park Island Masterplan (2013)

Figure 2 – Park Island Masterplan (2017)

Figure 3 - Site Context Map

Figure 4 - Viewpoint Location Map

Figure 5 -13 - Photo Viewpoints 1-9

Figure 14 – Proposed Mitigation Plan

### **Appendix B – Viewpoint Table**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Isthmus Group Ltd in response to a request by Napier City Council to review the likely visual effects on character and amenity from a proposed Plan Change to reconfigure the Main Residential and Sport Park Zones within the Park Island Masterplan area west of Orotu Drive, Napier.
- 1.2 This assessment investigates the existing character of the site and locality, and provides a high-level assessment of the likely visual effects of the proposed Plan Change. This report provides the findings of the site analysis concerning the sites existing uses, characteristics and sensitivities in relating to the wider context and potential viewing audiences. It also presents recommendations made by Isthmus (through proposed design and structure plan provisions) to ensure any significant adverse effects arising from the reconfiguration would be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Park Island is Hawke's Bay's largest sporting complex and an important hub for sport in the Napier City and wider region. The development of Park Island commenced in 1981. In 2013 a Master Plan was completed to guide further development (refer **figure 1, Appendix A**). The outcomes of this process resulted in a Southern, Central and Northern Sporting Hub. Since the adoption of the Park Island Master Plan it is understood there has been changes in user aspirations leading Napier City Council to commission a review to rationalise the Masterplan to reflect the changes in aspirations and the land required to service the updated requirements.
- 2.2 The review (refer **figure 2, Appendix A**) has led to a reduction in the area required for sports grounds within the Northern Hub and a reconfiguration in relation to the adjoining Main Residential Zone. The Northern Sporting Hub is no longer situated between a northern and southern pocket of Main Residential Zone but to the south of a larger consolidated residential area.
- 2.3 As the 2013 Master Plan is embodied in the District Plan a Plan Change is required to give effect to the recommendations.
- 2.4 It is understood Napier City Council has undergone a consultation process with adjacent owners/occupiers and other residents in the Parklands and Tamatea Area as part of this process.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 A standard assessment approach has been used to identify the existing landscape character of the site and its surrounding area to assess the potential effects of the proposed plan change on visual amenity.
- 3.2 A site visit was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017 to determine the landscape context and character and to take photographs for the visual assessment. Photographs of the area around the proposed plan change can be found in **Appendix A**.
- 3.3 The proposed Masterplan<sup>1</sup> has been reviewed within the context of the extent of the existing development and against the character of the surrounding area. In the same manner as provided for under the current zoning configuration, the Main Residential Zone rules and provisions<sup>2</sup> regarding site coverage, setbacks, earthworks etc will apply to the consolidated area.
- 3.4 Visual assessment of the proposed plan change is therefore based on context and extent of proposed development constructed in accordance with the rules managing land uses within the Main Residential Zone. *Main Residential Zone, Chapter 5, City of Napier District Plan*.
- 3.5 The following methodology has been used to assess the site, the broad physical context, the proposal and the visual effects;
- A desktop review of the site, relevant documents and a preliminary review of the relevant statutory provisions;

This report is based on the information provided;

- *Record of Community Engagement*, by Napier City Council; and
  - *The Park Island Napier Master Plan*, Dated May 2017 prepared by Boffa Miskell for Napier City Council.
- Site visit to determine landscape and site context (24 August 2017). Photographs were taken on this site visit;
  - Analysis of the landscape character of the site;

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed Master Plan Dated May 2017, Boffa Miskell. (Refer Figure 1, Appendix A)

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 5, Main Residential Zone – Rules. City of Napier District Plan

- Assessment of the visibility of the proposed Plan Change area from surrounding viewpoints; and
- Assessment of the potential visual effects of the proposal on the site of the proposal and the wider context.

3.6 This report should be read in conjunction with the Graphic Supplement (**Appendix A**), including the maps and photographs of the proposed site referred to throughout the report.

### **Visibility**

3.7 Given the nature of this proposal (a Plan Change for rezoning and not a specific development proposal), it has not been possible to undertake any computer based analysis of the likely visibility. As such, a review of the proposed masterplans (2013 & 2017) was undertaken against desktop research (land use and contour mapping). General visibility of the subject site and the likely development typologies are based on site observations during the site visit.

3.8 An overview of the key potential viewing locations is provided within this report. Although not specially identified, consideration of the likely residential viewing audience(s) has been undertaken in relation to this proposal. It is, however, not within the scope of this assessment to ground truth all potential residential viewing locations, rather an understanding of these has been formed from a site survey of publicly accessible locations. Based on site observations, the residential and sports field uses within the Plan Change area will be viewed as an extension of the existing adjacent uses.

## **4.0 THE SITE AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT**

### **Landscape Context**

4.1 The subject site is approximately 45.5 hectares in size and located within the Poraiti suburb of Napier, approximately 5km to the west of Napier Central Business District. See **Figures 3 and 4** in the **Graphic Attachments**.

4.2 In terms of the broader landscape the Poraiti area is at the junction where the western hills, coastal alluvial plain and Ahuriri Estuary converge. The western hills provide the backdrop to Napier City and define the western boundary of the coastal plain. They are moderately high rising to an elevation of around 100-200m. East of these and closer to the subject site are the Poraiti Hills, these are somewhat smaller and only rise to approximately 60m ASL.

- 4.3 The geology underlying the local area is made up of Zealandia Mega Sequence Terrestrial and Shallow Marine Sedimentary Rocks (Neogene)<sup>3</sup> and Zealandia Megasequence Mainly Marine Sedimentary Rocks (Neogene) towards the western hills<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.4 The relationship between the geographical elements contained within the landscape and the development modifications that have occurred upon them are important factors to consider when assessing how the proposed land uses will influence visual character. The predominant surrounding land uses of the site are open pasture, amenity tree planting and patchwork vegetation patterns associated with rural residential properties. The Poraiti hills have a general rural-residential landuse pattern on the lower hills amongst a framework of vegetation. Immediately east of the site is an extensive residential development (Parklands), and other residential areas situated on the flat areas to the south-east and south of the subject site, Tamatea and Onekawa.
- 4.5 The Taipo Stream is located at the base of the western hills to the west of Parklands and collects the run-off from the eastern side of the hills between Taradale and Park Island. Taipo Stream follows a meandering course along the base of the hills north into the Ahuriri Estuary.

#### **Subject Site**

- 4.6 The subject site is located at the corner of Prebensen Drive and Orotu Drive (Lot 3 DP 503709). The site is currently a flat block of ex-lagoon. The land immediately north of the subject site (adjacent to Prebensen Drive) has undergone earthworks in preparation for subdivision and development under an existing resource consent. The immediate surrounding area is characterised by the residential development of Parklands on the opposite side of Orotu Drive (to the east), and a consented residential area to the north that is currently under construction (area three of the Parklands subdivision). All the Parklands residential areas comprise single storey buildings and have been constructed under a number of other development controls established in a Generic Land Covenant<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.7 The piece of adjoining land to the north of the subject site is zoned Main Residential (area three Parklands currently under construction), whereas the subject site itself is zoned both Sports Park

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<sup>3</sup> Description : Unconsolidated to poorly consolidated mud, sand, gravel and peat. Source GNS Science <http://data.gns.cri.nz/geology/>

<sup>4</sup> Description Bioclastic limestone, sandstone, siltstone, mudstone and silty to pebbly shellbeds; minor conglomerate. Source GNS Science <http://data.gns.cri.nz/geology/>

<sup>5</sup> Generic Land Covenant – Napier City Council. Maximum height 7.2m and or a building height envelope created by inclining a plane into the lot commencing at 2.5m at an angle of 30 degrees. <https://www.parklandsnapier.co.nz/about-us/covenants/>

(the middle section) and Main Residential (to the south, on the corner of Orotu Drive and Westminster Ave). The proposed Plan Change involves reconfiguring this southern Main Residential zone with the Sports Park zone<sup>6</sup>.

- 4.8 Vegetation patterns on the site are currently limited. There is a row of tall *Poplar* shelter trees to the west of the site, on the boundary between the site and Western Hills Cemetery. It is noted that these shelter trees are deciduous and as such, during winter months, the landscape when viewed from Western Hills Cemetery has a more open character than when trees are in leaf during the summer months, **see figures 5 and 6, the Graphic Attachments**. There is also a streetscape framework of *Pohutukawa* and *Liquidamber* trees on the streets to the east and south of the site. There is currently a kiwifruit orchard and associated shelter belt planting to the south east of the site.
- 4.9 The subject site forms part of Park Island, one of the region's largest sport and recreation grounds as such there are a number of open spaces and recreation areas in the immediate area. These grounds include a number of sports clubs and fields both artificial and grassed. Immediately west of the site is a public open space and two cemeteries (Western Hills Cemetery and Park Island Cemetery). Walkways and cycleways connect through this area to the middle and upper estuary. The proposed Plan Change area connects to the local environment through a series of proposed and existing walkways (Refer **figure 2 Graphic Attachments**).
- 4.10 The topography of the subject site is flat, except for a shallow swale to the eastern boundary, along Orotu Drive. This swale is zoned Reserve in the Napier District Plan. To the west of the site the landform is elevated at the foothills of the Poraiti Hills and the Western Hills Cemetery.
- 4.11 Refer to the **Graphic Attachment** photographs that illustrate the character of the site within the surrounding Landscape.

#### **Key Visual and Landscape Components**

- 4.12 Derived from the descriptions above there are a number of physical characteristics that shape the character of the site and its surrounding environment. These have been taken into consideration when assessing the visual effects of the proposed Plan Change.
- 4.13 These components are:

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<sup>6</sup> Refer figure 1 & 2 Appendix A, Masterplan (2013) and Masterplan (2017)

- The sense of openness along Orotu Drive, with the open space to the west, single level residential buildings to the east side of the street and wide road carriageway;
- The lineal reserves to the boundaries of the site connecting the Plan Change area with adjacent residential areas and public reserves;
- The residential nature of the wider surrounding area with predominantly newer single storey houses to the north and east of the site;
- The Park Island Sport Park to the south west of the site;
- The flat typography of the site with the elevated backdrop of the Western Hills Cemetery; and
- The landscape backdrop to the west of the site of the Napier Western Hills.

## 5.0 VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Photographs of the local area where the proposed Plan Change is to occur can be found in the Graphic Attachments. The visual assessment is based on viewpoint photography and site and context analysis assuming future development under the provisions of the Main Residential Zone.
- 5.2 A site visit was undertaken, and nine viewing locations were identified. These vantage points are representative of a range of types of views available from which the subject site can be seen from the surrounding landscape. All selected view locations are identified on the View Location Plan **(Figure 4 Appendix A & Table Appendix B)**. In addition, the potential visual effects arising from the development of the subject site are explained later in this report.
- 5.3 The main viewing audiences have been identified as:

### Public Viewing Audiences

- Passing Motorists driving along Orotu Drive, Prebensen Drive and Westminster Avenue;
- Users of the Park Island Sports Park, particularly those from the northern most sports fields; and
- Visitors to the Orotu Park, Park Island Cemetery, Western Hills Cemetery and users of the Park Island Walkway and cycleway network.

### Private Viewing Audiences

- Residential Properties to the east of the site. These are limited to a single row of houses (numbers 2 – 80) along Orotu Drive situated directly opposite the subject site; and
- Residential Properties to the south of the site. These are limited to numbers 235-267 Westminster Avenue.

### Views from the Orotu Park and Western Hills Cemetery

- 5.4 Viewpoints 1 and 2 are from the northern end of Western Hills Cemetery, looking north and north east towards the subject site. Views obtained from these locations are representative of those obtainable from within the Cemetery. From this location, the key development changes resulting from the proposed Plan Change will be an increase in residential land use (*Main Residential Zone*) and a decrease in the visible area of the *Sports Park Zone*.
- 5.5 Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 5 Graphic Attachments**) is on the northern most edge of Western Hills Cemetery looking north towards Predensen Drive and the airport (in the left of the view). The subdivision of Parklands is visible to the right of the view, with further development (Parklands Area 3) currently under construction in the centre of the view. The proposed Plan Change will result in an extension of residential development in the open area to the south of Area 3.
- 5.6 Views of the proposed Residential Area from these locations will be seen at a distance of approximately 600m, and as such will be interpreted as an extension to the existing residential housing patterns in the area.
- 5.7 Viewpoint 2 (**Figure 6 Graphic Attachments**) is from the east of Western Hills Cemetery looking in an easterly direction over the Parkland Subdivision and across to Onekawa and Napier City. Hospital Hill and Bluff Hill form the backdrop of this view, (in the centre of the image). Area 3 of the Parklands subdivision currently under construction is visible to the left of the image. Immediately right of this construction area is a large area of land that has undergone earthworks. This is the location for the proposed Main Residential Zone in the 2017 Masterplan<sup>7</sup>. The edge of this residential area will be approximately 440m from the viewpoint location.
- 5.8 There are shelterbelts in the foreground of this view. These will provide a level of visual screening to the proposed plan change area. The screening will be increased during spring and summer when the trees are in leaf.

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<sup>7</sup> Refer Appendix A Figure 2. Masterplan (2017)

- 5.9 From this location, the new housing area will be seen as an extension to the existing housing patterns that are located on the adjacent sites. The distance to the site and vegetation in the foreground will reduce any adverse visual effects of the proposed Plan Change area.
- 5.10 On that basis, the development that results from the proposed Plan Change when viewed from viewpoints 1 and 2 is not considered to alter existing visual amenity values of the surrounding landscape.

**Views from Westminster Avenue (numbers 235 – 251) and Orotu Drive (numbers 2- 23)**

- 5.11 Viewpoints 3 to 6 are taken from Westminster Avenue and Orotu Drive (**Figures 7 - 9 Appendix A**), looking towards the site. These views are considered representative of what can be seen from the residential properties along Westminster Ave. The changes to landscape as part of the proposed Plan Change will see the relocation of future residential housing to the north, and transferring the Northern Sports Hub to this location. The sports hub will then extend along Orotu Drive as to the existing Unison substation (opposite approximately 23 Orotu Drive). (**Refer Figure 2 Graphic Attachments**).
- 5.12 Although the specific development details of the sports park are yet to be determined, the proposed change from Residential to Sports Park Zone as anticipated under the Master Plan for viewpoints 3 to 6 are considered to have a positive visual effect on the existing landscape. Key amenity aspects such as viewshafts and open space will be retained across this section of the site.

**Views from Orotu Drive (numbers 28 – 70) (Approximately 18 properties)**

- 5.13 Viewpoint 7 (**Figure 11 Graphic Attachments**) is from outside number 32 Orotu Drive, looking west towards the proposed Plan Change area, and is considered to be representative of views from along this vicinity of Orotu Drive. From this vantage point the Western Hills is in the distance. The Unison substation in the mid-ground of the picture marks the southern extent of the proposed residential areas. The proposed residential zone will be situated to the right of the view, and the Sports Park to the left, when viewed from this location.
- 5.14 View locations 7 – 9 (**Figures 11 - 13 Graphic Attachments**) represent public views obtainable from a motorist travelling northeast along Orotu Road, as well as private views afforded to (some) dwellings adjacent to Orotu Road looking in a westerly direction. Views are obtainable approximately 30m from the edge of the site. Views from these locations will be directly across to the proposed Plan Change area.

- 5.15 Views of the proposed residential development are considered to be in context with the existing and evolving residential environment of this area. The landscape behind Orotu Park provides an established contextual backdrop against which to view the proposed Plan Change development.
- 5.16 There will be more bulk and less open views in this location as the Plan Change proposes a rezoning from Sports Park Zone to Main Residential<sup>8</sup>. However, the existing planting along Orotu Drive and the proposed redevelopment of the existing swale along the edge of Orotu Drive, combined with the generous width of Orotu Drive and 30m landscape buffer to the edge of site (Reserve zone) ensures the residential area will be partially screened, and as such, the introduction of houses into this landscape will be greatly reduced. Residential development in this location is considered to be in the context with the existing residential development adjacent to the subject site, and as such, will be viewed as an extension of Parklands Area 3 to the north.

### Visual Assessment Summary

- 5.17 Under this proposed Plan Change the Main Residential Zone and the Sports Park Zone will effectively be interchanged on the subject site. The properties to the south and south east of the proposed development<sup>9</sup> are considered to be **positively affected** by this proposal.
- 5.18 The topography of the area, being predominantly flat, will not restrict views from the south and east of the subject site, however the majority of the locations from which views can be obtained are peripheral and therefore only around the interface of the subject site.
- 5.19 A limited number of elevated views are also obtainable north and east to the site from Western Hills Cemetery. A number of vantage points from within Park Island and the shared walkways will be screened by existing vegetation in the foreground (shelter belt plantings to the west and specimen trees within the park). The proposed development is considered to be in context with, and an extension of, the existing residential development located to the north and east of the site, and will be consistent with surrounding land use patterns in the area.

There will be open uninterrupted views from existing residential properties along Orotu Road (number 28-70) west to the subject site, across Orotu Drive and the Orotu Drain. The proposed land use change from these vantage points (from Sports Park to Main Residential zone) is the most affected by the change in land use. The proposed view will change from open views across sports fields, with a planted edge and reserve to views of residential development with a planted

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<sup>8</sup> As indicated in the 2013 masterplan

<sup>9</sup> Number 2 – 28 Orotu Drive and 235 – 251 Westminster Drive

reserve. The effect of this change, however, is considered to be **no more than minor** and not inappropriate for the setting.

- 5.20 Orotu Drain Swale located along the eastern boundary of the subject site provides separation as well as a significant visual buffer between the proposed development and the existing residential area. This swale combined with the width of the roadway, and intervening elements such as the existing street trees will add to the depth of view and reduce the overall visual impact of the proposed repositioning of the residential zone.
- 5.21 The development that is currently under construction in Area 3 of Parklands (north of the site) has a covenant restricting building height to 7.2m. The proposed maximum height for a house within the Main Residential Zone is 8m under the Napier City Plan.
- 5.22 Although the outlook from these properties will change from open space to residential housing, future development will be viewed as an extension to the existing residential development to the north.

## 6.0 MITIGATION STRATEGY

- 6.1 To address the likely impact of new residential development in an area that was previously zoned Sports Park a mitigation strategy is proposed. The intent of the mitigation strategy is to screen the proposed residential development and restrict the height of the houses along the interface of the proposed development, when viewed from Orotu Drive. This report finds that residential land use in an area currently zoned as sports park will increase visible structure in this landscape, thereby reducing the open character of the viewshaft. It is considered that this already mitigated by the width of the road and existing reserve land along Orotu Drive, however partial screening will further assist in reducing this visual impact.
- 6.2 The following mitigation strategy takes into consideration the findings of the visual assessment; (Refer **Figure 14 Graphic Attachments** for plan)
- Tree planting along the western edge of Council owned reserve land Clustered groupings or specimen trees is deemed an appropriate measure in this location. It is recommended that trees capable of reaching a minimum height of 7m would be most suitable.
  - Restrict building height to 6m (generally single storey residential) along the Orotu Drive interface. This restriction need only apply to the first 30m of the eastern boundary edge (ie the first lot width/depth).

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This assessment finds that the proposed Plan Change will result in changes to a number of views from external areas around the site.
- 7.2 The proposed main residential development will be visible from Park Island Cemetery and Western Hills Cemetery; however, the majority of the Plan Change area will be screened from view by existing planting on the boundary and the impact reduced by viewing distances.
- 7.3 Numbers 72 – 80 Orotu Drive will experience **no change** to what was proposed in the 2013 Masterplan.
- 7.4 A number of residential properties to the east of the site along Orotu Drive will experience a change in their westerly outlook (numbers 28-70 Orotu Drive). The distance afforded by Orotu Drive, the berm, and the drainage swale significantly reduce the visual dominance of this proposed residential development from these vantage points.
- 7.5 At the south of the site the proposed Plan Change will see the Main Residential Zone moved to the north and the Northern Sports Hub transferred to this area. The visual effects of the proposal on the residential and open space properties on the south and south east of the site will be largely **positive**.
- 5.23 Subject to the implementation of the mitigation strategy identified in paragraph 6.2, the proposed Plan Change development integrates well with the surrounding landscape. The proposed residential area will be contiguous with the existing residential to the north and east. Together with the Orotu Drain reserve, width of Orotu Drive and amenity tree planting the proposed residential area will maintain a high quality residential environment. The overall effect of this Plan Change on the existing environment is therefore considered to be **no more than minor** and not inappropriate for the setting.

### Isthmus

October 2017

## Appendix A

GRAPHIC SUPPLEMENT – Site photographs

*Refer separate document*

## Appendix B

Table 1

VP No.	Location of viewpoint	Direction of view	Distance to site (Closest element of plan change site)	Reason for selection.
1	Western Hills Cemetery	North east	430m	<i>Representative of viewing audiences from Western Hills Cemetery.</i>
2	Western Hills Cemetery	North west	440m	<i>Representative of viewing audiences from Western Hills Cemetery.</i>
3	251 Westminster Ave	North	50m	<i>Broadly representative of public views and (some) private viewing audiences from Westminster Ave.</i>
4	243 Westminster Ave	North	50m	<i>Broadly representative of public views and (some) private viewing audiences from Westminster Ave.</i>
5	Cnr of Westminster Ave and Orotu Drive	North west	32m	<i>Broadly representative of public views and (some) private viewing audiences from Westminster Ave.</i>
6	8 Orotu Drive	West	30m	<i>Broadly representative of public views and (some) private viewing audiences from Orotu Drive.</i>
7	32 Orotu Drive	West	30m	<i>Broadly representative of public views and (some) private viewing audiences from Orotu Drive.</i>
8	54 Orotu Drive	West	30m	<i>Broadly representative of public views and (some) private viewing audiences from Orotu Drive.</i>
9	72 Orotu Drive	West	30m	<i>Broadly representative of public views and (some) private viewing audiences from Orotu Drive.</i>