

Appendix 9: Landscape and Urban Design Peer Review

Memorandum

To: Carolyn Wratt – Waikato District Council (WDC) **Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020
Chloe Trenouth – Hill Young Cooper Ltd

From: Matthew Jones, Isthmus Group

Subject: **Waikato District Council – Ohinewai Rezoning. Landscape, Visual and Urban Design
Assessment Peer Review.**

1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Ambury Properties Ltd and Ohinewai Lands Ltd have submitted on the District Plan Review to re-zone approximately 220ha of land at Ohinewai within the Waikato District from Rural to Industrial, Business and Residential Zones.
- 1.2 The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a technical peer review of the landscape, visual and urban design assessments provided in relation to the proposed rezoning of the land at Ohinewai, Waikato to provide for a 'mixed-use master planned' community. The proposal also includes provision for an approximately 100,000m² factory for the New Zealand Comfort Group (Sleepyhead) within the Industrial zone.
- 1.3 The memorandum has been prepared by Isthmus following a request from the Waikato District Council as part of their Proposed District Plan review. It is to form support the Section 42A report.
- 1.4 For these sites there are two separate applications,
 - (i) Ambury Properties Ltd (**APL**) for approximately 178 ha north of Tahuna Road, and
 - (ii) Ohinewai Lands Ltd (**OLL**) for approximately 39ha south of Tahuna Road.
- 1.5 In relation to the **APL** rezoning, a Landscape and Visual Assessment Report has been prepared by Mansergh Graham Landscape Architects and an Urban Design Statement by Adapt Studio Ltd. The **OLL** rezoning application includes an Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Assessment prepared by Boffa Miskell.
- 1.6 The following documents were initially reviewed;
 - '*Sleepyhead Estate*' – *Urban Design Statement*. Prepared by Adapt Studio Ltd (5 December 2019) for **APL**.
 - '*Ambury Properties Development, Ohinewai*' – *Landscape and Visual Assessment Report*. Prepared by Mansergh Graham Landscape Architects (December 2019) for **APL**.
 - '*Ohinewai Masterplanning*' – *Urban Design, Landscape and Visual Assessment*. Prepared by Boffa Miskell (3 December 2019) for **OLL**.

- The Waikato District Council Online Data Portal.
- 1.7 Following the initial review, a request for further information was issued to **APL** in relation to landscape and visual, and urban design matters. These were responded to in the following documents;
- ‘Ambury Properties Limited Rezoning’ Memorandum, prepared by Mansergh Graham Landscape Architects (19/02/2020) for **APL** (landscape and visual matters).
 - ‘Ambury Properties Ltd Rezoning Submission; Implementation of Urban Design elements’ Memo prepared by Bloxam, Burnett & Olliver Ltd (BBO) and Adapt Studio Ltd (21 February 2020) for **APL** (urban design matters).
- 1.8 This memorandum provides a review of these documents and includes an assessment of the potential landscape, visual and urban design effects of the proposal.

2 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW

- 2.1 This section provides a review of the Landscape and Visual assessment documents (**LVA**).

Ambury Properties Ltd

- 2.2 The LVA prepared by Mansergh Graham is generally drafted in accordance with recognized landscape assessment methods¹. It sets out the *existing landscape and visual character*, the *proposed development*, an assessment of *effects on visual amenity and landscape character*², the *relevant planning matters*, *development integration* and *conclusion*.
- 2.3 The Appendix includes figures that illustrate the development including (a) Zoning Plan, (b) Framework Plan, (c) Illustrative Masterplan and a series of viewpoint location images.
- 2.4 The LVA concludes:
- “It is considered however that with appropriate mitigation requirements, including the visual mitigation planting, landscape buffers, open space, wetland and restoration planting areas proposed, and forming part of the Overall Master Plan in support of the proposed rezoning, and including the proposed provisions built into the planning provisions of the proposed zone, the effect on landscape character and visual amenity can be mitigated to an acceptable level.”*
- 2.5 The memorandum prepared by Mansergh Graham responds to the request for further information and provides an outline of the *appropriateness* of the proposed rezoning in this location. The memorandum concludes:

“The proposed rezoning is considered appropriate within the wider landscape context. While subsequent development of the proposed rezoning area will alter

¹ NZILA Best Practice Note: Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 10.1 (2010) and the Quality Planning Guidance Note.

² Including analysis of visual effects and landscape effects.

the existing landscape pattern; introducing earthworks, infrastructure development and buildings over an extent and to a degree that are not present within the receiving environment, when considered within the context of the proposed zone, it is anticipated that a complying development with appropriate mitigation would result in an acceptable level of effect on landscape amenity."

Summary of Review

- 2.6 The overall analysis and outline of the existing landscape and visual character of the site and the surrounding area is largely accurate and provides a clear, coherent description. I concur with the description provided.
- 2.7 The LVA identifies that the site has a limited visual catchment. Based on my site visit and subsequent assessment, I conclude that this is correct. Although the site is large, the visual catchment is contained by existing vegetation and topography in the surrounding area.
- 2.8 The individual viewpoint analysis within the report provides a useful outline and commentary. However, although there is a limited visual catchment, the change of character proposed for the site is definite (from rural to urban) and the analysis should be through an overall holistic approach in the context of the site rather than by individual viewpoints, that is, the pertinent question is: Is a change from rural land use to urban land use, an appropriate visual change for this site?
- 2.9 I do not agree that from more distant viewpoints the rural character of the area remains "unaffected"³. Given the scale of the proposal and that it is for a change from a rural use to urban, there is a definite and marked change to the character of the area and therefore, a change from the rural character.
- 2.10 Although the visual catchment is relatively small, the LVA provides a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) and describes the sites Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)⁴. In my opinion, for this project a ZTV is not a particularly useful assessment tool given the scale and nature of the proposal and potential future built form. The VAC is not relevant because of the proposal's definite change in land use and therefore character. In my opinion, the test is to identify the proposal's **appropriateness** in this setting rather than whether it can be absorbed.
- 2.11 As part of a request for further information, a memorandum was prepared by Mansergh Graham which provided an assessment of the proposal's appropriateness from a landscape and visual (and urban design) perspective. This memorandum concluded that the proposal is appropriate and that effects on landscape amenity would be acceptable subject to appropriate mitigation.
- 2.12 The conclusions reached state that the:

³ Refer page 18 of the Mansergh Graham report.

⁴ Refer page 15 of the Mansergh Graham report.

- *Location is consistent with the general spatial patterning in this part of the Waikato;*
- *Rezoning includes provision for a range of zones – residential and commercial activity and recreational and amenity facilities;*
- *The site has degraded ecological values;*
- *The proposal, although in close proximity, will not affect the two identified outstanding natural features (Lake Waikare and the Waikato River);*
- *The design of the masterplan (albeit illustrative) provides a “sympathetic” response to the site; and*
- *Anticipated outcomes of the development is consistent with the Proposed District Plan Urban Design Guidelines for residential subdivision.*

- 2.13 In my opinion, the proposal’s change from rural to urban and its appropriateness requires an assessment ‘*in the round*’ where urban design, landscape and visual assessment matters are reviewed concurrently. I provide further analysis and assessment of the proposal in that regard later within this report.
- 2.14 In relation to design controls, the proposed *building setbacks, landscape buffers* and *visual mitigation* planting will assist in minimising potential effects. This planting will provide softening, but not screening to the extent indicated within the LVA report. A development of this scale will not be able to be screened, but its edges can be integrated with broad-scale vegetation patterns into the surrounding environment.
- 2.15 The Lumsden Road (15m) and Balemi Road (8m) planted landscape buffers will be complemented by the *landscape buffer* along Tahuna Road. The 3m landscape buffer proposed along Tahuna Road should be increased to a minimum of 5m and include large scale trees. These measures will provide visual and physical separation to the proposed development, integrating the edges of the proposal into the surrounding rural environment.
- 2.16 Although there is a change in character and land use, the buffers and planting proposed around the periphery and through the centre of the site will assist with integration and will enhance the amenity of future development – particularly views of the larger industrial buildings from the surrounding landscape.
- 2.17 The landscape approach for the ‘Central Park’ and ‘Wetland Park’ within the eastern reaches of the site will provide landscape and ecological enhancement, respecting the sites natural attributes and also providing enhanced amenity values for future residents and users of the development. This is a strong and landscape responsive design move. I agree that the wetlands will provide sufficient separation and enhancement to Lake Rotokawau. The planting pattern proposed will be contiguous and will complement the existing vegetation around the lake and the surrounding area.
- 2.18 I also agree that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the two identified outstanding natural features – Lake Waikare and the Waikato River. This is due to their separation distance from the site and (i) the ‘man-made’ elements in the intervening

landscape (e.g. State Highway 1, the railway line and the existing Ohinewai settlement proximate to the Waikato River), and (ii) the restoration and enhancement planting proposed contiguous with the vegetation associated with Lake Rotokawau (part of the Lake Waikare ONF) and the setback and buffer provided to this area.

- 2.19 These is limited discussion and assessment provided in relation to the loss of rural / productive land.

3 URBAN DESIGN REVIEW

- 3.1 This section provides a review of the Urban Design assessment documents (UDA).

Ambury Properties Ltd

- 3.2 The UDA prepared by Adapt Studio Ltd provides an assessment of the proposal in relation to urban design matters. It sets out the *proposal* and outlines the *background, existing context, design principles, site opportunities and constraints* and provides an assessment within the *relevant planning context* section. This includes an assessment under the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (NZUDP) seven “C’s”⁵ and reference to the Waikato Urban Design Guidelines – Town Centre 2018. These were produced by the Waikato District Council to provide direction for future land use development focussed on Town Centre development.
- 3.3 The Appendix includes figures that illustrate the development including (a) Illustrative Masterplan, (b) Structure Plan and (c) Zoning Plan.
- 3.4 The report provides a clear and coherent assessment and concludes:

“Sleepyhead Estate has been designed utilising best practice urban design principles and is in alignment with the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol.”

Summary of Review

- 3.5 The report provides an assessment of the site and proposal with clearly articulated background, vision and description of the existing context provided.
- 3.6 Specific review and assessment of planning provisions were not provided within the original assessment report. Although I acknowledge that the NZUDP and Waikato Urban Design Guidelines – Town Centre 2018 provide a means to review, assessment against the relevant *proposed new zones* is not provided – Industrial, Residential, Commercial. The combined memorandum subsequently prepared by BBO and Adapt Studio Ltd provides an outline of these provisions.
- 3.7 The original UDA report provides an assessment of the NZUDP seven “C’s” and a somewhat indirect assessment of the proposal in relation to *context*, the *movement network* (connectivity) and *activity*. The assessment of these matters was provided within the

⁵ These include Context, Character, Choice, Connections, Creativity, Custodianship and Collaboration.

description of the Proposal (Section 6) rather than within a specific assessment section. On first reading of the report this was not clear, however this point was clarified within the combined memorandum⁶.

- 3.8 The combined memorandum states that the site's context is analysed within the original assessment report. A description of the site and its surrounding context is provided, however an assessment of the proposal in light of this context is limited.
- 3.9 In relation to the **form, connectivity** and **activity** of the proposal I provide the following comments:

Form

- 3.10 The form and arrangement of the proposed zones across the site is sound. The Industrial zone situated along the western edge provides the connection to Lumsden Road and the NIMT railway line. It is also proximate to State Highway 1 and its associated infrastructure and the farthest distance from the more sensitive eastern edge (closest to the wetlands).
- 3.11 The Business zone is logically situated adjacent to the Industrial zone at the junction of Lumsden and Tahuna Roads. The residential zones extend toward the east, fronting Tahuna Road, with a pocket situated along the northern site boundary.
- 3.12 The overall pattern of development appears to be derived from a landscape led approach and the respective zones are separated by the underlying 'indicative Open Space Network' (which includes extensive planting). Inherent landscape values are preserved and these form guiding and structuring elements in the arrangement of the proposal. This open space network will provide separation and 'buffers' between the zones and enhanced amenity across the site – connecting with the 'Wetlands Park' and wetlands feeding Lakes Rotokawau and Waikare.
- 3.13 In my opinion, in order to provide surety and control of the design quality of future built form a **design guide** (or similar) should be established. This will be a complementary document to the Structure Plan and ensure the vision of the proposal is upheld. To this end, within the combined memorandum the applicant suggested they were open to collaboration in the development of a series of urban design provisions and guidance as part of the development. In my opinion, this would provide a sound outcome and give more surety to the anticipated form. The proposal would then become more supportable from an urban design perspective.
- 3.14 The proposal is of considerable scale and essentially provides a new 'town' at Ohinewai and a population base in the rural Waikato. The site is in close proximity to Huntly (south) and Te Kauwhata (north), however it is not contiguous with these locations. It will provide a new settlement for the area. Without careful consideration, this in turn results in sporadic urbanisation along State Highway 1.

⁶ Prepared by BBO and Adapt Studio Ltd (21 February 2020).

- 3.15 There is other 'industrial' scale development in the area. This includes the Lumbercorp NZ Ltd site to the north and the abandoned Woollscour building to the west, across State Highway 1.

Connectivity

- 3.16 In relation to **internal circulation**, the road network indicated on the Structure Plan is logical and complements the proposed zones. There is a clear hierarchy and collector roads are adequately spaced apart and are set back from the respective site boundaries. This provides adequate block depths and setback from the Lumsden and Tahuna Road frontages.
- 3.17 The connections into the site correctly provide separate entrances and movement to the Industrial and Residential zones respectively. There are numerous entrances to distribute traffic movements, avoiding unnecessary bottlenecks.
- 3.18 As outlined within the UDA, the proposal provides a multi-modal approach to the movement network – largely focussed around internal circulation. I concur with this assessment and approach.
- 3.19 The recreational path network will provide connections across the site through the open spaces, connecting with the adjacent DOC reserve (wetlands) to the east.
- 3.20 In terms of **external connectivity**, the proposal will rely heavily on vehicle movements. Although I appreciate the size of the proposal does not necessitate the provision of a Town Centre, it does not appear to provide a 'centre' per se or integrated amenities – this relates to community facilities and also a small commercial centre. The site is well placed to connect to State Highway 1, but residents and workers will need to travel to Huntly or Te Kauwhata.
- 3.21 The respective reports outline the connection and relationship between the existing Ohinewai settlement and the proposal. In my opinion, this is overstated as they will be viewed as separate elements, disconnected and separated by State Highway 1 and the NIMT.
- 3.22 A strong feature of the design is the provision to allow for a **rail siding** into the site, connecting to and from the NIMT railway line.

Activity Mix

- 3.23 The activities proposed provide for industrial, residential and business zones. These zones and their subsequent uses are complementary (especially given Sleepyhead developer envisages workers to live on site) and the design provides a well-considered configuration.
- 3.24 On Page 14 of the UDA, the report states that *"the creation of a community is at the heart of the proposal"*. I acknowledge and commend this intent of the proposal, however further measures and design investigation is required in order to provide a mechanism to create this community focus and therefore a *sense of community*. The proposal is seeking the

development of a new settlement with a considerable resident and worker population and a community centric approach should be applied.

- 3.25 The design should include provision for a centralised community hub, where a series of complementary facilities, amenities and small scale commercial activity is provided. This will assist in creating a focal point for the development which, in my opinion, should complement and be situated adjacent to the open space network.
- 3.26 Within the UDA there is limited discussion and assessment of the proposed **density** of the residential component. Within the original submission, the proposal is for a medium (350m²) to high density (200m²) proposal. As previously mentioned, the residential, industrial and business activities can be complementary activities. However, in my opinion the density envisaged is inappropriate for this location. These densities are more suited to and are found in urban settings, focussed around an established (or new) town centre such as Hamilton, or similar.
- 3.27 The proposal is for a new settlement and at this density, in my opinion, it necessitates the requirement for a central community focus and appropriately scaled, associated commercial services. This would provide a more sustainable, self-sufficient and connected response to a new settlement, rather than the reliance on adjacent existing towns and the increased vehicle movements.
- 3.28 For these reasons, I cannot support the residential density proposed.

Ohinewai Lands Ltd

- 3.29 The combined LVA and UDA prepared by Boffa Miskell is also generally drafted in accordance with recognized assessment methods⁷. It describes the *existing environment*, the *urban expansion opportunities*, the *alignment with the APL proposal*, the *visual catchment*, an assessment of *potential landscape effects*, and a *conclusion*.
- 3.30 The Appendix includes figures that illustrate the development including (a) Flood Prone Areas Plan, (b) Site Location Plan, (c) OLL Masterplan, (d) an Open Space Connection Plan (to the APL site), and (e) a Framework Plan.
- 3.31 The report provides a clear and coherent assessment and concludes:

“Future urban expansion of Ohinewai to the east of SH1 has the potential to balance urban growth with landscape protection and ecological enhancement for the betterment of the wetland peat lakes in the vicinity. Furthermore, such urban expansion would support the urban regeneration and enhancement of the long established Ohinewai settlement which has over recent years declined. From an urban design and community development perspective, the preferred form of urban expansion at Ohinewai would comprise both employment land as well as residential and appropriately scaled service retail zones. This mix of uses is also

⁷ Including the NZILA Best Practice Note: Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 10.1 (2010) and the Quality Planning Guidance Note.

consistent with the community aspirations expressed through the Ohinewai Blueprint which seeks an ‘integrated approach’ to growth at Ohinewai to create a strong identity for the town.”

Summary of Review

- 3.32 The report provides a well-articulated outline of the proposal and a focus on the site and its context – including urban expansion and development opportunities.
- 3.33 A brief assessment is provided of the potential landscape and visual effects resulting from the proposal. I agree with the assessment that the proposed rezoning *“brings about substantial change to the existing character of the landscape”*⁸ and that future urban expansion could occur in the area. It is the form, scale and appropriateness of this development in relation to the adjacent APL proposal that is of most interest.
- 3.34 In relation to the assessment on visibility, I provide a similar response to that outlined within **paragraph 2.10** above.
- 3.35 The **OLL** proposal relies heavily on the success of the rezoning of the **APL** site to the north⁹. This site will provide additional residential zoned land (and therefore residential development) proximate to the APL site, but with no proposed complementary commercial or community uses.
- 3.36 I therefore agree with the comment within the conclusion of the report (outlined above) which states *“the preferred form of urban expansion at Ohinewai would comprise both employment land as well as residential and **appropriately scaled service retail zones**”* (my emphasis added).
- 3.37 The relationship between the **APL** and **OLL** proposals are critical in the future development opportunities and urban expansion in the area. These developments should be integrated to ensure best practice urban design and landscape design and management measures are delivered. Given the OLL proposal also does not seek to provide a ‘centre’ as part of the development, the necessity for a refined and overall integrated structure plan and subsequent design guide / provisions is essential.
- 3.38 The Boffa Miskell report provides reference to the ‘Waikato Blueprint’ (figure 9) which identifies future employment, residential, convenience retail for the immediate area. Notably, it appears to be largely connected with a future ‘furniture factory’.

4 KEY LANDSCAPE, VISUAL AND URBAN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Through my review of the respective reports above I have provided an assessment of the proposal in relation to urban design, landscape and visual matters. In my opinion there are a number of key considerations which are summarised as:

⁸ Refer Section 7.0 of the Boffa Miskell report.

⁹ Refer page 9 and Section 5.0 of the Boffa Miskell report.

Appropriateness

- Assessment of the **appropriateness** of the proposal from an integrated perspective in relation to urban design, landscape and visual assessment matters.
- In my opinion, the proposal provides urbanisation of an existing rural site. I consider this to be appropriate for the following reasons:
 - The site is located at a junction / intersection along State Highway 1 and the NIMT rail line in close proximity to the existing settlement of Ohinewai (west of SH1);
 - It provides mixed zoning which allows for a variety of complementary development across the site;
 - The design and layout emphasises and respects the sites underlying landscape values (e.g. the design and layout largely follows and respects the sites underlying topography, drainage patterns and attributes);
 - The open space and landscape enhancement proposed will enhance and be contiguous with existing landscape patterns, particularly the wetlands to the east of the site associated with the ONF;
 - The Industrial zone is located within the western reaches of the site, proximate to road and rail connections, separate from the residential zone and wetlands further to the east.
 - The scale of the proposal allows for an integrated design for the proposed zones, rather than a small scale development that results in ad hoc urban growth.

Settlement Patterns

- I do not agree that the proposal will be viewed as an extension of the existing Ohinewai settlement. The proposal site is disconnected from the Ohinewai by the NIMT rail line and State Highway 1 and is of a scale that it would dominate the existing Ohinewai settlement. Although proximate, they are separate.
- A strength of the proposal is its location on the Ohinewai / Tahuna Road junction on State Highway 1. This location provides the proposal ease of vehicle access to State Highway 1.
- The landscape assessment memorandum states that the location of the proposal is “consistent with the general spatial patterning in this part of the Waikato District”¹⁰ where there are “regular spacings” along the SH1 corridor. Although I acknowledge that there is an existing pattern north-south along SH1, I have concern that the proposal provides increased and more intensive development in a new location (proximate to Ohinewai) rather than complementing and expanding the existing established settlements in the area (such as Huntly or Te Kauwhata).

¹⁰ Refer paragraph 1 of the Mansergh Graham memorandum.

- There is an opportunity for investigation and review of the structure plan and associated design guidance in relation to integrated future development across both the **APL** and **OLL** sites. This will provide surety to future connections, patterns and built form and how the proposal will relate, connect with and complement the existing Ohinewai settlement, and the adjacent townships of Huntly and Te Kauwhata.

Reverse Sensitivity

- The reports provided as part of the application do not provide an assessment on potential effects with regard to **reverse sensitivity**. The proposal is for a considerable population increase and land use change in this part of the Waikato. The land use of the surrounding properties will remain rural, although there is a small 'slither' of land between the APL site and the NIMT railway line.
- In my opinion, the proposal layout, landscape buffers and setbacks to the neighbouring properties will reduce any potential effects on reverse sensitivity.

Community and Connectivity.

- Although I appreciate the size of the proposal does not necessitate the provision of a Town Centre or supermarket¹¹, it does not appear to provide a 'centre' per se or integrated amenities – this relates to community facilities and also a small commercial centre. The site is well placed to connect to State Highway 1, but residents and workers will need to travel to Huntly or Te Kauwhata for these services.
- In order to assist in creating a 'sense of community' for proposed future development, it is recommended that refinement of the **Structure Plan** is undertaken across both **APL** and **OLL** sites and that elements (such as Community Facilities / Hubs, Community Corner Shops, Sports Fields and Market Gardens¹²) are identified and will form complementary activities.
- The lack of a 'centre' will also result in residents and workers having to travel outside of the proposed development (predominantly by vehicle) for schools, supermarkets and some community facilities and infrastructure, thus reducing the self-sufficiency of the community. It puts reliance on State Highway 1 and the connections to the established centres of Huntly (south) and Te Kauwhata (north).

Integrated Structure Plan and Design Guide

- As outlined previously, in order to provide surety and control of the design quality of future built form a **design guide** (or similar) should be established. This will be a complementary document to the Structure Plan and ensure the vision of the proposal is upheld.
- To this end, within the combined memorandum the applicant suggested they were open to collaboration in the development of a series of urban design provisions and

¹¹ As outlined within the Property Economics report prepared for **APL**.

¹² As listed on the Illustrative Masterplan.

guidance as part of the development. In my opinion, this would provide a sound outcome and give more surety to the anticipated built form and design quality.

- To assist in ensuring best practise urban design, it is recommended that a **structure plan** is prepared which encompasses the APL site, the OLL and the wider context including Ohinewai, and the connections to Huntly and Te Kauwhata. This will ensure an integrated approach to future urban development is prepared, avoiding piecemeal development.
- The provisions / design guide will complement and add another level of detail to the proposed structure plan. This further level of detailed analysis and future guidance will also assist in appeasing my concerns related to the potential 'sporadic urbanisation' within the Waikato along State Highway 1.

5 COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED PROVISIONS

5.1 In relation to the proposal Plan provisions, I make the following suggestions:

- **4.1.19** to add detail and provision relating to the proposed Design Guide (subject to agreement);
- **17.2.10(C1)** and **20.2.2(P1)** to extend size of the 'landscape strip' from 3m to a minimum of 5m and include the provision for large scale trees;
- All **landscape strips** are to include vegetation of scale, rather than just grass cover. This planting is to provide integration into the surrounding environment.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposal is for the proposed rezoning of sites in Ohinewai, Waikato totalling approximately 220ha from **Rural** land use to a mix of **Industrial**, **Business** and **Residential** zones.
- 6.2 The respective reports relating to urban design, landscape and visual assessment matters provide an overview of the proposal and its potential effects in this location. The proposal presents a unique opportunity for urban development within this part of the Waikato, proximate to the existing Ohinewai development, State Highway 1 and the NIMT rail line.
- 6.3 The proposal provides a number of sound and appropriate design moves and these have been outlined within the body of the text. However, having undertaken the assessment in relation to urban design, landscape and visual matters, I can not support the proposal for the following reasons:
- a) The proposal will form a new settlement on these sites in the Waikato, which is disconnected and separated from the existing Ohinewai settlement;
 - b) The nature of the structure plan and activities proposed is 'car centric' and will require vehicle trips and rely on the surrounding towns (Huntly, Te Kauwhata and Ohinewai) for amenities such as supermarkets and community facilities;

- c) The proposal states that “*community is at the heart of the proposal*”, however, further measures and design investigation is required in order to provide a mechanism to create this community focus and therefore a *sense of community*. The proposal does not provide for a community heart or centre;
- d) The density of the residential density component of the proposal is inappropriate in this setting; and
- e) The APL and OLL sites are not integrated and coordinated proposals. The OLL site relies on the approval of the APL proposal.