

57 & 57A Schnapper Rock Road Plan Change

LANDSCAPE & AMENITY EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Brown NZ Ltd

For: KBS Design Group Limited

January 2021

Contents:

PAGE

1. Introduction	2
2. The Proposal	3
3. Statutory Context	6
3.1 Zoning & Related Provisions	9
4. Landscape Context	11
4.1 The Application Site	11
4.2 The Site's Wider Setting	11
5. Relevant Effects	15
5.1 Effects In General	15
5.2 Effects Relevant to the Application	17
6. Effects Assessment	18
6.1 Introduction	18
6.2 Receiving Environments & Audiences	18
6.3 Assessment Viewpoints & Criteria	19
6.4 Visual Effects Evaluation	21
Viewpoint 1. Schnapper Rock Road Roundabout	22
Viewpoint 2. 90A Schnapper Rock Road	24
Viewpoint 3. Kyle Road & Wicklam Lane	26
Viewpoint 4. Mackays Drive Playground	28
6.5 Key Findings	29
7. Statutory Review	33
8. Conclusions	36

1. Introduction

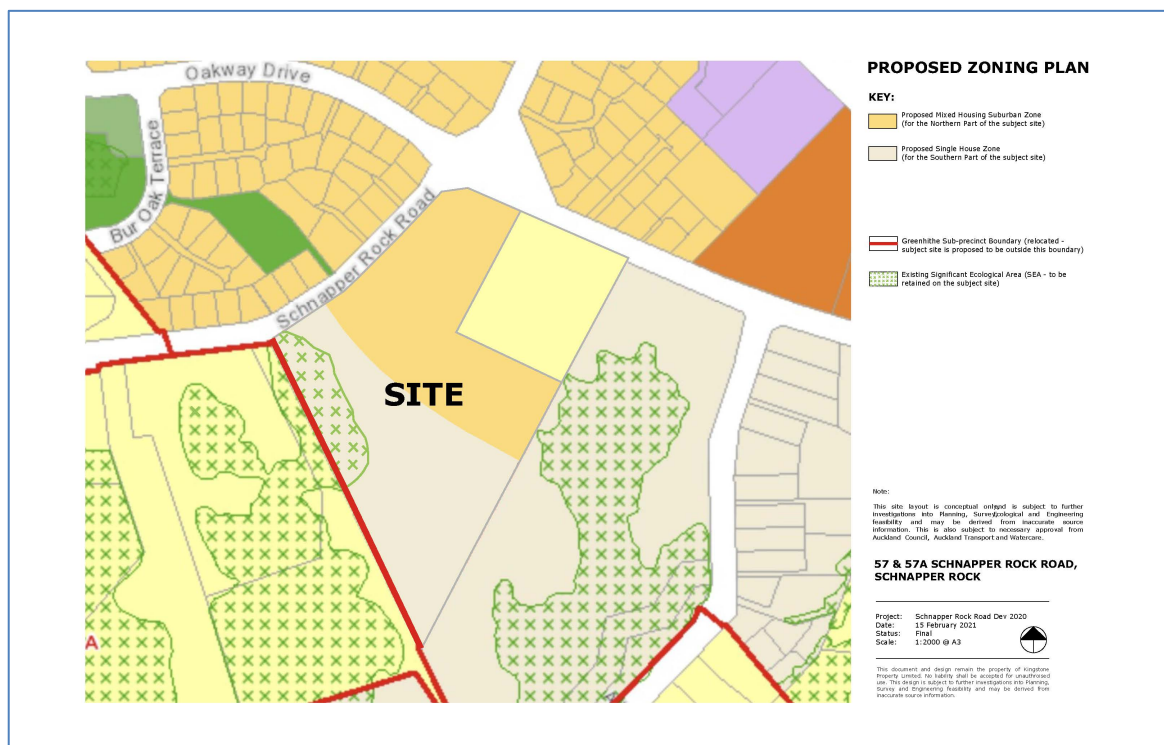
This report has been prepared for KBS Design Group Ltd. It addresses the landscape and amenity effects of a proposed Plan Change that would give rise to zoning that would conceptually accommodate a mixture of *Mixed Housing Suburban* development within the more elevated parts of the site and *Single House* development ‘below’ it – to the south and south-west. This is reflected in **Attachment 1**, which shows both the proposed zoning pattern for 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road and indicative development on the site transitioning from *MHS* development adjacent to both arms of Schnapper Rock Road into *Single House* zoning across most of the rest of the site. An area of bush, identified in the Auckland Unitary Plan as part of a Significant Ecological Area would be protected within a new reserve at the western edge of the application site, while two *Riparian Margins* – farming stream courses – would enter the site from its south-western and south-eastern boundaries. Vehicle access, leading to a circular access road, would be provided off Schnapper Rock Road.

The proposed development would occupy land zoned for *Large Lot* development in the Auckland Unitary plan (**Attachment 2**), directly adjacent to a Watercare Designated Site (east and north of the subject site) on which development is being undertaken at present. The northern half of the site is located on part of the ridge crest that Schnapper Rock Road runs along, whereas the remainder of the property descends progressively into a valley system that extends towards Greenhithe – with Kyle Road running down it. Most of the site is presently covered in the rough grass of former pasture, while the valley below it is now dominated by housing near Kyle Road and a broad swathe of maturing bush, stream courses and scattered lifestyle blocks north of it. This valley corridor descends to the west, before turning northwards to meet Te Wharau Creek, an arm of the larger Lucas Creek. Together, the valley landform and coastal inlet effectively separate Greenhithe from residential development further down Schnapper Rock Road near the North Shore Memorial Park and Crematorium, and the North Shore Golf Course.

This report addresses the landscape and amenity effects of the proposed zoning change: the former in relation to both the ridge and valley landscape that the site partly occupies, and the latter in relation to surrounding residential development and the wider environs around the subject site.

2. The Proposal

As indicated above, the proposed subdivision and residential development would sit on a site that abuts Schnapper Rock Road on two sides – to the north and north-west comprise – while the Watercare land and a consented subdivision on 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road extend from east to south – in an arc following Kyle Road. The proposed Plan Change would result in *Mixed Housing Suburban* (MHS) and *Single House* zones covering most of the subject site. These are designed to accommodate a pattern of development indicatively represented on Attachment 1, as shown below:



The *MHS* zone would traverse the ridge crown immediately south and east of the two main ‘arms’ of Schnapper Rock Road that varies in elevation from 80.0m RL (approximately) to just over 83m RL (**Attachment 3** & below). The *Single House* zone and its detached housing would occupy the steeper parts of the site that fall progressively – across old paddocks – to near 50m RL at the southern corner of the site. The proposed reserve would cover a gully and one of the two ephemeral stream courses that enter the site from below. It would also cover a pocket of bush that links up with other stands of native vegetation extending along the Te Wharau Creek escarpment.



Application Site with contours – see Attachment 3 for greater clarity

It is anticipated that subsequent to consent for the Plan Change, all development undertaken by KBS Design Group Ltd would comply with the relevant *MHS* and *Single House* zone standards. Even so, they clearly signal KBS's intention to significantly intensify the site when measured against the Large Lot zoning applied to it under the AUP. Of note in this regard, the proposed development would occupy land directly west of, and largely contiguous with, a 44 lot subdivision at 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road. That subdivision comprises *Single House* lots occupying parts of the ridgeline near Schnapper Rock Road and also running down the margins of Kyle Road, with a number of larger, *Single House* sites lower down. These occupy part of the site which falls more steeply into the valley corridor opposite Albertine Place (off Kyle Road) and from there south-westwards.

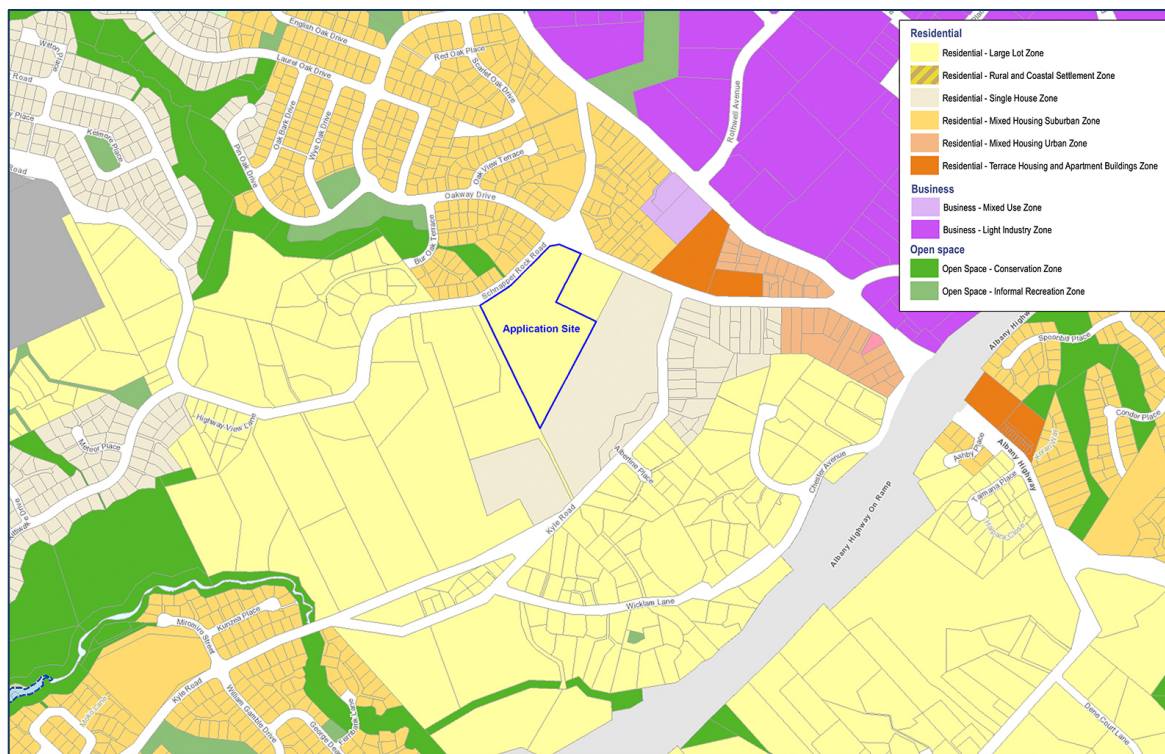
The main difference between these two sites is that the KBS Group property comprises a ridge crest transitioning into (for the most part) gently rolling slopes that remain dominated by old pasture, whereas the 55 Schnapper Rock Road / 52 Kyle Road site is bisected by a stream course within a steep gully system that nearly reaches Schnapper Rock Road. Most of the native vegetation within and around that stream corridor has a closed canopy and is in a semi-mature to mature state, stretching up through the centre of that site. It is all identified as being part of a larger SEA that stretches down the 'Kyle Road valley'.

Together with bush on other neighbouring properties to the immediate west – at 89 and 95 Schnapper Rock Road – this creates a situation in which the remnant open space of the KBS Design Group site and the adjacent Watercare Services property is effectively closed off from the valley system that falls towards Te Wharau Creek and the bush filled reserves lining its northern slopes: Lady Phoenix Reserve across most of the lower creek escarpment and the Kyle Road Esplanade Reserve that extends up the valley system as far as 52 Kyle Road.

Reflecting this situation, KBS Design Group is also seeking to vary the Greenhithe Precinct (AUP Section I509) by removing 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road from Greenhithe Sub-precinct A and amending that Sub-precinct's boundary to reflect this.

3. Statutory Context

As indicated in Section 1 and shown below (**Attachment 2**), 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road is zoned *Large Lot* in the AUP, with *MHS* zoning applied to the land directly across Schnapper Rock Road, on the other side of the ridgeline that the road corridor follows. A pocket of *Terrace Housing and Apartment* zoning (THAB) is located to the north-east of the subject site, again across Schnapper Rock Road, while the site already consented for development at 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road is zoned for *Single House* development. Most of the land between Kyle Road and Schnapper Rock Road further down the valley – across the ridge escarpment – is zoned to accommodate *Large Lot* development. Further afield the aforementioned reserves occupy much of the steeper land closer to the Te Wharau and Lucas Creeks, while *Business - Light Industry* zoning covers most of the land north-east of the Albany Highway.



Zoning pattern around the subject site

The Auckland Unitary Plan's Regional Policy Statement contains objectives and policies that are directly pertinent to the intensification of parts of Auckland's urban environment. Those shown overleaf address matters related to landscape and amenity effects more directly:

B2.2. Urban growth and form

B2.2.1. Objectives

- (1) *A quality compact urban form that enables all of the following: (a) a higher-quality urban environment;*
 - (e) *greater social and cultural vitality;*
 - (g) *reduced adverse environmental effects.*

B2.3. A quality built environment

B2.3.1. Objectives

- (1) *A quality built environment where subdivision, use and development do all of the following:*
 - (a) *respond to the intrinsic qualities and physical characteristics of the site and area, including its setting;*
- (2) *Innovative design to address environmental effects is encouraged.*

B2.3.2. Policies

- (1) *Manage the form and design of subdivision, use and development so that it does all of the following:*
 - (a) *supports the planned future environment, including its shape, landform, outlook, location and relationship to its surroundings, including landscape and heritage;*
 - (d) *achieves a high level of amenity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists;*
 - (f) *allows for change and enables innovative design*
- (5) *Mitigate the adverse environmental effects of subdivision, use and development through appropriate design*

B2.4. Residential growth B2.4.1. Objectives

- (1) *Residential intensification supports a quality compact urban form.*
- (2) *Residential areas are attractive, healthy and safe with quality development that is in keeping with the planned built character of the area.*

B2.4.2. Policies

Residential intensification

- (1) *Provide a range of residential zones that enable different housing types and intensity that are appropriate to the residential character of the area.*

Residential neighbourhood and character

- (8) *Recognise and provide for existing and planned neighbourhood character through the use of place-based planning tools.*
- (9) *Manage built form, design and development to achieve an attractive, healthy and safe environment that is in keeping with the descriptions set out in place-based plan provisions.*

Focusing more specifically on the Greenhithe area, 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road is also located within part of Greenhithe Precinct and its Sub-precinct A (**Attachment 4**). Both the wider Precinct strategy and the overarching objectives applicable to the Sub-precinct are set out below:

1509. Greenhithe Precinct

1509.1. Precinct Description

The Greenhithe Precinct covers a broad area of the Greenhithe Peninsula and drains in two directions to the upper Waitemata Harbour. The purpose of the precinct is to manage subdivision and development in a sensitive catchment and ensure that new development responds to the natural environment including topography, vegetation, water quality, landform and the visual landscape.

The Greenhithe Precinct comprises two sub-precincts. Sub-precinct A requires larger minimum site sizes than those permitted by the Residential - Large Lot Zone.

The zoning of land within this precinct is the Residential – Large Lot Zone.

1509.2. Objective

- (1) Subdivision and development is managed to protect environmental values and the landscape character of the area.*

The overlay, zone and Auckland-wide objectives apply in this precinct in addition to those specified above.

1509.3. Policies

- (1) Design subdivision and development to protect environmental values and the landscape features and character of the area, including watercourses and significant native vegetation and fauna habitats.*
- (2) Determine the type and intensity of development opportunities in different parts of the precinct based on the environmental constraints.*
- (3) Locate buildings platforms and access roads to:*
 - (a) minimise adverse effects on and protect native vegetation and fauna habitats;*
 - (b) minimise land modification and scarring of the landscape;*
 - (c) avoid where practicable significant steep slopes, ridgelines and stream valleys; and*
 - (d) minimise visual intrusion when viewed from public places.*
- (6) Retain and enhance native fauna and flora within the area.*

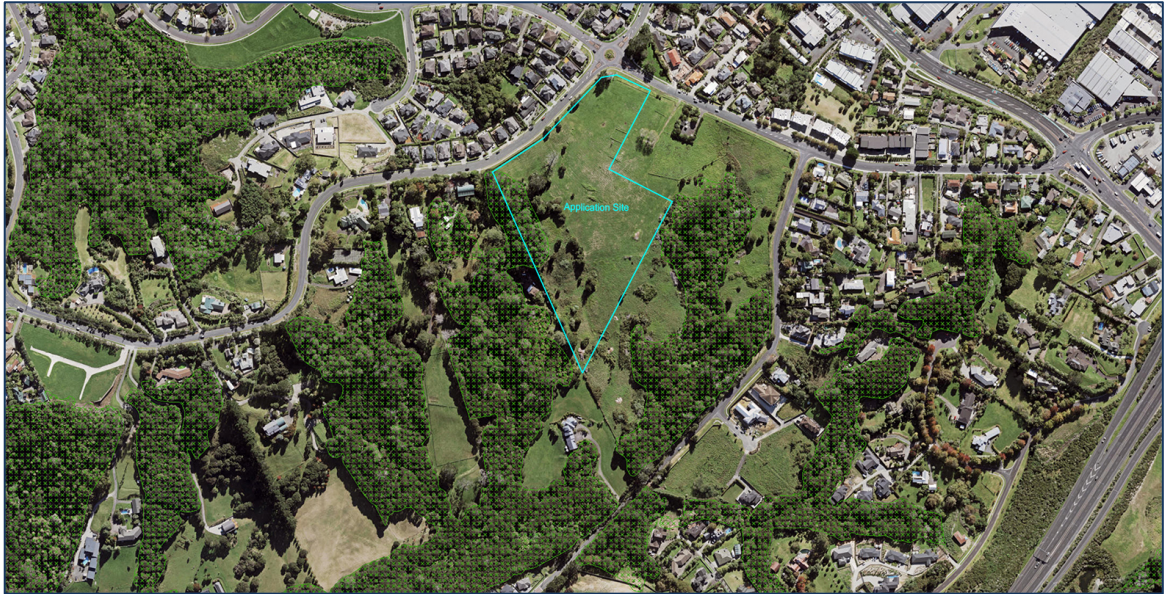
Greenhithe Sub-precinct A

- (7) Protect the natural and physical environment by maintaining the existing low density residential character of the area.*

Development under the proposed Plan Change would effectively replace the *Large Lot* provisions (including standards) of the site's current zoning and replace them with provisions that are consistent with the AUP's MHS and Single House zones. The Plan Change would also remove the

application site from Greenhithe Sub-precinct A, so that development on it would not be subject to the provisions and standards of the Greenhithe Precinct.

On the other hand, the proposed provisions would still need to protect the *Significant Ecological Area* also identified on part of the site (below and **Attachment 5**). Any components of that future development not fully complying with the Plan Change would be assessed as Restricted Discretionary Activity.



Significant Ecological Areas around the subject site – shown with green hatching

3.1 Relationship to Other Zones

The general zoning pattern around the application site is described above. In this regard it is important to note that the subject site is ringed on three sides by (predominantly) MHS and Single House zones. Of particular note, the Single House zone spread across 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road encompasses a site that is generally steeper, with more variable terrain across it, while a stream course and native vegetation cover much of its core. That vegetation comprises part of a much wider Significant Ecological Area that extends down the valley corridor towards Te Wharau Creek (above and **Attachments 5 & 6**).

This geophysical setting for future development contrasts with the relatively flat to rolling terrain of the KBS Design Group's site, which the current Plan Change proposal responds to. Although it might be argued that the subject site is the physical head of the Te Wharau Creek valley (as a whole) and comprises a sensitive ridge crest, the reality is that the ridge crest is already largely

ringed by residential development and is impossible to see over any distance. It does not 'read' as ridge crest of any note or particular value.

Moreover the physical constraints and limitations associated with 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road are more significant from a landscape standpoint than those associated with the subject site and even the physically contiguous Watercare property. In particular, those two Single House zoned properties are bisected by a sizeable stream course and gully, together with a large stand of native bush that is identified as being part of the wider valley SEA. In addition, the linked bands of native vegetation across 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road, extending into 89 and 95 Schnapper Rock Road, serve to largely isolate the KBS property site from the rest of the valley corridor, which culminates in the regenerating coastal forest of the Lady Phoenix Reserve and Te Wharau Creek margins.

This creates a seemingly contradictory and situation, and these issues are explored further in relation to the site's landscape context and the effects of the proposed subdivision.

4. Landscape Context

4.1 The Application Site

As indicated above, the subject site is flanked on three sides by the two main arms of Schnapper Rock Road and Kyle Road. In addition, a roundabout at the intersection of both 'halves' of Schnapper Rock Road meets a third arm of the road that runs away from the site to the north. This smaller section of Schnapper Rock Road descends rapidly in the direction of the Albany Highway (which it meets) and only intersects with the application site at the aforementioned roundabout.

Most of the application comprises old pasture, now covered in long grass. Its northern end, in the 'crook' of Schnapper Rock Road's two main corridors either side of the roundabout, rises to a shall ridge crest (**Attachment 7** above), before falling, increasingly rapidly, into the valley which Kyle Road follows (**Attachment 7** below). Part of the site is currently being used as a lay-down area for construction materials, as development goes on within the Watercare property, while construction is also presently underway within the adjoining properties at 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road to implement the consented housing development previously described.

Away from these construction sites, a scattering of remnant native shrubs and trees emerges near the site's south-western boundary. This coalesces into the stand of bush at the edge of the property that is part of the wider SEA spread across much of 89 and 95 Schnapper Rock Road. Although this vegetation mainly comprises native sedges, griselinia, mamaku, manuka, totara and other endemic species, patches of Kahili ginger, gorse, woolly nightshade and other weeds are also apparent, while pines are also found near Schnapper Rock Road and the bush margin.

Apart from the stream course and its bush edges within the SEA, there are no other landscape elements or features of particular note. Even the ridge crown near Schnapper Rock Road rises almost imperceptibly above the rest of the ridge that extends both east and south-west of the subject site – towards the Upper Harbour Highway and the confluence of the Lucas Creek with Te Wharau Creek, respectively.

4.2 The Site's Wider Setting

The geophysical pattern just described reflects the wider spread of coastal ridges, gullies and escarpments that emanate inland from both the upper Waitemata Harbour and Lucas Creek. The

most elevated of the east-west trending ridges within this area is the main Greenhithe Escarpment above Hellyers Creek – which Upper Harbour Drive follows – while the Te Wharau Creek and escarpment are key features closer to the application site. As with other ridges between Kauri Point and the Albany foothills, this landform pattern is strongly articulated and reinforced by tracts of bush across a series of steep, south-facing escarpments. As with Te Wharau Creek, these help to express the form of individual ridges and frame the creeks below them. Frequently, they also stretch some distance inland, beyond the extent of the coastal waters and mangroves that act as a catch-pit for local streams feeding into local creeks and the upper harbour (**Attachment 8**).



The application Site in its wider context

The lower, more steeply sloping, reaches of the property at 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road are therefore part of the wider sequence of south-facing slopes near the end of the escarpment linked with Te Wharau Creek, while the top of the property – abutting Schnapper Rock Road – is part of the ridge sequence that caps and terminates the escarpment landform. It is not the most elevated ridge in the general area around the subject site – the ridgeline that Upper Harbour Drive runs along enjoys that distinction – but it is still quite clearly defined geophysically. On the other hand, it is much less apparent visually. The ridge crown on 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road rises only very slightly above the ridgeline wither side of it, while layers of vegetation, localised landforms and a swathe of residential development wrapping around the site in an arc (from north-west to north-east) effectively screen it from most surrounding areas.

Looking from elevated points within Greenhithe both sides of the Upper Harbour Motorway corridor, the site and its ridge crest is largely lost amid the much wider array of kauri, totara, tanekaha, manuka and other native vegetation that solidly lines the ridgeline and its south-facing escarpment. Even so, its open space is fleetingly visible near the intersection of Upper Harbour Drive and the Albany Highway (**Attachments 9 & 10**), while the current earthworks on both adjoining sites attract attention from some of the lifestyle blocks and residential development below Upper Harbour Drive, much closer to Greenhithe Road.

Travelling up Kyle Road, it is largely screened by intervening landforms and native vegetation within the SEA next to that road. The only gaps in this cover are associated with current subdivision works at the entrance to 52 Kyle Road (**Attachment 11**) and near that road's intersection with Schnapper Rock Road (**Attachment 12**). In the future, this 'buffering' will be augmented by housing both above and below the SEA, as well as down its western flank. Similarly, when looking from the direction of the Upper Harbour Motorway (near its intersection with the Albany Highway), vegetation completely encloses and screens the Schnapper Rock Road ridge.



Google Earth view of the subject site & its more immediate surrounds

Looking towards the site from the opposite direction – either side of the Albany Highway in the general vicinity of the Massey University Albany campus, then Kirsten School, through to Oakview Drive (**Attachment 13**) and the northern arm of Schnapper Rock Road – the ridge is again concealed by both vegetation and (more obviously) residential development stepping up the ridge's northern flanks. Similarly, views from within the Rosedale industrial area towards the ridge

are effectively curtailed by the light industrial premises within that area and existing development either side of the Albany Highway.

Consequently, the ridgeline and crest around the subject site are primarily defined by surrounding tracts of native vegetation in views from the west to south-east, while views towards both from within the main Albany and Rosedale catchments are totally dominated by the residential and light industrial development ringing its north-western to eastern flanks. As such, it is impossible to see the ridge 'crown' on 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road, or slopes within the property below it, from the broader catchments just described.

It only becomes apparent in quite close-up views from within the road corridor at the very top of Kyle Road and from both arms of Schnapper Rock Road (**Attachment 14**) that run around its upper perimeter. The properties that visually interact with the subject site therefore comprise:

- Traditional, detached 'single house' properties at the top of Kyle Road;
- Detached residential housing north of the site at 22-28 and 68 Schnapper Rock Road;
- Detached residential housing north-west of the site at 79-94A Schnapper Rock Road;
- A complex of multi-unit residential development at 20 Schnapper Rock Road that extends through to the Albany Highway – north of the site near Kyle Road; and
- Lifestyle properties at 52 Kyle Road and 89 Schnapper Rock Road (although visual interaction with the subject site is very limited in relation to the latter due to intervening terrain and vegetation).

The houses found on these properties are mostly two storeys high, including the multi-unit development at 20 Schnapper Rock Road, although the majority of those within this part of the road corridor – no.s 20-28 – face northwards, away from the subject site. This is often reinforced by the benching of houses into the side of the ridge below Schnapper Rock Road, so that living area views are directed towards Albany and Rosedale. The properties north-west of the site – past the roundabout that brings joins up all three arms of Schnapper Rock Road – also tend to face away from the subject site, with many benched into the local terrain in a manner that reinforces this orientation, although some remain elevated above the road corridor. A few more single storey houses are also evident next to this arm of Schnapper Rock Road.

5. Relevant Effects

5.1 Effects In General

Assessments addressing changes to the urban environment and the community perceptions of such change often refer to a range of effects on visual, landscape, amenity and even natural character values. This section clarifies the focus of such assessment in this report, which is narrowed by the statutory matters and ‘assessment criteria’ outlined in Section 3, above.

Visual Effects

‘Visual effects’ reflect changes to the visual composition, configuration and character of a locality and / or landscape, together with the perceived scale of such changes – in terms of their relative prominence and legibility. However, an assessment of visual effects does not address the values associated with such change, which are more appropriately addressed in relation to the landscape, amenity and natural character attributes of an area. Visual change and ‘effects’ are, in effect, devoid of value: they convey a sense of the magnitude of visible change that would be experienced from a viewpoint or viewpoints, but not the impact that this has on the values and identity of the subject site and its surrounds. As such, visual effects are no more than a stepping stone to addressing the more meaningful range of effects on landscape, amenity and natural character values – as appropriate to any given situation.

Landscape Effects

“Landscape” is an all-encompassing term. The NZ Institute of Landscape Architects’ Charter (2010) describes “Landscape”, at page 4, as being, *“the cumulative expression of natural and cultural elements, pattern and processes in a geographical area.”* Moreover, the Charter’s Preamble offers the following, slightly more fulsome, description of landscapes – as follows:

“Landscapes are the result of unique combinations of biophysical, cultural and social processes, evolving over time and interwoven with memory, perception and tradition. They include land, water systems and marine areas, and play a vital role in human nurture, fulfilment and in shaping individual and collective identity. Landscapes range from the outstanding and the memorable, to the familiar and commonplace”

In addition, the NZILA Best Practice Note on *Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 101.1* identifies that landscape values comprise three ‘layers’ of attributes:

- *Biophysical elements, patterns, and processes*

- *Sensory qualities*
- *Spiritual, cultural and social associations, including both activities and meanings.*

In relation to most urban and suburban environs, the latter two layers are typically of greater concern and relevance, whereas in more rural or natural environments, the biophysical state and values of that environment can be more important.

Within Auckland's metropolitan area, landscape effects therefore primarily relate to changes to the sensory (or perceptual) values of an environment – triggered by physical change. Such effects are often interpreted in terms of the legibility, expressiveness, aesthetic value, transient values and other 'associative' matters (with reference to the well known, 'Modified Pigeon Bay / WESI factors'). However, changes to the physical and visual character of a landscape may also affect people's appreciation of its 'shared and recognised values' (appreciated by communities and wider societal groups), cultural dimensions and meanings, its historical importance and its identity.

Amenity Effects

Effects on amenity values overlap with effects on the 'sensory' and 'associative' qualities of landscape, insofar as the description of Amenity Values in the Resource Management Act describes them as comprising:

those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.

This indicates that 'amenity' pertains to areas that are known, understood and appreciated by those who live within them or visit them – often on a reasonably regular basis. Amenity values also relate to such factors as noise, lighting, smells and awareness of activity and movement; in effect, the fuller spectrum of sensory factors that contribute to perception and appreciation of an area's character, pleasantness and aesthetic coherence. Inevitably, this also brings into play perceptions of identity and sense of place (evolved from the Greek concept of the '*genius loci*') that reflect the more particular, even unique, qualities of a locality or environment. Concepts of familiarity, shared ownership (in a figurative sense) and pride of place are also important in this regard. Moreover, Section 7(c) refers to "*cultural and recreational attributes*", which, focusing on Auckland's urban area, often pertain to areas used for walking, cycling, coastal activities and passive recreation.

Amenity effects can also include so called, 'nuisance' effects that degrade the 'pleasantness', 'aesthetic coherence' and other values associated with a particular locale. In urban environments, these often pertain to such matters as:

- Visual dominance or over-dominance;
- Loss open space and perceived spaciousness;
- Encroachment on privacy;
- Over-shadowing; and
- Noise.

5.2 Effects Relevant to 57 & 57A Schnapper Rock Road

The scope of effects that are relevant to the KBS's proposal is narrowed by the provisions of the AUP. As a result, it is considered that the changes associated with the proposed Plan Change should be addressed primarily in terms of:

- 1) Effects on the landscape of the Te Wharau Creek / Kyle Road valley and escarpment; and
- 2) Effects in relation to those residential catchments exposed to the subject site and their amenity values, including any 'nuisance effects' and effects in relation to the identity and sense of place associated with the area around the application site.

6. Effects Assessment

6.1 Introduction

This assessment has been undertaken in five stages:

- 1) Identification of those catchments / receiving environments, key viewpoints and related audiences potentially impacted by the proposed development at 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road;
- 2) Evaluation of the landscape and amenity values currently associated with the area around the application site and views towards / of it;
- 3) Analysis of the visual legibility and prominence of the type of development foreshadowed by the Plan Change – as reflected in KBS Design Group’s Development Concept (**Attachment 1**) – relative to the various receiving environments around it;
- 4) Evaluation of the proposal’s impact on the landscape character and values of the Te Wharau Creek valley corridor and escarpment; and
- 5) Evaluation of the amenity effects that would be generated in relation to the viewing sectors and audiences exposed to the proposed complex – taking into account Points 2) and 3) above.

6.2 Receiving Environments & Audiences

As indicated in Section 4, the application site is screened from most locations to the west – within the Kyle Road / Te Wharau Creek valley and near western Schnapper Rock Road – as well as to the north through to south-east – from Albany and Rosedale to the eastern end of Upper Harbour Drive. It is glimpsed, but no more than this, from more elevated parts of Greenhithe near the Upper Harbour Motorway and from residential properties on the northern side of Upper Harbour Drive. This means that the locations that it is more directly visible to are quite small scale and comprise:

- The top of Kyle Road;
- That part of Schnapper Rock Road south-east of the roundabout (no.s 20-28 and 68);
- That part of Schnapper Rock Road north-west of the roundabout (no.s 79-94A);

- Part of Kyle Road near the intersection with Wicklam Lane; and
- Part of suburban Greenhithe south of the Upper Harbour Motorway – near the end of Mackay Drive, either side of Blacks Road and around Viridian Lane.

Views to the subject site might also be obtained from the private properties at 89 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road, but those from the former are hampered by intervening vegetation – to the extent that such views would comprise glimpses at worst – whereas future views from 52 Kyle Road will be significantly affected by development on, and close to, that particular property. That emerging development will also sit in the immediate foreground of views towards the subject site from the eastern side of Kyle Road, in the vicinity of no.s 3-31 Kyle Road, as well as 2 and 4 Albertine Place. Views towards 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road from these properties are already significantly impeded by the vegetation within that SEA.

Audiences associated with these receiving environments and vantage points include:

- The local residential community of Schnapper Rock Road (both main ‘arms’); and
- Future residents of the subdivision on 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road;
- Residents of parts of Mackay Drive, Blacks Road and Viridian Lane elevated above the Upper Harbour Motorway;
- Local road users travelling along Schnapper Rock Road and Kyle Road; and
- Workers on the adjoining Watercare Services site.

6.3 Assessment Viewpoints & Criteria

Assessment Viewpoints

Given the limited catchment and audiences exposed to the subjects site, this assessment employs just two viewpoints to address the effects of the proposed Plan Change (**Attachment 15**):

- Viewpoint 1. **Schnapper Rock Road Roundabout** (Attachment 15)
- Viewpoint 2. **Outside 90A Schnapper Rock Road** (Attachment 16)
- Viewpoint 3. **The intersection of Kyle Road with Wicklam Lane** (Attachment 17)
- Viewpoint 4. **The Mackay Drive playground** (Attachment 18)

These provide the basis for comparison of the current (‘before’) situation with that anticipated subsequent to the sort of development shown in KBS’s Development Concept (‘after’).

It should be noted that consideration was given to using a viewpoint closer to the intersection of Schnapper Rock Road with Kyle Road. However, it appears that the Watercare development on that site will, in the future, create a substantial buffer between the KBS site and the road / residential environments east of 26-28 Schnapper Rock Road. Similarly, views to the subject site from most of Kyle Road are effectively screened by the terrain around that road and the vegetation with the SEA next to it.

Evaluation Criteria

In assessing the extent and nature of such effects for each viewpoint (and surrounding locality, where applicable), the following checklist of assessment factors / criteria has been employed:

A. Existing Values:

- 1) *The general nature & qualities of the landscape within and around views generally towards the Schnapper Rock Road site;*
- 2) *Key views encompassing the subject site;*
- 3) *Key landscape features also captured in views generally in the direction of the subject site.*

B. Legibility / Prominence:

- 4) *Viewing distance to the site & its relative elevation;*
- 5) *The natural orientation of views / outlook for the receiving environment / viewpoint;*
- 6) *Intervening elements – landforms & development*

C. Landscape Effects:

- 7) *Any adverse effects in relation to the landscape's biophysical values*
- 8) *Any adverse effects in relation to the landscape's perceptual values (structure, expressiveness, legibility & aesthetic appeal);*
- 9) *Any adverse effects in relation to the landscape's associative values (any special attachments & connections for the local community / shared and recognised values)*

D. Amenity Effects:

- 10) *Any adverse impacts on the aesthetic coherence of the environment around the subject site – related to visual intrusion, over-dominance and effects on privacy;*
 - 11) *Any degradation of the receiving environment's overall pleasantness;*
 - 12) *Any degradation of the receiving environment's identity and sense of place.*
-

The analysis for each receiving environment / vantage point mainly comprises a summary of key issues and effects relevant to each viewpoint.

Effects Rating Scale

The effects ratings for each receiving environment or vantage point are 'scored' in accordance with the following rating scale (**Table 1**, below), which is aligned with the 7-point scale of ratings recommended by the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects (*Best Practice Note: Landscape Assessment And Sustainable Management 10.1*):

Table 1.

<i>Adverse Effects:</i>		<i>Adverse Effects Rating:</i>	<i>RMA Rating:</i>
1	<i>No appreciable change to the local landscape & its amenity values: no visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	<i>Very Low Effect</i>	<i>Less Than Minor Effect</i>
2	<i>Limited change to landscape character & amenity values: no visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	<i>Low Effect</i>	
3	<i>Increasingly evident change to landscape character; limited change to amenity values & a low level of visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	<i>Low - Moderate Effect</i>	<i>Minor</i>
4	<i>Appreciable change to parts of the local landscape; more obvious impact on some amenity values, but still limited visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	<i>Moderate Effect</i>	<i>More Than Minor</i>
5	<i>Marked change to parts of the local landscape; obvious impact on some amenity values, including visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	<i>Moderate - High Effect</i>	<i>Significant Effect (or greater)</i>
6	<i>Obvious changes to landscape character & degradation of landscape values, including obvious visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	<i>High Effect</i>	
7	<i>Severe degradation of amenity values & high levels of visual intrusion / 'nuisance'</i>	<i>Severe Effect</i>	

6.4 Effects Evaluation

The following tables summarise the assessment undertaken for both viewpoints and the corresponding audiences. They are accompanied both by photos from each viewpoint location (**Attachments 15-18**).

Viewpoint 1. The Intersection of Kyle Road & Schnapper Rock Road

Existing Values:

The existing outlook from the general vicinity of the Schnapper Rock Road roundabout is dominated by three elements:

- The gently rising, 'dome' of grassed open space that culminates in the aforementioned ridge crest and the Watercare site, flanked by an area of marked uplift and tall grass at the edge of the KBS property;
- A scattering old pines, dead macrocarpas, a willow and other trees: although some of these, together with a totara, are situated close to the road corridor and roundabout, more significant concentrations of vegetation are apparent on the far margins of the site within the Kyle Road SEA and lining the boundary with 89 Schnapper Rock Road; and
- Housing on the northern and western sides of Schnapper Rock Road, enclosing the visible ridgeline and its crest.

Although that crest and the slopes falling into the Te Wharau Creek / Kyle Road valley lie close to this viewpoint only the very top of the subject site and its roadside margins are visible. Instead, roadside views are dominated by the uplifted grass edge described above and the scattering of trees both within, and next to, it.

The subject site is different because of its open space qualities – certainly when compared with the residential development around its periphery; but it is not notable for any features, patterning, vegetation cover or other characteristics that are either distinctive or notable. Although part of a much wider ridge sequence, the upper reaches of the subject site simply 'read' as a grassed open space, without really emphasising or articulating the ridge landform and its crest. As indicated above, the slopes beyond this ridgeline, that feed down into the Te Wharau Creek valley, are not visible at all.

As such, the property displays no exceptional or important landscape characteristics and values, other than looking like an old farm block, when viewed from this quarter.

Values Rating: **Low**

Legibility:

The proposed *MHS* housing would front the subject site and dominate views of it. This change would be very apparent.

Legibility Rating: **High**

Landscape Effects:

The loss of grassed open space across 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road and its replacement by *MHS* development would fundamentally change the nature of the site relative to this vantage point and other parts of Schnapper Rock Road nearby. However:

- The proposal would not significantly alter the ridge landform abutting Schnapper Rock Road;

-
- It would not impact on significant native vegetation, with both the stream gully and bush near the site's south-western boundary captured by the proposed reserve;
 - It would affect an area of 'old pasture' that is connected with Schnapper Rock Road, but the subject site's physical and visual connections with the adjoining valley corridor and escarpment are not visible from this direction – even in views from closer to the site boundary;
 - It would not impact on any specific, landscape features, patterns or other elements of note.

Consequently, much as the site would be profoundly changed by the proposed Plan Change and subsequent development, this would have a limited impact on the landscape values of the area exposed to it. Importantly, the subject site displays limited values in its own right – beyond comprising an area of visible green space – and this is also reflected in the low level of landscape effects anticipated for the site.

Landscape Rating: **Low**

Amenity Effects:

The grassed sward and open space of the subject site provides contrast with, and visual counterpoint to, the urban development generally north to east of it and a reasonable degree of 'pleasance'. However, as indicated above, it is not particularly notable for any features or elements of note (other than its SEA margins), nor does it accommodate public access for recreational use. Moreover, it has no particular cultural associations or sensitivities that have been identified.

The MHS development anticipated on the subject land would be two storeys high – the same as that of most housing around the site's margins – and this would preclude any feeling of over-dominance relative to the established residential environment around Viewpoint 1. Schnapper Rock Road's two main road corridors and roundabout curtelage would assist in this regard, helping to also prevent any overshadowing and avoid impacts on the existing residents' privacy. In relation to over-shadowing, it also noted that most late afternoon shadows would fall on the adjoining Watercare site and SEA near Kyle Road.

Taking all, of these factors into account, it is likely that the inhabitants of Schnapper Rock Road would be adversely affected to some degree by the loss of open space and vegetation 'on their doorstep', but it is nevertheless considered that any amenity effects generated by the proposal would be of a low - moderate order.

Amenity Effects Rating: **Low - Moderate**

Viewpoint 2. Outside 90A Schnapper Rock Road

Existing Values:

Current views across the subject site from this viewpoint are broadly similar in most respects to those from Viewpoint 1, although the vegetation around 89 Schnapper Rock Road is much more prominent. Notwithstanding this change, the rising crown of the ridge, covered in tall grass and flanked by a scattering of old trees – mainly pines, manuka and some small totaras – dominates views to, and across, the site. Again, the valley system below the subject site is not really visible, although the site starts to sink into the stream gully at the top of the SEA at the western end of the site and the bush within, and next to, 89 Schnapper Rock Road frames the site, both physically and visually (as indicated above). Development on, and fencing around, the Watercare site is again very apparent, straddling the apparent centre of the ridge crest, backed by the distant profile of trees on the more elevated, Upper Harbour Drive ridge.

As for Viewpoint 1, even though the site currently remains distinctive because of its green, open space qualities – juxtaposed with the residential development on its periphery – it is not notable for any features, patterning, vegetation cover or other characteristics of any real note. It subtly expresses the ridge landform, but the crown apparent on contour images of 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road is barely legible; it is, in reality, barely distinguishable from the rest of the ridgeline that follows Schnapper Rock Road – except in relation to its grassed open space.

The property appears far from exceptional, simply registering as an old farm block that is devoid of any special landscape characteristics or qualities.

Values Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Legibility:

Contrasting with Viewpoint 1, the proposed *MHS* housing would be relegated to a secondary position, largely behind and to the left of the more conventional “Single House” type development at the western end of the KBS site. Even so, housing development, in both guises, would still front the subject site and completely dominate views of it. This change would still be fundamental in terms of the character of the site and very obvious to both local residents and road users.

Legibility Rating: **High**

Landscape Effects:

Again, the proposed Plan Change would dramatically change the nature of the site in respect of this vantage point and nearby parts of Schnapper Rock Road. However, as for Viewpoint 1:

- This would not significantly alter the site’s landform profile or – more importantly – that of the wider, Schnapper Rock Road ridge;
 - It would not impact on the SEA below most of the proposed development within the site;
-

-
- It would not affect or degrade perception of the subject site's physical and visual links with the valley corridor and escarpment extending down towards Te Wharau Creek simply because that relationship is not visible (or, at least, not obvious) from this quarter; and
 - The development accommodated by the Plan Change would not affect any specific, landscape features, patterns or other elements of note associated with the site.

Consequently, even though 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road would be profoundly changed and modified under the aegis of the proposed Plan Change, this would have a limited impact on the landscape values of the area exposed to Viewpoint 2 – which are themselves limited, as identified above.

Landscape Rating: **Low - Moderate**

Amenity Effects:

The open space of the KBS property provides significant contrast with the residential environment across Schnapper Rock Road, and is reasonably 'pleasant'. Yet, as already indicated, it is not notable for any features or elements of note (other than its SEA margins), nor does it accommodate public access for recreation use. Moreover, it has no particular cultural associations or sensitivities that have been identified.

In line with the analysis for Viewpoint 1, it is recognised that the visually predominant, *MHS* development on the subject land would be two storeys high, as would the *Single House* development to the right of it, bordering 89 Schnapper Rock Road. Both forms of development would be similar to the mixed housing already found along the northern and north-western margins of Schnapper Rock Road. As such, it is most unlikely to generate any sense of visual over-dominance, while the road corridor would also help to limit any early morning over-shadowing and perceived encroachment on existing residents' privacy.

Although the inhabitants of Schnapper Rock Road could well feel somewhat aggrieved by the loss of open space and vegetation 'on their doorstep', it is therefore considered that any amenity effects generated by the proposal would be of a low-moderate order.

Amenity Effects Rating: **Low - Moderate**

Viewpoint 3. Intersection of Kyle Road With Wicklam Lane

Existing Values:

Looking towards the subject site from this vantage point, most of the current outlook is dominated by the wealth of regenerating bush and pines either side of Kyle Road, and the small enclave of conventional housing directly opposite the entrance to Wicklam Lane. Kyle Road itself carves a straight path through the valley and its bush cover, while earthworks being undertaken on 52 Kyle Road and 55 Schnapper Rock Road – laying the foundation for the consented residential development on those properties – is also prominent. Indeed, the fencing around the Watercare site is also visible, but much less obvious.

While the local landscape therefore retains some elements and features that reflect its more natural capital and values, with large tracts of bush dominating much of the middle distance, this is also a landscape that lacks coherence and unity. The housing opposite Wicklam Lane already disrupts the visual flow of bush across the slopes and escarpment north of Kyle Road, while old pines still dominate much of that vegetation cover. The local landscape is also clearly disturbed by the current construction works, and in the future housing will directly flank the part of the SEA near Kyle Road. In fact, that development will dominate the open space that presently remains below the Watercare site and ‘in front of’ 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road. Consequently, regardless of KBS Design Group’s proposals for their site, this is already a landscape in transition, especially so around the immediate curtelage of that site.

Values Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Legibility:

The *Single House* type development proposed for the lower slopes of the application site would be located above, and to the left of, the housing platforms currently being constructed on 55 Schnapper Rock Road. In effect, both subdivisions would effectively merge, with no clear break between them. The housing on both 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road would tend to sit more ‘front and centre’ in views towards the ridge crest, appearing more immediate, while the housing on the KBS site – culminating in the more solid profile of the proposed *MHS* housing – would comprise the visual backcloth to that development.

By and large, it is therefore anticipated that the proposed Plan Change would give rise to development that, although visible, is visually ancillary to that within the consented subdivision across 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road.

Legibility Rating: **Moderate**

Landscape Effects:

Although the proposed Plan Change would change the nature and character of the subject site, its effects on the wider landscape of Greenhithe would be much more muted. This is primarily because the neighbouring subdivision, already underway, would generate the greater bulk of change within the open space climbing towards the Schnapper Rock Road ridgeline. The effects of that subdivision will be exacerbated by the Watercare development on the very crest of the subject ridge.

While development under the direction of the proposed Plan Change would undoubtedly amplify this landscape change in absolute terms, it would be much less obvious, dramatic and fundamental because of the level of development and modification already generated by the consented subdivision and Watercare development. More specifically, the secondary – backdrop – location of development on the subject site, its merger with housing on 55 Schnapper Rock Road and the continued framing of that development by SEA bush both sides of the current open space would all help to limit such development's effects.

Indeed, this situation highlights the greater sensitivity of 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road relative to the KBS Design Group property, and the seemingly inexplicable up-zoning of the more sensitive properties from a landscape standpoint. The direct corollary of that situation now is that subdivision and development on the seemingly more sensitive sites would significantly mute the effects of development on the neighbouring, KBS property.

Overall, therefore, development on the subject site:

- Would not significantly alter the landform/ ridge characteristics of the local landscape;
- Would leave the SEA areas and bush either side of the Schnapper Rock Road ridgeline intact;
- Would meld with existing residential development at the head of the Kyle Road / Te Wharau Creek valley system; and
- Would not affect any specific, landscape features, patterns or other elements of note specifically associated with the site.

At worst, development under the Plan Change would slightly exacerbate the change already triggered by the neighbouring developments.

Landscape Rating: **Low**

Amenity Effects:

Development on the subject site would quite remote and would be 'buffered' by the intervening development on 52 Kyle Road and 55 Schnapper Rock Road. The changes anticipated would not, therefore give rise to any 'nuisance effects', to any appreciable change to the coherence and pleasantness of the local environment, or its identity and sense of place.

Amenity Effects Rating: **Low**

Viewpoint 4. Mackay Drive Playground

Existing Values:

This elevated viewpoint reveals a strong degree of visual counterpoint between the housing development in the foreground and middle distance, and the backdrop of mostly bush running along the Kyle Road / Te Wharau Creek escarpment and Schnapper Rock Road ridgeline. That bush sequence is almost unbroken on the north-western to north-eastern horizon, except near the top of Kyle Road, where current earthworks on 55 Schnapper Rock Road highlight work on the subdivision across that property.

As a whole, this panoramic view highlights the importance of the far ridge and its bush cover as defining features of the Greenhithe catchment and its valley landscape. They provide important, aesthetically appealing, counterpoint to the housing development that otherwise dominates most views across the valley corridor.

Values Rating: **Moderate - High**

Legibility:

Views to the subject site traverse just over 1km, but the site appears more distant, with most of it either hemmed in by SEA vegetation or the adjoining subdivision and Watercare development. The subdivision of 55 Schnapper Rock Road is especially prominent – highlighted by current earthworks – while the greater bulk of the KBS property is fragmented and hidden by intervening vegetation within 89 Schnapper Rock Road. With the completion of both adjacent developments, that across the subject site would appear complementary and secondary, if not quite insignificant. Certainly it would merge with the adjoining residential development – much as is explained in relation to Viewpoint 3 – with little real separation and / or demarcation of the development on 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road.

Although legible, that development would remain quite small scale, remote and ancillary to the larger area of change on both physically contiguous properties.

Legibility Rating: **Low**

Landscape Effects:

See Viewpoint 3. The viewing distance from this viewpoint to the subject site would further diminish the visual presence and influence of development under the proposed Plan Change.

Landscape Rating: **Very Low**

Amenity Effects:

See Viewpoint 3. Again, the viewing distance from this viewpoint to the subject site would further diminish the visual presence and influence of development under the proposed Plan Change.

Amenity Effects Rating: **Very Low**

6.5 Key Findings

The following table summarises the effects ratings for Viewpoints 1-11 and their related receiving environments:

	VIEWPOINT:	EXISTING VALUES:	LEGIBILITY:	LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:	AMENITY EFFECTS:
1.	Schnapper Rock Rd Roundabout	Low	High	Low	Low - Moderate
2.	90A Schnapper Rock Rd	Low - Moderate	High	Low - Moderate	Low - Moderate
3.	Intersection of Kyle Rd & Wicklam Lane	Low - Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
4.	Mackay Drive Roundabout	Moderate - High	Low	Very Low	Very Low

These findings reflect a number of key factors:

1. The relatively low profile of the ridge crest on the application site, which sits at much the same elevation as the Watercare Services property currently being developed (presumably for a water reservoir) and only slightly above the ridge's 'shoulder' areas to the south-east and south-west. In reality, the slight variations in the ridgeline on and around 57 and 57A Schnapper are 'swallowed up' by the vegetation cover on and around it – especially in more distant views. Consequently, the ridge crest has no real prominence in its own right.
2. The relative paucity of landscape features, elements and patterns of note across the subject site that might be disrupted or removed in the course of development across it.
3. The way in which the site is further screened and visually buffered by:
 - a. The ring of existing residential development that arcs around it from north-west to east, screening it from nearly all of Albany, Rosedale and the western end of Upper Harbour Drive;
 - b. A wealth of SEA vegetation below the site that screens it from neighbouring properties to the south and south-west, including most of the Te Wharau Creek valley system that Kyle Road follows; and
 - c. The elevated margins of those same bush (SEA) tracts that visually enclose the subject site, the Watercare Services property and the subdivision across 55

Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road when viewed over any distance – most notably from elevated parts of Greenhithe and Upper Harbour Drive.

4. The way in which future residential development on the Plan Change site would integrate with that already found on the opposite side of Schnapper Rock Road, together with that of the subdivision currently being constructed at 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road and the development on the Watercare Services site. The application site will, in effect, be enclosed by suburban type development on three sides within a very period of time, and KBS Design Group's proposed housing scheme would fill in the open space void left between these areas of 'existing' development.
5. Although the *MHS* housing proposed by KBS would – in part, at least – be more intensive than that currently found on neighbouring properties, its (up to) 2-storey profile would be consistent with that of the existing detached house and multi-unit development in the site's immediate vicinity, while the *Single House* lots proposed lower down the subject site would meld with those consented (and currently being constructed) on 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road.

Landscape Effects

As a result, views to, and of, the subject site are generally restricted to either its very immediate vicinity – around the top of Kyle Road and adjoining parts of Schnapper Rock Road – or much more remote, elevated locations, like the residential pockets developed between Upper Harbour Drive and SH18 as outliers to suburban Greenhithe. Most other in-between areas, including most residential areas within the main Greenhithe valley and around lower Kyle Road, are therefore screened from the subject site with few exceptions – such as the intersection of Kyle Road with Wicklam Lane is one.

Those more distant vantage points (such as parts of Mackay Drive, Blacks Road and Viridian Lane) exposed to the KBS site would see the proposed development emerge above and beyond that across 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road, and – for the most part – roughly parallel with that on the Watercare Services land. The subdivisions would visually meld together, with that on the application site generally cast as the subservient 'backdrop' to the more visually immediate housing on 55 Schnapper Rock Road and even the adjoining (presumably) reservoir development. Of the developments presently either being implemented or proposed, that across 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road would appear to penetrate most deeply into the Kyle Road / Te Wharau Creek valley system, while that on 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock would appear more peripheral to the main valley system.

Much the same interplay of valley components with both current and proposed residential developments would ‘play out’ in the one middle distance view identified, at the junction of Kyle Road with Wickham Lane. In views from this vantage point and nearby, the housing development across 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road would have more immediacy and presence than when viewed from further afield. Although the housing development proposed by KBS Design Group Ltd would reinforce this visual incursion, it would also be slightly more peripheral, relatively speaking. Most of it would also be screened by SEA vegetation on the margins of 89 Schnapper Rock Road, as well as by the convex profile of the ridge rolling over towards Schnapper Rock Road.

As a whole, therefore, more distant views would tend to reveal development under the proposed Plan Change in a generally subservient role, secondary to that across both neighbouring properties. Its visual impact would be further diluted by the reservoir (or other) development on the Watercare Services property. Those current developments, especially the subdivision extending down into Kyle Road’s valley corridor, would have a more appreciable impact on the immediate valley environs, including its aesthetic character and appeal, and the visual coherence and intactness of its SEA bush. From a landscape standpoint, these changes would be adverse and are unfortunate, but they are largely predicated by the Single House zoning applied to a number of key properties down Kyle Road. In a comparative sense, the landscape effects generated by the KBS Plan Change would be quite limited and of a low to very low order, overall.

Contrasting with both of these situations, views from much more close-up – in the vicinity of Schnapper Rock Road and its roundabout – would reveal the full extent of change across the crest of the subject site, from quite passive, grassed open space into the potentially terraced, *MHS* housing, then *Single House* lots. This transformation would be obvious, immediate and quite fundamental.

However, it would be contextualised by both those houses already fronting the site on two sides – down the north-western and northern sides of Schnapper Rock Road – as well as by development on the Watercare site and across both subdivision sites accessed via Kyle Road. In addition, this transformation would impact on a visible pocket of old pasture that is devoid of any features or elements of note, and that is not as connected with the wider valley sequence falling towards Te Wharau Creek.

Overall, therefore, it is considered that the landscape effects of the anticipated development on this quarter would be of a low or, at most, low-moderate, order.

Amenity Effects

The more distant vantage points exposed to 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road from part of Kyle Road and across the Upper Harbour Motorway (described above) would be too distant to be subject to any nuisance effects generated by future development under the proposed Plan Change. Furthermore, the aesthetic character, coherence and 'pleasantness' of the landscape exposed to the subject site, together with the identity of its wider landscape setting, will all be re-shaped by the development currently occurring on neighbouring properties – well before housing under the Plan Change can add to this change. In effect, the proposed subdivision would be at the tail-end of the sequence of development already unfolding across part of the Schnapper Rock Road ridge. Any amenity effects generated by proposed Plan Change would therefore be small scale and wholly subsidiary to those already being wrought by development on neighbouring properties.

In close-up views from the margins of Schnapper Rock Road either side of its roundabout, the proposed *MHS* housing development would be largely consistent with the pattern of development already found across the road corridor, and by retaining a 2-storey profile would avoid appearing over-dominant. It would also avoid any overshadowing of those existing residential properties and adverse effects on the privacy of their inhabitants.

Focusing on other local amenity values, it is acknowledged that the grassed sward and open space of the subject site provides contrast with, and visual counterpoint to, these same suburban neighbours at present and a reasonable degree of 'pleasance'. Yet, as indicated above, the subject site is not notable for any features or qualities of note beyond being an area of grassed open space, it does not accommodate public access for passive recreation use, nor has it any known cultural associations or sensitivities. In addition, it evinces little real sense of connection with the Te Wharau Creek valley corridor beyond and below the site. As such, it is pleasant, but not in any way exceptional. In the future, its character and amenity value will also be appreciably affected by the Watercare Services development sharing the ridge 'crown' – much as the construction site already does – while the rooftops of development rising above 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road would further change the essential character of the site and its immediate surrounds.

Taking all of these factors into account, it is considered that housing development as proposed by KBS Design Group Ltd would have a low - moderate level of effect.

7. Statutory Review

KBS Design Group are seeking removal of the subject site from Greenhithe Sub-precinct A because the site's characteristics and values differ very markedly from those of the rest of the Sub-precinct. Even so, for the sake of completeness, I have reviewed the Plan Change proposal in relation to key matters identified in Chapters B.23 and I509 of the AUP. The following are summary evaluations of the application relative to those matters:

Respond to the intrinsic qualities and physical characteristics of the site and area

Commentary: The subject site will soon be surrounded by residential development on three sides. Retention of grassed open space that is largely devoid of landscape values or meaning across most it would have created a seemingly anomalous situation. The proposed housing development would complete the change already apparent across part of the Schnapper Rock Road ridge, without eroding any special characteristics of either the site or its wider landscape setting.

Residential intensification supports a quality compact urban form

Commentary: The proposed pattern of development, with greater intensification near Schnapper Rock Road and less near the valley system (and SEA bush) to the south-west, responds to the variable physical nature of the site. IT would maximise intensification where that is appropriate, without adversely affecting the amenity values of existing residents to a significant degree. The proposed distribution of 'Single House' lots would also ensure the merger of 'like for like' housing with that consented for 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road.

Subdivision and development is managed to protect environmental values and the landscape character of the area

Commentary: The proposed Plan Change would contribute to further change on the Schnapper Rock Road ridge that will inevitably erode some of the Large Lot characteristics and values associated with most of the Greenhithe Sub-precinct A. Yet, the Single House zoning of 55 Schnapper Rock Road, 32 and 52 Kyle Road, together with the Watercare Services site on the ridge crest, all foreshadowed significant change to that part of the ridge directly associated with 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road. Consequently, changes are currently occurring to the area around the subject site irrespective of what might or might not happen on it. These changes include encroachment into the upper valley system and escarpment slopes that descend to Te Waharau Creek.

The changes anticipated under KBS's Plan Change would be much less far reaching: they would be largely confined to part of the ridge already re-shaped, both physically and figuratively, by development currently under way on neighbouring sites and would not reach as far down into the valley corridor as the neighbouring subdivision. They would not affect the coherence of the SEA bush tracts within the valley and would have little, if any, impact on the valley system's aesthetic character and appeal. Indeed, as described, above any landscape effects generated by the proposed Plan Change on key parts of the Greenhithe landscape would be very much secondary to those arising from current subdivision and development within Kyle Road's Single House Zone. By the time any residential development occurs on 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road, it will simply fit into an immediate landscape setting that is already substantially changed.

Design subdivision and development to protect environmental values and the landscape features and character of the area

Commentary: The visually contained, subsidiary, nature of the subdivision would be apparent when viewed from vantage points that reveal the fuller extent of the Te Wharau Creek valley and escarpment (such as Mackay Drive and Blacks Road). This would help to maintain the macro landscape characteristics of the Greenhithe landscape. At a more fine grained level, the proposed reserve on the application site would protect the pocket of SEA found on it, while the stepping of different types of development down its slopes would minimise the geophysical impact on the Schnapper Rock Road ridgeline.

These factors would also help to address the Greenhithe Precinct policies directed at:

- (a) minimising the adverse effects of development on native vegetation and fauna habitats;
- (b) minimising land modification and scarring of the landscape;
- (c) avoiding, where practicable significant steep slopes, ridgelines and stream valleys – although the proposed Plan Change would, in conjunction with neighbouring development, affect part of Schnapper Rock Road's ridgeline and ridge slopes.

Inevitably, it would be much more difficult for the proposed Plan Change to comply with Sub-precinct A's Policy 7, which requires development to:

Protect the natural and physical environment by maintaining the existing low density residential character of the area.

However, for the reasons set out above, it is difficult to see what would ultimately be achieved by maintaining an area of Large Lot type subdivision across a site that is effectively stranded by the more intensive development around it. Moreover, because of this situation, the subject site will

also be largely cut off from the main body of Greenhithe Sub-precinct A in the future – the area within which such a policy will remain much more meaningful. This situation supports KBS Design Group’s proposed revisions to the Sub-precinct boundary and the removal of 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road from Greenhithe Sub-precinct A.

8. Conclusions

Based on this assessment, it is considered that:

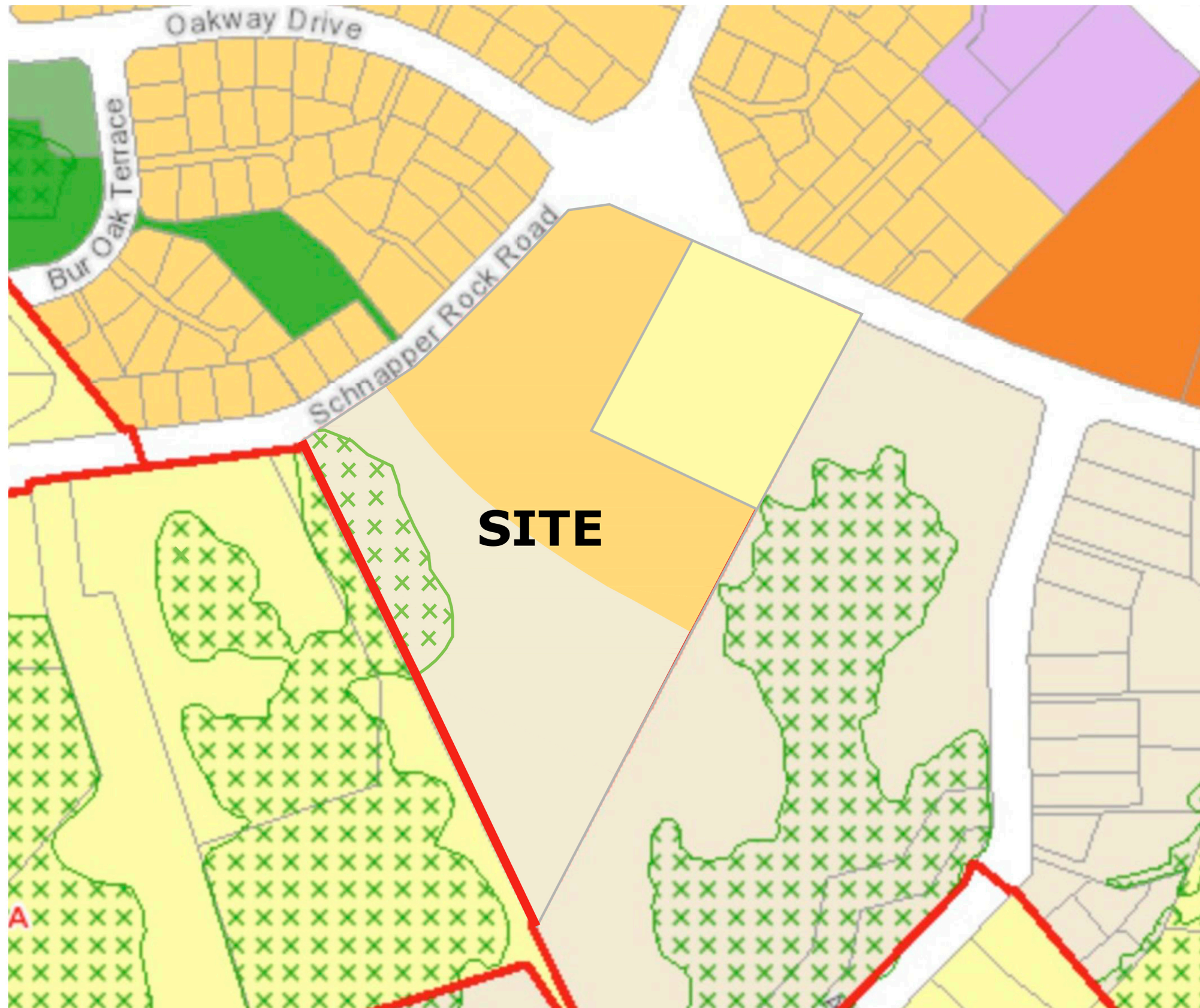
- Any landscape effects generated by the proposed Plan Change would be incremental and very much secondary to those effects associated with current development on neighbouring properties that is permitted by the AUP. Development on those adjoining sites will change the nature of the landscape on part of the Schnapper Rock Road ridge directly associated with 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road and the context for development under the proposed Plan Change. This, together with the very limited range of landscape features, elements, patterns and values associated with the site itself indicates that future housing development across it would generate landscape effects of a low to low-moderate order.
- The proposed Plan Change and related indicative development would not affect the 'macro values' of the wider valley / escarpment landscape that visually frames and defines the northern side of the Greenhithe valley (Sub-precinct A).
- Instead, this evaluation of the site and its surrounds supports the removal of 57 and 57A Schnapper Rock Road from Greenhithe Sub-precinct A and the consequential realignment of its boundary.
- Although the indicative housing development proposed by KBS Design Group Ltd would change the character of part of Schnapper Rock Road that currently remains in grassed open space, the limited utility and aesthetic value of that area of old pasture – subject to further effects from development on 55 Schnapper Rock Road and with the Watercare Services site – limits its 'aesthetic coherence' and 'pleasantness'. Conversely, the proposed pattern of housing on the subject site would be generally in accord with that already found across Schnapper Rock Road, as well as that consented for 55 Schnapper Rock Road and 52 Kyle Road. It would not give rise to any appreciable 'nuisance effects'. As a result, the amenity effects generated by the proposed Plan Change would also be quite limited.

On the basis of these findings, it is concluded that KBS Design Group's Plan Change proposal is appropriate in terms of its landscape and amenity effects. Overall, it would generate effects that are typically of a low order, and 'Less Than Minor' in RMA terminology.

Stephen Brown

BTP, Dip LA, FNZILA





PROPOSED ZONING PLAN

KEY:

-  Proposed Mixed Housing Suburban Zone (for the Northern Part of the subject site)
-  Proposed Single House Zone (for the Southern Part of the subject site)
-  Greenhithe Sub-precinct Boundary (relocated - subject site is proposed to be outside this boundary)
-  Existing Significant Ecological Area (SEA - to be retained on the subject site)

Note:

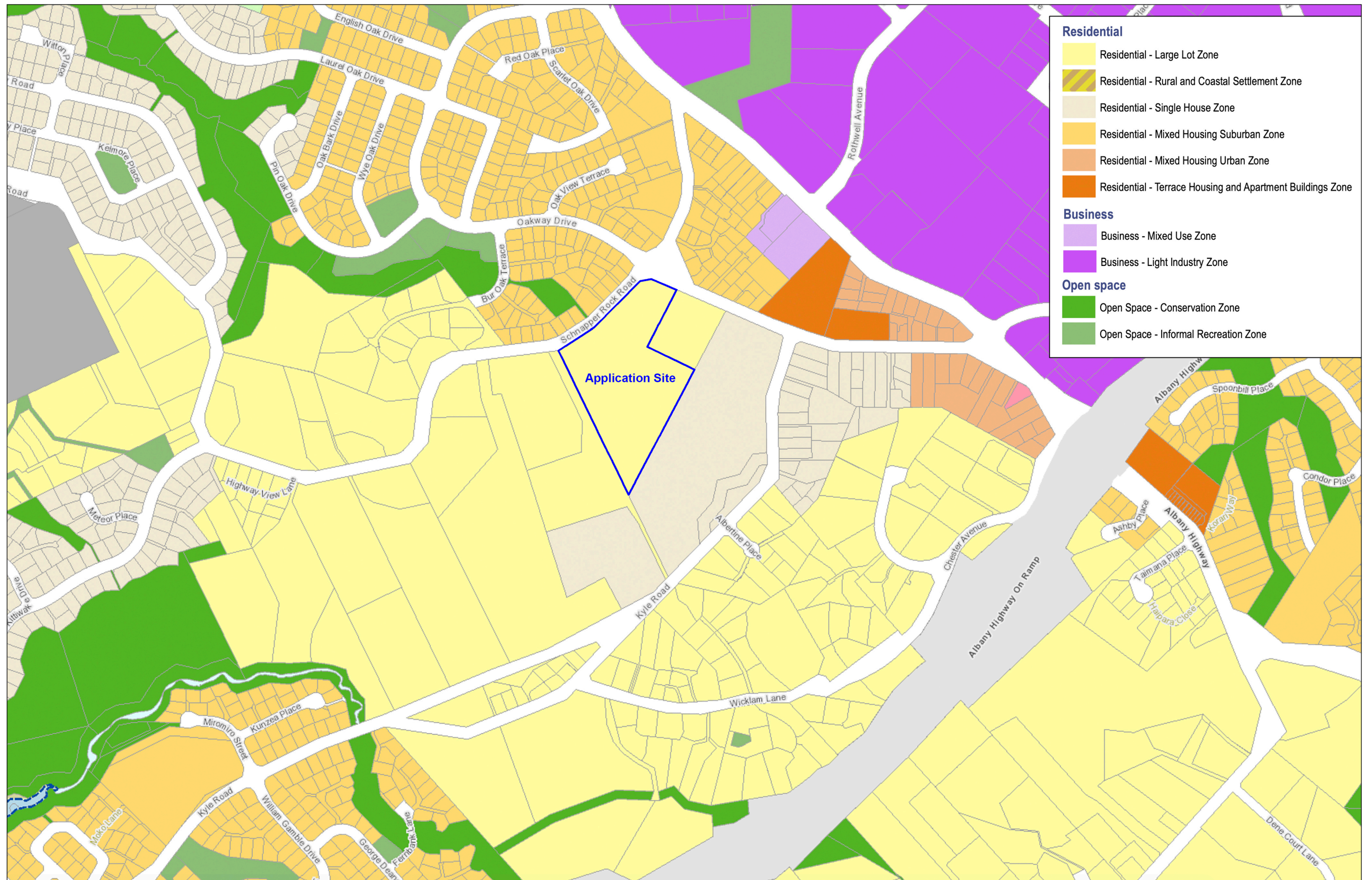
This site layout is conceptual only and is subject to further investigations into Planning, Survey, Ecological and Engineering feasibility and may be derived from inaccurate source information. This is also subject to necessary approval from Auckland Council, Auckland Transport and Watercare.

57 & 57A SCHNAPPER ROCK ROAD, SCHNAPPER ROCK

Project: Schnapper Rock Road Dev 2020
Date: 15 February 2021
Status: Final
Scale: 1:2000 @ A3



This document and design remain the property of Kingstone Property Limited. No liability shall be accepted for unauthorised use. This design is subject to further investigations into Planning, Survey and Engineering feasibility and may be derived from inaccurate source information.







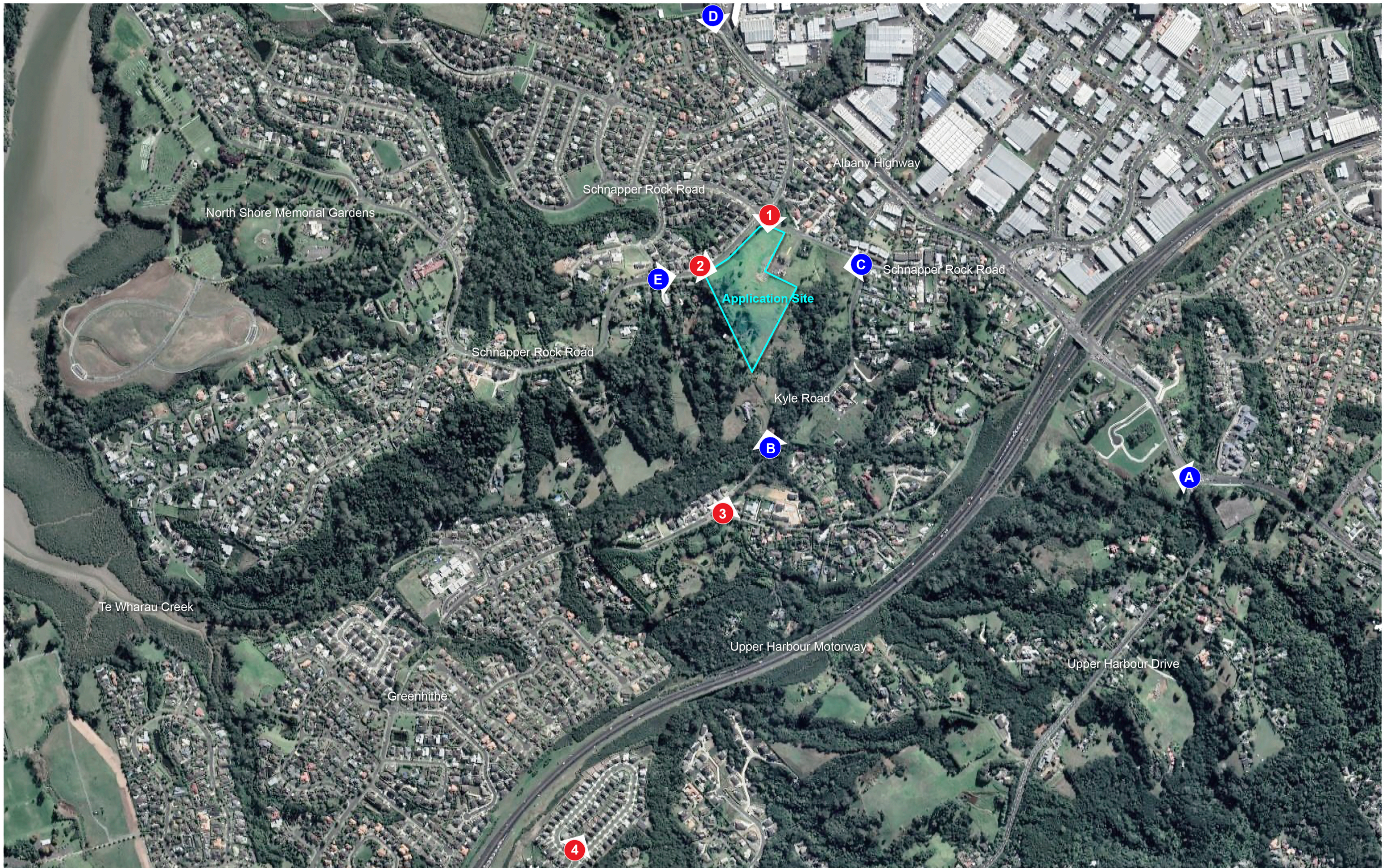






Looking from the centre of the application site towards Schnapper Rock Road (above) & towards Greenhithe & Upper Harbour Drive (below)





Viewpoints employed in the Viewpoint Analysis (Section 6.3 & Attachments 15 - 18)

Other viewpoints (Attachments 10 - 14)



The application site visible, together with part of the subdivision on 55 Schannper Rock Rd below it & the Watercare Services development to the right



The application site visible (just) beyond the current subdivision at 52 Kyle Rd & 55 Schnapper Rock Rd



Looking from the intersection of Kyle Rd with Schnapper Rock Rd past the subdivision at 55 Schnapper Rock Rd & the development on the Watercare Services site to 57 & 57A Schnapper Rock



Looking from near the intersection of Oakview Drive with the Albany Highway towards 53 Schnapper Rock Rd - solidly ringed by housing development



Looking from outside 94A Schnapper Rock Rd towards the application site



Looking from next to the Schnapper Rock Rd roundabout towards the application site (to the right of the Watercare Services construction site)



Looking from outside 90A Schnapper Rock Rd towards the application site (on the near side of the Watercare Services construction site)



Looking from the intersection of Kyle Rd with Wicklam Lane towards the application site (above & to the left of the earthworks on 52 Kyle Rd & 55 Schnapper Rock Rd)



Looking from the Mackay Drive Playground towards the application site (above & to the left of the earthworks on 52 Kyle Rd & 55 Schnapper Rock Rd)