

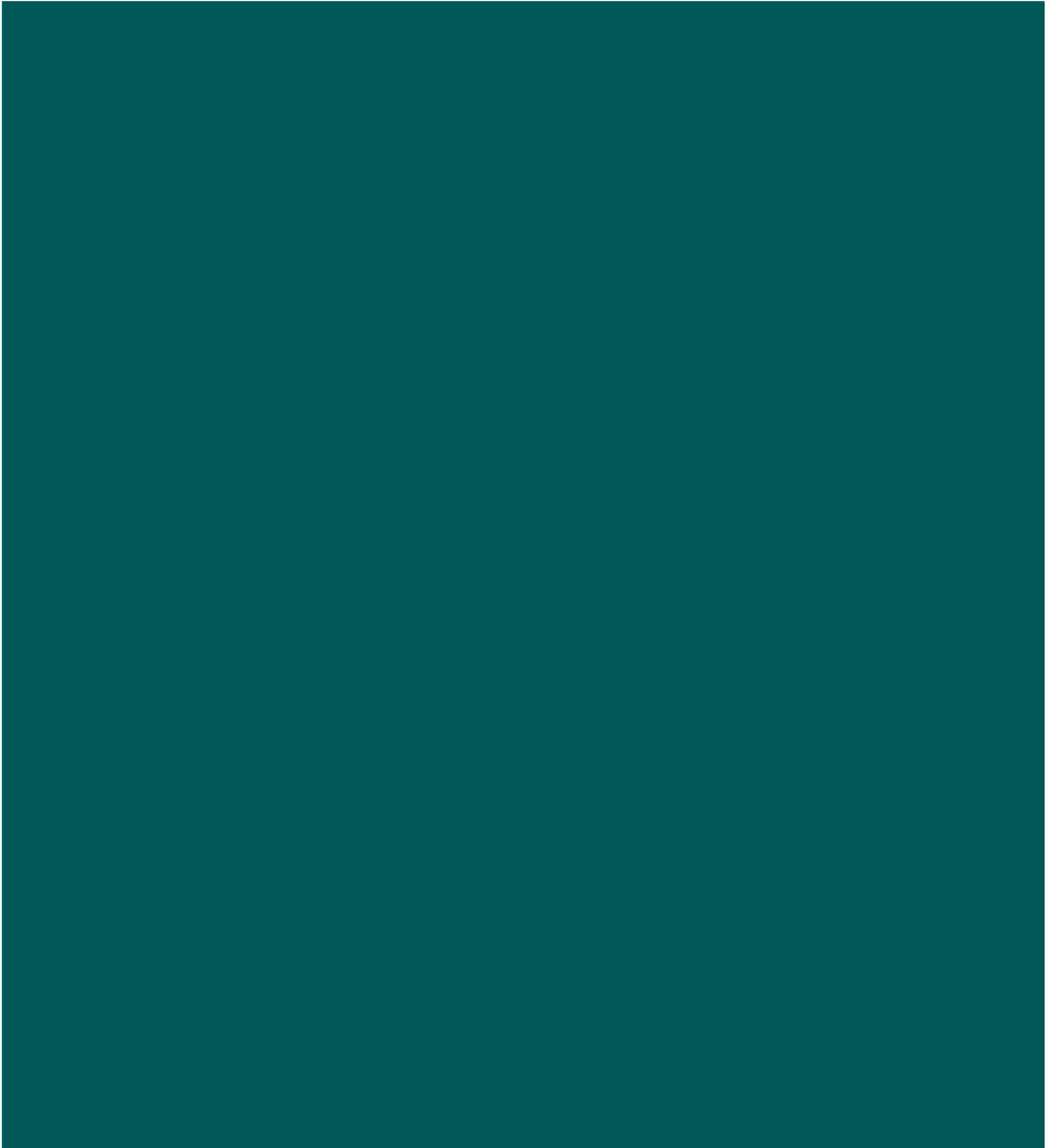
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# Amberfield

Landscape / Visual Effects / Open Space Addendum  
Prepared for Weston Lea Ltd

20 February 2019



## Document Quality Assurance

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# CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	The Proposed Changes	1
3.0	Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment	3
4.0	Conclusion	4



# 1.0 Introduction

This addendum report is in response to changes that have been made to the proposed Amberfield Subdivision Resource Consent proposal.

It provides an addendum to the initial report 'Amberfield Subdivision Resource Consent Application, Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects' dated 14 May 2018 and the subsequent 'Amberfield S92 Response, Landscape / Visual Effects / Open Space' dated 17 August 2018.

The changes to the application as lodged are in response to submissions that have raised concerns in respect to the potential impact of the proposed subdivision on ecology, specifically the Long-Tailed Bat (LTB). The submitters in this respect include the Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Riverlea Environmental Society Incorporated (RESI). The writer has met with representatives of both submitter organisations along with Hamilton City Council personnel including their consultant ecological advisors from Tonkin & Taylor (T&T) along with Amberfield planners and ecologists following receipt of submissions and in the development of the proposed changes to the subdivision layout.

The changes proposed involve moving the development further away from the Waikato River in the north-east of the site to create a greater open space / vegetated separation between the future residential area and the river as well as from Hammond Bush, which is located on the opposite side of the river in the suburb of Riverlea.

In addition to this greater physical separation, additional planting is proposed to enhance the habitat values of the river corridor for LTB and other species of indigenous wildlife including lizard / skink, insect and bird species.

The proposal is explained in greater detail in section 2 below and in the accompanying set of drawings as well as in the addendum reports prepared by other members of the Amberfield project team including Merestone (planning), Harrison Grierson (engineering), Urbanismplus (urban design) and Boffa Miskell (ecologists).

## 2.0 The Proposed Changes

The proposed changes to the Amberfield Subdivision proposal as lodged are fully documented in the set of revised engineering drawings prepared by Harrison Grierson (HG).

The primary driver of the changes has been to remove development of future roading and houses from within an indicative area adjacent to the Waikato River corridor which has been identified by T&T to have ecological constraints, particularly with respect to LTB.

Figure 1 attached shows the subdivision layout as lodged with a yellow line and hatch showing the indicative extent of the mapped ecological constraints across the full site. Figure 2 shows a detail of the northern portion of the site with this ecological constraints area identified. The ecological constraints area is indicative to the extent that T&T consider that some development within the area is able to occur, subject to suitable mitigation.

In discussion with T&T's specialist ecologists it was confirmed that the area of specific concern was in the north where the proposed Amberfield subdivision lies across the river from Riverlea and Hammond Bush. Part of the proposed 'riverside' perimeter road adjacent to the esplanade reserve / riverside open space and some 37 proposed residential lots were previously proposed to be located fully or in part within the ecological constraints area.

Altering the proposed subdivision layout in the north eastern part of the site has had flow on impacts on the proposed site contours and the location of a proposed stormwater pond and a wastewater pump station. The relocation of these latter components of the proposal are identified on HG Services and Coordination Plan Sheet 1 (141842-5001).

Topographically the subdivision as lodged extended onto the lower terrace adjacent to the river in this northern part of the site. Pulling the extent of the subdivision back, west, from the river has removed the requirement for a substantial area of fill adjacent to the river on the naturally lower terrace with the perimeter, riverside, road now sitting at a level more closely aligned to natural ground.

The proposed layout removes one of the previously proposed north / south roads in the north of the subdivision with the lot layout along the bottom perimeter road now comprising a series of front and rear lots. In total 17 rear lots are now proposed.

A pedestrian access walkway is retained through the centre of the block with a second such access located at the northern end of the proposed Knoll Reserve (neighbourhood park) extending east to the riverside roadway.

The area of change to the layout extends to the southern end of the proposed Knoll Reserve on the eastern, river side. The engineering re-design of the vertical alignment of the riverside road in this location has involved consequent changes to the width of the open space connection between the Knoll Reserve and the road / adjacent riverside open space. The alignment of the rear lot boundary of Lots adjoining the Knoll Reserve has been re-aligned, slightly increasing the extent of the reserve in this location and improving the topographical relationship between these lots and the reserve. The new boundary seeks to better follow the natural topography with the knoll open space sitting above the house lots below.

In addition, as a consequence of the expert caucusing between the ecologists, it is proposed to retain the east / west 'row' of vegetation across the site (previously only partially retained) located on the southern edge of the reserve. A pedestrian pathway will also provide a connection between the reserve and the road here providing access to residential lots as well as to the reserve.

The changes in the area of open space between the proposal as lodged and now proposed are an increase of:

- i. 22,103m<sup>2</sup> in the north-eastern riverside open space
- ii. 1,176m<sup>2</sup> in the Knoll Reserve:

In additional to the physical enlargement of the open space corridor adjacent to the river in the north east of the site, substantial planting is proposed within this riverside open space with the intention of creating enhanced habitat and ecological service for the LTB and other indigenous wildlife including lizards / skinks, insects and birds.

Figure 3 illustrates the proposed landscape concept plan for the north eastern area. The landscape concept plan includes planting alongside the existing river corridor vegetation, areas of naturalised meadow and buffer planting along the eastern side of the road.

Figure 3 illustrates the extent of area adjacent to the river corridor that is outside the extent of proposed earthworks, which includes additional planting alongside the existing river corridor vegetation. Depending on the timing of earthworks (related to the next available earthworks season) it may be possible to initiate the proposed planting in this area in advance of that stage of earthworks – the planting season is over winter - April to September - whilst the earthworks season occurs during summer.

Further to the additional riverside planting, further native species planting is proposed adjacent to the eastern side of the proposed road edge, with a minimum width of 7m and most typically 20m. This planting will be established in the planting season immediately following earthworks and construction to form the road and associated footpath.

The landscape concept also includes an area of meadow grass, and a communal stormwater raingarden basin. These components of the landscape plan for the north-eastern riverside reserve will enhance and diversify the habitat biodiversity and create interest / variety in the open space amenity of the riverside reserve. The proposed location of the wastewater pump station is also less prominent, moving from a roadside location to one within the reserve accessed for maintenance via the proposed 3-metre-wide shared path.

A 'row' of large stature trees through the centre of the meadowland area is proposed to further enhance the ecological service of the site for LTB. In combination with the planting adjacent to the proposed road edge it will provide an additional series of edges parallel to the river along which the bats can navigate and forage for insects. In this way the landscape concept has been designed, with input from the ecologists, to achieve both ecological outcomes and to provide an attractive, diverse, interesting and safe recreational amenity for the community. These multiple values are also evident on the eastern, Riverlea, side of the river.

In addition to planting within the widened riverside reserve area the proposed street cross-section, refer Figure 4, incorporates a planted berm on the residential side of the street. Species proposed for this area are Rewarewa and Totara intended to create a tall hedge to further separate the presence of houses from the river corridor. Driveway access to rear lots is paired with a right of way width of 3.6m, enabling fence-line planting, with a formed carriageway width of 3.0m. Driveway locations have not been fixed for the front lots but a 3.0m width is proposed for the crossings to enable practicable access to the lot whilst also minimising the openings in the planted berm.

## 3.0 Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

The original LVEA and later S92 response found there to be a **low level of adverse visual effects** of the proposal in respect of the residential viewing audience across the river in the suburb of Riverlea.

This is the visual catchment that will be most affected by the proposed changes involving the widening and increased planting of the Riverside open space reserve.

Given the lesser extent of proposed development in this part of the site, any change to the visual outlook will be beneficial. However, I consider the scale of effects in respect of this viewing audience will remain at a **low adverse** level given the change from rural to urban, noting also the long-established presence of the Peacocke Structure Plan and future urban zone of the land which anticipates this change in land use across the site and a much wider area in the locality.

In terms of **landscape effects** there will be a reduction in the volume of earthworks in this part of the site with more of the natural topography retained along the river edge with increased indigenous species planting established. Furthermore, the existing 'shelter belt' / trees that extend east / west across the site (only some of which were previously retained) will be retained as a natural feature of the site. In the context of this northern part of the site alone this will reduce the effects on the natural character of the river corridor / existing vegetation cover and the associated landscape effects. However, when considered across the scale of the 105ha site, the change will be of a small beneficial magnitude. The original **moderate to low** adverse landscape effects are likely to be generated but reducing over time to a **beneficial landscape effects outcome** given the scale of open space amenity particularly along the river corridor, the extent of proposed planting, and the form of the proposed urban development.

## 4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, I consider the proposed changes to the Amberfield subdivision to be beneficial in both landscape (including natural character) and visual effects terms although not substantially altering the overall scale of effects of the development as originally assessed.

There will however, be localised enhancement such as in respect of the outlook for residents in the suburb of Riverlea across the river, as well as the obvious ecological and vegetative enhancements.

Rachel de Lambert  
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