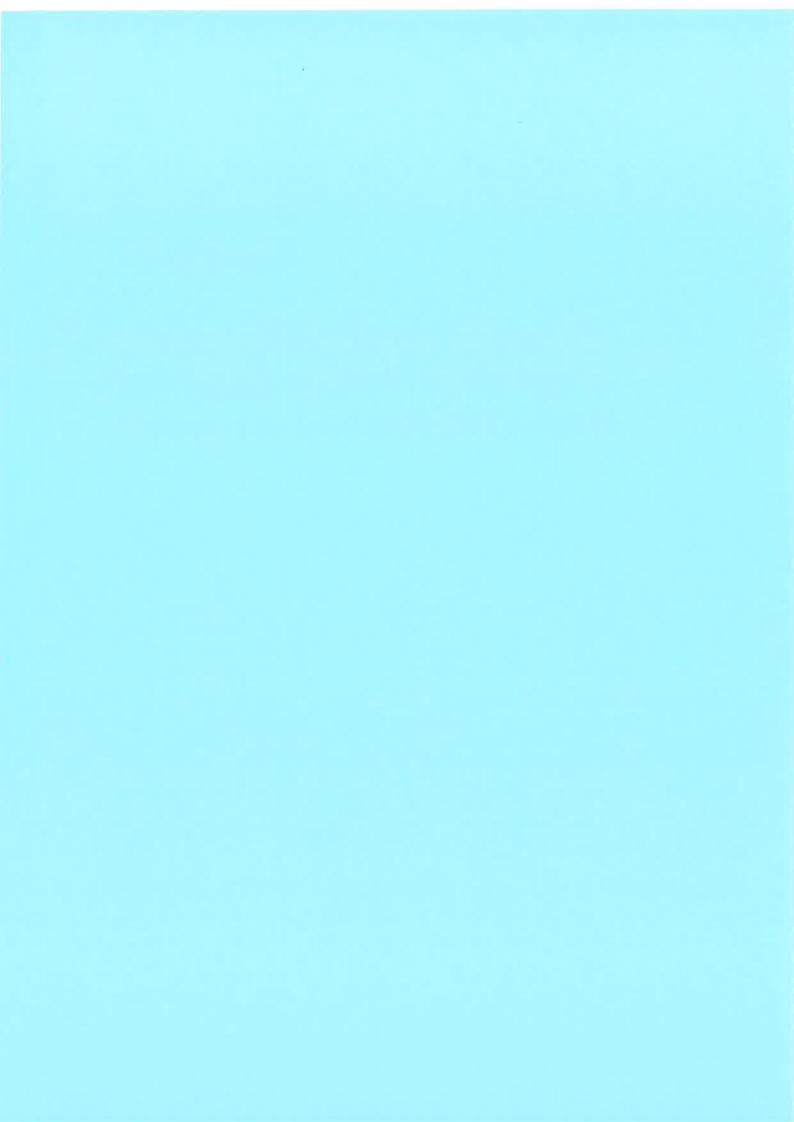
# **Appendix 17**

Landscape and Visual Assessment (prepared by Thresher Associates) prepared for past land use consent



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# Resource Management and Assessment Ltd

# Molesworth Drive Mangawhai

Landscape and Visual Assessment

September 2006 P444

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Landscape and Visual Assessment

Molesworth Drive, Mangawhal
Proposal for commercial complex
On behalf of Resource Management and Assessment Ltd

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Thresher Associates Ltd was requested by Resource Management and Assessment Ltd to undertake an evaluation of the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed commercial complex on two adjoining properties at Molesworth Drive, Mangawhai.

In order to undertake this evaluation a site visit was carried out to survey the site and its surrounding context on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2006.

The assessment is based on the drawings and assessment of effects provided as part of the application for land use consent dated 312 October 2005. In addition, the following new and updated drawings are referred to:

LC01 Wider context map LC02 Site analysis LC03 Concept plan

This report describes the outcomes of the evaluation and assesses visual and landscape effects against the resource management issues identified in the Mangawhai Structure Plan and The Kaipara District Plan.

In particular, the assessment reviews the height of the buildings and structures, and their form and bulk in relation to the adjoining land uses and road corridor.

# 2. EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The proposed development is located on two properties (Lot 80 DP 352077, Lot 1 DP 341981) located on the corner of Molesworth Drive and Estuary Drive, which lies close to the causeway to the peninsula.

The AEE report states that the site has been selected for the proposed development because it is strategically located on the main route between Mangawhai Heads and Mangawhai Village. Also, "the chosen site is of a suitable contour and offers safe and efficient vehicle access from both directions along Molesworth Drive".

The site therefore takes advantage of its strategic location close to the causeway, and obtains direct access off Molesworth Drive, which is the primary road and gateway to the peninsula. The wider Mangawhai natural landscape is characterised by the beach and harbour system with its estuarine and salt marsh ecosystems, and the upper catchment with its ridges and valleys of mixed pastoral land, remnant indigenous vegetation, and exotic forestry and horticulture.

Settlements comprise residential areas around services and retail eg Wood Street and Mangawhai Village, and beach/traditional housing along the eastern side of the peninsula. More recent development trends are associated with subdivisions of new housing, including

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the adjoining residential site and rural-residential subdivisions on larger and more elevated sites, and commercial/retail developments at existing centres.

The subject site is zoned residential and lies on the fringe of an area identified in The Structure Plan as an area experiencing growth pressure for subdivision (page 35). Adjoining existing land uses are residential to the east, rural residential to the south and south west, and rural to the west. Proposed land uses under The Structure Plan are similar with the exception that the rural zone is replaced by Mangawhai Park and golf course.

Signs of transition or change are evidenced by new housing (to the south and east) with attendant urban features such as kerbs, footpaths and street lighting, and similar urban changes occurring along Molesworth Drive. It is also understood that approval has been given for a new museum to be constructed on the corner of Molesworth Drive and Thelma Drive to the west of the subject site.

The site itself also has the appearance of being in transition. The land is vacant apart from a rural/industrial building in the north west comer and a wastewater treatment plant in the south east corner. Elsewhere there are stockpiles of sand and topsoil from recent earthworks. A planted bund of variable quality is adjacent to Molesworth Drive.

Within the road reserve is a row of Norfolk Pine trees of varying age and height, at approximately 15 metre centres. These form part of a gateway treatment and are repeated on the western side of the road where, in contrast to the subject site, there is dense vegetation comprising a mix of native and exotic vegetation and weeds.

The recent subdivision to the east comprises a fairly dense mix of modest residences in varied styles and materials, of one and two storeys. 7 lots are located along the boundary with the subject site but not all of these lots have been developed (refer Photographs). Generally those houses abutting the site are one storey with a 1.8m screen fence on the boundary. In two locations there is opportunity for connections between the site and subdivision – at either end of the residential road servicing the subdivision.

#### 3. THE PROPOSAL

The proposed development consists of a commercial development for a variety of activities including a service station (relocated from Wood Street), visitor accommodation (a motel), and retail and professional office space (in two buildings). These are spaced along the rear of the property with separate access and parking to each activity. The boundary with residences would have a close-boarded timber fencing and screen buffer planting is proposed along the fence.

The development is proposed to be staged. Stage 1 would comprise a Mobil service station with a drive-through forecourt for 4 pump islands covered with a canopy; a service building and shop/café; facilities for washing and cleaning cars and boats; and a campervan station. The facilities would be similar to other Mobil service stations (refer Photograph 1) and include a white canopy with "Mobil" lettering, pre-cast concrete walls to the building in Mobil colours, and a white fascia with "Mobil" lettering. A water tank would be located in the north east corner, partially screened by planting. A 6 metre high "Mobil" sign would be located on the frontage, at the intersection of Molesworth Drive and Estuary Drive where good approach views are afforded from the road. The site slopes moderately from the north east towards Estuary Drive at an approximate gradient of 1 in 14 and the service station building would be elevated above Molesworth Drive with a similar ground level to the adjoining lot, resulting in the roof of the building being approximately 1.5 metres above the fence height. In addition, the water tank would be approximately 3 metres higher than the top of the fence.

A central entrance off Molesworth Drive is proposed to provide access for the service station and the retail and professional office building. An additional exit would be provided on to Estuary Drive.

Stage 2 buildings comprise the retail and professional office building and the motel. The retail and professional office building (Building 2) and associated parking would use the entrance and exit off Molesworth Drive and it is anticipated that an advertising sign would be located close to this entrance. This building would be 2-storey with ground floor retail and offices

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above. With the proposed ground level up to 3 metres above existing ground, and a 10 metre maximum building height, the building could be some 8 metres above the boundary fence, and is quite close to the boundary (5 metres). Materials are described as Mocha or grey Coloursteel roofing and solid plaster/Hebel block/precast concrete panels with terracotta/mushroom or off white textured finish.

Building 3 (the motel) is proposed to provide 20 visitor accommodation units and associated facilities including a manager's unit, office, laundry and kitchen. It would be located at the northern end of the development in a central position, surrounded by parking, and with amenity planting at either end. Access is gained from Seabreeze Place. The building is 2 storeys high and at the highest elevation on the site, with roof level some 7 metres above the residential boundary fence. Materials are described as Mocha or Grey Coloursteel roofing, with walts of the same material and colour walts as for Building 2. It is noted, however, that the drawings in the AEE show different colours for Buildings 2 and 3. A polycarbonate and steel canopy or portico is shown on the front elevation, and a sign at the northern end within the planter.

Stage 3 of the development is located on the existing wastewater plant at the southern end, and would comprise service buildings associated with the service station as well as the proposed vehicle washing and grooming facilities. They may therefore be considered as future proposed development as their construction relies on the Mangawhai sewerage scheme.

Planting and landscaping is associated with each of the activities and buildings, and the resource consent application included a proposal for a planted bund similar to the bund constructed for the residential subdivision. As part of this assessment and report, however, this has been superseded by a comprehensive landscape plan for the development.

The proposed landscape concept seeks to provide a planted structure that would enable the individual buildings and development sites to be integrated and contained as part of a total landscape. A hierarchy of treatments would be adopted to provide screening where appropriate, enable views where appropriate, and implement a range of amenity planting and feature gardens to complement the uses and appearance of the site layout. These are discussed in more detail in the next section.

#### 4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Landscape assessment within the context of this report is used in a broad sense to encompass the general meaning of assessment and ways of looking at, describing, and evaluating the landscape. A distinction is made between landscape effects, which derive from changes to the physical landscape and how it is experienced (perceived values), and visual effects that relate to changes that arise from the composition of available views, people's response to changes to the landscape, and the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

The assessment of landscape effects in this context is primarily concerned with effects on landscape character and amenity values. The site is located in a coastal and rural location, and within an area valued for its natural rural character. Equally, the area is exhibiting a change to this character, and the site is close to areas of industrial and residential development. Both this site and the site to the south also accommodate buildings that have been used for industrial uses, so that the immediate locality is not typical of the wider landscape and may be described as peri-rural.

The proposed development would involve construction of buildings and paved areas that are larger in scale than the adjoining residences, so that the proposal would inevitably result in some change to the character of the existing landscape although such changes may be viewed as contributing to positive changes to the site. In relation to this assessment, therefore, evaluation of effects is based on the difference between the proposed development and a complying development of residential development.

With regard to the proposed development, I note in the AEE that several alternative building locations and land uses were considered but I was not involved with the project at that stage. It would appear, however, that some of the discarded alternatives may offer mitigation against potential adverse effects identified in this assessment.

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In particular, the linear arrangement of buildings along the eastern boundary of the site, while favouring the disposal and ownership of lots, results in long building faces close to residential boundaries. As a result, dustering of buildings and shared parking is not possible, and each building is at the maximum elevation relative to Molesworth Drive.

Benefits of the layout are, however, the separation distance from Molesworth Drive, allowing an almost continuous buffer planting of the roadside, and the stepped arrangement of buildings results in an aesthetically pleasing and open layout. This is in contrast to a permitted development that could have either a series of driveway entrances and residences along Molesworth Drive, or if served by an internal access road, the rear fences of residential lots adjacent to the road.

It is considered, therefore, that the overall landscape character of the proposed development would be improved when compared with a complying development, resulting in positive effects. Similarly, the proposed development would offer enhancement of the environment when compared with the existing environment.

It is also recognised, however, that landscape effects are also linked to perceived landscape value, and the introduction of a service station on this site may be perceived negatively. Determination of whether there are actual adverse effects must however be assessed against the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of effects. In this particular situation the sensitivity of the site has to be weighed against the existing landscape character and its permitted use, and in relation to the wider landscape. Consideration should also be made of the potential landscape improvements to the site of the existing service station at Wood Street.

The site has no particular intrinsic landscape sensitivity but has landscape sensitivity in relation to its location close to the causeway and on the route to Mangawahi Heads. A service station on the comer of Molesworth Drive and Estuary Drive would result in a change of character to the area but would be consistent with other proposed changes (proposed museum and roundabout) and would result in positive effects to Wood Street. The potential landscape effects of the service station are therefore primarily linked to its visibility.

The methodology used to assess visual effects involves looking at the physical catchment and character that would be exposed to visual change, the nature of the audience who would experience that change, and the scale, type and intensity of change.

The only audience that would be able to see the proposed development would be neighbouring residents and people travelling on Molesworth Drive, Estuary Drive or Seabreeze Place. For neighbouring residents, as discussed earlier, the proximity and height of the buildings would be the principal issue, but I understand that they have given approval so that consent may not be refused based on these effects. It is however noted that Building 2 is likely to result in loss of privacy and effects of dominance, at least in the short term, and that the considered alternatives described in the AEE (3.5 and 3.6) would be expected to reduce these effects. The motel has some separation distance from the residential boundary and the service station is generally below the neighbouring residences so that effects would be similar to those that could be expected from residential development.

For people travelling on roads, views of the development would be limited by landform and vegetation. Those locations where there would be available views are, however, considered to have the potential for adverse effects due to the sensitivity of Molesworth Drive as the entry to Mangawhai Heads. But, as discussed previously, it is also considered that permitted development could also have adverse effects, so that assessment of effects is based on the perceived appropriateness of the activity or land use, and its visibility from the road.

In terms of the appropriateness of the activity or land use, this is discussed in the next section. In relation to visibility, it is considered that the proposed development would result in a better outcome than a permitted (residential) development – subject to recommendations suggested in this assessment report. The comprehensive landscape plan for the proposed development has expressly provided for a landscape treatment of Molesworth Drive that would enhance the role of Molesworth Drive as the gateway to Mangawhai Heads and the peninsula.

It is proposed that this landscape treatment would be adopted for all the sites fronting the road to avoid a piecemeal and fragmented approach that would otherwise result on the basis of site by site development. It is based on the creation of a rural landscaped buffer that would complement the Norfolk Island pines and provide continuity of roadside treatment through

Landscape & Visual Assessment - P444 Molesworth Drive, Mangawhell

provision of informal layered planting. It would also screen development except where planned viewshafts are appropriate.

It is considered that the existing buffer with its mixed exotic and native planting has not achieved its purpose and that a larger more holistic approach is necessary. This could be adopted by Council and subsequent development could be required to extend the treatment onboth sides of the road from the causeway up to the industrial area.

This would support the entryway definition in The Structure Plan (page 59, Industrial strategy) but in order to fully realise this rural gateway it would require a complementary treatment within the road reserve. While a footpath within the road reserve is desirable, there are problems with its implementation due to conflicts between roading and access improvements and retention of the existing Norfolk Island pines.

Rural roads are exemplified by an absence of kerbs and channels and other built stormwater features, and the presence of wide grass berms and verges. Proposed road widening threatens these features and reduces available area for footpaths. In this proposal required improvements include earthworks associated with sight lines, and a widened roadway with a passing lane. These result in a reduced road verge width and are likely to result in a change of landscape character along the road.

The recommendation from this assessment is to consider omitting the left turn deceleration lane required in order to provide a passing lane. This would reduce the amount of paved surface and increase the retained grassed verge. The need for a passing lane with the limited amount of outgoing traffic from the peninsula is questioned, and the retention of the existing Norfolk Island pines may be compromised.

While these recommendations would ensure that the visual effects of the proposed development would be limited, it is also recommended that all buildings, with the possible exception of the service station shop/café, be designed in accordance with a limited palette of materials and colours, and to a high standard befitting the importance of this gateway site. To this end, materials selected should ensure a high level of light absorption and low reflectivity in order to minimise visual impact, and colour selection should be restricted to darker shades of brown, grey and green tones to better integrate structures into proposed vegetation and allow buildings to recede into the landscape (terracotta/mushroom and off white are not preferred colours). In addition natural materials and elements are preferred.

### 5. LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

The following summary is provided as a discussion of the proposal in relation to the Mangawhai Structure Plan and the Kalpara District Plan.

The Mangawhai Structure Plan provides a strategic framework to manage the effects of growth and help guide decisions on development, infrastructure management and environmental matters for the area. Adopted in January 2005 it provides principles for eight policy areas that suggest direction and character for future development together with recommended design principles/guidelines.

The site lies in policy area 3 (mangawhai residential) but other policy areas are also appropriate for the proposed development given its interface and relationship with other zones and activities. Key issues for policy area 3 include the changing character of residential development, erosion of "rural landscape character" and enhancement of open space and walkway opportunities. The proposal reflects the changing character of the area as well as the strategic importance of the site. The assessment demonstrates that the proposal, although different from a residential development, will not result in effects that are significantly different from a residential development. In part this is due to planting and landscape treatment that seeks to maintain rural landscape character and mitigate effects of development. The proposed development recognises and provides for walkway opportunities and connections to open space.

The proposed removal of the existing service station at Wood Street offers opportunities to improve continuity of scale and enhance the main street area, and would relieve some of the traffic and parking Issues identified as due to the service station and fire station. It would also

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potentially reduce unnecessary traffic and journeys on to the peninsula due to its location close to the causeway.

The site is recognised as occupying a unique position in the arrival sequence to Mangawhai from the causeway, and the assessment acknowledges the issues associated with the scale of proposed buildings, similar to the industrial area farther along Molesworth Drive. This report therefore addresses issues associated with the visibility and appearance of the proposed buildings, through recommendations and the proposed landscape concept.

In addition, the development would group a number of commercial buildings together, which would result in potential advantages - it avoids a standalone single use commercial development and would build on the proposed museum development thereby creating a formal gateway to the peninsula. It also enables the removal of the service station at Wood Street, and facilitates the enhancement of both Wood Street and Mangawhal Village where such development could contrast with the existing character with detrimental effects.

The site and area have not been identified in the district plan as having any units or features of outstanding or significant landscape value or scenic value, (the dosest area is Mangawhai Barrier Spit). There is no existing native vegetation of particular value on the site and the site has already been cleared and approved for subdivision.

Consequently although the service station is a non-complying activity it is considered that the proposed development is not inconsistent with the objectives and policies of the District Plan, and this report and the landscape concept plan address the requirements of 13.2.3A. In particular, the proposed planting will contribute to the planted 'avenue' and visual amenity of the area, the visual prominence of the site when viewed from the road is controlled and mitigated with a planted buffer, signage is controlled and visibility reduced to key viewshafts, and a pedestrian walkway system has been integrated into the landscape concept and layout plan. It is submitted that the proposed plan will enhance the site and be an improvement on a permitted complying residential development with a reduced planted bund.

#### 6. CONCLUSIONS

The site occupies a strategic location close to the causeway, and obtains direct access off Molesworth Drive, which is the primary road and gateway to the penInsula. Although the wider Mangawhai natural landscape is characterised by the beach and harbour system, and the upper catchment with its ridges and valleys of mixed pastoral land, remnant indigenous vegetation, and exotic forestry and horticulture, the subject site is a degraded site that has been the subject of earthworks and has no significant trees or vegetation.

Zoned residential, it is part of a wider subdivision, and is within an area experiencing change and pressure for growth. A new museum is proposed on the site opposite, and a roundabout is proposed at the intersection of Molesworth Drive and Estuary Drive. The results of the assessment conclude that the landscape character of the site and immediate locality is not typical of the wider landscape, and that the overall landscape character of the proposed development would be improved when compared with a complying development, resulting in positive effects. Similarly, the proposed development would offer enhancement of the environment when compared with the existing environment.

Furthermore, in relation to the service station, the site has no particular intrinsic landscape sensitivity but has landscape. The service station would result in a change of character to the area but would be consistent with other proposed changes and would result in positive effects to Wood Street (due to the removal of the service station there).

With regard to visual effects, adverse visual effects would result from the proposed retail and professional office building for adjoining residences, but neighbours have given their approval. In respect of the motel and service station, the results of the assessment concluded that effects for neighbours would be similar to those that could be expected from residential development.

For people travelling on roads, views of the development would be limited by landform and vegetation. Overall, the assessment considered that the proposed development would result in a better outcome than a permitted (residential) development – subject to recommendations.

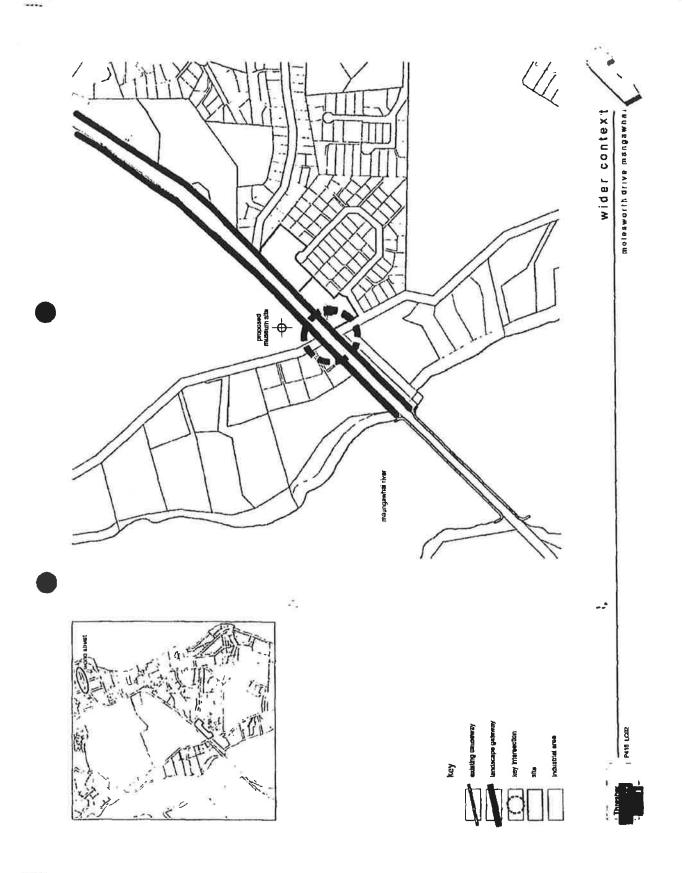
Landscape & Visual Assessment - P444\_ Molesworth Drive, Mangawhal

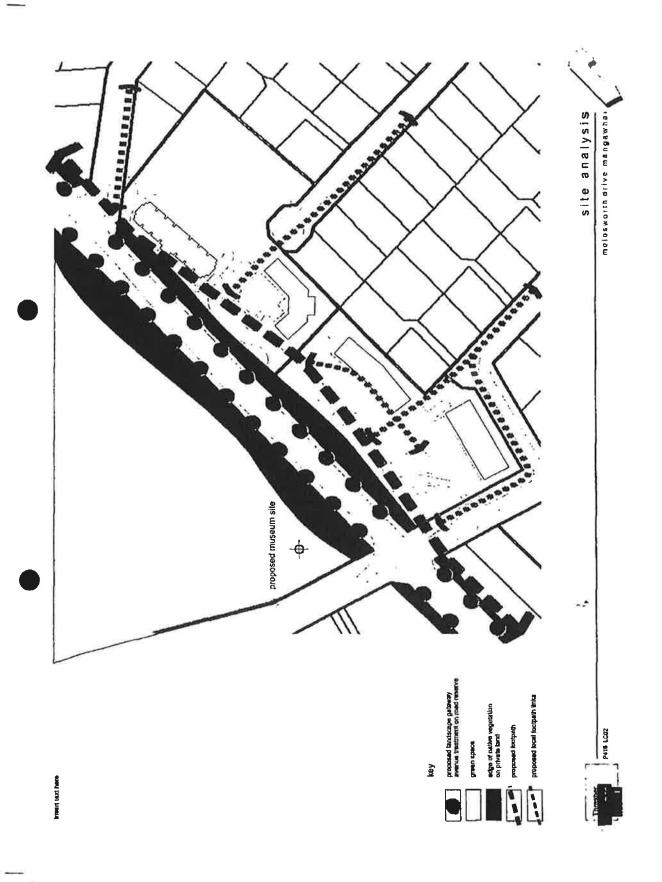
These included adoption of the landscape concept plan, proposed works within the road reserve, and management of building design including colour and materials.

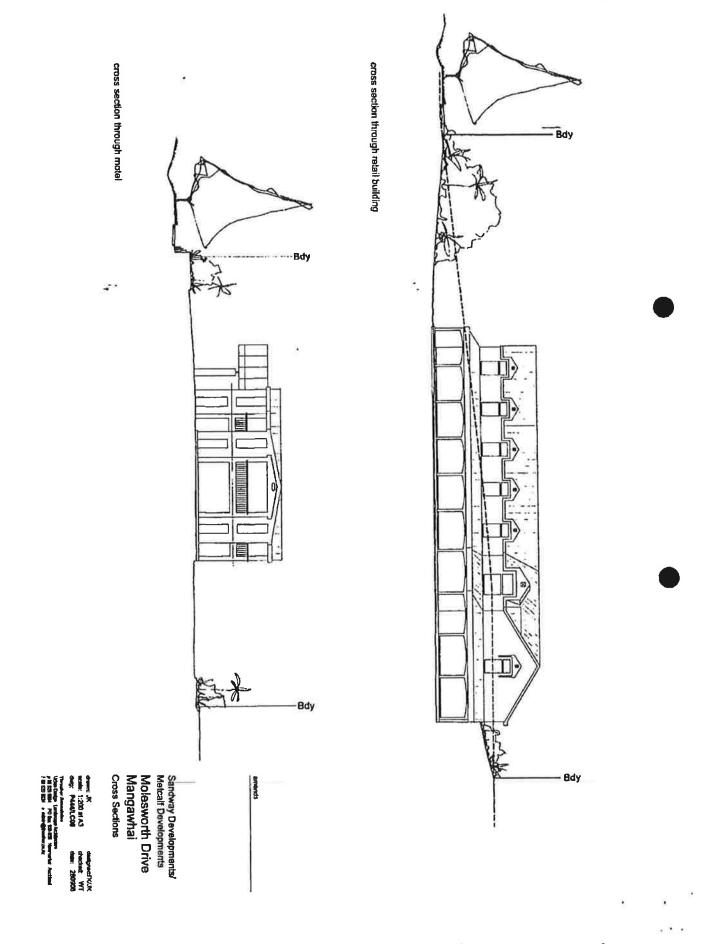
With regard to the Structure Plan and District Plan it is considered that the proposal is not inconsistent with the objectives and policies, and would provide a better outcome for the site than a complying residential development, and allow potential enhanced landscape character at Wood Street and Mangawhei Village.

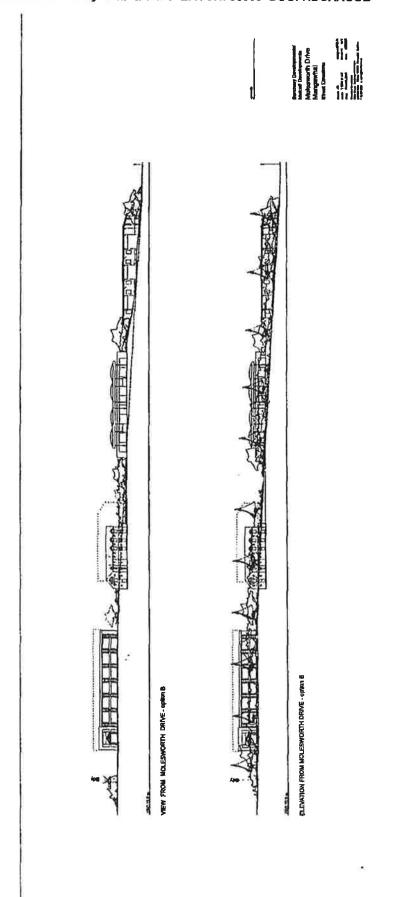
Sally Peake Landscape Architect

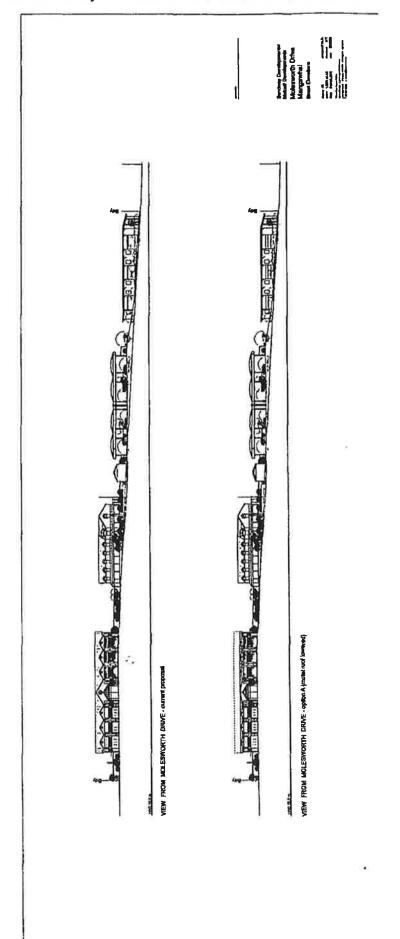
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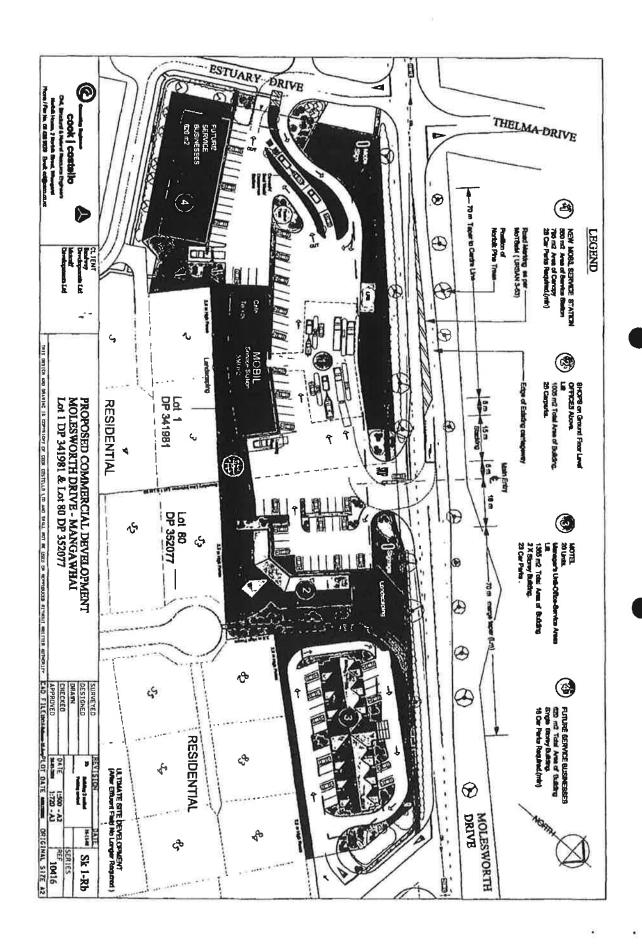












# LANDSCAPE STATEMENT

Proposed Commercial Development Sandway Developments/Metcalf Developments Molesworth Drive, Mangawhai

28<sup>th</sup> September, 2006

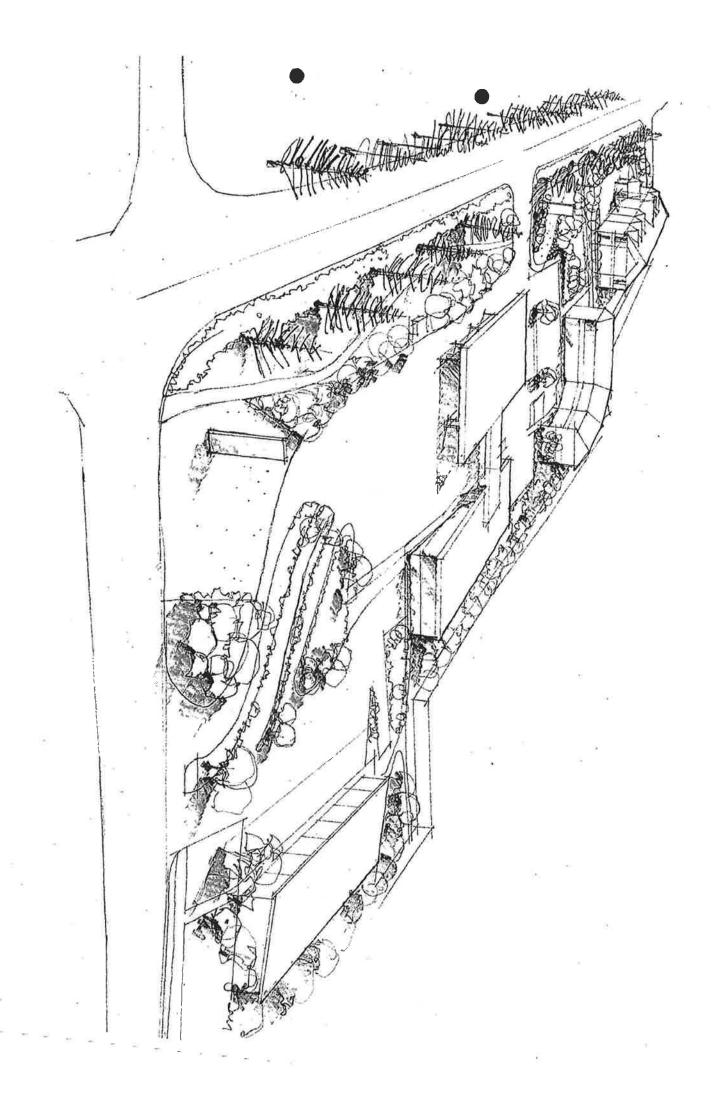


#### Option A Design Philosophy:

- a wide landscaped buffer along Molesworth Drive incorporating existing Norfolk Pines with a native pohutukawa forest landscape typology behind, promotes a green, rural gateway to the Maungawhai Heads approach
- landscaped buffer screens the development from passing traffic except for viewshafts provided at certain points allowing visual notification of the businesses and services offered within the development
- · feature planting differentiates entry/exit points from the more naturalised planting of the buffer
- service station utilises comer location allowing good vehicular entry/exit points from both Molesworth Drive and Estuary Drive
- service station and retall/business building back on to the neighbouring residential area and combined with a landscaped boundary condition help to create a buffer between the main business activity areas and the residential zone
- motel complex with activities more compatible with residential neighbours occupies highest and narrowest part of the site at the entrance to the residential subdivision and where best outlook can be appreciated by motel guests
- main pedestrian footpath along Molesworth Drive runs through the landscaped buffer behind the existing Norfolk Pines promoting a pleasant and safe route by maintaining distance from traffic
- pedestrian footpath network feeds from the neighbouring residential area through the development along the front of buildings to promote safety through surveillance
- low impact design solutions such as use of permeable paving in parking lots, creation of swales and rain-gardens are intended to help mitigate the effects of impermeable surfaces

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#### LANDSCAPE STATEMENT

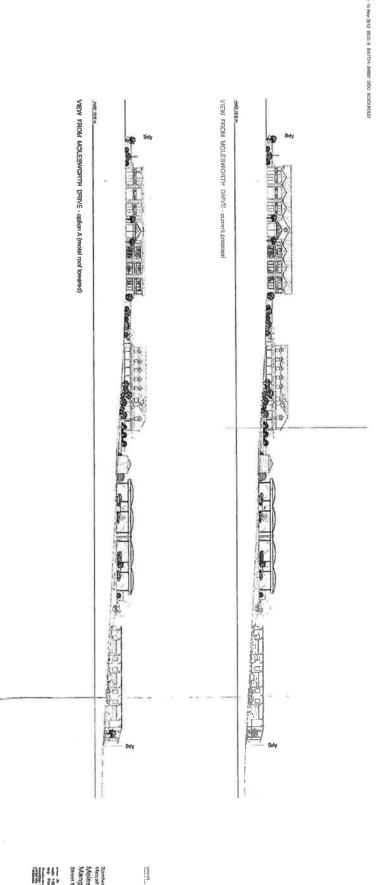
Proposed Commercial Development Sandway Developments/Metcalf Developments Molesworth Drive, Mangawhai

28<sup>th</sup> September, 2006



## Option B Design Philosophy:

- a wide landscaped buffer along Molesworth Drive incorporating existing Norfolk Pines with a native pohutukawa forest landscape typology behind, promotes a green, rural gateway to the Maungawhai Heads approach
- landscaped buffer screens the development from passing traffic except for viewshafts provided at certain points allowing visual notification of the businesses and services offered within the development
- feature planting differentiates entry/exit points from the more naturalised planting of the buffer
- service station utilises comer location allowing good vehicular entry/exit points from both Molesworth Drive and Estuary Drive
- service station and retail/office building clustered together to create an integrated service/retail precinct with consolidated vehicle manoeuvering and parking facilities at the same level
- service station and retail/business building back on to the neighbouring residential area and combined with a landscaped boundary condition help to create a buffer between the main business activity areas and the residential zone
- the two-storey retail/office building has its ground floor dug in to the ground so the building
  operates as a retaining structure for the higher land to the northeast resulting in a minimal
  visual impact to the neighbouring residential zone
- motel complex with activities more compatible with residential neighbours occupies highest and narrowest part of the site at the entrance to the residential subdivision and where best outlook can be appreciated by motel guests
- motel reception located at extreme north eastern end of site and coupled with a more open landscape treatment promotes both visibility to passing traffic and surveillance of street
- main pedestrian footpath along Molesworth Drive runs through the landscaped buffer behind the existing Norfolk Pines promoting a pleasant and safe route by keeping distance from traffic
- pedestrian footpath network feeds from the neighbouring residential area through the development along the front of buildings to promote safety through surveillance
- low impact design solutions such as use of permeable paving in parking lots, creation of swales and rain-gardens are intended to help mitigate the effects of impermeable surfaces



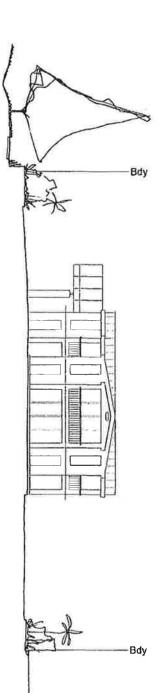
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VIEW FROM MOLESWORTH DRIVE - option 8 ELEVATION FROM MOLESWORTH DRIVE - option 8

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cross section through retail building



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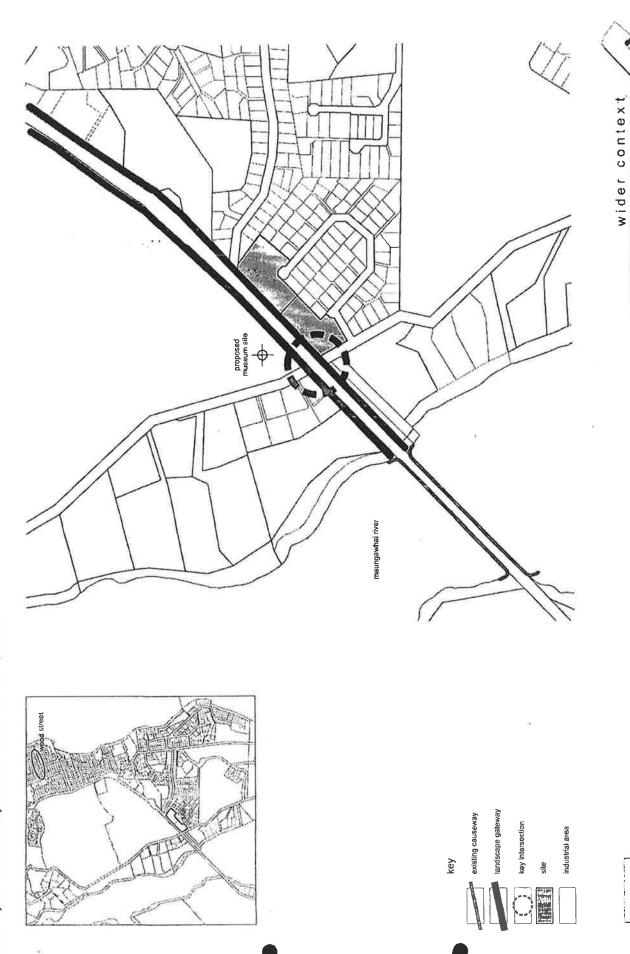
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Molesworth Drive Mangawhai Cross Sections Sandway Developments/ Metcalf Developments

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molesworth drive mangawhai



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site analysis

molesworth drive mangawhai

Associate

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