



## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BUILDING HEIGHT SETBACKS - BARDOWIE INDUSTRIAL PRECINCT

I have been asked by Mitchell Daysh Limited to undertake an assessment of the proposed changes to the rule framework in Section 7 of the Waipa District Plan in relation to building height / setbacks from State Highway 1 and Victoria Road in respect of visual amenity effects. This includes the design measures promulgated in the Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines within the Bardowie Industrial Precinct Structure Plan (proposed Appendix S19) that enable any potential adverse effects to be appropriately mitigated.

I am a Chartered Landscape Architect with over 10 years' experience in New Zealand as a Senior Landscape Architect at Jasmax undertaking predominantly large-scale infrastructure projects. During this period, I have undertaken landscape and visual impact assessments for roads, bridges, health care facilities and factories. Most recently I provided evidence on the landscape and visual effects for the successful hearing for the Happy Valley Milk Factory in Otorohanga. In addition, I was the senior landscape architect responsible for the detailed design of the Cambridge section of the Waikato Expressway and therefore have detailed knowledge of this site.

In this statement I;

- Describe possible adverse effects of the proposed height rule change
- Describe the ways the structure plan guidelines enable those potential effects to be avoided, remedied and / or mitigated (including comment on the positive effects of the proposal.)
- Provide a concluding statement in relation to the appropriateness of the proposed change to the setback / height rule from a visual / landscape perspective.

### Possible Effects on Visual Amenity on SH1 and Victoria Road

The current provisions in Section 7 Industrial Zone specify a 100m setback for the 20m height limit from State Highway 1 and Victoria Road, part of Proposed Plan Change 11 is to reduce this setback to 40m to accommodate large buildings within the precinct. The comparative effects of this change are identified below.

#### SH 1 Waikato Expressway

The Waikato Expressway forms the southern boundary of the site separating the town of Cambridge from the Industrial Zone. At this location it gradually rises on planted embankments approximately 9 metres high to cross Victoria Road. It is connected to Victoria Road via an at grade south bound on ramp along the site boundary.

There is a significant amount of landscape planting along the northern edge of State Highway 1 from the south eastern corner of the Bardowie Industrial Precinct to the Swayne Road overbridge which limits views for northbound traffic.

Potential additional visual amenity effects from the proposed set back change relate to the elevated views of the site and beyond for passing drivers and passengers travelling along SH 1. Essentially the reduction of the setback of from 100 to 40m will foreshorten the view of large buildings within the precinct (up to 20m high) from the State Highway. This will lead to a greater sense of bulk and mass when viewed from the State Highway and a reduction in the quality of the view to the rural landscape beyond the industrial zone.

However, the impact of this change is lessened as the amenity benefit provided by these views to travellers along the State Highway is limited in time by high vehicle speed (110 km/h speed limit) and further tempered as the focus of attention for the drivers will be the road and not necessarily the landscape.

In comparing effects between the 100m and 40m setbacks it is important to recognise that the 100m set back height limitation is reliant on both distance and a 5m amenity planting strip to mitigate visual amenity effects arising from the bulk and mass of the new buildings. However, these buildings in the Hautapu Structure Plan Area are likely to be plain simple industrial structures that will stand out in the view from the State Highway. In comparison, the provisions in relation to the Bardowie Industrial Precinct advocates a higher quality design which will mitigate the amenity effect associated with this change. This can be achieved through the diverse range of design tools contained in the Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines which, when undertaken together, provide a cohesive response to mitigating the visual amenity effects on State Highway 1. The range of tools in the guidelines are summarised below;

Building design:

- Avoid excessive and large expanses of building walls that are visible from the street by reducing the scale of the walls and providing interest through articulation of the building form, detailing and the use of contrasting materials and textures.
- Avoid bulky or highly detailed roof forms and visual clutter on the roofs and use neutral tones and textures that do not compete (and thereby contrast) with the natural colours of the existing landscape.
- Provide amenity planting within the 5m strip along the State Highway boundary and provide additional planting to screen loading bays, service areas, and mitigate large expanses of building wall and large parking areas.

### **Victoria Road height and boundary set back**

Victoria Road is an important arterial route leading directly into the centre of Cambridge. A potential rail corridor (currently used as a shared path) and Laurent Road follow the eastern side of the road from its intersection with Hautapu Road toward SH1 essentially creating a large-scale movement corridor for vehicles, walkers and cyclists.

This section of Victoria Road currently has little visual cohesion and legibility as expansive rural views on the east side contrast sharply with existing light industrial and agricultural retail development that directly fronts the western boundary. Existing vegetation patterns here provide little to address the lack of visual cohesion experienced along the existing road as mature trees are limited to small mature tree groups, specimen trees and a brief line of avenue trees which are limited in location to the area near between the Hautapu Cemetery and the intersection with Hautapu Road.

In relation to the Victoria Road corridor the Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines include;

- Feature entry points from Victoria Road and into the campus, clearly legible building entrances and appropriately designed frontages to enable positive interactions with areas of public space and, restrictions to avoid service areas, external storage and heavy vehicle movements in the front setback.
- Amenity planting opportunities including a minimum 2.5m amenity strip along Victoria Road, street tree planting at minimum of 30m intervals along Laurent Avenue with further opportunities to integrate storm water and screen planting into an amenity asset if these features are required near to the street.
- Building design measure to reduce the visual impacts from scale, mass, form and colour through articulation of building masses, use of shadow patterns, variations in materials, colours and textures and the avoidance of roof clutter.

### **Summary**

The Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines provide a comprehensive suite of tools to enable a consistent, legible and cohesive response of built forms to address landscape and visual effects associated with the plan change. These tools include guidance on, location, scale, bulk and architectural design together with the integration of external spaces, stormwater and landscaping which collectively enable a high quality environment to be created within and around the site.

With specific reference to the proposed height limit setback change from 100 to 40m the additional visual amenity effects on State Highway 1 can be mitigated by design solutions that reduce the apparent scale and mass of buildings, whereas along Victoria Road the urban design and landscape guidelines provides a comprehensive range of solutions that enable the creation of an activated frontage to the road that provides a strong consistent identity which is currently lacking.