
**URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT:
RETIREMENT VILLAGE
AT 32A HATHAWAY AVENUE, HUTT CITY**

FOR

SUMMERSET

BY

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APRIL 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines an independent assessment of a proposal for a 247-unit retirement village on a 2.93ha site at 32A Hathaway Avenue, Hutt City. The village includes basement car parking, landscaping, and numerous buildings ranging from 1 to 5 storeys tall. The units are a combination of care-based and independent apartments, and memory care units. The development includes communal indoor and outdoor amenities, and 235 car parking spaces.

The key conclusions of this report are that:

- ▶ Following on from Private Plan Change 35, the Applicant has undertaken a ground-up redesign including urban design input from the outset. The result is a substantially superior design strategy than the original 'master plan' that guided PPC 35.
- ▶ The proposal includes a type and scale of development clearly different to the predominantly detached 1-to-2 storey dwellings in the neighbourhood. This is not of itself inherently adverse or inappropriate but can only be accommodated due to the uncharacteristically large size (and in particular depth) of the site that allows additional building scale to be mitigated by setbacks and separation distances, and the creation of a series of internal building height tiers - or steps - up and away from the residential and school boundaries.
- ▶ The distribution of building mass and bulk across the site follows the site's opportunities and constraints, in particular the placement of lower height and separated buildings around the southern and eastern boundaries.
- ▶ The configuration of taller buildings adjacent to the northern stop-bank boundary includes a variety of heights and setbacks so as to avoid creation of a solid building wall in the event that a public walkway may occur along the stop bank's top in the future.
- ▶ The façade design includes modulation, variation, glazed circulation cores, and projections/recesses (including balconies) that in conjunction with the materiality proposed mitigates the potential effects of building scale and dominance.
- ▶ A combination of separation distances; the placement of proposed buildings; orientation of outlook spaces from units; proposed landscaping; existing / proposed fences and screening vegetation; and the existing orientation of buildings and outdoor spaces on neighbouring sites will ensure that shading effects, visual privacy effects and adverse overlooking are avoided or mitigated.
- ▶ The proposal will provide adequate visual permeability across the site as it relates to public places and privately owned adjacent sites.
- ▶ The proposal includes an acceptable internal amenity outcome including how units and buildings relate to internal access ways and provide pedestrian amenity.
- ▶ The proposal will have both positive and adverse urban design effects, and any adverse urban design effects would be at worst minor.
- ▶ On the basis of the above and subject to the recommendations set out in this report, **consent could be granted on urban design grounds.**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines an independent assessment of a proposal for a 247-unit retirement village on a 2.93ha site at 32A Hathaway Avenue, Hutt City. The village includes basement car parking, landscaping, and numerous buildings ranging from 1 to 5 storeys tall. The units are a combination of care-based and independent apartments, and memory care care. The development includes communal indoor and outdoor amenities, and 235 car parking spaces.

The application has been made by Summerset Villages (Lower Hutt) Ltd.

The report has been written to assist the assessment of the application. To that end it has been tailored to relate to the relevant planning matters raised by the Hutt City District Plan. Of particular relevance are the provisions of the General Residential Activity Area (“GRAA”) as varied by Private Plan Change 35.

A separate resource management planning assessment should however be relied on to establish the overall merits of the application, including satisfaction of the relevant District Plan matters.

2. SCOPE AND INVOLVEMENT

Ian Munro has been engaged to provide an independent urban design assessment of the proposal. Ian Munro has been consulted during the design process and offered suggestions as the project developed. However, the design decisions made by the Applicant’s design team have been its own and it has included such further considerations as environmental engineering, commercial feasibility, resource management planning, and traffic engineering.

Notwithstanding this, Ian Munro identified and/or subsequently supported the following key design decisions that led to the current proposal:

- › the general massing strategy around the provision and location of building heights on the site;
- › orientation of a central ‘void’ above the low-height entrance / common services building to retain a key visual connection to the western hills as viewed from the Boulcott Primary School;
- › the design approach taken to the 1 and 2-storey buildings adjacent to the southern and eastern site boundaries;
- › the configuration of building faces and setbacks relating to the northern site boundary and the river stop bank;

- ▶ the use of residentially-familiar pitched roof forms and gables as part of the articulation strategy for larger buildings; and
- ▶ the general approach taken to materiality and façade finishes for the larger proposed buildings.

The process followed to undertake this urban design assessment is as follows:

1. unaccompanied as well as whole-of-design-team site visits, in order to understand the location, characteristics and context of the site, were undertaken. These took in local streets and the site's boundaries;
2. experience from the Private Plan Change 35 process was reflected on with the design team, as well as a review of the PPC35 plan provisions;
3. a number of design meetings were attended, often weekly, and feedback was given as the design developed;
4. the Applicant's proposed 'final draft' plans were reviewed;
5. a pre-application meeting with Council staff was attended;
6. "final" plans were received and assessed including photo-simulations, visual assessments, and a series of shading diagrams; and
7. this report was prepared.

The plans relied on for this assessment were prepared by ASC Architects and Designgroup Stapleton Elliot (including a Design Statement), and are labelled "Somerset Boulcott Village Lower Hutt", dated November 2017. Shading assessment and diagrams were from Spencer Holmes Ltd, dated 14 November 2017. Photo-simulations were provided from Stantiall Studio Ltd, and a visual assessment of these from Kamo Marsh Ltd, dated 30 September 2017, was also considered.

Ian Munro has also been advised that the Applicant owns the following properties that adjoin the proposed development site:

- ▶ 10, 12, 14, 28 and 30A Hathaway Avenue

In addition, the Applicant has purchased and on-sold the following properties making them subject to 'no objections' covenants:

- ▶ 24A and 26A Hathaway Avenue

I have also been advised that written approval forms have been received from the owners of the following properties:

- ▶ 2/3 Boulcott Street
- ▶ 16, 18, 24, 24A, 28, 30A, and 32 Hathaway Avenue
- ▶ Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Club

No consideration of urban design effects on these sites has been had, pursuant to sections 95E(3)(a) and 104(3)(a)(ii) of the RMA, although for completeness a description of the application as it relates to the above sites has been included where relevant.

In addition, a separate resource consent has been granted to enable redevelopment of the sites at 10-14 Hathaway Avenue (currently a large car park previously serving the Golf Clubhouse) into 4 units. I have been advised that this consent is intended to be implemented by the Applicant and it has been considered as part of the existing environment.

3. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

I have identified an urban design framework to assess the proposal against. It is based upon:

- ▶ the provisions of the Hutt City District Plan GRAA, in particular Policies 4A1.2.1(l) and (m); and
- ▶ the provisions of the Hutt City District Plan Medium Density Housing Guideline (Appendix 18 of the GRAA).

Based on my review of the above, the following are the urban design considerations relevant to the proposal:

1. development adjacent to a Residential Activity Area boundary should be compatible, in a positive way, with the scale, location and form of development on existing Residential Activity Area properties (*District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policies 4A.1.2.1(l)(i) and (iii), and 4A.1.2.1(m)(i)*);
2. development adjacent to the Boulcott School boundary should be of a scale and form that responds, in a positive way, to the existing scale and intensity of development on the school site (*District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policies 4A.1.2.1(l)(ii) and (iii), and 4A.1.2.1(m)(i)*);
3. an appropriate urban design response to the wider context so that the coherence of the adjoining neighbourhood's urban form is not adversely affected to an inappropriate degree (*District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policy 4A.1.2.1(m)(ii)*);
4. appropriate visual permeability across the site should be achieved (*District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policy 4A.1.2.1(m)(iii)*);
5. an attractive and well-designed edge treatment when viewed from the new stop bank should be achieved, which avoids buildings that have inappropriate length or

mass (*District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policy 4A.1.2.1(m)(iv)*);

6. special consideration should be given to landscape design that manages visual impact including on edges where existing vegetation affords privacy (*District Plan restriction of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(v)*); and
7. the degree to which the proposal meets the Design Guide for Medium Density Housing (*District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(iii), and also 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(c) to the extent that the Design Guide addresses urban design considerations relating to on-site amenity*).

4. SITE ANALYSIS

SITE ANALYSIS

The following are the site's key characteristics:

Subject Site

- ▶ The site is an irregularly shaped and gently undulating 2.93ha in area. It has vehicle access to both Boulcott Street and Military Road, as well as an additional connection to Hathaway Avenue between 32 and 34 Hathaway Avenue.
- ▶ Despite these access points, the site is best described as a rear site given its lack of street frontage width or presence.
- ▶ The site is a former golf course which, through Wellington Regional Council flood protection works, has become developable and through Private Plan Change 35, zoned for development in the General Residential Activity Area (“**GRAA**”). This framework provides for all of the ‘standard’ development outcomes on the site that the GRAA enables (refer to Appendix 3 of the AEE), and is subject to additional provisions that apply if ‘housing for the elderly’ is proposed.
- ▶ The site is largely clear of buildings and vegetation although numerous trees do dot the site in occasional groups. The only existing building on the site is the former golf clubhouse, which is proposed to be removed.
- ▶ The site is divided into two main portions, a large triangular central section and a smaller, rectangular eastern section. These are joined by a narrow pinch point.
 - ▶ The central triangular section is deepest opposite Boulcott Primary School. In front of the school the site's depth ranges from 50m to 110m.
 - ▶ The eastern rectangular section is as shallow as 8.5m at its pinch point, broadening out to approximately 50m depth.

- ▶ There are no barriers to development of the site from an urban design perspective, and the site enjoys an excellent north-facing, sunny aspect with views (once the viewer is above the height of the stop bank) across the golf course, Hutt River plain and the western hills.

To the South

- ▶ South of the site are properties zoned GRAA at 1, 3/3, 5A and 3/7 Boulcott Street. These are detached dwellings in a variety of styles. With the exception of 1 Boulcott Street (where a written approval has been obtained), these units are rear sites, sitting behind rows of other units (all detached and all accessed from Boulcott Street). The length of boundary interface with these properties is 116m.
- ▶ Next to these is the Boulcott Primary School. It contains a number of 1-storey buildings and open playing fields. Views of the site from Boulcott Street and across the playing fields are possible. The length of boundary interface with the school is 152m.
- ▶ Boulcott Street is currently edged by predominantly 1-storey dwellings at this time. The drop off / parking requirements of the Boulcott School dominate the design of the road reserve, with an extended strip of 90-degree turn-in parking bays along the street's northern side, and other traffic management or calming measures also applied relatively liberally.

To the East

- ▶ To the east are detached residential dwellings on Hathaway Avenue. These units are zoned Special Residential Activity Area ("**SRAA**"). These are 32, 22A, 20, 18, 16, 8, 6, 4 and 2 Hathaway Avenue. Sites at 10, 12 and 14 Hathaway Avenue are also here. These are an existing car park that have consent for a residential development. These sites are owned by the Applicant. Sites at 30A, and 28, Hathaway Avenue also adjoin the site but are owned by the Applicant. 26A and 24A Hathaway Avenue also adjoin the site but are subject to a 'no objections' covenant in favour of the Applicant. The owners of 32, 16, 8 and 4 Hathaway Avenue have provided written approval to the proposal.
- ▶ All of these (excluding 10-14 Hathaway Avenue) are detached dwellings exhibiting a variety of conditions, styles and appearances. They are a mixture of 1 and 2-storey buildings. The majority of properties have existing solid fence barriers along the common boundary with the subject site, often including mature or semi-mature planting for additional screening.
- ▶ The length of boundary interface with these properties is 336m, of which 151m is either under the control of the Applicant or subject to a 'no objections' covenant.

To the West and North

- ▶ To the immediate west and north of the site is the recently relocated stop bank for the Hutt River, and the Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Course. This is an iconic

open space and urban form feature that bisects Hutt City through the CBD to its northern extent at Stokes Valley / Haywards and Manor Park.

- › Currently, Boulcott Street ends at a cul-de-sac that gives access to the site, and pedestrian access to the existing walkway that goes west, but could in the future be a logical point of public access to any public walkways associated with the stop bank behind the subject site.

Wider neighbourhood

- › The wider neighbourhood is a well-established residential area comprised predominantly of 1 to 2-storey detached family dwellings. The typical lot frontage width is 13.5m and the typical dwelling frontage width is 10m. Often properties have visually permeable or low-height front fencing.
- › Despite this, there is a wide variety of dwelling styles evident throughout both the GRAA and SRAA areas.
- › The topography is effectively flat and the historic road network is a deformed grid, offering a variety of walking routes.
- › The above characteristics are common of pre-WW2 development patterns, and are in my experience a key reason why communities find them more memorable and enjoyable than the looser, cul-de-sac and often 'placeless' suburban estates developed between 1950-2000.
- › A wide variety of mature vegetation is obvious within the streetscapes, often privately owned but of sufficient size to lend substantial amenity to the streets.
- › At the Boulcott Street and High Street intersection is a small node of shops, and immediately south of that is the substantial Hutt Hospital. The hospital is a flat and direct 450m walk from the subject site and this would be regarded as a convenient walking distance. The Hospital is up to 7-storeys tall and is a visually dominant building from all viewing directions.
- › From the Hospital, it is an approximately 5min drive to the Hutt CBD.
- › Overall, I would characterise the wider neighbourhood as a well-established inner-city suburb with a rich character and high amenity values. Subject to ongoing growth pressures into the future, its flatness, well-formed block structure, proximity to major open space, healthcare, schools and the CBD, would make it a text-book location for targeted intensification (although the existing GRAA provisions do not promote this at this time).

5. DESIGN RESPONSE

The Architectural Statement prepared by ASC Architects / Design Group Stapleton Elliot outlines the proposal and I agree with that. In summary:

- ▶ the proposal is based on a series of height steps upwards away from the southern and eastern (residential and school) boundaries and towards the northern (stop bank) boundary. In addition to this progression, height has been successively concentrated inwards from the eastern and western boundaries, creating a clear concentration in the centre of the main part of the site, where the set back away from the adjacent residential and school properties is the greatest;
- ▶ the first 'step' consists of a line of 1 (x17 units in 17 buildings, each up to 4.5m tall) and 2-storey (x16 units in 4 buildings, each up to 7.3m tall), set back at least 5m from the boundary. These buildings comply with all relevant GRAA bulk and location controls, and have been designed to have less adverse effects on neighbours in terms of building bulk and proximity than the GRAA typically or normally provides (i.e. a placement of consistently 2-storey buildings);
- ▶ the 5m setback is proposed to be landscaped. This is an attempt to provide a softened screen into the site, and the Kamo March Ltd landscape assessment is referred to;
- ▶ behind this is the main access way spine through the site. This connects Boulcott Street to Military Road and has been designed to have the characteristics of a common driveway rather than a formal road so as to intentionally discourage unnecessary through traffic. The through link meanders deliberately through the site so as to avoid the characteristics of a long linear road corridor and reinforce very slow (<30km/h) vehicle speeds. Visitor parking is provided periodically along this route;
- ▶ the access link has been designed to accommodate pedestrian and mobility scooter traffic by way of a shared carriageway. This is relatively common in retirement villages in light of the need to still cater for low-speed mobility scooters along the vehicular carriageways anyways (it is not desirable that they share with pedestrian-only footpaths);
- ▶ all buildings incorporate pitched roofs in one attempt to retain a residentially-compatible form and expression of function;
- ▶ behind this is the second row of buildings. Starting from the site's eastern end:
 - ▶ there is a 2-x storey 4-unit building up to 7.3m tall. This is the first building seen from 2, 4 and 6 Hathaway Avenue. It is 'skewed' rather than parallel to these properties and varies from 16m to 35m back from them;
 - ▶ Block F is a 3-storey apartment building up to 11.5m tall. It accommodates 27 x 2-bedroom apartments in a 'double loaded' configuration of access corridor

along the south and units facing north towards the view and away from the residential dwellings to the south. This building is set back 24.5m back from the residential boundary and provides its car parking in a row along the ground level front and has a single, central pedestrian access. This building is 67m long and is configured to sit opposite 10-14 Hathaway Avenue (owned by the Applicant) and of note 8 Hathaway Avenue¹;

- ▶ west of Block F, taking advantage of a small wedge of the site as it transitions into its main pinch point, is a 1-unit, 1-storey cottage. This building is up to 4.5m tall;
- ▶ from the western end of Block F to the northernmost 7.3m tall 2-storey building within the site's main area is a 127m long gap where only 4.5m tall 1-storey buildings, and open spaces are proposed. While the site's pinch point is a natural constraint on buildings in this space, I consider that substantially greater building mass could have been proposed here. My understanding is that limiting this 'elbow' of the site to 4.5m tall 1-storey buildings and open spaces only is a recognition of the SRAA properties in Hathaway Avenue and their status as the 'closest' sites to the stop bank and open space north of the site. This is proposed as an area of visual permeability across (through) the site that has been made as large as possible. For instance, an earlier design test that was both plausible and market-attractive was to have the access link 'hug' the boundary east of the pinch point in front of 22A, 20 and 18 Hathaway Avenue before kinking northwards to its proposed alignment in front of Block F. The eastern-most 1-storey duplex currently proposed adjacent to 18 Hathaway Avenue then sat north of that access link, 10m from the boundary in a 2-storey, 4-unit building. The 1-storey cottage immediately west of Block F was in that scenario also a 2-storey tall duplex unit. Those buildings would have however impacted on views and presented other retirement village nuisance to these SRAA property boundaries, and lessened the quality of the site's 'elbow' acting as a significant and substantially open area between these SRAA properties and the northern view. This was not supported on urban design grounds;
- ▶ the next building in the second tier is Block D. This is a 68m long and very linear 3-storey building accommodating 14 serviced apartments, 7 premium serviced apartments and 30 care rooms. Like Block F, this building is 'double-loaded' with units on each side of a central access corridor, except for the ground level where resident parking is proposed. This building is up to 11.1m tall. The building is opposite a varied boundary alignment that results in its distance from adjacent properties ranging between 24m – 50m (Boulcott School), and 28m (30A Hathaway Avenue, owned by the Applicant) to 55m (32 Hathaway Avenue). In respect of 32 Hathaway Avenue, although Block D extends as far as 55m back from it, it also comes to 28m of that property;

¹ It is noted that from 8 Hathaway Avenue views of Block F will be possible given its height and that a 1-storey rather than 2-storey building has been proposed at the boundary interface. My analysis is that a 2-storey building would be sufficient to entirely screen views of Block F from this property.

- ▶ adjoining Block D is the 7m tall, 2-storey formal entry and resident facilities building (Block E). This is positioned to run generally north-south, with its narrow end facing towards the southern boundary. This building is screened from the eastern SRAA properties by other proposed buildings, but would be visible from Boulcott School. This building has been kept at 2-storeys in height so as to help separate taller buildings within the site to either side, but also form a visual permeability across the site from the Boulcott School fields through to the top of the hills further north. This building has 2 pedestrian entrances, one at either end;
- ▶ west of the services block is Block C. This is a 4-storey building 13.2m tall that accommodates 4 memory care care units, 6 premium memory care care units, 14 serviced apartments and 20 premium serviced apartments (44 units in total). This building is 57m long and almost parallel to the boundary with Boulcott School. It is set back 37m – 50m from that boundary. This building has a small area of car parking in front of it;
- ▶ west of Block C is Block A. This is a 11.5m tall, 3-storey building. Like Blocks D and F, this building has a double loaded 'upper' layout, with the ground level being single-loaded and accommodating a row of car parking and a central pedestrian entrance point. This block contains 5 x 1-bedroom units and 15x 2-bedroom units. This building will be visible from Boulcott School (minimum 24.5m setback and behind a 1-storey cottage), 3/7 Boulcott Street (minimum 16.5m setback), and 5A Boulcott Street (minimum 10m setback);
- ▶ west of Block A is a 4-unit, 2-storey building up to 7.3m tall. This building will be visible from 1 and 3/3 Boulcott Street and is effectively the 'front' building that will be seen from these properties. It varies in setback from 8m (1 Boulcott Street) to 14m (3/3 Boulcott Street). It is 26.5m long;
- ▶ a small standalone pump station building is also proposed in this western end of the site;
- ▶ behind the second row of buildings, and the tallest buildings on the site, is Block B. This is a 'cranked' building split into two sections. The western section runs parallel to the northern stop bank boundary and is 49m long. The eastern section is rotated so as to be offset from the northern boundary and it is 47m long. The building accommodates a basement car park and 5-storeys above that. In total the building provides 62 units, being 10 x 1-bedroom units, 47 x 2-bedroom units, and 5 x 3-bedroom units. This building, given its total 98m dimension, has also been designed to include a varied height where by only the western section extends to 5-storeys / 18.5m height. The eastern section is limited to 3-storeys / 11.1m height. This has the effect of expressing the overall building as two separate but adjoining buildings rather than one continuous 98m long building with a bend in it; and
- ▶ between Blocks D and B is a communal open space area including a bowling green and petanque court. This space helps separate units from one another so as to manage internal amenity (privacy) effects.

Overall the proposal is for 247 units or rooms broken down as follows:

- ▶ 15 x 1-bedroom units
- ▶ 89 x 2-bedroom units
- ▶ 5 x 3-bedroom units
- ▶ 4 x memory care units
- ▶ 6 x premium memory care units
- ▶ 29 x serviced apartments
- ▶ 27 x premium serviced apartments
- ▶ 30 x care rooms
- ▶ 18 x 1-storey villa or cottage units
- ▶ 24 x low-rise apartments.

6. ASSESSMENT

The starting point for my analysis has been understanding the ‘anticipated’ environment for the site based on the GRAA zone and the typical outcomes it provides for, as a means of benchmarking the order and nature of environmental effects (especially on adjacent properties) that the District Plan has enabled. This was developed through the PPC35 hearing by Mr Hudson Moody and remains in my view a useful starting point. In summary, the site could be developed as a conventional residential subdivision, likely including properties ‘backing onto’ the common residential and school boundaries around the site’s southern and eastern boundaries. These could accommodate a variety of dwelling sizes and shapes, up to the 8m height limit (i.e. 2-storeys).

This is not as I understand the matter a literal permitted baseline, however it forms an ‘anticipated planning baseline’ that I have relied on under s.104(1)(c) to help pragmatically compare the effects of the proposal against. I have done this because while the existing environment of the site is vacant and it was historically used as a golf course, the District Plan does not intend that it remain so given its GRAA zoning.

DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO A RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY AREA BOUNDARY SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE, IN A POSITIVE WAY, WITH THE SCALE, LOCATION AND FORM OF DEVELOPMENT ON EXISTING RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY AREA PROPERTIES

District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policies 4A.1.2.1(l)(i) and (iii), and 4A.1.2.1(m)(i).

I consider that this matter is limited to that part of the proposal that is adjacent to the relevant site boundaries, rather than the entire proposal or subject site itself. I also consider that “compatible” in respect of new and existing buildings does not mean “the same”; it means “the same or comparable”, even if bigger (or smaller). To this end, I consider that it is generally accepted that a “rule of 2 applies” in urban design practice, whereby for a 2-storey building, another building up to 4-storeys could be generally considered compatible (subject to its design). In PPC35 and in light of the known preference of the Applicant for a large-scale retirement village, I consider that this should be reduced to a “rule of 1”, whereby in the context of a GRAA provision for 2-storey houses, a new building up to 3-storeys could be compatible depending on its design and placement. The same proportionality applies, in my view, in terms of horizontal mass and building length.

I consider that the proposal is successful in this respect and will result in a compatible, positive interface with the residential boundary, including with reference to the photo-simulations and analysis provided by Stantiall Ltd / Kamo Marsh Ltd, and the shading analysis provided by Spencer Holmes Ltd.

In terms of the Boulcott Street properties (1, 3/3, 5A, 3/7 Boulcott Street)

- ▶ The interface proposed with 1 Boulcott Street is almost entirely open space (affected only by boundary fencing and landscaping). The proposal is for a solid 1.8m fence and landscaping. Provided that the fence is constructed as a solid acoustic fence, I do not consider that this neighbour would be affected to a greater extent than if the subject site were developed as a standard GRAA subdivision; in any scenario this interface is likely to act as a landscaped vehicle access way. While views from this site to the southern corner of a 7.3m / 2-storey tall building will be possible, it will be set back at least 8m from the boundary and as such will not be visually dominant or particularly conspicuous. I would not be supportive of tall light poles to provide for night time use of the vehicular access way; these should be low-level bollard type lights so as to avoid nuisance for the neighbour, and set to the lowest illuminance level that is operationally safe. Overall, I consider that any adverse urban design effects here would be less than minor, and less than could otherwise eventuate based on the GRAA rules for subdivision and development.
- ▶ For 3/3 Boulcott Street, the interface will consist of solid (acoustic) fencing, the access link road, and landscaping. Behind that, and set back 8m-14m from the boundary, will be a 7.3m / 2-storey tall building. I consider that the acoustic fence and landscaping will provide an adequate mitigation of the vehicle access way's proximity (in conjunction with a controlled <30km/h speed environment). In terms of the scale, form and compatibility of the building, it is at the larger end of what

could be reasonably expected for detached houses and is clearly larger than the existing Boulcott Street units. However, its set back and off-set orientation will be sufficient to adequately mitigate its additional scale. I also note that with some design changes this building could be turned into two close but detached smaller buildings that could be closer to the grain of existing units including on 3 Boulcott Street. However I consider that doing so would achieve little real difference in urban design effects as they relate to 3/3 Boulcott Street and I therefore do not consider it necessary or especially desirable. Overall, I consider that the proposal will have no greater, and possibly less, effects than a standard GRAA alternative solution (i.e. the access road could have hugged the northern site boundary, with a row of standard lots and houses adjacent to the common boundary - which is a common 'backs facing backs' urban design response). In other words, a smaller but closer building, still at 2-storeys, could result in the same net effect of building size, scale and mass as is currently proposed relative to 3/3 Boulcott Street. Overall, I consider that any adverse urban design effects here would be less than minor.

- ▶ In terms of 5A Boulcott Street, this property will have a direct view of Block A. I consider that this property is the most affected of all adjacent sites in terms of this specific assessment issue. Block A is not a compatible building scale, mass or form due to its combination of height (up to 11.5m) and length (47m). However, it is in my view necessary to consider the off-set orientation of Block A and its horizontal setback from 5A Boulcott Street. The setback varies from 10m to 37m. The relevance of this is that relative to 5A Boulcott St, the proposal as a whole and Block A in particular will not be substantially different in terms of the actual proportion of view occupied by buildings for the neighbour than a smaller but much closer 2-storey house. Because of this, I consider that for this property a minimum-acceptable solution has been proposed and that any adverse urban design effects would be minor, once the visual mitigation of landscaping is also considered.
- ▶ In terms of 3/7 Boulcott Street, from this property views of Block A and a 4.5m / 1-storey tall cottage will be possible. I consider that the 1-storey cottage is of itself a very compatible and appropriate response, with considerably less mass and scale than a typical 2-storey GRAA alternative could result in. In terms of Block A, my analysis for 5A Boulcott Street applies except that for 3/7 Boulcott Street the setback distances between a viewer and Block A are greater than for 5A Boulcott Street (16m – 37m), with a corresponding reduction in adverse urban design effects attributable purely to the juxtaposition of building scale and form. I consider that for this site, an adequate urban design compatibility has been achieved also noting that the 4.5m / 1-storey tall cottage will block or screen some views of Building A, mitigating and masking its true length and scale.
- ▶ In respect of all of the above properties, the relevant assessment matter is that the proposal development be compatible "in a positive way". I consider that this means that the placement of buildings should show a superior outcome than a standard GRAA development would, including clearly identifiable positive effects. I consider the proposal has done this as follows:

- ▶ the proposed buildings, other than a 1-storey cottage adjacent to 3/7 Boulcott Street, are set back substantially more than is the norm in a GRAA subdivision and more than the 5m minimum determined through PPC35. This will allow more daylight, sunlight, and spaciousness at the residential boundary. It will also result in less building dominance (even though some of the proposed buildings are much larger than a standard residential house), less overlooking and less visual privacy nuisance. The placement of the access way adjacent to the boundary helps to push buildings away in a manner that will not result in a substitute of adverse urban design effects on neighbours;
- ▶ building setbacks ranging from 8m minimum to 47m are rare in a standard residential setting and this will considerably mitigate potential visual privacy and noise (human speech etc.) nuisances;
- ▶ the incorporation of a landscaped area and acoustic fence is superior to the minimum GRAA outcome of no boundary screening in terms of privacy and comfort for neighbours; and
- ▶ a variety of different building designs and forms have been proposed including 1 and 2-storeys units; in new subdivisions it is increasingly common for a single 2-storey house design to be used on equally shaped and minimum-sized lots.

In terms of the Hathaway Avenue properties (excluding those that have provided written approvals) (22A, 20, 8, 6, 4 and 2 Hathaway Avenue)

- ▶ For 22A and 20 Hathaway Avenue, these properties are proposed to substantially face an open space condition with only a solid boundary fence and landscaping proposed. In this instance, I would support less landscaping so as to maximise the openness and view enjoyed from those properties. I consider that for these properties, a very compatible outcome will eventuate and that any adverse urban design effects would be less than minor.
- ▶ For 8 and 6 Hathaway Avenue, from these properties views over the 4.5m / 1-storey tall 'edge' buildings to the long 11.5m / 3-storey tall Block F building will be possible. I consider that 8 Hathaway Avenue is the more affected by views of Block F than 6 Hathaway Avenue. Block F is not of a compatible length with the scale and form of existing residential development however the placement of the building relative to 8 and 6 Hathaway Avenue makes it very unlikely that the full length of Block F would be conspicuous or obvious given that it extends to the west of these properties for most of its length (the building is primarily opposite 10-14 Hathaway Ave, owned by the Applicant). That the 11.5m tall Block F is set back from 8 and 6 Hathaway Avenue by a minimum of 24.5m is also very material to understanding the net building dominance effects likely. Overall, I consider that a minimum-acceptable compatibility has been achieved here and that any adverse urban design effects would be minor.
- ▶ For 4 Hathaway Avenue, this property will face a 7.3m / 2-storey tall building. The building has been offset from the boundary line and this will mitigate the

adverse visual effects of its full length. The boundary setback between this site and the building of between 16m – 31m also substantially mitigates the effects of its size. Overall, I consider that with a solid boundary fence and suitable landscaping, an appropriately compatible outcome will be achieved. I consider that any adverse urban design effects would be less than minor, and a smaller GRAA-compliant building much closer to the neighbour would be likely to result in greater adverse urban design effects than has been proposed.

- ▶ For 2 Hathaway Avenue, this property will experience the vehicular entranceway, and a part of a 7.3m / 2-storey tall building (16m back from the boundary). For this property, the majority of openness and views to the north will remain unaffected and overall, limited only by the addition of a solid acoustic fence. I consider that for this property an appropriate urban design compatibility has been achieved and that any adverse urban design effects would be less than minor.
- ▶ In respect of all of the above properties, the relevant assessment matter is that the proposal development be compatible “in a positive way”. I consider that this means that the placement of buildings should show a superior outcome than a standard GRAA development would, including clearly identifiable positive effects. I consider the proposal has done this as follows:
 - ▶ the proposed buildings are set back close to the 5m minimum determined through PPC35, but other than adjacent to 32 Hathaway Avenue are proposed to be 1-storey in height only with larger buildings set well back from the boundary. This will allow more daylight, sunlight, and spaciousness at the residential boundary. It will also result in less building dominance (even though some of the proposed buildings are much larger than a standard residential house), less overlooking and less visual privacy nuisance;
 - ▶ building setbacks ranging from 5m minimum to 31m (especially those greater than 8m) are rare in a standard residential setting and this will considerably mitigate potential visual privacy and noise (human speech etc.) nuisances;
 - ▶ the incorporation of a landscaped area and acoustic fence is superior to the minimum GRAA outcome of no boundary screening in terms of privacy and comfort for neighbours; and
 - ▶ the attempt to broaden the open space clear of buildings adjacent to 22A and 20 Hathaway Avenue has created a notably ‘light touch’ of development here.

I have also considered shading effects likely to result from the proposal in comparison with the previously identified “anticipated” baseline prepared for PPC35 by Mr Hudson Moody. I consider that the Spencer Holmes Ltd shading analysis demonstrates that the proposal’s shadows will be appropriate and compatible with a likely GRAA alternative.

In terms of the scale, form and appearance of the proposed boundary interfaces, I note

that the duplex buildings proposed are larger than would be likely for single dwellings. If these were all 2-storeys tall, I consider it very likely that their cumulative scale and spacing would not be appropriate. However, as most are only 4.5m / 1-storey tall and 5m (minimum) back from the boundary, they will have little impact on neighbours over and above boundary fencing and associated landscape screening. Because of this, I consider that an appropriate combination of building lengths, heights, spacings (gaps between buildings) and forms has been proposed and a varied boundary condition will result.

Overall, I consider that the proposal will result in a positive and compatible outcome relative to the adjoining residential properties within the GRAA and SRAA. 'Edge' buildings have a clearly residential character, and have been proposed to be clad in typical dwelling materials including brick veneer or timber / weatherboard finish and iron profiled roofing. Doors and windows suitably articulate the elevations. I have reached this conclusion in terms of the overall boundaries as a whole as well as the individual properties. Any adverse urban design effects would be at worst minor on the basis of the combination of building configurations, placements, setbacks and lengths. Where buildings are proposed of a scale that is not directly compatible with the adjacent residential development, the adverse effects of this have been appropriately mitigated by way of substantial horizontal setbacks. I consider that the photo simulations for visual location 5 and 6 substantiate this conclusion.

The following recommendations are made to ensure the overall scale of adverse urban design effects remain appropriate:

- ▶ solid acoustic-rated fencing should line the boundaries with adjacent properties between 1.8m - 2m high. The residential-side of the fence should be painted in a dark / recessive colour such as black, dark green or brown, although in the alternative, specific colours identified by any neighbour would also be appropriate;
- ▶ a final landscape plan should be submitted for Council approval prior to the release of a building consent, showing how provision for at least 1 tree opposite each residential property has been made, with a mature height of between 3m – 4m. For 22A and 20 Hathaway Avenue, no landscaping with a mature height greater than 2.5m should be provided;
- ▶ the vehicular access way through the site should be lit only by low-height bollard lights, at the lowest safe operational illuminance level. This detail should be confirmed by a lighting engineer at the time of building consent; and
- ▶ the 1 and 2-storey buildings adjacent to the boundary should have different roof and façade colours than the larger buildings on the site to differentiate them from one another and the larger buildings on the site. This will reinforce the character and scale 'softening' proposed at the boundary interface from existing activities and the 'main' buildings within the retirement village. A final materials and colour palette should be provided for Council approval prior to the release of building consent in this respect.

I have considered whether a more desirable outcome could be achieved by swapping some of the proposed two-storey buildings with the proposed one-storey buildings in

terms of more consistently configuring the two-storey buildings to sit opposite those adjoining sites that the Applicant controls or which are subject to 'no objections' covenants. This could bring a combination of both positive² and adverse³ effects to neighbours.

While I would not object to such a reconfiguration if the relevant landowners sought it, I do not consider there is an overall strong enough urban design argument to separately recommend or justify it – especially given that it may, in the view of individual neighbours, worsen their experience of the proposed retirement village.

DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO THE BOULCOTT SCHOOL BOUNDARY SHOULD BE OF A SCALE AND FORM THAT RESPONDS, IN A POSITIVE WAY, TO THE LOCATION AND FORM OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE SCHOOL SITE

District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policies 4A.1.2.1(l)(ii) and (iii), and 4A.1.2.1(m)(i).

I consider that this matter is limited to that part of the proposal that is adjacent to the relevant site boundaries, rather than the entire proposal or subject site itself.

I consider that the proposal is successful in this respect and will result in a compatible, positive interface with the school boundary. The interface condition is limited to 1 and 2-storey buildings (4.5m – 7.3m tall), and open space. The setback of taller buildings is substantial, with the closest 3-storey building (Block D) being 11.1m tall and 26.5m back from the boundary and the closest 4-storey building (Block C), 15.2m tall and 37m back. These are substantial distances relative to the additional height proposed for those buildings and I consider it is sufficient to mitigate potential dominance and visual effects possible as a result of the building sizes proposed.

In terms of the boundary fence with the school, a solid fence with landscaping inside the subject site is proposed and as the interface proposed is a 'back' condition, this is appropriate and conventional. I note that I would not be opposed to a visually permeable pool-type fence along the school boundary either in terms of promoting passive surveillance of the playing fields, however do not consider that any specific urban design effect of concern will arise in its absence.

Due to the size of the school site and playing fields, expansive views of the development will be possible and in this respect, this is the place where viewers outside the site will be able to appreciate multiple buildings in one consistent field of view. I consider that the photo simulations and analysis provided by Stantiall Ltd and Kamo Marsh Ltd (visual locations 1 and 2) confirms that a compatible interface will result. I consider that here the proposal's stepped approach to height reinforces the compatibility (lower height and smaller buildings) proposed at the boundary, as viewers will be able to see the obvious

² Specifically, greater openness and sunlight access, and less potential for overlooking.

³ Specifically, less screening of / more direct views to the taller building forms within the subject site and a less 'random' distribution of 1 and 2 storey buildings sitting within the townscape. A more concentrated row of taller 2-storey buildings could reinforce the edge between the GRAA / SRAA properties and the retirement village and this could weaken its integration with those edges.

layout approach of pushing the tallest buildings back and screened by intermediary buildings. Even though it results in more building height, the inclusion of pitched roof forms also helps to establish a residential, rather than commercial or institutional, character for the new development as viewed from the school.

I also note that while from the fields views of the taller and longer Block D will be possible, this is because of the decision to decrease building mass near the boundary by using 1-storey buildings. It would have been possible to substantially screen views of Block D by providing more 2-storey buildings near the school boundary. These could readily comply with the GRAA zone rules but this would, overall, be likely to result in more shading and more overlooking of the fields than is proposed. This is one reason why I have concluded that while views from the fields of Block D will be possible, this will still maintain the amenity values and other qualities of the playing fields.

Referring to my earlier comments on shading analysis, I consider that the proposal will not give rise to problematic or inappropriate shading effects on the school.

I also note my view that the proposal incorporates sufficient horizontal setbacks so that any privacy or overlooking effects on the school would be less than minor.

Overall, I consider that a compatible interface has been achieved and that any adverse urban design effects relating to the interface of the proposal with Boulcott School would be at worst minor, and to have been appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated. My only recommendation is that 'final' landscaping plan should include trees that will reach a mature height of between 3m – 5m at regular spacing (approximately every 10m) adjacent to the 7.3m / 2-storey tall buildings. The 'central' section of the boundary that includes the 2 x 1-storey duplex buildings should be limited to landscape screening with a maximum height of 3.5m so as to maximise the view above the central facilities building (Block E) between Blocks B and C.

AN APPROPRIATE URBAN DESIGN RESPONSE TO THE WIDER CONTEXT SO THAT THE COHERENCE OF THE ADJOINING NEIGHBOURHOOD'S URBAN FORM IS NOT ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO AN INAPPROPRIATE DEGREE

District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policy 4A.1.2.1(m)(ii).

I consider that the wording of the GRAA policy places a key parameter around my urban design analysis, specifically the words "...to an *inappropriate degree*." I consider that this contemplates that an outcome may be appropriate on the subject site that is not entirely or strictly "coherent" with the adjoining neighbourhood's urban form and as such, it would not be the correct urban design expectation to assess the proposal against.

I note that I have excluded from this analysis any effects of the proposal on the open space / stop bank to the north and west, which while adjoining the subject site is not part of what I consider the adjoining neighbourhood to be (i.e. the residential area comprised of GRAA and SRAA zones). I am also aware that the Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Club has provided written approval to the proposal and so in any event no consideration of urban design effects on that private property is in the first instance possible. Nonetheless,

I have considered the appropriateness of the proposal as it relates to the stop bank given it is going to be eventually transferred to Regional Council (i.e. public) ownership.

I have sought to identify the extent to which the coherence of the adjoining neighbourhood's urban form could be adversely affected by the proposal and then separately considered whether such effects would be appropriate or inappropriate with reference to the policy framework for the site established by PPC35, including its approach to building height and scale.

The neighbourhood is effectively flat and, in my view, it is very unlikely that public views of the proposal will occur beyond 75m distance of the site. Beyond that distance, other than people having an awareness that a large retirement village may be in the neighbourhood, I do not consider the proposal will have any material effect on the coherence of the adjoining neighbourhood or its amenity values.

Within 75m of the site, specifically the public spaces of Hathaway Avenue, Military Road, Boulcott Street and Boulcott School, I consider that the proposal will be sporadically visible although will in all cases be well separated and set back such that the proposed buildings would not be excessively dominant or conspicuous. For example, in visual location 4 the heights proposed will appear consistent with the heights of existing buildings and not create an antagonistic or different character element into the view.

I consider that in all cases the proposal will be less obvious within the neighbourhood than the existing Hutt Hospital. That the proposal is well away from any road axis is also helpful, i.e. along Boulcott Street and Military Roads themselves, the proposal will have no discernible presence.

The key viewing points are from Boulcott Street outside Boulcott School looking between existing buildings and across the fields, within the Boulcott School fields, and intermittently from Hathaway Avenue, in particular the shared driveway serving 30A and 28 Hathaway Avenue. From these locations, the separation distances that apply are 174m (Boulcott Street to the 11.1m tall Block D) or 205m (Boulcott Street to the 18.5m tall Block B); 113m (Hathaway Ave to the 11.1m tall section of Block B); or 26.5m (northern edge of Boulcott School fields to the 11.1m tall Block D) or 65.5m (northern edge of Boulcott School fields to the 18.5m tall Block B).

In terms of Boulcott Street, the more east-west alignment of buildings will potentially present more building mass that could be seen. However, the substantial horizontal setbacks that apply will make the retirement village appear to be a large development adjacent to the neighbourhood rather than a central focal point that visually dominates or detracts from that neighbourhood. I consider that Boulcott Street itself will continue to be visually dominated by and characterised by the existing buildings and school that front it.

In terms of Boulcott School, I consider that from the fields the retirement village will be obvious and plainly visible. However even from the northernmost boundary, there is still a substantial setback proposed between the fields and the tallest Block B such that the amenity and quality of the fields as a spacious open area for play and larger events will be maintained. The main change relative to the school is its historical views of the western hills, which are proposed to be substantially removed and which will be considered in the following topic.

In terms of Hathaway Avenue, I consider that the additional height and building scale proposed is offset by the proposed setbacks and limited views across the long faces of building elevations that will be possible. I consider that Hathaway Avenue, noting its significance as part of the SRAA zone, will remain dominated and characterised by the existing parade of houses and established landscaping that fronts it.

It is also notable that although for buildings that are at times substantially larger than any family home could ever be, the buildings have been designed to be visually varied, vertically sectioned and to include pitched roof forms (even though this increases total height). These reinforce a residential activity on the site, and this is in my view more consistent with neighbourhood coherence than a more commercial or institutional flat roof outcome would be.

On balance, the proposal offers no notable positive effect as it relates to neighbourhood coherence, on the basis that it is based on a type and scale of development that is fundamentally different to the existing detached dwelling-based neighbourhood. Such an outcome is implicit in the PPC35 GRAA provisions and I have instead turned my mind to what extent the proposal undermines existing neighbourhood coherence. I consider that where the proposal's taller buildings are visible (including long buildings Blocks A, D and F), they will not be highly conspicuous or visually dominant other than from the Boulcott School fields.

Overall, I consider that the proposal will sit adequately within its context. Although for a very different scale and type of development than is the predominant norm, the village will have limited direct visibility and will beyond 75m-100m from the site have effectively no perceptible bulk, scale or form effects on the existing neighbourhood's coherence. I support the design inclusion of generous pitched roof forms on the buildings even though they add to the overall height and visibility of the proposed buildings. Lower height but more institutional or commercial flat roofed buildings would, overall, result in less height-related adverse effects but disproportionately greater character-related adverse effects.

In conclusion, the proposal will result in adverse character and urban form effects on the adjoining neighbourhood that will be at worst minor (focused around the Boulcott School playing fields), which have been appropriately mitigated primarily by way of building placement and design.

APPROPRIATE VISUAL PERMEABILITY ACROSS THE SITE SHOULD BE ACHIEVED

District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policy 4A.1.2.1(m)(iii).

To assess this matter, I have had to establish what "visual permeability across the site" may mean. I consider it is not the same thing as "viewshafts", where there is a more established expectation of linear corridors of open space or 'gaps' clear of buildings from the ground to the sky. I also consider that it does not solely mean views through the site; views into the site would also in my view be included in the meaning of "visual permeability across the site."

Accordingly, based on the orientation of adjacent development, the practicalities of the subject site's shape and characteristics, and that "visual permeability across the site" may include a spectrum of outcomes ranging from, potentially, views into the site above low-rise (1 storey) buildings, through to, potentially, viewshafts that are entirely clear of buildings from the ground to the sky.

I also note that this particular matter, described in policy 4A.1.2.1(m)(iii) of the District Plan, appears to relate to the management of the development as a whole. Therefore, while I consider the principal benefactors of visual permeability across the site will be immediate neighbours, I have also considered the balance of visual permeability achieved as a whole.

I consider that, overall, the effects of the development relative to Boulcott School (i.e. the visibility and scale that will be seen and the change in view of the hill backdrop) are the most significant of all urban design effects raised by the proposal.

In PPC35, the analysis and evidence in support of this topic was primarily given in terms of views from the residential and school uses adjoining the site to the east and south to the hills north and west of the site, rather than from the golf course / stop bank back to the east or south. The wording of policy 4A 1.2.1(m) reinforces this 'northwards' emphasis, through the words "...to recognise the large site and the opportunity to take advantage of views across the Lower Hutt Golf Course from the edge of the new stopbank."

It is considered that this matter has two dimensions. The first is the extent to which viewers, particularly from public spaces, can see 'across' and into the site itself (i.e. the avoidance of a solid perimeter wall around the boundaries). The second relates to the extent to which viewers can see 'across' and through the site.

Views into the site

I consider that the proposal provides an appropriate degree of visual permeability and is in particular very successful in terms of the adjoining residential properties and school. This has been achieved through the following (noting that a solid 1.8m-2.0m boundary fence is proposed for security and privacy, so views into the site would be where a building's floor level was higher than 0.5m above the boundary level):

- ▶ use of 1 and 2-storey buildings (4.5m – 7.3m tall) around the site's residential and school boundaries, so as to allow views above those buildings into the site, and also (where 2-storey buildings on adjacent land can look over the top of proposed 1-storey buildings), down into the site;
- ▶ use of domestically-scaled detached (often duplex) buildings that create frequent side-yard type gaps between buildings allowing views into the site;
- ▶ the periodic placement of car parking and/or the vehicle access way adjacent to the boundary as a further means of keeping space clear of buildings and trees that could over time block views; and

- › my analysis is that of the adjoining residential sites, the only one that would not enjoy the opportunity for views into the site is 32 Hathaway Avenue. This site, due to established vegetation, already does not have such views due to dense screening (recommended separately in this report to be retained / replaced where possible, and which is also the subject of a written approval to the proposal), and for this reason I do not consider any problematic adverse urban design effect likely here.

These together have resulted in a varied and very visually permeable edge to the site from the south and east, and although solid boundary fencing and landscaping is proposed, this is a common expectation within residential environments to assure privacy.

I would prefer that a visually permeable pool-type fence be used between the site and Boulcott School to provide additional visual permeability and passive surveillance benefits over the school fields. However, I would only recommend this if the Boulcott School was also supportive given that it could result in a perception of less privacy for children using the fields.

The proposal is less successful at providing views into the site from the northern boundary looking back to the south and east, although regular gaps (including above the communal services building between Blocks B and C) will be possible. Given the speculative basis on which a public walkway could eventuate atop the stop-bank, I have not weighted this prospect, or the severity of a lack of frequent views into the site from the north, heavily. It is also likely that, in a future public walkway scenario, that the focus would be the significant open space of the river plain to the west and north (this is apparent on the Stantiall Ltd photo simulations, visual locations 8, 10, 11 and 12).

Views across the site

In terms of views across the site, the proposal provides 'viewshaft' opportunities entirely clear of buildings from the ground upwards in three locations:

- › 1 Boulcott Street (due to the need to accommodate vehicle access here);
- › 2 Hathaway Avenue (due to the need to accommodate vehicle access here); and
- › 22A Hathaway Avenue (due to the narrow pinch point in the site allowing only vehicle access here).

In addition to this, an extended open space allowing high quality north-facing views has been provided for 24A Hathaway Avenue (although this is subject to a 'no objections' covenant), 20, 18 and 16 Hathaway Avenue. In total, this space is 127m wide and will allow these Hathaway Avenue properties to enjoy a much higher visual quality (retained views) than would be normally likely in a GRAA scenario; my analysis is that it would have been possible to locate viable, 2-storey tall buildings such that only a 42m (approx.) gap was necessary due to the pinch point's geometry (and 5m required residential setback).

In terms of 4 Hathaway Avenue, and to a lesser extent 6 Hathaway Avenue, views above the 2-storey tall building will still retain a predominantly open aspect and wide outlook.

For 8 Hathaway Avenue the quality is lower although the 24.5m setback of the 11.5m tall

Block F is sufficient to still allow a predominantly open outlook to result (although views of the hills will be mostly lost).

From Boulcott School a more classically formed 'framed' view is proposed above the 7m tall Block E (communal services) between 15.2m tall Block C and 18.5m tall Block B. This is 18.5m wide at its narrowest and will allow a clear view of the hills. However other than this, the majority of existing hill views will be lost relative to the school.

West of Boulcott School, 3/3, 5A and 3/7 Boulcott Street will enjoy a predominantly open and sunny aspect although the 2-storey building (10m from 3/3 Boulcott St), and the 11.5m tall Block A (10m – 16.5m from 5A Boulcott Street, and 16.5m – 24.5m from 3/7 Boulcott Street) will remove most existing hill views. Of these three properties, 3/7 Boulcott Street will have the best retained view.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal provides an appropriate visual permeability across the site, although the extent of views currently possible across the vacant ex golf-course will be significantly reduced and many hill views will be removed. I consider that any urban design effects resulting from the proposed configuration of buildings on views across the site would be minor and have been mitigated through the placement and setback of buildings (notably those taller than 8m) from residential and school boundaries.

It would in my view only be possible to substantially increase the quantity of existing neighbours who retained predominantly open views if the 4-unit, 2-storey building at the site's Boulcott Street entrance was removed, with the 4 units redistributed on top of some of the proposed 1-storey buildings around the site's boundary where they are proposed opposite to sites owned by the Applicant. This would further open up views for 1 Boulcott Street, but also give predominantly open views to 3/3 and 5A Boulcott Street. I would not oppose this, but neither do I consider it is necessary, and doing so could result in additional (but still appropriate) visual privacy and building bulk effects experienced by 16 and/or 8 Hathaway Avenue.

In overall conclusion, the retention of views across the site is an inevitably 'overs and unders' issue where some existing properties will enjoy almost no loss of view, and others will experience a substantial change. To improve the views for those properties where there is the greatest change, redistribution of building mass would likely worsen the situation for other neighbours. In consideration of a likely GRAA development alternative near the common boundary, I therefore overall consider that a workable and appropriate balance has been achieved.

In terms of Boulcott School, this is in my view the most serious concern given just how open and expansive the existing view is and how much this will change. It is unfortunate that the primary view from the school fields is across the deepest section of the site (i.e. where there is the greatest potential to accommodate building height along the stop bank). It is likely that in any scenario much of these views would be lost to GRAA development. Overall, I consider that the combination of building forms and stepped height proposed, and the framed view between Blocks C and B will result in a minimum-acceptable response to this issue. Adverse urban design effects would be minor and will not be considerably different to what could be achieved on the site with less building height (i.e. from much of the fields buildings will obscure most if not all of the hill

backdrop in the absence of a deliberately formed viewshaft as has been proposed).

AN ATTRACTIVE AND WELL-DESIGNED EDGE TREATMENT WHEN VIEWED FROM THE NEW STOP BANK SHOULD BE ACHIEVED, WHICH AVOIDS BUILDINGS THAT HAVE INAPPROPRIATE LENGTH OR MASS

District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(i) and (ii), and 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(b), and policy 4A.1.2.1(m)(iv).

I consider that the proposal is successful in this respect. A variety of building forms have been proposed, including in terms of height, and including varied setbacks and alignments so as to avoid a strongly linear 'edge'. This will result in a changing visual experience for any potential viewers atop the stop bank or within the golf course⁴. The top of the stop bank is approximately 5m north of the site boundary, and I have added this distance to the distance that buildings within the site are set back from the boundary, as it represents the net separation between people and buildings likely. The stop bank is also approximately 1-storey high, making the net dominance effects of the proposed buildings 1-storey less than would ordinarily be the case.

From behind or north of the new stop bank, the stop bank bund itself will soften the perceived height of the buildings by screening at least the ground level of each one. In conjunction with the setback distances that very quickly come into play on the golf course land, I consider that the potential building length and mass effects will be appropriately mitigated. The Stantiall photo simulations demonstrate this.

I also consider that the massing proposed will maximise the potential for passive surveillance over and visual amenity benefits from the stop bank and golf course within the development. These are positive effects, including (as it relates to passive surveillance of a potential future public walkway that would be well away from the public-eye) a potential public safety and amenity benefit.

From west to east, a traveller would walk approximately 85m from Boulcott Street to the first 2-storey building. This would be 7.3m tall, 8m – 12m set back from the viewer, and 26.5m long. There would then be a 5m gap between buildings before the viewer encountered Block A. This would be 11.5m tall, 6m-8m back from the viewer, and 47m long. Another 5m gap would bring the viewer to Block C. This has been positioned so as to not run parallel with the boundary. It would be set back 6m – 18.5m from the viewer, be 15.2m tall, and 53.5m long. The viewer would then experience the 7m tall / 2-storey communal services building Block E, ranging between 22.5m – 6m from the boundary, for a length of 18.5m. This would bring the viewer to Block B. The tallest part of this building, 18.5m tall, would run parallel to the boundary at a setback from the viewer of 6m, for a length of 47m. The building then 'kinks' to the east and steps down to 3-storeys in height (11.1m tall). The setback from the viewer extends to 12m, for a length of 49m. From this point the viewer experiences predominantly open space for approximately

⁴ It is understood that the Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Club has provided its written approval to the proposal and that it is not supportive of general public use of the stop bank due to concerns of injury-by-golf-ball. However, as potential future public use of the stop bank or golf course land cannot be ruled out it has been considered as a potential but uncertain future outcome.

160m before encountering a detached, 4.5m / 1-storey tall cottage. That is 4.5m tall, 6m-10m back from the viewer, and 14.5m long. A 6m gap then brings the viewer to Block F, at 11.5m tall, 6m from the viewer, and 67.5m long. The viewer would then experience a gap of 12m before experiencing the final 2-storey, 7.3m tall building. This is 5m – 12m from the boundary and 26.5m long. Finally, the viewer would experience the final 27m of the site's boundary as open space, to Military Road.

In summary, of the site's approximately 650m northern / open space boundary, 350m (54%) is proposed to be faced with a building, ranging between 1 to 5-storeys in height. The remaining 250m would be open space / gaps allowing views over the site and to the east / south. I consider that this is an appropriate proportion whereby the additional height sought in places is suitably offset by the additional open space edge than would likely result from a conventional subdivision of GRAA lots adjacent to the boundary.

In terms of the building design, the buildings include a number of elements to distinguish them and otherwise break up the appearance of one long building form. These include:

- variation in façade materials and colours between buildings;
- variation in balcony / balustrade design and glazing design;
- variation in roof pitch height and width; and
- individual building facades have been vertically sectioned, frequently aligning with pitched roof features so as to soften the horizontal length of buildings.

I consider that the above techniques have been successful at mitigating the potential adverse effects of building design, and will result in a suitable visual quality being achieved. The buildings will clearly be very large however the design quality and irregular / varied edge condition proposed will be sufficient to ensure that no inappropriate building lengths or masses will result. As part of this, I consider that the progression of height and length from either end of the site towards the central Block B is a successful means of managing the development's mass. I consider that the 2-storey buildings, Block C and Block E will have no problematic dominance or scale effects on potential future users of the stop bank (while Block E is long, its varied setback up to 18.5m is a successful mitigation buffer). Block F, due to its length and long linear / parallel edge, and Block B with its height as well as length, will have minor adverse dominance and scale effects.

Overall, I consider that the proposal will result in a well-resolved edge to the golf course, and that any adverse urban design effects would be at most minor.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO LANDSCAPE DESIGN THAT MANAGES VISUAL IMPACT INCLUDING ON EDGES WHERE EXISTING VEGETATION AFFORDS PRIVACY

District Plan restriction of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(v).

This is primarily relevant to the existing vegetation at 32 Hathaway Avenue. It is understood that much of this will be removed to facilitate necessary earthworks and recontouring within the site. The landscape plans prepared by Kamo Marsh Ltd indicate that new landscaping will be proposed along this boundary.

Overall, I consider that the replacement planting proposed will mitigate the loss of privacy screening for the occupants of 32 Hathaway Avenue in the short and in particular long term (as planting establishes and matures), and in any event I note that this property is subject to a written approval.

Other than this, I consider that the boundary landscaping proposed will balance visual softening and screening of the proposed new buildings in a way that will not result in adverse nuisances on neighbours including loss of views, shading, or leaf-litter. I consider that any adverse urban design effects arising from this matter would be less than minor and adequately mitigated. No additional recommendations are made.

THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PROPSAL MEETS THE DESIGN GUIDE FOR MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING

District Plan restrictions of discretion 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(a)(iii), and also 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv)(c) to the extent that the Design Guide addresses urban design considerations relating to on-site amenity.

The Guideline consists of 6 key topics, each considered below:

Fitting in the neighbourhood

This issue has been substantially addressed earlier, however in terms of the specific commentary provided within the guideline the following additional commentary is made:

- ▶ the development does not “fit in” with the predominant development forms and scales within the neighbourhood however the way that the development has been planned and laid out will be successful at substantially limiting adverse effects on neighbourhood character. PPC35 specifically enabled an outcome that does not strictly-speaking “fit in”, by emphasising the importance of a compatible edge or transition around the subject site’s edge;
- ▶ the development has in this respect achieved a very compatible ‘edge’ transition with established activities, and then transitioned progressively higher (and longer) beyond that. This is supported and as a result the development will have minimal obvious public effects (i.e. as experienced from public spaces) within the neighbourhood;
- ▶ a variety of building sizes and forms has been proposed so as to acknowledge and integrate with the smaller-scale detached dwellings that typify the locality;
- ▶ individual buildings are legible and have obvious pedestrian entrances (although as noted in more detail below the fronts of Blocks A, D and F are lined with rows of car parking spaces, a generally undesirable urban design outcome further discussed below); and
- ▶ although the central access way is not intended to act as or have the characteristics of a formal street, the internal development is considered to relate appropriately to it and overlook it as a ‘front’ within the site. I consider that in this

respect, buildings have been orientated to address and provide a presence to the internal access way.

Integrated buildings and spaces

The proposal is considered to partially satisfy these guidelines for the following reasons:

- ▶ I consider the development has been well laid out relative to site opportunities and constraints. A number of south-facing units has been proposed and this is generally undesirable. However, I consider that the nature of the activity (aged care), and the availability of communal amenities and services on site, is sufficient to assure that a minimum-acceptable but adequate level of on-site amenity will be achieved;
- ▶ it is noted that the majority of units on the site have a northern aspect and will receive ample day and sunlight; and
- ▶ the buildings are appropriately designed relative to open spaces and outdoor spaces, although none of the units will receive 35m² of exclusive-use outdoor space / courtyard. The adverse effects of this are in my view mitigated by the scale and extent of communal facilities provided on the site. I also note that the extent of private outdoor space per-unit is in line with standard retirement village planning and is not considered concerning.

Vehicles

The proposal is considered to partly satisfy these guidelines for the following reasons:

- ▶ the publicly-accessible access way has been designed to have the least possible paved surface, be a low speed environment, and be well landscaped;
- ▶ permeable pavers for the periodic clusters of visitor car parking spaces would be supported;
- ▶ the proposal does include long lines of car parking directly visible from and adjacent to the access way, for Blocks A, D and F. This is an undesirable outcome. If the proposal were for a public street or a private road where large volumes of the general public were likely, the proposed interface would not in my view be supportable. However, in light of the nature of the access way as a publicly accessible but private access unlikely to be frequented by the general public, and which will have minimal lasting amenity value or character effects on the wider environment, I consider that only minor adverse amenity and safety effects are likely to result. Pedestrian entrances have been pulled forwards through these areas to the main access way frontage and this is supported;
- ▶ I have considered whether adding garage doors would assist in managing these outcomes. I do not consider that long lines of garaging would improve the proposal, and that being kept open and recessed beneath the building remains the optimal means of managing car parking in the absence of a plausible basement solution (as is proposed and supported for Block B); and

- to further mitigate the visual effects of the long car parking strips in Blocks A, D and F, it is recommended that the car parks be finished in a different colour than the access way (such as via a concrete with oxide in the mix). I would also support divisions coming down to the ground periodically, for instance every 4-6 spaces, to help bring the buildings to the ground more solidly and provide a visual interruption that prevented views taking in all car parking spaces together in one long line. I also note that on the Applicant's landscape plans small shrub-type planting is indicated between parking spaces and this will help to visually mitigate them.

In respect of the above, I propose that a condition of consent as follows:

"X. Prior to the release of a Building Consent the applicant shall submit plans to the Council's satisfaction detailing proposed landscaping between parking spaces for Buildings A, D and F, and visually permeable timber-slat screening (or similar) between no more than every third parking space to break up long views of many car parking spaces."

On the basis that such a condition of consent is imposed, then I consider an appropriate outcome will be achieved.

Fences and walls

The proposal is considered to satisfy these guidelines for the following reasons:

- no front fences or walls are proposed throughout the development. The proposed vehicular access way is a structuring element akin to a public street and while it will be publicly accessible, is closer in design characteristics to a shared space or private driveway. As such, an informal and open character will result that avoids the creation of a 'fortress' outcome;
- it is understood that no gates are proposed at either Boulcott Street or Military Avenue and this is supported;
- 1.8m – 2m acoustic fences and landscape screening for privacy are proposed along the southern and eastern (residential and school) boundaries and this is supported, although as noted earlier a visually permeable pool-type adjacent to Boulcott School would also be supported; and
- visually permeable pool-type fencing of 2.0m height is proposed along the northern golf course / stop bank boundary for security.

Site facilities

The proposal is considered to satisfy these guidelines for the following reasons:

- communal waste collection facilities are proposed and no storage areas are proposed close to the central access way or two street entrances;
- all units are provided with an outdoor area or (for elevated apartments) balconies.

In addition to communal services, in-unit clothes drying can be achieved;

- › the small pump station visible from and adjacent to the main Boulcott Street entrance is not considered a successful urban design outcome, however it is not considered likely to result in an adverse effect of concern; and
- › communal amenities, indoor and outdoor, are provided and these are considered superior to what is typically provided within intensive housing developments.

Privacy and safety

The proposal is considered to satisfy these guidelines for the following reasons:

- › pedestrian entrances are legible and obvious (noting that most units are proposed as an apartment typology whereby individual units do not have their own external pedestrian entrances). The principal facility lobby / entrance is particularly legible on arrival via Boulcott Street;
- › although I consider the ground level treatment of Blocks A, D and F to be undesirable in urban design terms, the number of units and habitable rooms above these with windows and/or balconies orientated to the internal access way will provide outlook and privacy between units;
- › the access way space and building setbacks either side are sufficient to ensure privacy between units generally, in conjunction with the design approach (no internal corner unit alignments are proposed, whereby units are perpendicular to one another and occupants can readily look into one another's spaces);
- › I consider that in terms of pedestrian entrance legibility and lighting, a lighting plan should be provided for Council approval prior to the release of a building consent detailing how the access way will be lit, and this should include details of building entrance lighting;
- › a landscaping plan has been proposed and recommendations have been made throughout this report in that regard. Landscaping is not considered likely to create a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design hazard; and
- › the access way has been designed to be a slow-speed (<30km/h) area that has natural pedestrian and mobility scooter priority over vehicles.

OVERALL URBAN DESIGN EFFECTS AND MERIT

On the whole, the proposal will result in an outcome that is very different from the predominant scale, pattern and character of development in the locality. These are and are likely to remain as 1-2 storey detached family homes, notably within the Hathaway Avenue / Military Road SRAA. I disagree that being different is of itself an inherently adverse urban design problem, but the way in which one form and type of development transitions into another requires a very sensitive solution and I consider that the thrust of the PPC35 policy framework seeks to ensure that this occurs in a way that recognises

the potential of the site to accommodate a development outcome that does not of itself rigidly 'fit in'.

In terms of the proposal's design approach, I consider that it reflects the PPC35 policy framework and also successfully manages potential urban design effects primarily through the massing, placement and orientation of buildings. The proposal also demonstrably responds to the characteristics and sensitivities of the site, and is a marked improvement on the site planning at the time of PPC35.

The transition from 1-2 storey buildings, to 3-4 storey and then 5 storey buildings has been well resolved and, while from many locations visible from public and private property, will be sufficiently set-back or screened such that any adverse urban design effects, including on the amenity and character values of the established neighbourhood, would be at most minor.

The greatest potential adverse effects of building height will result on the site's northern side with the new stop-bank and golf course. On the presumption that this private space will become public space (the stop bank), and may in time include a pedestrian trail atop it, specific consideration has been given to the interface of the development here. The variation in building heights, setbacks, façade treatments, and that the stop bank's peak is approximately 1 storey high and set back approximately 5m from the site boundary together mitigate potential urban design (building dominance) effects. That the stop bank is north of the tallest buildings also has the benefit of minimising any potential shadows (most of the proposal's shading will fall within the subject site itself).

The design of the buildings, including vertical divisions and frequent modulation (use of projections, recesses and voids), incorporates several 'domestic' or classically residential responses, most notably the use of multiple smaller pitch roof forms to help break up the length of the taller buildings. This reinforces the fundamentally residential nature of the proposal and substantially improves the visual quality of buildings.

The proposal presents a compatible interface with immediate neighbours and will not result in inappropriate or problematic visual privacy / overlooking, building dominance, or shadowing effects on neighbours. Internally, a semi-street is proposed that will be publicly accessible but, due to the nature of the activity, is less likely to be frequented by the general public. Although the proposal does not result in an ideal 'street' interface, the proposal includes sufficient mitigation measures that any adverse urban design effects falling on residents or visitors would not be problematic.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be a well-resolved scheme that will sit appropriately within its neighbourhood. Subject to the recommended conditions of consent identified within this report, consent could be granted on urban design grounds.

I also consider that, in specific regard to the matters identified in District Plan policies 4A.1.2.1(l) and (m), and in consideration of the restrictions of discretion at 4A.2.3.1(n)(iv) and (v), an appropriate urban design solution has been arrived at.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This report outlines an independent assessment of a proposal for a 247-unit retirement village on a 2.93ha site at 32A Hathaway Avenue, Hutt City. The village includes basement car parking, landscaping, and numerous buildings ranging from 1 to 5 storeys tall. The units are a combination of care-based and independent apartments, and memory care care. The development includes communal indoor and outdoor amenities, and 235 car parking spaces.

The key conclusions of this report are that:

- ▶ Following on from Private Plan Change 35, the Applicant has undertaken a ground-up redesign including urban design input from the outset. The result is a substantially superior design strategy than the original 'master plan' that guided PPC 35.
- ▶ The proposal includes a type and scale of development clearly different to the predominantly detached 1-to-2 storey dwellings in the neighbourhood. This is not of itself inherently adverse or inappropriate but can only be accommodated due to the uncharacteristically large size (and in particular depth) of the site that allows additional building scale to be mitigated by setbacks and separation distances, and the creation of a series of internal building height tiers - or steps - up and away from the residential and school boundaries.
- ▶ The distribution of building mass and bulk across the site follows the site's opportunities and constraints, in particular the placement of lower height and separated buildings around the southern and eastern boundaries.
- ▶ The configuration of taller buildings adjacent to the northern stop-bank boundary includes a variety of heights and setbacks so as to avoid creation of a solid building wall in the event that a public walkway may occur along the stop bank's top in the future.
- ▶ The façade design includes modulation, variation, glazed circulation cores, and projections/recesses (including balconies) that in conjunction with the materiality proposed mitigates the potential effects of building scale and dominance.
- ▶ A combination of separation distances; the placement of proposed buildings; orientation of outlook spaces from units; proposed landscaping; existing / proposed fences and screening vegetation; and the existing orientation of buildings and outdoor spaces on neighbouring sites will ensure that shading effects, visual privacy effects and adverse overlooking are avoided or mitigated.
- ▶ The proposal will provide adequate visual permeability across the site as it relates to public places and privately owned adjacent sites.
- ▶ The proposal includes an acceptable internal amenity outcome including how units and buildings relate to internal access ways and provide pedestrian amenity.
- ▶ The proposal will have both positive and adverse urban design effects, and any adverse urban design effects would be at worst minor.

On the basis of the above and subject to the recommendations set out in this report, **consent could be granted on urban design grounds.**