

RMA S87F REPORT

DATE: 3 October 2018

TO: Hearing Committee

FROM: Julia Williams
Director, Drakeford Williams Ltd, Landscape Architects

SUBJECT: AN ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY VALUE EFFECTS IN RESPECT OF AN APPLICATION BY SUMMERSET VILLAGES (LOWER HUTT) LIMITED FOR A RETIREMENT VILLAGE AT 32A HATHAWAY AVENUE, BOULCOTT, LOWER HUTT.

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Julia Anne Williams. I have been engaged by the Hutt City Council to prepare a landscape and visual assessment to assist the S87F Planner's report for this application.
2. I hold a Bachelor of Architecture from Auckland University and a Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Lincoln College. I am a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects and hold current Professional Registration. I am an Independent Commissioner with a current Certificate for Making Good Decisions.
3. I am a Director of Drakeford Williams Ltd, landscape architects. I have practised as a landscape architect for over thirty-five years. During that period I have undertaken numerous landscape assessment and planning projects.
4. I have acted in the capacity of Independent Commissioner for:
 - Wellington City Council's hearing for Long Gully Windfarm (2009);
 - Horowhenua District Council's PC 22 Outstanding Natural Features & Landscapes (2011/12);
 - Wellington City Council's hearing for Frank Kitts Park; and
 - Hastings District Council's District Plan Variation 4 for Iona Residential Rezoning (2018).
5. I have acted in the capacity of expert landscape architect for:
 - EPA MacKays to Peka Peka Expressway Sec 42a Landscape Report for KDC (2012);
 - EPA PekaPeka to Otaki Landscape Sec 42a Landscape Report for KDC (2013);
 - Turitea Wind Farm Proposal Sec 42a Landscape Report for BOI (2009);
 - Whitby Retirement Village, Porirua (2014);
 - Silverstream Road Subdivision, Crofton Downs, Wellington (2016);
 - Waverley Wind Farm, South Taranaki (2016); and
 - Prince of Wales Reservoir, Mount Cook, Wellington (2017)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

6. The purpose of this report is to identify and assess the landscape and visual amenity value effects in relation to the activities described in the application by Summerset Villages (Lower Hutt) Limited to construct a retirement village at 32A Hathaway Road, Boulcott, Lower Hutt.
7. My scope of work is to:
 - Review and assess the evidence that concerns landscape and visual effects, based on the following information:
 - Information in the Summerset Villages (Lower Hutt) Ltd Application documents applicable to landscape and visual effects including the Landscape and Visual Assessment (the **Assessment**) and the accompanying visual simulations;
 - Other Summerset assessments on urban design and shading

- The statutory context including information and expert witness evidence prepared for and presented to HCC during the hearings of submissions on the proposed private District Plan Change 35 in 2017;
 - Submissions that pertain to landscape and visual effects;
 - A site visit undertaken 20 April 2018;
 - Further design information provided in response to a s92 request on the wider landscape context, the treatment of existing site vegetation, a visual simulation from Harcourt Werry Drive, and a cross-section through one of northern boundary buildings, showing the relationship between the building and the stopbank.
- Prepare a report discussing the validity of the application and expert evidence concerning landscape and visual effects;
 - Form opinions based on the field work, my experience and my expertise on the conclusions drawn;
 - Outline an independent opinion on the landscape and visual effects, with detailed reasons for this opinion; and
 - Identify any short comings, gaps, errors or omissions in the Assessment.

OVERVIEW OF THE LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY VALUE EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE APPLICATION

8. Potential landscape and visual amenity effects include: effects on the biophysical landscape; effects on existing landscape character; effects on visual amenity; effects on outstanding natural features or landscapes; and temporary construction effects.
9. The key issues arising from the proposed retirement village are effects on existing landscape character and effects on visual amenity including public views and views from private property.

ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY VALUE EFFECTS

The review uses the same 7-point scale as that used in the Assessment: Extreme; Very High; High; Moderate; Low; Very Low; and Negligible. On this scale I consider that Low is equivalent to ‘*minor*’ effects in RMA terminology.

Biophysical Effects

10. The Assessment is silent on the biophysical effects arising from the retirement village proposal. The site has been modified as through the construction of two river stopbanks and its use as part of the golf course, and resource consent for bulk earthworks was approved in March 2018. The applicant proposes to undertake additional earthworks on the site including the removal of contaminated topsoil, installation of infrastructure and construction of a roading network.
11. There are no water courses or identified notable trees on the 32A Hathaway Avenue site, although the earthworks consent conditions require the retention and protection of four macrocarpa on the joint boundary with Boulcott School. Otherwise the bulk of the existing site vegetation will be removed during the earthworks process, and replaced with mixed specimen trees and amenity planting as shown in the Landscape Concept Planting Plan. In this context, overall biophysical effects are Very Low.

Effects on Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes, or Special Amenity Landscapes

12. The assessment is silent on potential effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONFs and ONLs), and special amenity landscapes (SALs) in close proximity to the project site. No ONF, ONL or SALs are identified in the GW RPS or in the operative Hutt City District Plan.

A Hutt Landscape Study was undertaken in 2012 for the Regional Council by Boffa Miskell¹ with landscape character descriptions for the combined area of Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt. This provided the basis for Identification of the Hutt's ONFs, ONLs, and SALs in a Hutt City Ecology and Landscapes Project, which currently is going through an informal community and landowner engagement phase. The draft SAL areas have no status and no decision has been made about whether SALs will be included in a plan change proposal as an overlay with associated provisions. For the purposes of this report, Council officers note that if SALs become included in a plan change proposal, the SAL overlay is highly unlikely to affect land neighbouring the overlay.

Effects on Landscape Character

Effects on landscape character relate to changes in land use and existing patterns and elements in the landscape, such as vegetation, waterbodies, landform, and settlement patterns.

13. I agree with the assessment that:

- The wider landscape context is characterised by the Western Hills that form a backdrop to the site in views to the north, the open, parklike space of the golf course and river corridor, and Boulcott residential development to the south; and
- Over time the landscape will continue to mature and add to the surrounding character.

14. I do not agree that:

- *The village blends into the character of the surrounding landscape.*
 - River corridor. At a district scale, Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River is the dominant element of the Hutt Valley floor and foothills landscape. As described in the Hutt Landscape Study '*The land between the stop banks and the river is free of development and provides an important open space and recreational resource for the residents of the Hutt Valley including the Hutt River Trail and several golf courses.*' Outside the CBD area, either side of Ewen and Melling Bridges, built development bordering this open space corridor is 2-3 stories high with the exception of the tower block at Avalon Studio in Percy Cameron Street that is 11 stories high. The proposed retirement village is located within a residential area and has buildings up to 5 stories high. In short there is no comparable built development of this scale adjoining the open space and the development is not consistent with the character of the boundary of the Hutt open space corridor landscape.
 - Western Hills. Although the extended ridgeline remains visible in distant views from Boulcott properties, the Summerset Blocks B and C edging the stopbank block all views of the hills for residents in Boulcott Street and Hathaway Road within 100 -125m of these buildings. Residents of properties orientated to the north more than 125m from Blocks B and C can see the skyline but a section of views of the western hills is screened. In other words, the wider outlook to the western hills is removed for a number of local properties and the proposed development does not contribute to a positive relationship to its neighbours.
 - Boulcott built development. The scale of the proposed retirement village, particularly the massing and height of Blocks B and C is inconsistent with the scale and character of the surrounding Boulcott landscape including the residential development, Boulcott School, Ropata Medical Centre and the GNS Science building on Fairway Drive. While the Summerset development has a well-designed landscape edge treatment when viewed from the stopbank, the scale of the buildings is not consistent with the adjoining Boulcott residential development and the built form dominates the edge of the open space.

¹ Boffa Miskell for Greater Wellington Regional Council. April 2012. *Hutt Landscape Study 2012. Landscape Character Description.*

Based on the above analysis, I would assess adverse effects on the character of the surrounding landscape as Moderate but localised. Refer *Appendix 1 Built development along Hutt City river corridor from south to north* for analysis of built development.

Effects on Visual Amenity

15. I have reviewed the Assessment of effects on visual amenity.
16. No information is provided on how the visual simulations have been constructed and whether it is in accordance with current best practice. With regard to the photo simulations, I agree that:
 - The simulations show a range of views from public places and 2 views from adjoining residential sites.
 - The simulations appeared to be accurate representations of the existing views and viewing distances.²

17. I agree with the Assessment that the development will be visible from the majority of the locations.

Effects on visual amenity of neighbouring properties at 1-7 Boulcott Street, 26-34 Hathaway Avenue and Boulcott School (and by extension, Boulcott Kindergarten).

18. Many of these properties will have expansive views of the western hills to the north and west largely screened by the retirement village. Due to the linear layout of the apartment buildings, and the orientation of the site boundaries, viewshafts through the site will be limited by the oblique viewing angle and intervening buildings.
19. While the Assessment has not provided a detailed evaluation of the potential impacts on views from adjoining properties, I do not agree with the more generic assessment in the matter of impacts on visual amenity. The RMA defines amenity values as *'those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes'*. Distant or panoramic views from the valley floor are not 'protected' per se but I regard the loss of outlook and openness as an adverse effect on visual amenity values.
20. Simulations for Viewpoints 2, 4, 5 and 6 assist in determining the impact of viewing distance on the magnitude of effect on visual amenity and thereby interpolate effects for individual properties. Views from locations within 100-125m of the larger apartment blocks will have views of the ridgeline screened by Blocks B and C, but will maintain distant views to either side of these larger buildings. Views from some closer locations may have their entire outlook screened by intervening buildings. Refer *Appendix 2* for a more detailed analysis of the simulations and effects from their specific viewpoints.
21. A number of these properties are owned by Summerset or have provided written approvals. For the remaining, properties, I consider adverse effects on visual amenity for residents of 26, 28A, 28B and 30 Hathaway Avenue and for occupants of Boulcott School, who see the built development silhouetted on the skyline and may lose their outlook towards the ridgeline of the western hills, will be Low-Moderate. Effects for residents of 1, 3/C, 3/5 and 3/7 Boulcott Street and 20, 22 and 22A Hathaway Avenue, who retain views to the north but lose their wider ridgeline outlook, to be Low. Effects for residents of 2-6 Hathaway Avenue who are further away from Blocks B and C, whose major views are focussed towards the eastern end of the site, are considered to be Very Low.

Effects on visual amenity of properties and streets south of and not adjoining the site

22. Residents on southern side of Hathaway Avenue, western side of Boulcott Street, Ariki Street, Fry Street, Troon Crescent and Military Road, whose properties are at a slightly higher elevation due to

² With the exception of Viewpoint 5 that appears to have been taken from the 30A Hathaway Avenue backyard rather than the 26A Hathaway Avenue backyard as per description.

the local topography, may be able to view the 3-5 storey buildings in the retirement village but they will be backdropped by the western hills. Adverse visual effects are Very Low to Negligible

Effects on views from locations north of the site

23. I agree that views from Harcourt Werry Drive will be screened over time by the recent golf club plantings along their northern boundary.
24. Views from more elevated locations on the Western Hills, the closest dwellings are over 500m distant. While the retirement village mass, and the taller apartment blocks in particular, will be visible, it will be backdropped built development on the valley floor and the eastern hills. From these viewing distances, the village forms a small part of the overall panoramic view and adverse effects are Negligible.

Close views from the stopbank

25. Policy 4A 1.2.1 (m) requires views from the stopbank to be considered. I note that although there appears to be open access along the stopbank, it is located on private land and both Greater Wellington Regional Council and Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Club have provided approval for this development.
26. I agree with the Assessment that for the more distant views on approach to the retirement village along the stopbank, the visual impact of the built development is mitigated by the large specimen plantings on the northern boundary that partially screen the bulk of the larger apartment blocks. Effects on visual amenity are most pronounced in views looking directly across to Blocks B and C and are considered Moderate. If at some future time a public walkway is provided along the stopbank and even linked to the Hutt River Trail, due the length of the stopbank walkway and the limited duration of the view, overall adverse effects on visual amenity would be Very Low.

Effects on environmental amenity of occupants of properties on the site boundary arising from vegetation either side of the joint boundary.

27. Potential adverse effects on the environmental amenity of retirement village residents and occupants of neighbouring properties arising from the built development including loss of privacy, shading, wind, noise and dust are dealt with by other expert assessments.
28. Existing privacy/screening on the residential boundary arises from a combination of change in ground levels, particularly where the old stopbank abuts the boundary, trees and mixed shrubbery within the site but close to the boundary, planting within residential properties, and planting along the residential boundary. In some sections the boundary is not clearly marked and there seems to have been vegetative creep into the former golf club land.
29. Potentially affected residents such as owners of properties that have not been purchased or signed written approval forms or who have submitted against the proposal, include 1, 3C, 3/5, 3/7 Boulcott Street and 2, 4, 6, 20 and 22A Hathaway Avenue. Of these properties, only 3/7 Boulcott Street has a Summerset building on the adjoining boundary. The dwelling at 3/7 Boulcott Street is located beside a single storey cottage slightly set down below existing ground levels. All other properties are adjacent to internal streets and/or parking bays.
30. For other properties, the combination of existing amenity plantings within properties, proposed tree and native shrub plantings along the Summerset boundary and the proposed 1.8m timber fence on the boundary restricts views from villas into neighbouring residential properties and effects are Negligible.
31. There remains the issue of shading. There is potential for large street trees and specimen trees on the boundary of 1-7 Boulcott Street and 20, 22A Hathaway Avenue to negatively impact on properties by shading yards and dwellings, particularly for those Boulcott Street residents whose houses are close to the boundary. Careful selection of tree species in terms of height, deciduous or

evergreen, and form, will minimise adverse effects. It is recommended that should consent be granted, the selection of species is dealt with in the Consent Conditions.

32. Four large macrocarpa adjacent to Boulcott School that screen views from a 2-storey villa block into the site. Otherwise all existing vegetation along the joint boundary lies within the school property. The landscape concept proposes 14-15 specimen trees along the boundary. Given the open space and vistas from within the school property, these trees could screen or soften views of the larger 4-5 storey buildings but at the same time would also shade the playing fields. Therefore it is recommended that should consent be granted, the selection of species is undertaken in consultation with the school and is confirmed in the Consent Conditions.

Assessment against Statutory Provisions

33. Relevant statutory provisions for the assessment of landscape and visual effects are contained within Chapter 4A of the Hutt City District Plan, and more specifically in Policy 4A 1.2.1 and Rule 4A 2.3.
34. I agree with the Assessment that in accordance with 4A 1.2.1 l) i) and ii) development adjacent to the Residential Activity Area boundary is compatible with or in the case of vegetation has the potential to be compatible with the scale, location and form of development of existing residential properties and with Boulcott School.
35. I do not agree with the Assessment that in accordance with 4A 1.2.1 m) the proposed buildings that are taller than the permitted height of 8m are of a compatible scale and form to those of existing residential properties to the south and a similar scale and intensity to the Boulcott School buildings and site. More specifically the height and mass of Block B (18.419m) and Block C (15.276m) are inconsistent with the scale and character of the Boulcott area including the 1-2 storey high residential landscape and all other built development in the Boulcott area. The built form dominates the edge of the open space in views from the west and in immediate views from the new stopbank.
36. A number of residential properties adjoining the site will have their existing outlook to the west screened by the retirement village. The layout of the apartment buildings and the oblique viewing angle from the residential boundary limits visual permeability through and across the site to narrow viewshafts of the western hills. Views from locations within 100-125m of the larger apartment blocks not only lose views of the low hill slopes but also have wider views of the hill ridgeline screened by Blocks B and C.
37. Visual effects arising from bulk and scale of the larger apartment blocks viewed from the open space corridor to the north is mitigated by the graduated height and scale of the buildings and large scale tree plantings adjacent to buildings.
38. Visual effects arising from bulk and scale of the larger apartment blocks viewed from properties south and southeast of the proposal are more difficult to mitigate. The visual impact of Blocks B and C is due to their height and building mass. The lower levels of these blocks are screened by intervening villas. The most effective way of screening the upper levels of the blocks is by planting large trees between the villas and the apartment blocks, or by screening views at the residential boundary, which in turn generates adverse effects on the residential amenity of Summerset or existing residents.
39. With regard to Rule 4A 2.3 n) (v), I agree that within the above limitations, special consideration has been given to building layout and landscape design that manages the visual impact including on edges where existing vegetation affords privacy, for properties that have not been purchased by or provided written approval for the Applicant.

COMMENTS ON MATTERS RAISED IN SUBMISSIONS

40. There is some overlap between landscape and urban design effects, particularly around terminology used in submissions to describe local concerns and potential effects. From a landscape and visual perspective, submissions on the scale and character of the development, its landscape dominance

and lack of compatibility with the surrounding environment have been evaluated. In all, 84 of 178 submissions make reference to landscape and visual effects arising from the proposal.

Landscape character effects

41. Submissions 1, 2, 13, 18, 35, 39, 42, 44, 45, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 116, 120, 122, 124, 157, 158, 161, 162, 163, 165, 166, 167, 169, 171 and 178 objected to the potential effects on landscape character, submitting that the proposed development was not in keeping with surrounding residential development and would dominate the landscape.
42. Brian Timmins (#122) submits that the proposal *“would transform an area of the Hutt River greenbelt with high density commercial sized building.”*
43. Andrew and Debbie Curran (#51) submitted that the proposed development apartment blocks *“are out of character and incompatible with the surrounding residential, recreational and educational environment.”*
44. Ray Wallace and David Bassett (#49) submit *“the overall scale of the proposal is irreconcilable with the Hathaway/Military Road suburban environment and the broader residential, school and kindergarten Boulcott suburban environment, along with the remaining open spaces in the vicinity.”*
45. I agree with the above submissions that the development is not consistent with the character of the boundary landscape of the open space corridor. Similarly the scale of the proposed retirement village, particularly the massing and height of Blocks B and C is inconsistent with the scale and character of the surrounding Boulcott landscape and the built form dominates the edge of the open space. Considered within the wider context of the character of Hutt Valley and the valley floor, effects are Moderate but localised.

Effects on visual amenity

46. Submissions 13, 28, 38, 42, 45, 47, 49, 54, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 70, 74, 79, 82, 87, 89, 91, 97, 107, 113, 120, 122, 123, 128, 146, 150, 151, 152, 153, 155, 159, 163 and 175 objected to the loss of outlook, lack of visual permeability across the site and loss of views to the hills.

Loss of outlook

47. Submission 123 for Boulcott School notes that *“the “openness” currently enjoyed by the school would be significantly reduced by the Proposed Development.”* The school would also lose an ‘attractive outlook’ in views to the western hills.
47. Dennis Page (#59) objects to the loss of outlook blocked by a wall of building. *“The current outlook that I enjoy, and one of the major reasons for my purchase of the property, will be obliterated – I will no longer see anything of the Eastern Hills, golf course, green open spaces, northern outlook to the Tararua and most of the Western Hills.”*
48. Nick Miller (#79) requests the existing views of the hills to be preserved for adjoining residences.
49. I agree that the views from Boulcott properties will change and that many residents will have their existing panoramic views curtailed. A finite number of properties adjoining the site will have most if not all of their wider outlook to the western hills and ridgeline screened by the 4 and 5 storey apartment blocks. Effects for these residents are Low to Moderate as detailed in paragraph 21 of this report.

Effects for residents on the western hill with views to the valley floor.

50. Submissions 18, 42, 57, 71 and 74 specifically objected to the visual effects for residents on the western hills with views across the Hutt River towards the Summerset site. Residents on the western hills will perceive the new development, particularly in its location alongside the open space of the golf club and river corridor. However given the viewing distances and the scale of the development within the context of the wider valley floor and eastern hills landscape, effects on visual amenity are Negligible.

Lack of visual permeability across the site

51. Many submissions reflected language used in Chapter 4A 1.2 of the District Plan and submitted on the lack visual permeability across the site.
52. Ray Wallace and David Bassett (#49) objected to the “continuous and unrelieved building form” that does not achieve permeability across the site as required.
53. As Submitter 50 Ian McLauchlan noted *“The site is compact and narrow with only a very short distance to visually dominant apartment blocks along the stopbank”*. Submitter 57, Dennis Page for the Boulcott Preservation Society described *“the layout of individual buildings with respect to one another (staggered) and their relative heights, cumulatively contribute to creating a continuous solid wall across the back of the site that permits no visual permeability at all.”*
54. I agree in part with these submissions. While there is not a solid wall of building along the northern boundary, the unusually narrow, linear lot, the building layout with larger apartment blocks aligned along the boundary and the angled residential interface combine to restrict views from Hathaway Avenue and Boulcott Street properties through the proposed village. It could be anticipated that the combination of 1-2 storey villas and the new stopbank would restrict views to the golf course and river corridor beyond. However the proposal also limits the wider outlook towards the western hills on the skyline. In this respect, the development does not allow for visual permeability across and through the site.

Impact of shading and vegetation on the boundary

55. Submissions 28, 59, 89, 97, 98 and 165 objected to the effects of removing or installing vegetation on the boundary including shading and loss of privacy.
56. Dennis Page (#59), and Warren Searle and Penelope Musgrave (#28) expressed concerns in their submissions with regard to shading. Mr Page states *“I do not want extensive tree planting on my boundary undertaken as some futile attempt to compensate for lack of privacy; that will only create its own problems with shading (if it is to be effective) which will further detract from my enjoyment of my back yard (where my vegetable garden, fruit trees, perennial beds and largest lawn space are located). Large evergreen trees would have to be the worse choice: these will only compound my shading issues and concerns.”*
57. I do not agree that the removal of site vegetation will result in direct views from nearby villas on the adjoining boundary. , I support concerns that large trees on the boundary may shade adjoining backyards and dwellings. As discussed in paragraphs 31 and 32, should consent be granted, the issue of shading can be dealt with in the Consent Conditions through careful selection of tree species.
58. In Submission 97, Nicola Sievert opposes the retention of the stand of 4 macrocarpa on the boundary of Boulcott School. In her opinion they pose a natural hazard to the school and its occupants. No evidence has been produced by the submitter or by the applicant re these trees and it is not an issue raised by the school itself. The Landscape Concept plan provides for the retention of existing ground levels within 3m of the trees. The trees provide visual mitigation in terms of softening and screening the scale of built development in views from the school and the playground but I acknowledge that it might be prudent for the applicant to seek arboricultural advice as to whether the trees are in good health or would be viable in these circumstances.

Effects on special amenity landscapes (SAL)

59. Submitters Martyn and Rachel Bain (#91) object to the impact of the proposal on amenity values of the GRAA and SRAA and Hutt River corridor and Hutt River Trail. Dennis Page for the Boulcott Preservation Society (#57) argues that the Hutt River corridor is a Special Amenity Landscape as recognised and defined by the GW RPS and that the Boulcott Special Residential Activity Area uplifts many of values as defined in SAL in RPS.

60. As detailed in paragraph 11, neither the operative District Plan nor the GW RPS identify an SAL in Hutt City, nor is a SAL overlay for the Hutt River and open space corridor likely to affect land neighbouring the overlay.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

61. I have reviewed the assessment of effects from the 32A Hathaway Avenue Proposal.
62. Overall biophysical effects are Very Low.
63. Adverse effects on the character of the surrounding landscape are assessed as Moderate but localised.
64. Adverse effects on visual amenity for residents of 26, 28A and 30 Hathaway Avenue and for occupants of Boulcott School, who see the built development silhouetted on the skyline and lose their outlook towards the ridgeline of the western hills, will be Low-Moderate.
65. Adverse effects on visual amenity for residents of 1, 3/C, 3/5 and 3/7 Boulcott Street and 20, 22 and 22A Hathaway Avenue, who retain views to the north but lose their wider ridgeline outlook, are Low.
66. Effects for other nearby residents of 2-6 Hathaway Avenue, the southern side of Hathaway Avenue, western side of Boulcott Street, and Ariki Street, Fry Street, Troon Crescent and Military Road, and from locations to the north on the river corridor and western hills are Very Low to Negligible.
67. If at some future time a public walkway is provided along the stopbank, overall adverse effects on visual amenity for views from the stopbank would be Very Low, due the length of the stopbank walkway and the limited duration of the view,
68. There are Negligible adverse effects arising from the removal of existing site vegetation along the southern/southeastern boundary.
69. There is potential for proposed large street trees and specimen trees on the boundary of 1-7 Boulcott Street, 20 and 22A Hathaway Avenue and Boulcott School to negatively impact on properties by shading yards and dwellings, particularly for those whose houses are close to the boundary.
70. The proposal is in accordance with Policy 4A 1.2.1 l) i) and ii) in that development adjacent to the Residential Activity Area boundary is compatible with or in the case of vegetation has the potential to be compatible with the scale, location and form of development of existing residential properties and with Boulcott School.
71. I do not consider the development to be in accordance with Policy 4A 1.2.1 m) iii). The height and mass of Blocks B and C are inconsistent with the scale and character of the Boulcott area including the 1-2 storey high residential landscape and all other built development in the Boulcott area. The built form dominates the edge of the open space in immediate views from the new stopbank.
72. The layout of the apartment buildings and the oblique viewing angle from the residential boundary limit visual permeability through and across the site to narrow viewshafts of the western hills. Views from locations within 100-125m of the larger apartment blocks not only lose views of the low hill slopes but also have wider views of the hill ridgeline screened by Blocks B and C. The visual impact of these building will be difficult to mitigate as screening the buildings by planting large trees between the villas and the apartment blocks, or along the residential boundary, creates shading that in turn generates adverse effects on the residential amenity of Summerset or existing residents.
73. With regard to Rule 4A 2.3 n) (v), it is my opinion that consideration has been given to building layout and landscape design that manages the visual impact including on edges where existing vegetation affords privacy, for properties that have not been purchased by or provided written approval for the Applicant.
74. Should consent be granted I have included recommendations to address concerns of potential adverse effects including:

- Careful selection of tree species in terms of height, deciduous or evergreen, and form along the residential and school boundary to minimise adverse effects arising from the vegetation shading dwellings and yards. To be dealt with in the Consent Conditions.
- The applicant should seek arboricultural advice as to whether the 4 macrocarpa trees to be retained on the boundary adjacent to Boulcott School are in good health and/or will be viable and/or pose a health and safety risk when considering the proposed changes in ground levels.

Appendix 1: Built development along Hutt City river corridor from south to north

Building	Height – number of stories	Building location
Woburn House	3	Adjoining stopbank
Abbot Laboratories 19 Market Grove	2	Adjoining stopbank
CBD	2-3 mainly with occasional high building 5-6 stories, one 6 stories plus penthouse	Eastern side of Dudley, Daly Rutherford Street
	Mainly 2-3 but 5 + penthouse	Western side of Rutherford Street
Melling Bridge		
	1-2 Light industrial or commercial buildings, a motel then residential	Western side of Connolly Street
Substation & Safeway Self-Storage	2-3	
Harcourt Werry Drive	Golf Course (330-360m from river)	
Summerset	5	
GNS Science	3	Fairway Drive
Avalon Towers	11 (334m from river)	41 Percy Cameron St
Almost entirely residential development north to Eastern Hutt Rd		
Shona McFarlane Retirement Village	2	66 Mabey Road

Appendix 2: Simulation View points and Analysis

	Location	AEE Effect	AEE Commentary	S87f effect	S87f Commentary
1	School entry	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Removes views of golf course and hills. Tree planting within the site screens villas and softens apartment blocks</i>	Moderate. Views are public rather than residential.	Villas screened by trees within site and fence. Mature plantings do little to soften the scale, perceived bulk and character of the apartment blocks. Built development on the skyline impacts visual amenity of school users
2	School playground	<i>Low. Effects mitigated over time with mix of existing and proposed planting on boundary</i>	<i>Loss of long open views.4-storey apartments separated to allow views to hills.</i>	Moderate but views are public rather than residential.	Apartment blocks almost complete screen wider outlook, allowing one viewshaft to hills. Simulation shows that removal of one storey would enable views of wider ridgeline from this location although the outlook decreases as viewer get closer to boundary. Change in character – appears institutional rather than residential
3	Opposite 42 Hathaway Avenue	<i>Negligible</i>	<i>Existing houses and vegetation limit views into the site from the street but wider outlook to western hills retained.</i>	Negligible	Views of proposed development screened by intervening houses and vegetation. in views closer to the site, residents of 40 &42 Hathaway will retain wider outlook in oblique views to the northwest and the northeast
4	28,30a Hathaway Avenue	<i>Low</i>	<i>Northwest viewshaft to western hills retained</i>	Low	View from street – wider ridgeline and viewshaft retained and mix of existing and proposed trees soften villas on boundary.
5**	26a 30A Hathaway Avenue backyard	<i>Very Low</i>	<i>Loss of views of existing open space, stop and hills</i>	Moderate	Views to the west have the wider outlook including ridgeline views blocked by serviced apartment blocks. Note that removal of 1 storey from eastern wing of Block B would allow views of ridgeline above the villa in the foreground of the photograph.
6	16 Hathaway Avenue backyard	<i>Negligible</i>	<i>Existing building on site screens views</i>	Negligible or even positive effects	Proposed building is lower and set back from boundary with less enclosure of 16 Hathaway backyard.

	Location	AEE Effect	AEE Commentary	S87f effect	S87f Commentary
7	4 Hathaway Avenue, opposite 12-14 Hathaway Ave	<i>Negligible or even positive effects</i>	<i>Existing building on site screens views. Proposed built development a better fit with Boulcott residential character.</i>	Negligible	Existing two storey building in site screen views to hills to north. Like replaced with like.
8	On stopbank looking west	<i>Very Low</i>	<i>Proposal quite dominant but graduated height and form of development, specimen trees on boundary mitigate impact.</i>	Low –Moderate for views on approach towards larger buildings Moderate for localised views from stopbank looking directly at Blocks B and C.	Scale of built development visibly different to surrounding residential area but views from the stopbank encompass wider open space and river corridor and western hills
9	Entry to Golf Course	<i>Negligible</i>		Negligible	Change in views. 2 and 3 storey development allows views over the building to distant hills
10	View from stopbank looking northeast	<i>Very Low</i>		Low for views on approach	Views from the stopbank encompass wider open space and river corridor, eastern and western hills. Scale of built development visibly different to surrounding residential area but views from the stopbank encompass wider open space and river corridor and eastern hills
11	View from stopbank looking east	<i>Very Low</i>		Low –Moderate for views on approach towards larger buildings	Graduated building from 2-5 stories and specimen trees break up form/scale of buildings from some locations.
12	View from stopbank looking east	<i>Very Low</i>		Low for views on approach	
13	View from Harcourt Werry Drive	<i>Negligible</i>	<i>Screened by Golf Course plantings</i>	Negligible (over time once planting within golf course matures)	Would have been useful to have shown simulation post construction before golf course plantings had grown – to replicate what would be seen in more distant views from the western hills

** Photograph appears to have been taken from 30A Hathaway Avenue, not 26A Hathaway Avenue as labelled.