

# VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Application for Subdivision Consent  
348 Ohiro Road, Brooklyn,  
Wellington



Prepared for Calibre Consulting

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Visual Impact Assessment, 348 Ohiro Road

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This assessment of visual effects has been prepared by David Goodyear, Landscape Architect, to assess the potential visual effects arising from a land use consent for a 3 lot subdivision at 348 Ohiro Road, Brooklyn, Wellington.

## 2.0 THE SITE

Ohiro Road is a main vehicular thoroughfare, linking Wellington's central business district and the suburb of Brooklyn to the city's Southern suburbs. It follows a steeply incised valley that runs approximately North to South, flanked by steep, densely vegetated slopes.

A fringe of residential buildings closely lines Ohiro Road on both sides, but predominantly along the Eastern slope of the valley and only intermittently on the Western slope. The narrowness of the valley floor resulting in houses being tucked in between the road and the base of the steep slopes or, predominantly on the Eastern side, being pushed up onto those slopes along narrow, twisty access roads..

The proposal site is situated on the Western side of the valley, comprising 5872m<sup>2</sup> of steeply sloping land extending along the contour on the lower slopes of the valley. Vegetation over the site consists of dense, predominantly regenerating broadleaf native bush, with occasional exotics, notably groups of tall Gum trees that line the downhill side of the existing driveway at the Southern end of the site and extend along the contour adjacent to the Western boundary.

An existing 2 storey dwelling is located towards the Southern end of the site, accessed off a shared driveway that also serves Numbers 364 and 362 Ohiro Rd



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These 3 dwellings and associated service buildings comprise a cluster of buildings set slightly above Ohiro Rd and accessed from the single driveway. The new dwelling proposed for Lot 1 of this application would be located amongst this cluster on a terraced, largely bare area against the Southern boundary.

To the immediate North of the access drive is a cut platform with a relatively flat gradient extending along the contour that currently accommodates a shipping container.

The Northern and Eastern edges of the site have been designated as a Significant Natural Area (SNA) (see Figure 2). The SNA occupies the steep riparian banks and serves as a buffer to the adjacent Ohiro stream and tributary

Designated WC138 in Schedule 8. The site, named 'Mahoe scrub on western side of Ohiro Road, Brooklyn' is summarised as 'Five areas of mahoe scrub on western side of Ohiro Road, Brooklyn. The north end of the site includes a forest remnant identified by Park (1999) and described as karaka surrounded by Mahoe dominated mosaic with rangiora, Veronica parviflora, karaka and cabbage trees (0307.1)'



FIG 2. SNA LOCATIONS

### 3.0 PROPOSAL

The proposal is for a subdivision of the site into 3 new allotments, comprising a new lot for a proposed new dwelling (Lot 1), a lot for the the existing building located on the property and a third lot comprising the balance of the site for which no building is proposed at this time.



FIGURE 3. SCHEME PLAN (source:Calibre Consulting)

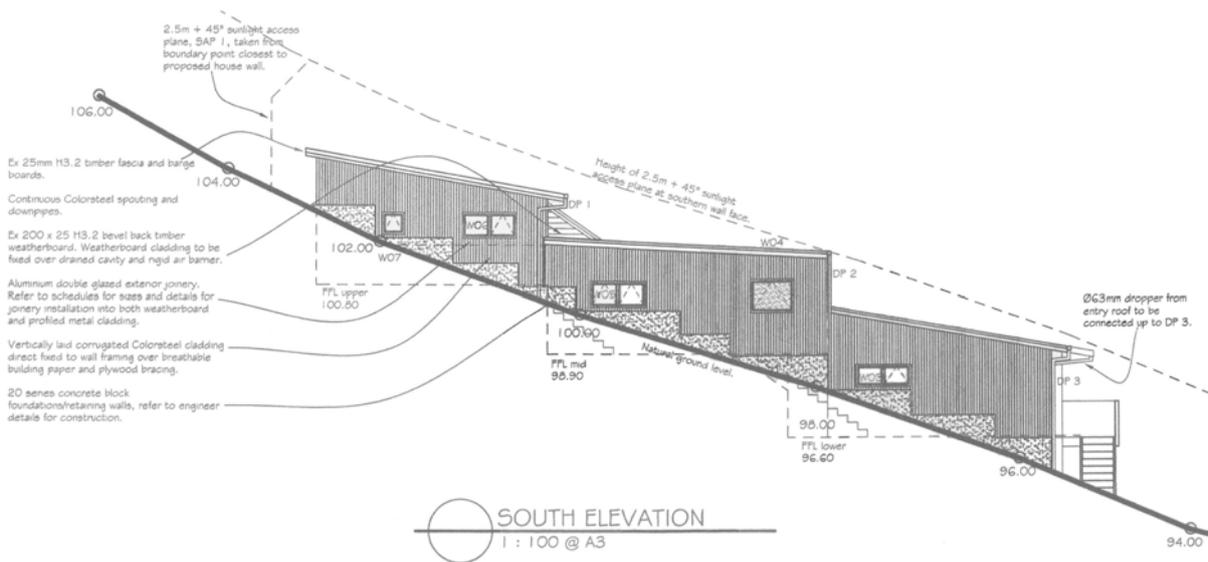


FIGURE 4. PROPOSED HOUSE SOUTH ELEVATION (source:Wallis Architectural Design)

The house proposed for Lot 1 is a single storey design, built over 3 cut terraces and set into the bank with the roofs pitched to follow the ground contour and to sit within a 2.5m height plane above existing ground level. (Figure 3) This design, combined with a visually recessive colour scheme (recommended), would serve to minimise the visual impact of the structure on the local environment.

### LOT 3

While no house is proposed at this stage for the proposed Lot 3, the site is located within the Outer Residential zone, the rules of which allow for a generous 2 storey dwelling (8m) that could be constructed at a future time. While the size, location and configuration of such a dwelling would be speculative,, in order to make an assessment of the likely visual impact of a possible house on this site, it is necessary to make a few assumptions. The most likely location for a house on Lot 3 would be at the Southern end of the site, close to the access on the cleared flattish terrace that extends along the contour to the North. This location avoids the SNA , has the advantage of already being largely clear of vegetation, and has a cut platform and gentler gradient lessening the need for significant earthworks.

The building site would be set some 3m higher up the slope than the existing house on the proposed Lot 2, set against a backdrop of regenerating bank vegetation with tall Eucalyptus above. The bank below the anticipated building sites is clad with dense regenerating native vegetation that comprises the SNA and, to some extent, screens the area, particularly from lower level viewpoints.



FIGURE 5. ANTICIPATED BUILDING SITE ON LOT 3

## 4.0 VISUAL EFFECTS

Visual effects result from changes to topography, vegetation and hydrological features or the introduction of new structures and activities into the landscape. However, change itself is not necessarily an effect and an effect is not necessarily adverse or even significant.

Adverse visual impacts typically arise where there is a discordance or discontinuity between the existing environment and the proposed development. The significance of an adverse effect is influenced by variables such as the degree of visibility, distance from the viewpoint, the degree of discontinuity and the sensitivity of the receiving landscape.

Degree of visibility relates to whether or not there will be clear sightlines to the proposed development and how much of it can be seen.

Distance is of course how far away the viewer is from the site and therefore how much of the view the structure occupies

Degree of discontinuity reflects how much of a contrast exists between the elements of the new development against the existing, so in this case, strongly contrasting or reflective colours will show up significantly against a backdrop of vegetation.

Sensitivity relates to the 'naturalness' of a site in that heavily modified landscapes are generally more able to accommodate change than pristine, natural landscapes. In this case, the bush clad slopes above the Western side of Ohiro valley could be described as having a relatively high degree of naturalness.

This assessment seeks to analyse :

- The visual catchment, ie from where views are possible to the site.
- the significance of the structure in the view given the type and location of viewers and the views they will experience.
- the ability to integrate the structure and to mitigate adverse visual impacts.

## 5.0 METHODOLOGY

The potential visual effects of the subdivision application will be limited to the construction of a new house on the proposed Lot 1, and a possible further dwelling on the proposed Lot 3. Other minor effects may be possible as a result of drainage works, fencing, etc. but once completed, these will be minor.

In order to describe and assess the visual impact of the proposed dwellings, two site visits were conducted to gain an understanding of the site and its context. The assessment sought to identify a number of publicly accessible, representative view points to determine the visual catchment.

These were assessed and the potential visual effects of the proposal analysed from the photos in order to draw conclusions about the magnitude and nature of the visual effects likely.

Figure 6 below is a marked up 3D aerial that shows the site and the representative locations from which views were possible



FIGURE 6 - VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS (source: Apple Maps)

## 6.0 VIEWPOINTS

The new dwellings on the proposed Lots 1 are 3 are likely to be seen from a very limited number of viewing points. By its nature, the long, narrow valley location, combined with extensive existing vegetation and sharp viewing angles will limit the number of viewing locations with a clear view to the house site.

### VIEWPOINT A, B,C (OWHIRO ROAD)

These views are taken from both directions along Ohiro Road, representing views obtained travelling North and South along Ohiro Road. Topography and existing vegetation completely screen any views from these locations to either of the proposed house sites.

The only view of the house sites possible would be a fleeting view from the bottom of the driveway looking directly up the drive to the house site on Lot 1. (View B). Even from this viewpoint, the proposed house would be set amongst and behind existing vegetation, and with a bush backdrop, will be quite inconspicuous



VIEW A. LOOKING NORTH ALONG OHIRO ROAD



VIEW B. LOOKING WEST FROM ACROSS THE ROAD



VIEW C. LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE LIVINGSTONE ST. INTERSECTION



VIEW D. LOOKING WEST FROM LIVINGSTONE STREET TOWARDS LOT 1

#### VIEWPOINT D - LIVINGSTONE STREET

This view is taken from the lower section of Livingstone Street on the opposite side of the valley and looking directly toward the proposed house site on Lot 1. The existing 2 storey house can be seen to the right, with the houses at 362 and 364 to the left and the Gum trees lining the driveway in the centre obscuring the proposed house site in the centre. From this viewpoint the scale and density of the existing vegetation would make anything but a glimpse of the proposed house unlikely.

#### VIEWPOINT E - LIVINGSTONE STREET

This view is taken from slightly higher on Livingstone Street, this time looking towards the anticipated building site on the proposed Lot 3. The existing shipping container can be seen on the right of the view and it would be expected that a house for Lot 3 would be located there. An approximate building envelope is shown marked on the photo.

From this location, which is relatively close and slightly above, views to the anticipated house site would reveal most of the building where it is not obscured by foreground vegetation



#### VIEW E. LOOKING WEST FROM LIVINGSTONE STREET TOWARDS LOT 3

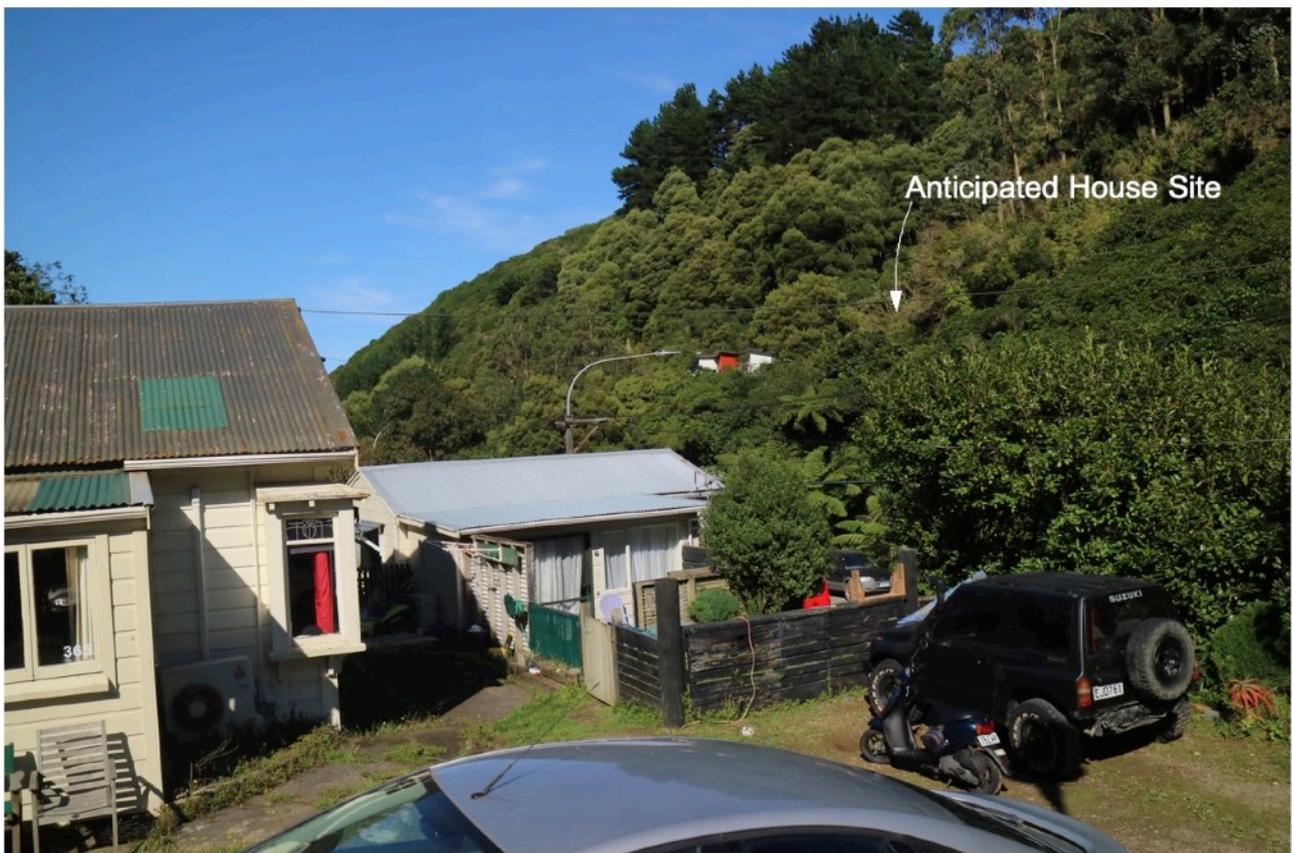
Above this point on Livingstone Road, dense vegetation on both sides of the road and the alignment of the road itself obscures any views out across the valley from publicly accessible locations until it joins Stock Street much further up the slope.

## VIEWPOINT F- STOCK STREET

This view is taken from Stock Street looking over No.365B Ohiro Road to the subject site on the opposite side of the valley.

In this view, the existing 2 storey house on the site can be seen emerging from dense vegetation. The location of the proposed house on Lot 1 would be behind Gum trees to the left of the existing house and, from this direction, would be completely obscured.

A house on the proposed Lot 3 could be located to the right of the existing house, slightly higher on the contour, although as this viewpoint looks up toward the site, the vegetation of the SNA would obscure most, if not all of a potential dwelling on Lot 3



## VIEW F LOOKING SOUTH WEST FROM STOCK STREET

### VIEWPOINT G - 11 STOCK STREET (next page)

This view is taken from a viewpoint at the very top of Stock Street where it emerges from the bush, looking SouthWest past No. 11 (under construction) down the Ohiro Valley. The existing house on the subject site can be seen with the other 2 houses at 362 and 364 Ohiro Road along the contour to the South. Lot 1 would be located between the existing houses while Lot 3 is obscured by the house from this viewpoint. The proposed house site on Lot 1 would be obscured behind vegetation between the existing houses. This view also shows how the existing and proposed houses form a cluster in the landscape aligned along the contour that minimises the visual impact of the houses individually.



VIEW G. LOOKING SOUTH WEST FROM 11 STOCK STREET



VIEW H. LOOKING SOUTH WEST FROM 11 STOCK STREET CAR PAD

#### VIEWPOINT H - CAR PLATFORM, 11 STOCK STREET

This view is similar to Viewpoint G, but taken from a viewpoint on the other (uphill) side of No. 11 Stock Street from the car pad beside the house.. The existing house on the subject site can be seen, with the anticipated building site for the proposed Lot 3 to the right. From this viewpoint, the view to a house on Lot 3 would be relatively unobstructed

#### VIEWPOINT I. - TOP OF LIVINGSTONE STREET

This view is taken from a viewpoint at the very top of Livingstone Street where it emerges from the bush, looking West across the Valley. The existing 2 storey house on the subject site can be glimpsed above the Turquoise roof with the other 2 houses at 362 and 364 Ohiro Road along the contour to the Left. The proposed house site for Lot 1 would be obscured behind vegetation between them. The anticipated building site for Lot 3 would be visible to the right of the existing houses ( an approximate building envelope is shown). At this distance the house is likely to be clearly discernible depending on colour and configuration but without a significant visual impact.

Note that this photograph was taken from the edge of the road looking down into the valley so from the new houses being built behind this viewpoint, the predominant view would be out across the valley rather than down to the valley floor.



VIEW I. - LOOKING WEST FROM LIVINGSTONE STREET

## VIEWPOINT J.- - VOGELMORN PARK

This view is taken from a viewpoint at the edge of Vogelmorn park looking over the fringe of vegetation on the top of the bank at the park edge, looking down into the valley. From this viewpoint, the neighbouring houses at 362 and 364 Ohiro Rd can be seen, with the existing house on the subject site largely obscured by the Gum trees edging the drive. Both the house on the proposed Lot 1 and a possible house on Lot 3 are largely obscured by the screen of Gum trees and foreground vegetation. Given the extreme downward angle and the distance from the site, any visual impact of the proposal is likely to be insignificant.



VIEW J. LOOKING WEST FROM VOGELMORN PARK

## 6.0 Conclusion

Consent is being sought for a land use consent related to a proposed subdivision at 348 Ohiro Road, Brooklyn. The proposal consists of subdivision into 3 lots, - Lot1 would allow for the construction of a new dwelling on the site, a second Lot (Lot 2) would encompass the existing house on the site, and a third lot ,(Lot 3) would cover the balance, and majority of the site for which no further buildings are proposed at this time. However, subdivision of the site would potentially allow for the construction of another dwelling at some future time on the proposed Lot 3.

The likely visual effects of the application would be those associated with the construction of the additional dwellings. The house proposed for Lot 1 is to be located on the Southern

boundary of the site, between the existing 2 storey house on the site and a group of 2 houses on the adjacent site at 362 and 364 Ohiro Road. A house on Lot 3 would most likely be sited at the South Western corner of the proposed Lot 3. Together the 5 houses would create a cluster aligned along the contour, accessed off a single driveway that would be well screened by existing vegetation from Ohiro Road.

In assessing what locations afforded views to the site, it became apparent that views to the proposed house sites from publicly accessible locations will be limited to a few sites where roads are cut above steep banks creating views out amongst the existing vegetation. There will, of course be some views possible from second storey windows and decks of the few houses on Livingstone Road and Stock Street, but they would not be markedly different from the views represented here.

#### LOT 1

The house proposed for Lot 1 would consist of a single storey house stepped down the slope and set into the bank in an effort to keep the profile and visibility of the house as low as possible, particularly when seen from below or level with the house. Viewpoints across the valley looking down on the subject site will mostly see the roof, to the extent that views are obtainable through the existing vegetation. Combined with existing vegetation screening, use of a visually recessive colour palette for the roof and walls of the proposed dwelling would be recommended to reduce the visual impact of the structure.

From all viewpoints, the proposed house site on Lot 1 will be substantially obscured by existing vegetation, particularly by the Gum Trees lining the lower section of the driveway and by extensive vegetation lining the roads on the opposite side of the valley which severely limit the available viewpoints from which the subject site can be viewed. Together with the effects of distance and viewing angles higher up the slope, I conclude that the visual impact of the subdivision and the dwelling on the proposed Lot 1 will range from nil to less than minor.

#### LOT 3

In the case of the anticipated house on Lot 3, this house could potentially be up to 8m tall, set higher on the slope than the existing house and less well screened than Lot 1.

The degree of visibility of this house would depend on distance, visibility and factors such as colour and form of the possible house which are unknown. The house would be set on a steep slope with a dense cover of native vegetation below that would potentially screen a single or lower storey and will be seen against a bank clad with regenerating bush.

From Ohiro Road and from the lower levels of Livingstone Road and Stock St., the visual impact of the house will be negligible due to the angle of view and the screening effect of the bush clad slopes below the potential house site.

The degree of visibility is likely to be greatest from viewpoints opposite and level with or slightly above the subject site. Of the viewpoints identified, this would apply to a couple of houses at the top of Stock Street (No's 11 and 12) with a South westerly view and possibly, 2 storey houses above Ohiro Road. From these houses, viewers would be likely to experience relatively unobstructed views to a house on Lot 3. Depending on the colour and form of the house, I consider that minor adverse effects of a single additional house

set amongst the bush would be noticeable but will not cause significant adverse impacts. The visual effects, therefore from these locations, would be considered to be minor.

From viewpoints higher up the valley side, from houses higher up at the top of Livingstone Road and higher again, such as from Vogelmorn Park, the distance from the site, the angle of view and the obstruction by foreground vegetation is likely to mitigate any adverse visual impacts to less than minor.