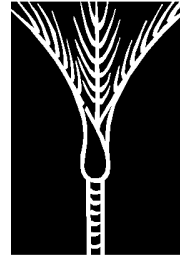


Addendum - 2 February 2006

Previously this project was named 'Harbour Bridge to City' project and there may be references in this document referring to this name or its abbreviation: HBTC.

The name of this project has since changed and is now referred to as 'Vic Park Tunnel'. Therefore, any reference to 'Harbour Bridge to City' or HBTC should now be taken to refer to Vic Park Tunnel or VPT.



LA4

LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS

HARBOUR BRIDGE TO CITY
Preferred Option

VISUAL AND LANDSCAPE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

PREPARED BY LA4 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
October 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
THE ASSESSMENT BRIEF	4
2. THE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT	4
SURROUNDING AREAS	4
THE LANDSCAPE OF THE MOTORWAY CORRIDOR	5
CONCLUSIONS	6
3. BACKGROUND LANDSCAPE STUDIES	8
4. STATUTORY BACKGROUND	10
5. THE PREFERRED OPTION	11
6. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	11
7. VISUAL CATCHMENT AND VIEWING AUDIENCE	13
8. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS ANALYSIS	16
LANDSCAPE UNIT 1 - WELLINGTON STREET	16
LANDSCAPE UNIT 2 - VICTORIA PARK	17
LANDSCAPE UNIT 3 - ST MARY'S BAY	19
9. LANDSCAPE MITIGATION	22
10 CONCLUSIONS	23

LIST OF FIGURES/VIEWPOINTS

Figure 1	Viewpoints (Locations)
Viewpoint A	Victoria park (West side of Viaduct)
Viewpoint B	Level 3 ACP Media Centre
Viewpoint C	19 Ring Terrace, St Mary's Bay
Viewpoint D	ASB Business Centre, 17 Hargreaves St, St Mary's bay

1. INTRODUCTION

THE ASSESSMENT BRIEF

The purpose of this report is to carry out a landscape and visual effects assessment of the preferred option for upgrading SH1 motorway between Auckland Harbour Bridge and the City. The assessment focuses on the landscape character and values of the surrounding context, and assesses the potential visual effects of the preferred option on the locality.

2. THE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The study area extends from the Auckland Harbour Bridge, through St Mary's Bay, Victoria Park, to Wellington Street.

SURROUNDING AREAS

St Mary's Bay

The landscape of much of this area is dominated by its proximity to the part of the Waitemata Harbour lying east of the Harbour Bridge, Westhaven Marina and St Mary's Bay.

The surrounding landforms and man-made features define this part of the harbour. To the northwest is the Harbour Bridge, and the rocky headland of Point Erin to the west. To the north is the Waitemata Harbour and to the east is the main harbour entrance. To the south and east are the CBD, the defining coastal cliffs of St Mary's Bay, and Victoria Park. The following landscape features were identified as being the key components to the character of this part of the harbour :

- The small remnant of St Mary's Bay;
- Westhaven Marina;
- St Mary's Bay cliff (and the pohutukawa along it);
- The rocky, vegetated promontory of Point Erin; and
- The views of the water (harbour and St Mary's Bay) from the motorway and residential areas largely uninterrupted by man-made elements.

This area is arguably the most viewed piece of harbour in New Zealand. Thousands of commuters look at it as they move to and from Auckland along the motorway and across the Harbour Bridge each day; and large numbers of office workers and residents look out over it from St Mary's Bay, Ponsonby and the CBD.

Victoria Park

Victoria Park is a large inner city park constructed on reclaimed land. It is sited between Beaumont, Fanshawe, Victoria and Halsey Streets and is surrounded by a band of large mature London Plane trees, with other trees also of notable size. Most of the mature London Planes are scheduled trees, and are highly significant in visual terms adding considerably to the amenity of this area. This is the largest open space near the CBD and is used for a range of active recreation, particularly cricket and soccer. Toward the western side of the park is a skateboarding facility, a petanque terrain and a bowling green. The park is also used extensively for passive recreation such as walking, jogging and picnics.

Although largely disguised by built development the original coastal cliff edge can be seen curving south from Fanshawe Street, along the west of Beaumont Street.

Significant landscape features in this area are:

- Victoria Park (particularly its mature trees and spaciousness); and
- The original coastal cliff edge.

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE MOTORWAY CORRIDOR

Three main landscape units unfold as one travels along the motorway corridor from Wellington Street towards the Harbour Bridge.

Landscape Unit 1 - Wellington Street

In the area of Wellington Street, the motorway is in an enclosed cutting with vegetated slopes either side. Moving northward, the motorway is overlooked by commercial buildings, particularly on the eastern side, with the Birdcage Hotel to the west. Travelling along this section, views are focussed ahead along the Victoria Park viaduct. The characteristics of this small unit are its enclosed nature, and its views focussed to the north - to the harbour and the buildings and advertising billboards on the corner of Beaumont and Fanshawe Streets.

Landscape Unit 2 - Victoria Park

Travelling north across the Victoria Park Viaduct views are out into the tree tops in the park. Industrial and marine buildings mainly dominate views towards the harbour. The Orams Dry Stack building blocks views out to the Waitemata Harbour from the viaduct until the viaduct turns westward and St Mary's Bay and the marina become visible. For motorists this is the first close contact with the Waitemata Harbour from the motorway corridor. Travelling south the views out across the park and to the city to the east are significant.

The characteristic of this landscape unit is one of low enclosure, achieved mainly by the barriers on the viaduct and the tops of the trees, with occasional views out.

Landscape Unit 3 - St. Mary's Bay

Travelling northwest from Beaumont Street, the motorway passes through an area tightly enclosed by buildings and the motorway viaduct. It is at this point that the visual experience of the city gives way to the harbour edge/marina landscape.

North west of HMNZS Ngapona, glimpses of the water of St Mary's Bay on the right are available with the marina beyond. On the left, the pohutukawa-clad cliff with houses perched on the cliff top is the main focus of the view. The motorway swings along the base of this cliff and there is a sense of being on the dividing line between the harbour and the land. There are a number of vertical elements along this corridor such as lampposts, stanchions for signs and the masts of yachts in the adjacent marina.

Toward the harbour and views of the North Shore are filtered through the yachts. Although further westward, the buildings surrounding Westhaven marina tend to block views to the north.

For those travelling north from the inland parts of the motorway and further south, or along the city streets of Auckland, one of the important aspects of this stretch of motorway is the sense of being close to the water - part of the harbour/marina landscape. For these motorists this is the first close contact with the Waitemata Harbour. The remaining areas of water (outside the marina) in St Mary's Bay, although small, still give a sense of being connected to the sea, particularly with the combined influence of marine activities. Glimpses of areas of water close to the motorway are an important part of this experience, as are the views of the boats in the marina.

The sensitive elements in this landscape unit are the cliff and the pohutukawa on the southern side of the motorway, and the remaining areas of open water to the north.

CONCLUSIONS

Whether this landscape is experienced from the surrounding areas or whilst travelling along this motorway corridor, the same elements remain important to the viewer. Some of these features are very sensitive to change because of their high visibility, their rarity and their influence on the local landscape character. These landscape elements can be roughly divided into the following categories:

Landform

There are a number of distinct landforms along this corridor. The coastal edge of St Mary's Bay, which incorporates the coastal cliff and mature pohutukawa, is one of the most visually important elements of Auckland's harbour landscapes. The cliff edge through St Mary's Bay has been retained mostly undisturbed, during the construction of the motorway, which follows the general form of the cliff line as it retreats and advances to create an interesting and diverse landscape edge.

The cliffs and pohutukawa are highly sensitive to change because of their high visibility from the motorway and also because of their vividness, rarity, and continuity.

Trees

The most important trees along the motorway are the pohutukawa on the cliffs around St Mary's Bay and the mature London Planes surrounding and within Victoria Park.

Open Space

From a landscape and experiential perspective, the wide-open green expanses of Victoria Park are significant as they are rare and provide visual and psychological contrast and relief from the 'built' character of the city.

Views

Views out to the harbour and the city are probably the most important visual elements along this route. They are certainly the aspects which give the journey through Auckland (both from the north and the south) its interest and visual appeal. The important motorway views in the assessment area are:

- The view into St Mary's Bay from the northern end of Victoria Park viaduct and from the motorway travelling south;
- The view out to Birkenhead Point and the upper harbour from the southern approaches to the Auckland Harbour Bridge travelling north;
- The view to Herne Bay, Ponsonby ridge and St Mary's Bay from the Auckland Harbour Bridge travelling south; and
- The views across Victoria Park to the city, particularly travelling south.

3. BACKGROUND LANDSCAPE STUDIES

Auckland Urban Area Coastal Landscape Assessment. ARC October 1994

Westhaven and St Mary's Bay fall into the category of "Marinas" in the Auckland Urban Area Coastal Landscape Assessment.

In carrying out the assessment, the Auckland Regional Council divided Auckland's regional coastal landscape into 104 landscape units. Individual lengths of coastline have a relatively homogenous and consistent landscape character. There is however a certain repetition of landscape types and many units have a landscape character that is similar to that of landscape units around other parts of the urban area coastline. Landscape units have therefore been grouped together into categories.

The unifying theme for the marina category is their development as marinas. They are all sited in coves or embayments, although in the case of Westhaven the eastern extent of this enclosure has been formed by the Tank Farm reclamation. Land inshore of the marinas is typically either elevated on cliffs or quite steeply sloping. It generally supports fairly intensive residential development.

A thicket of yacht rigging and boat superstructures is visible over the reclamation and seawalls of Westhaven. Whilst conveying a nautical theme, the sheer mass and numbers of these predominantly white vertical elements is a dominant and sometimes intrusive element within the coastal environment.

The original coastal cliff line, with associated mature vegetation forms the partial backdrop to Westhaven. The retention of this topography and vegetation contributes to the quality of this unit.

Westhaven marina has a low visual and landscape sensitivity of 2, where a rating of 5 is regionally significant and 6 or 7 is outstanding.

Evaluation of Landscape Values – ARC ASP 2 Units¹ LA4 Landscape Architects Oct 1997

This report summarised the key values and sensitivity ratings for the Auckland urban and peri urban areas using the ARC's ASP 2 boundaries. The key criteria in the assessment of "Landscape/Townscape Value" and "Vulnerability to Change" were:

Landscape / Townscape Value

Built character/ Form / Identity:

Reflecting the value found in the built heritage of different parts of Auckland, with emphasis upon residential development, from the Victorian / Edwardian villa period, through the transitional villa, bungalow and state housing eras to the present day. Assessment in relation to this criteria also recognises that particular buildings which house other activities - such as the War Memorial Museum.

¹ Auckland Strategic Planning Model. Part 2

Mature Vegetation:

In many areas this built fabric is complemented and supported by vegetation in both the public and private domains. This adds to the sense of maturity, permanence and visual character found in different parts of Auckland, including its rural and more natural areas - from the mature trees which line the streets of Remuera and Epsom (often softening and disguising the discontinuity evident in the built environment alone) to the shelter belts and native forest remnants in most rural parts of the region, to the extensive native forests of the Waitakere and Hunua Ranges.

Open Space:

Again, this is seen as a complementary facet of both the urban and rural environments, ranging from the prevalence of neighbourhood to civic parks in most of suburban Auckland to the much more widespread feeling of open space (though more limited physical access) in most of the countryside.

Natural Features:

Auckland is built on a wide range of natural features that are central to the identity of both the city and the rural parts of the region. Such features include:

- *The Waitemata and Manukau harbours and the cliffs and bays that line them*
- *The West Coast, the eastern coastline from Waiwera to Pakiri, the Kaipara Harbour and the Firth of Thames*
- *Rangitoto and the islands of the Hauraki Gulf*
- *The central isthmus's unique array of volcanic cones*
They extend over both public and private domains, with assessment in relation to this criteria based on both the presence and awareness of such features within and from each ASFI unit.

View / Outlook:

Although evaluation on the basis of this criteria focuses upon visual 'access' to such features, it also includes exposure to cultural elements and points of interest as well, such as the War Memorial Museum, the harbour bridge, the CBD, parts of the port area and other local man-made 'icons'. It addresses the general sense of pleasantness associated with typical outlooks within each unit and the degree of coherence (without significant disruption from adverse elements) found in such views. The degree to which such views contribute to local character and identity is central to this assessment.

Vulnerability To Change**General Topography:** *This relates to:*

- *the degree to which the individual unit's terrain is more or less convoluted and therefore liable to either screen or expose change and development within it (marked valley and ridge terrain versus an open or gently concave landscape), and*
- *typical slope angles within it which either tend to 'lift' development out of the landscape or see it sit 'flat' within its general surrounds (a landscape marked by obviously rising 'edges' versus the flat plain or gently rolling landscape).*

Natural Elements & Features:

Each unit contains or addresses (visually) landscape features

which could be affected or compromised by particular forms of development, with the presence of such features and their characteristics reflected in the assessment ratings. Thus, for example, the forested parts of the Waitakere and Hunua Ranges are highly sensitive to most forms of urban development whereas the Waitemata Harbour's sensitivity to change varies according to the part being addressed and the array of development which is already associated with that part - from marina to wharves, to Tamaki Drive and residential development.

Urban / Suburban Development/ Settlements:

The nature of existing development within each unit is a key indicator of its ability to accommodate new development of various kinds. As a result, heavily industrialised areas, such as around Penrose and Favona are much more able to absorb a wide range of new development without significant alteration to the area's existing character. Whereas localities which are either dominated by residential development or which lie within sectors which are essentially rural or natural in character are much less able to withstand most forms of development without an appreciable impact upon landscape character and values.

These matters have been taken into account when carrying out this assessment.

4. STATUTORY BACKGROUND

The need to include within an Assessment of Environmental Effects consideration of visual and landscape effects, arises from the provisions of Part II of the Resource Management Act, the Fourth Schedule, and from the definitions of "environment" and "amenity values".

Section 6 of Part II, dealing with matters of national importance, is specific in stipulating that all persons exercising functions and powers under the Act shall recognise and provide for:

- a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*
- b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivisions, use, and development:*
- c) The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna: ...*

A significant requirement under the Act is therefore to assess the landscape of territorial areas, to specifically examine the character of coastal environments and to identify outstanding landscapes.

Section 7, addressing other matters, also requires those exercising functions and powers under the Act to have particular regard to, amongst others:

- c) *The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values:*
- f) *Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment:*

In the Fourth Schedule, Section 2 - Matters to be considered when preparing an assessment of effects on the environment, any person preparing an assessment of effects should consider the following:

- b) Any physical effect on the locality, including any landscape and visual effect. (LA4's emphasis)

5. THE PREFERRED OPTION

The report assesses the preferred option for the Harbour Bridge to City motorway improvements (the project), which include:

Wellington Street – Victoria Park

- Northbound lanes sited in a tunnel, southbound lanes use existing viaduct.

St Mary's Bay

- A realigned on-ramp crossing above the tunnel and over the Victory Christian Church car park;
- The construction of a concrete median and roadside barriers on top of retaining walls with a combined height of up to 2.5m in sections through St Mary's Bay (to replace existing retaining and guard rails);
- A 5 metre high transparent perspex acoustic barrier along the western side of the motorway below the St Mary's Bay cliffs;
- Minor widening, realignment of the motorway and the installation of a concrete retaining wall/barrier in between the motorway and Westhaven Drive; and
- An extension for the northern side of Shelly Beach Road overbridge.

6. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The first part of this assessment established the existing landscape characteristics and values of the area between the Auckland Harbour Bridge and Wellington Street, including the St Mary's Bay and Victoria Park landscape. This section assesses the landscape and visual effects of the project on them.

The key landscape and aesthetic issues that arise in relation to virtually any new proposal or change in the landscape are:

- i) the physical catchment that would be exposed to visual and landscape change;
- ii) the nature of the viewing audience; and
- iii) the scale, type and intensity of change, ie the nature of the expected effects.

The process of analysing such effects involves:

- identification of the landscape units through which the project passes;
- identification of the catchment from which the project would be visible;
- identification of the different viewing audiences that would see the project;
- allocation of viewpoints to positions which capture those audiences' perspectives;
- use of photos from chosen vantage point and, as appropriate, 'before' and 'after' photomontages to depict the nature of the change associated with the proposal;
- application of LA4 Visual Effects Matrix to methodically and consistently analyse the degree of landscape and visual effects associated with such change for each landscape unit; and
- evaluation of the effects of the proposal as a whole, taking into account all the preceding analysis.

In carrying out this assessment the effect of the project on each of the three landscape units - Wellington Street, Victoria Park and St Mary's Bay - is assessed.

The Visual Assessment Matrix is divided into two parts.

Part A assesses the sensitivity of the landscape unit to change. In doing this it includes an assessment of the landscapes' quality, including its contribution to the experience of entering Auckland; landscape heritage - in which an assessment of the extent to which the landscape unit conveys a sense of identity because of its endemic or cultural associations; the visual absorption capability of the area (its ability to accommodate change) and the size of the viewing audience and its proximity to the proposed option. As part of this assessment, the key values and sensitivity ratings for the Auckland urban and peri urban areas from the ARC's ASP 2 are considered. (ASP – *Auckland Strategic Planning Model Part 2*)

Part B assesses the specific visual and landscape implications of each option including its visual prominence; its visual contrast or integration (ie how well does the option fit into the existing scene in terms of composition, and its relationship to elements and features in the landscape); view blockage and obstruction (ie does the option intrude into existing views and across landscape elements and features); effects on key landscape elements and patterns; and amelioration potential (ie are there opportunities to merge or integrate the option into the landscape setting). As part of this assessment the aspects contributing to "vulnerability to change" from the ARC's ASP 2 are considered.

The rating given at the end of each description denotes the overall visual effects rating including the potential for amelioration.

The definitions of the visual effects used by LA4 in its assessments are as follows:

no effect	no visual effects or positive visual effect
low effect	minor visual effect
moderate effect	medium visual effects
high effect	significant visual effects
severe effect	very high visual effects.

In general terms, visual effects in the no effect to moderate effect range are acceptable, provided mitigation is carried out for close up residents or workplaces, or for particularly intrusive elements. For those viewpoints where high effects result, significant landscape mitigation is required, and/or a redesign of parts of the proposal. Where a severe effect is created, the effects are likely to be so high as to render the option unacceptable in visual and landscape terms.

7. VISUAL CATCHMENT AND VIEWING AUDIENCE.

In this section, the viewing audience, that is the people who would be able to see some part of the preferred option, is described. The audiences include motorway and road users, people in residential areas, in offices or places of work and nearby open spaces.

The motorway

The largest viewing audience is the motorway users - a transient audience, for whom the proposed motorway upgrades will be experienced from within the context of the motorway environment. So, although this audience will experience the greatest visual impacts they are generally likely to be less sensitive to these effects than others within the visual catchment such as local residents or park users. This group comprises private car users, tourists in buses and other vehicles, commuters in buses and cars, and drivers of commercial trucks and heavy industrial vehicles. About 155,300 vehicles cross the Harbour Bridge each day and, at an average occupancy rate of only 1.2 people per vehicle, there is a viewing audience of about 186,360 people. The route over the bridge into and out of Auckland is also one of the city's tourist sights.

Residential Areas

From surrounding residential areas the motorway corridor is not highly visible. Through St Mary's Bay it is tucked closely under the cliff. Views of part of the corridor can be gained from some houses on Ring Terrace, Harbour, London, Dylan and Hackett Streets, but from other areas the pohutukawas and other houses along the cliff edge largely screen the motorway from view.

There are a number of apartment blocks, which have been constructed over the last 10 years, in the vicinity of Victoria Park. Some of these will be affected by the proposal.

Public Open Space

The proposed motorway upgrade will be visible to people using the public open spaces in the area. These include parts of Point Erin Park, the public reserve between the motorway and the cliff in St Mary's Bay, and Victoria Park, where people partake in a wide variety of passive and active recreation.

Central Business District and commercial areas

From some of the tower blocks of Auckland City the motorway can be seen as it crosses Victoria Park, and through St Mary's Bay. Some of the effects of the proposal will be visible from these locations, albeit at some distance and seen in the context of a diverse cityscape.

The effects on Victoria Park, which relate mainly to tree removal will also be visible from commercial properties surrounding Victoria Park particularly on the slopes to the west, and in the Union Street, Franklin Road and Victoria Street areas.

From the Fuji Xerox building above the old Gas Company Board on Beaumont Street, and other commercial premises on this ridge, and in the adjacent areas around Beaumont Street and Fanshawe Street, and the Auckland Christian School, partial views of the tunnel entries, realigned on-ramp and existing viaduct would be obtained.

Views of aspects of the proposal will also be gained from Victoria Street, College Hill, Beaumont Street and Fanshawe Street.

Western reclamation

From the industrial and boat building premises along the west side of Beaumont Street and the Western reclamation, parts of some of the proposal would be visible. From here and from the CBD the most obvious feature of the motorway is the movement of cars.

Westhaven

Elements of the proposal would be visible from Westhaven Drive, and from the southern and western parts of the marina itself.

VIEWING AUDIENCE

Based on the visual catchment identified, the following groups comprise the main audience that would be visually affected by the project:

- People travelling on the motorway either northwards or southwards. They would include commuters in private cars and in buses, commercial vehicle drivers, and tourists;
- Some residents who live in the St Mary's Bay area, or overlooking Victoria Park;
- Motorists and pedestrians using nearby roads;
- Office workers in buildings overlooking the proposal, and people in offices in the CBD that overlook this area;
- People using Westhaven Marina and the Western reclamation;
- People using Victoria Park for active or passive recreation;
- People walking along the base of the St Mary's Bay cliff and
- People using retail and commercial premises in the vicinity of Victoria Park Market.

In conclusion, the anticipated level of audience exposure would be high, mainly because of the very high numbers of people using the existing motorway and local roads, who would see the proposal. Permanent residents who would be visually exposed to the proposal would be moderate in size - bearing in mind that these people already have a motorway in their views. The viewing audience who work in buildings that directly overlook the project is quite small.

Viewpoint Selection

In order to assist in assessing the visual and landscape effects of the project as it passes through the landscape, four representative viewpoints within the visual catchment have

been chosen. The assessment does not rely entirely on these photomontages as it is not possible to illustrate all of the effects. The effects of the project in each landscape unit is assessed by descriptive means, and where possible a photomontage has been provided.

The viewpoints were selected as locations which capture and fairly represent the range of public views towards the project. They are:

- Viewpoint A:** Victoria Park on the west side of the Campbell Free Kindergarten looking north, on the west side of the Viaduct.
Audience: park users.
- Viewpoint B:** Level 3 ACP Media Centre, corner of Beaumont and Fanshawe Streets looking south
Audience: office workers.
- Viewpoint C:** House in St Mary's Bay - 19 Ring Terrace
Audience - St Mary's Bay resident
- Viewpoint D:** Level 4 ASB Business Centre 17 Hargreaves Street off College Hill
Audience: Office workers.

The position of these viewpoints is shown on **Figure 1. Viewpoints.**

For each viewpoint the existing view is illustrated with a photograph and below it are photomontages of the proposal. They provide a basis for comparison of the present and anticipated situation. The photomontages are indicative only. The photograph has been taken using a 50mm lens, which most nearly represents the human eye.

8. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS ANALYSIS

LANDSCAPE UNIT 1 - WELLINGTON STREET

Assessment of landscape and visual effects through this unit

The table below shows the outcome of applying the visual assessment matrix to the proposal as it passes through Landscape Unit 1. Part A gives the sensitivity rating of the existing landscape unit to change. Part B gives the specific visual and landscape implications of each option.

The landscape and visual effects are described in the section following the table.

	EFFECT
Part A SENSITIVITY	
A1 Visual Quality	Low
A2 Landscape Heritage	Moderate
A3 Visual Absorption	Low *
A4 Visual Catchment	Moderate
Composite Rating	<i>Low- Moderate</i>
Part B QUALITATIVE CHANGE	
B1 Visual Quality/Integration	Low
B2 Amelioration Potential.	Low – Moderate *
Composite Rating	<i>Low- Moderate</i>
OVERALL EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE UNIT	Low -Moderate

**Note - the effect value relates to potential effect in relation to each specific criteria. For A2 Landscape Absorption Capability and B2 Mitigation Potential, a high rating (ie high VAC or mitigation potential) results in a low 'effect' rating against these criteria (and visa-versa).*

Discussion

Through this landscape unit, the extension to the existing motorway is sited largely within an existing motorway cutting, with existing or proposed shrubby vegetation on both sides until just to the north of Sale Street. This landscape unit has a fairly low landscape quality rating despite the heritage value of the Birdcage Hotel, the buildings associated with Victoria Park Market and the large trees around the Victoria Street/Union Street intersection. The existing landscape unit is viewed mainly by people using the motorway and by a small number of nearby residents and workers. Apart from a number of large trees on the periphery of the unit, there are no natural features of significance

The proposal will involve realignment of the motorway within the existing cutting as an extension of the 'Northern Tie-In' work currently being undertaken as part of the Central Motorway Core upgrade.

The motorway's northbound lanes will be rebuilt from just north of the Wellington Street off ramp where the roadway will descend toward a tunnel portal in the location of the existing Birdcage Hotel. The effect of this development will be to double the width of the motorway through this area. There will also be significant level changes, but they will be contained visually within the existing road cutting. The proposal will necessitate removal of a significant portion of the vegetation to the west of the motorway. The vegetation on the eastern side of the cutting has been removed as part of existing works - but will be reinstated. The Birdcage Hotel will also be relocated approximately 30m up the hill from its current location.

Overall, the landscape and visual effects on this landscape unit will be relatively low because:

- The location of the development within a cutting in an existing motorway corridor means it will only be visible to motorway users and a few adjacent businesses and residential properties;
- A large part of the proposed development is below ground level;
- Results in relatively low qualitative change in relation to existing land use;
- Can be reasonably well integrated with appropriate planting along sides of the motorway; and
- The Birdcage Hotel will be relocated nearby.

LANDSCAPE UNIT 2 - VICTORIA PARK

Assessment of landscape and visual effects through this unit

	EFFECT
Part A SENSITIVITY	
A1 Visual Quality	High
A2 Landscape Heritage	Moderate-high
A3 Visual Absorption	High *
A4 Visual Catchment	High
Composite Rating	High
Part B QUALITATIVE CHANGE	
B1 Visual Quality/Integration	Low-Moderate
B2 Amelioration Potential.	Low -Moderate*
Composite Rating	Low - Moderate
OVERALL EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE UNIT	Moderate

**Note - the effect value relates to potential effect in relation to each specific criteria. For A2 Landscape Absorption Capability and B2 Mitigation Potential, a high rating (ie high VAC or mitigation potential) results in a low 'effect' rating against these criteria (and Visa-versa).*

Discussion

The key landscape features of this landscape unit are the open grassed spaces of Victoria Park, and the mature London Planes around the periphery. Many of these

London Planes are magnificent specimens and are particularly important because of their heritage value (between 100 – 120 years old), and the sense of establishment and amenity enhancement they bring to the park.

The built character around the park retains much of its heritage values with the Birdcage Hotel, Victoria Park Market and the Gas Company Building along Beaumont Street. There are views across the park and from the viaduct crossing the park. This combination of factors results in a landscape unit with a relatively high visual quality.

This unit contributes to the experience of entering Auckland for the motorway user with views from the viaduct out to the Waitemata Harbour and the city. The park contributes significant landscape value to the people living and working in the immediate area. The park also has strong cultural and endemic associations with this part of Auckland. The viewing audience is large and significant and includes motorway users, park users and people living and working adjacent to the park, and those using the major streets encircling the park. This combination of factors contributes to a high overall sensitivity rating for this landscape unit.

The proposed motorway upgrade includes the construction of a northbound tunnel under Victoria Street, Victoria Park and Beaumont Streets. All southbound traffic will use the existing viaduct which will have slight modifications, with solid concrete barriers to replace the existing steel railings.

The construction of the tunnel will necessitate the following removals:

- Four mature London Planes including one adjacent to the Birdcage Hotel, one to the south of the petanque terrain and two to the north of the skate-boarding area.
- A small group of mixed native and exotic trees in the park next to Victoria Street.
- A large elm next to the skateboard area.
- A significant group of pohutukawa and other mixed native specimens near the Newton Sports Club.
- Several Brush Box (*Tristania sp*) street trees on Beaumont Street.

Visually, once the construction is complete, the area will appear almost exactly as it is, but with less trees, as the main part of the works is underground. So, apart from the restriction of views from the viaduct as a result of the installation of the concrete barriers, the main effect of the proposal will be the reduction in the abundance of significant vegetation within the park and immediate surrounds. The indicative effects of this vegetation removal are depicted in photomontages A, B and D.

Although these trees collectively are of considerable significance as landscape, heritage and amenity features within the park, their removal must be considered in the context that the project:

- Will result in no further visual intrusion of motorway structures on the park;
- In the short term will result in increased apparent spaciousness of the park (as the result of the removal of some trees), which may well be perceived as a positive effect by some park users;
- Will not affect a large number of remaining trees; and

- With time, the trees that have been removed - can be reestablished, albeit in a slightly different locations.

Overall the landscape and visual effects on this landscape unit will be moderate.

LANDSCAPE UNIT 3 - ST MARY'S BAY

Refer Photomontage

Viewpoint C: 19 Ring Terrace – St Mary's Bay – Existing situation.
Photomontages showing the proposal.

Assessment of visual and landscape effects through this unit

	EFFECT
Part A SENSITIVITY	
A1 Visual Quality	High
A2 Landscape Heritage	High
A3 Visual Absorption	Moderate*
A4 Visual Catchment	High
Composite Rating	<i>Moderate - High</i>
Part B QUALITATIVE CHANGE	
B1 Visual Quality/Integration	Low - Moderate
B2 Amelioration Potential.	Low- Moderate*
Composite Rating	<i>Low - Moderate</i>
OVERALL EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE UNIT	<i>Moderate</i>

**Note - the effect value relates to potential effect in relation to each specific criteria. For A2 Landscape Absorption Capability and B2 Mitigation Potential, a high rating (ie high VAC or mitigation potential) results in a low 'effect' rating against these criteria (and Visa-versa).*

Discussion

St Mary's Bay has a high landscape and visual quality because of :

- The built character of the residential development sited on the slopes above St Mary's Bay coastal edge;
- The mature pohutukawa extending along the cliff line below the houses marking the old coastline;
- The grassed open space at the base of the cliff;
- The proximity to the harbour edge; and
- The views of the harbour, marina and cityscape.

This landscape unit contributes significantly to the experience of arriving in or leaving Auckland. It is complex in visual terms with the motorway corridor, housing and marina

overlaid upon the natural coastal edge. The combination of natural and built features contributes to Auckland's sense of identity. The remnant coastal edge and pohutukawa cliff have significant heritage values. The viewing audience for this landscape unit is also significant. It includes not only the large numbers of people using the motorway but also the residents of St Mary's Bay who look out over the motorway, and the people using Westhaven Marina.

Notable aspects of the proposal within this landscape unit include :

- A realigned on-ramp crossing above the tunnel - cutting into the Victory Christian Church car park;
- The construction of a concrete median and roadside barriers on top of retaining walls with a combined heights of up to of up to 2.5m in sections through St Mary's Bay (to replace existing retaining and guard rails);
- A 5 metre high transparent perspex acoustic barrier along the western side of the motorway below the St Mary's Bay cliffs;
- Minor widening, realignment of the motorway and the installation of a concrete retaining wall/barrier in between the motorway and Westhaven Drive; and
- An extension for the northern side of Shelly Beach Road overbridge.

The main visual effects in relation to this landscape unit will result from vegetation removal and introduction of the acoustic barrier.

The construction of the tunnel and realigned on-ramp will necessitate the removal of most of the mixed vegetation along the edge of the Victory Christian Church car park - removing its current screening. The realignment will also require the removal of the HMNZ Ngapona facility (Auckland Division of Naval Reserves).

West from the Victory Christian Church, along St Mary's Bay cliff line, general construction and installation of the acoustic barrier will necessitate considerable pruning and crown lifting, and complete removal of some pohutukawa. Although most of the significant pohutukawa along this stretch are retained, the selective removal of some trees and pruning will reduce the overall canopy effect in this area.

The pohutukawa on the cliff, and the trees that surround Point Erin Park and the southern end of the Shelly Beach Road bridge are the focus of the views from the Harbour Bridge travelling south – a view seen by thousands of commuters on a daily basis. These are part of the remnants of coastal pohutukawa cliff line, which extend from St Mary's Bay to Cox's Bay. These have additional tree protection under Rule 5B.7.2B of the City Of Auckland - District Plan Isthmus Section – Operative 1999, and are an important landscape feature of urban Auckland.

The proposed widening of the Shelly Beach Road bridge will require the removal of 11 pohutukawa and a 3m crown lift on 2 other significant specimens on the cliff below Point Erin Park to allow machinery to pass beneath them for construction works. Individually most of the trees intended for removal in this area are relatively insignificant. However, collectively they perform an important visual function, particularly trees 2575 –2579 which grow up under the bridge screening the abutment and assisting in its visual integration.

The ability to mitigate the loss of some of this vegetation is good; particularly the less established planting adjacent to the Victory Christian Church where some of the existing specimens could be relocated and augmented with new planting. However, tangible mitigation for the loss of substantial cliff line canopy, individual mature pohutukawa and other smaller groupings is more of a long-term proposition.

As part of the minor realignment on the seaward side of the motorway, the entire existing narrow strip of vegetation will be removed. Although this vegetation is small in stature, of variable quality, and discontinuous, it does provide a visual break between the motorway and Westhaven Drive, reducing the apparent scale of the total carriageway. The removal of this vegetation could however be quite rapidly mitigated through appropriate planting.

The acoustic barrier will be constructed using a transparent material (refer to Viewpoint C). While this will mitigate the adverse visual effects of the wall itself to some degree, it is considered that the noise walls could still potentially result in relatively high, adverse visual effects.

For motorway users the barrier will be viewed within the context of the motorway corridor and its associated infrastructure, and although not, in relative terms, necessarily objectionable aesthetically, it will introduce a reflective barrier between the viewer and the pohutukawa lined cliff. The acoustic barrier will not intrude significantly on views of most local residents as many are located in elevated positions with views out over the motorway to the harbour and city beyond, or have views of the motorway filtered by trees and other houses. Even for those with clear views of the barrier it will be seen in the wider context of the motorway and wider setting. Negative visual associations relating to the barrier for some residents will also be offset to a degree by the acoustic improvements it will provide. The actual visual effects of the acoustic barrier could also be significantly reduced with well-considered design (refer Landscape Unit 3 – Mitigation measure 5, page 22).

The overall landscape and visual effects of the motorway upgrade on this landscape unit are moderate.

9. LANDSCAPE MITIGATION

The following mitigation measures are recommended for each landscape unit to assist in reducing the landscape and visual effects identified in this assessment.

LANDSCAPE UNIT 1 - WELLINGTON STREET

1. Where space allows - continue native coastal themed revegetation proposed for the Northern Tie-In section of CMJ Core Upgrade into the HBTC project area for continuity and screening of the motorway from adjacent areas.

LANDSCAPE UNIT 2 - VICTORIA PARK

1. As part of the outline plan process, a landscape mitigation /tree planting plan should be prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect to ameliorate for the loss of significant trees. This plan should be prepared well in advance of initiation of works so that suitable advanced grade or relocatable specimens can be sourced for replacement planting.
2. Re-establish the lines of plane trees along the south (Victoria Street) and west (Beaumont Street) sides of the park.

LANDSCAPE UNIT 3 – ST MARYS BAY

1. Replant the new boundary of the Victory Christian Church car park with suitable fast growing native coastal shrubs and pohutukawa specimens identified as suitable for relocation in this area in the Arboricultural report prepared by The Specimen Tree Company 2005.
2. Where space allows - investigate a replanting programme of locally sourced pohutukawa along the base of the cliff line for the length of St Mary's Bay both to replace specimens removed and to provide successional replacements for the existing trees as they naturally decline.
3. Plant a strip of low to medium growing native shrubs on the landward side of the motorway barrier and acoustic wall to soften and integrate this edge with the reserve area.
4. Where space allows, replant the remaining strip between the new motorway barrier and Westhaven Drive to assist in screening and separation of the motorway from Westhaven Drive. Some gaps should be left at regular locations to allow the retention of glimpses of the water.
5. Ensure the acoustic barriers are of a simple aesthetically pleasing design with emphasis on transparency, and minimal structural elements. Consideration should be given to designing upright structural members in a way, that make reference to the 'forest' of yacht masts in the adjacent marina, to assist in visual integration.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Because the proposed development is either located within the existing motorway corridor or underground, the main effects of the upgrade relate to vegetation removal and additionally in St Mary's Bay, the establishment of the transparent acoustic barrier. Initially the overall potential effects are relatively high, due to the significance of the trees proposed for removal and the landscape values of St Mary's Bay. However, with successful implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, the 'proposals' overall visual effects will be reduced to low and acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

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27th[†] October 2005