



**Proposed Development at 99-105 Botanic  
Gardens Rd, Durban. A Visual Impact  
Assessment Report**

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**PREPARED FOR THEUNISSEN  
JANKOWITZ ARCHITECTS**

A Visual Impact assessment of a proposed  
residential development as required by the  
KZN Amafa & Research Institute.

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## 1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of the study is to assess the visual impact of the proposed development in the streetscape. Reference is made to the motivation document by TJArchitects to KZN Amafa and Research Institute dated 14-09-2021.

## 2. Location

The properties are located on the Berea on the East (lower) side of Botanic Gardens Road.



Fig. 1. Ethekwini GIS map aerial photography



Fig. 2 Ethekwini GIS map

### 3. Character and Context

The area is historically a residential area with medium density residential blocks predominately on the East side of Botanic Gardens Road continuing on Problem Mkhize Rd northwards. The Land Use Scheme Zoning is General Residential 2.

Botanic Gardens Rd forms an arterial route that travels North and South along the Berea. It is a main public transport route and a feeder to a few education institutions along the route. As a result, traffic is high at peak hours and there are a fair number of pedestrians.

Botanic Gardens Rd is a wide two-way road with pavements either side, narrow Lanes and Avenues lead down and up to the main road. A portion of Botanic Gardens Rd (just North of the property) is split by a centre-median retaining wall to accommodate a large difference in levels between one side of the road and the other. Both sides have large established trees that occupy part of the pavement.



*Fig. 3. View North up Botanic Gardens Rd*



*Fig. 4. View South West across Botanic Gardens Road*

Original residences on the Western side are set-back from the road and, in some cases, sited above the road. Road boundaries are defined by high walls or parking forecourts in front of garage doors.

On the Eastern side, original residences are closer to the road with access on the same level or a few steps down. Road boundaries are defined by high walls, brick piers with palisade fencing and gates. Residential blocks are set-back from the road with garden or parking areas between the building and the street.

A proportion of the original Edwardian and Victorian residential fabric still exists on Botanic Gardens Road. The remaining fabric contribute a residential scale in pockets where there are groups, but most are not

intact or have been altered substantially. Larger residential blocks dating from 1930 and 1970 interspersed between the original fabric, have changed the character to a medium density residential environment. The demand for accommodation in the area has adversely affected the use of the older residences, with more occupants demanding more amenities.



Fig. 5. View down Botanic Avenue no.101-105 in view



Fig. 6. View up Botanic Avenue



Fig. 7. View of Eastern side of Botanic Gardens Road (Botanic Ave centre)

**Analysis of the immediate streetscape :**



*Fig.8, 61 Botanic Avenue and 108 Botanic Gardens Rd  
Western side of Botanic Gardens Rd (opposite no. 99-105).  
Residences set-back from the road and above the road, accessed off Botanic Avenue.*



*Fig.9, 99-105 Botanic Gardens Rd (Eastern side of Botanic Gardens Rd)  
No. 105 and 101 are a pair of semi-detached houses, situated on the corner of Botanic Avenue with entrance level raised a half-storey above the street, resulting in a 1.5 storey building on the street. The boundary is defined with piers and a fence on Botanic Gardens Rd and a solid wall on Botanic Avenue. No.99 is a single-storey house situated lower than the street, garage and boundary wall screen the veranda and gable from view. A three-storey (1970's) residential block is adjacent to the South.*



*Fig.10, 109, 111, 119 Botanic Gardens Rd (Eastern side of Botanic Gardens Rd north of Botanic Avenue)  
A pair of double-storey gabled-veranda houses and a three-storey (1930's) residential block "Gladington Court". Low brick pier and walled boundary (109) on the Avenue corner and high boundary walls (111-119).*



*Fig. 11. Corner of Botanic Gardens Rd and Botanic Avenue (no.105 Botanic Gdns Rd) Showing the close relationship with the streets*



*Fig. 12. Looking South down Botanic Gardens Rd, no. 99 on left.*



*Fig. 13. View from Botanic Avenue of the boundary of no.105 Botanic Gdns Rd Showing the close relationship with the street*



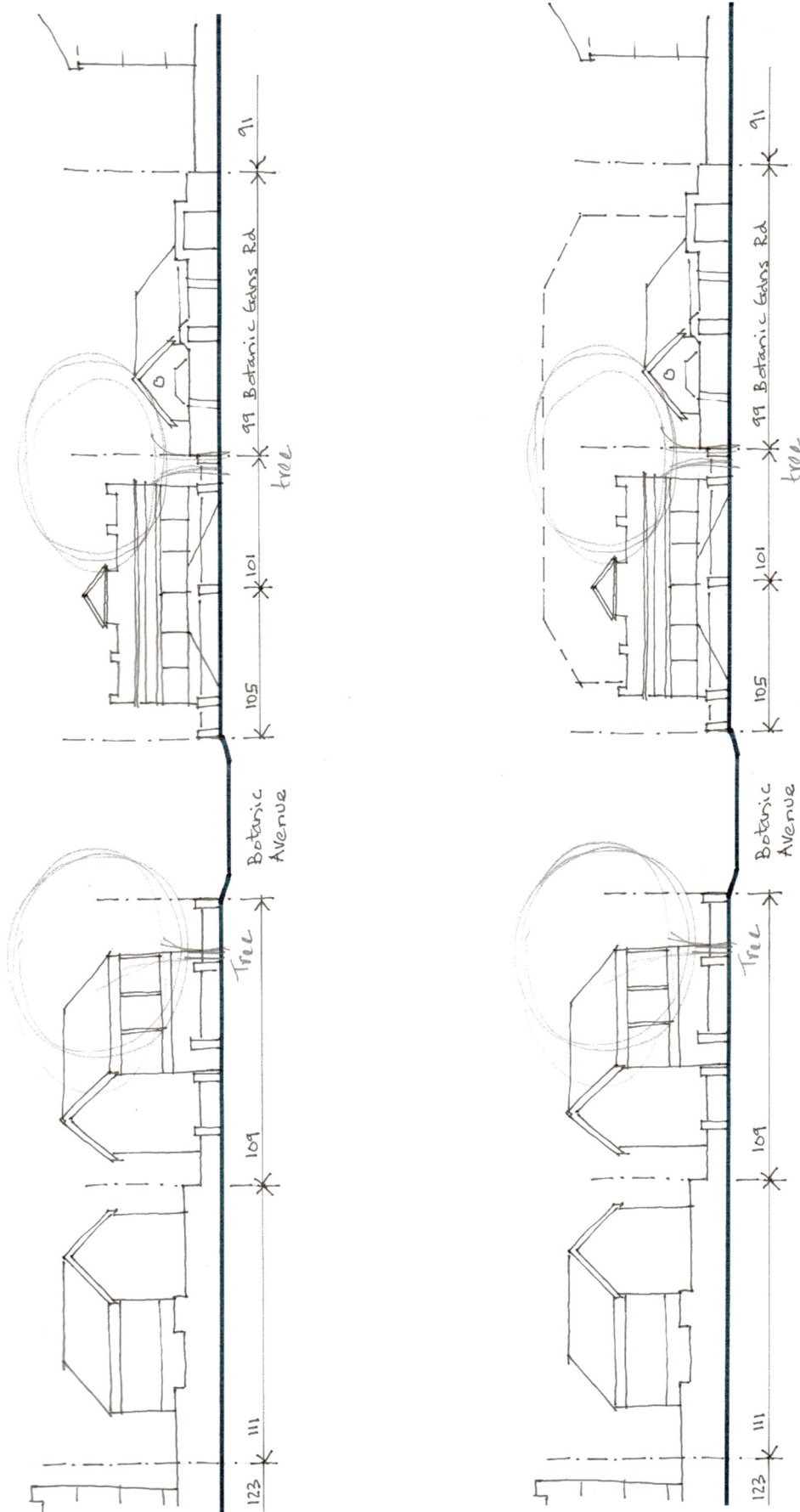
*Fig 14. Figure-ground study : historic residential scale buildings hatched*

The study demonstrates the dominance of medium-density “modern” residential buildings (unhatched) in Botanic Gardens Rd between Steve Biko Rd and Botanic Ave and the concentration of historic fabric on the upper-West side of Botanic Gardens Rd and in lower Botanic Ave.

*Fig 15. Streetscape sketches (following page)*

The sketches demonstrate the existing scale and proportion of buildings either side of Botanic Avenue and the potential massing of the proposed development across 99-101-105 Botanic Gardens Rd.





**4. Development proposal :**

A three to four-storey residential development for student accommodation is proposed which involves the demolition of all structures on the site. The feasibility of the proposal is based on the current zoning of General Residential 2. The conceptual design maximises the potential of the property within the zoning.

In the proposal the current building lines are adhered to, ie. 7.5m from road frontages and 3.15m from the side and rear boundaries. This has an impact of the relationship to the street frontages with the new building set-back further than the existing building from the street. This is accommodated by a garden buffer zone in the new proposal.

Currently the proximity of the buildings to the street has become a security and privacy issue to the occupants and the narrow spaces between the boundary and buildings have become “no-mans-land”.

Three properties are proposed for consolidation, increasing the street frontage from 16.5m to 33m. The neighbouring properties to the South range from 19 to 28m frontages.

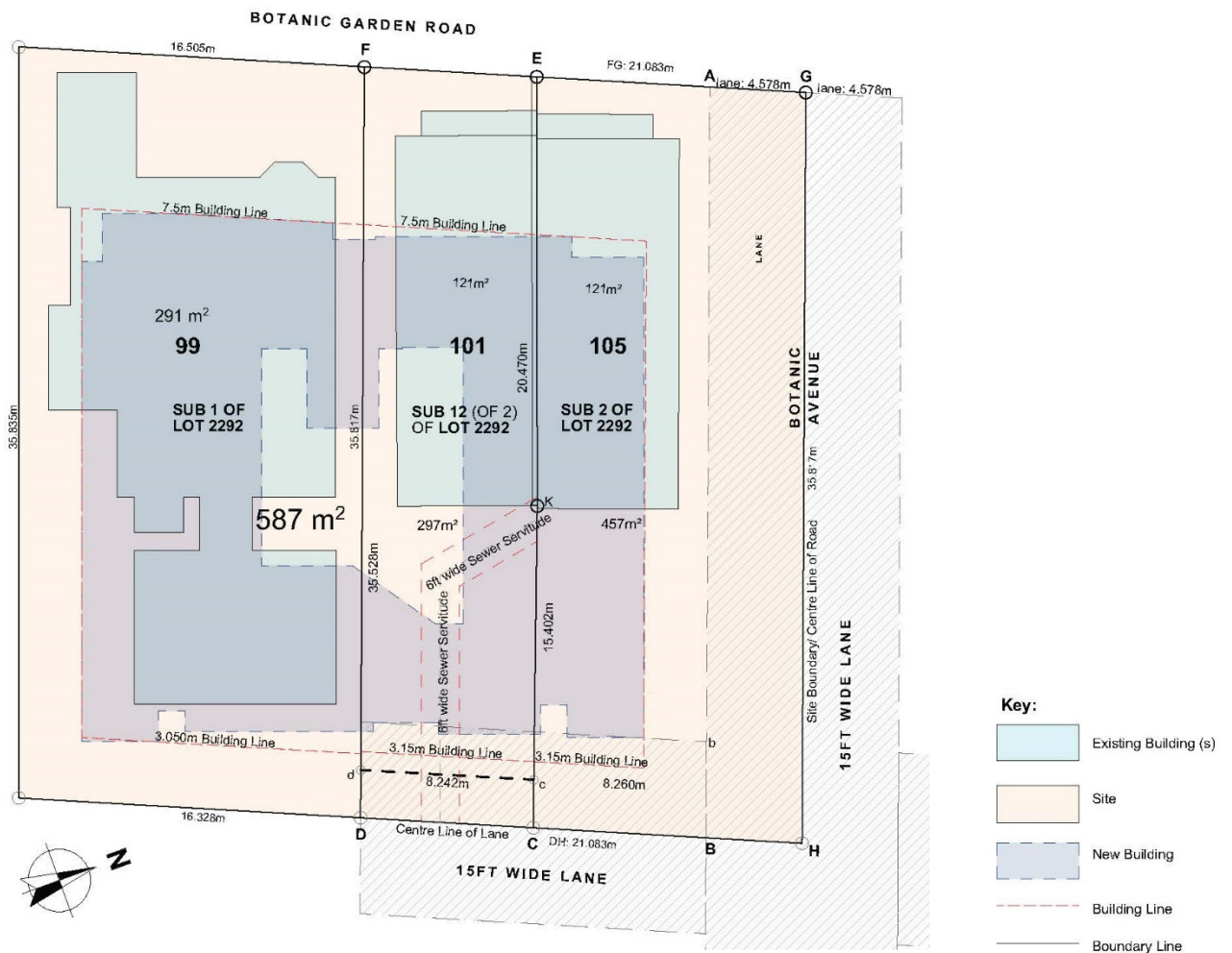


Fig. 16, Site development plan showing existing and proposed footprints

5. 3D renders of the proposal :

View from Botanic Avenue looking East :



*Fig. 17, View down Botanic Avenue with proposed development superimposed*



*Fig. 18, View up Botanic Avenue with proposed development superimposed*

6. **Summary of impact Assessment :**

- Due to the consolidation of three properties the greatest impact will be on Botanic Gardens rd.
- Historic single-dwelling-residential scale will be lost.
- Neighbouring buildings that are listed and protected are intact and remain part of the streetscape. Large trees that form part of the streetscape remain as a filter to buildings facing the street.
- Groups of protected structures of residential scale exist in Botanic Avenue, Halford Lane and on the upper Western side of Botanic Gardens Road.
- The proposed development has a lesser impact on Botanic Avenue's streetscape, the "avenue" streetscape starts from no.41 Botanic Avenue down towards Ritson Road.
- Botanic Avenue is steep on the corner with Botanic Gardens Road and the properties either side of the Avenue do not relate to the street due to the steep gradient.

7. **Mitigation of impact in the proposal and in the surroundings :**

- The proposed building is three stories above the road and one-storey below, the highest point of the massing will be on the Eastern corner on Botanic Avenue where the Avenue drops down steeply.
- The existing buildings are raised 1.5 storeys above the road (at no.101-105) and a few steps down from the road (no.99), the replacement building is entered at street-level, therefore relating better to the street.
- Two structures that are over 60 years old will be lost, but they do not form a group with each other or with neighbouring structures. (A group is defined by "2 or more buildings of similar or matching architectural style and scale"
- The proposed medium-density development is consistent with the existing residential blocks on Botanic Gardens road in the block between Steve Biko and Botanic Avenue.

8. **Conclusion :**

Although the development results in the loss of historic fabric and scale, the impact of a new student housing development on the consolidated site can be lessened through good design, massing and consideration of the space around the buildings.

Access to the new buildings at street level is encouraged to activate the street through more pedestrian traffic, landscaping and security. Private and semi-private spaces are to be incorporated into the side-spaces and road frontages, further contributing to the character and safety of the area.

The regulated set-back from the street boundary provides an adequate buffer for a building that will be 1.5storeys higher than the existing building. New and existing vegetation can soften the impact on the streetscape.

It is noted that the proposal is conceptual and that a more developed design can achieve the above while meeting the requirements of the economic feasibility.