

Helipad No 49 gets nod from council...

A proposal for a helipad at a multimillion-dollar property on Gordons Road has been given the green light despite opposition.

Soon after the resource consent for 345 Gordons Road was lodged in August, lobby group Quiet Sky Waiheke wrote to Auckland Council's head of planning urging them to deny the application.

Opponents of what will now become Waiheke's 49th helipad said there would likely be a problem with the cumulative impact of noise because the proposed site would be near four existing helipads and noted that the helipad would lie close to the approach and departure paths of an aerodrome at 171 Carsons Road.

The request also said that the helipad would be 600 metres away from Whakanewha Regional Park, home to native birds and other wildlife.

Quiet Sky Waiheke member Michael Sweeney says consultation with the Civil Aviation Authority should precede the approval of any more helipads on Waiheke.

"Yet another helipad has now been approved, and several other applications are being processed. None of these would have a chance if they were proposed in Auckland itself. But Waiheke is still being treated like a helicopter sacrifice zone," he said.

"The council continues to ignore the cumulative impact of helipads, the routine violations committed by pilots, the safety hazards, and its self-confessed inability to enforce conditions. It's a scandal. We need action now."

The new helipad will sit at the coastal headland area of the six-hectare Gordons Road property, and helicopters will predominantly access the site over the sea, according to council's decision.

The landing pad will be used by the applicant Michelle Bartlett and visitors to the property.

The original application for the new



The new helipad, Waiheke's 49th, will sit at the coastal headland area of the six-hectare Gordons Road property, and helicopters will predominantly access the site over the sea, according to council's decision.

helipad was prepared in August by Isle Land Planning and requested that single-engine helicopters would be able to operate up to 12 flights over a three-day rolling average period, or a maximum of eight movements in a single day while complying with the relevant noise limits.

However, council has approved significantly less, setting a maximum of two flights on any single day and four flights in any rolling three-day period.

Council's decision document, signed by resource consents team leader Brad Allen,

says the acoustic research to support the application included a detailed cumulative effects assessment, "noting that there is another helipad consented on immediately adjacent land and there are another three located 1.4km to 4kms away".

The helipad closest to 345 Gordons Road is 650m from the subject site and, according to the acoustic assessment, is "well screened" by vegetation and is located west, beyond a ridgeline.

"As such, given the separation distance and land characteristics, there is limited opportunity for cumulative noise effects to arise, particularly given the flight path restrictions and assessment under this consent being restricted to the 500ft limit of the take-off/landing movement being assessed."

Auckland Council's noise specialist agreed with the acoustic report's methodology, assessment, and conclusions and put in place conditions of consent, including the development of a flight management plan and a site log.

All helicopters that use the helipad must have GPS tracking devices, and all flight paths must be accurately recorded.

The consent holder, Michelle Bartlett, is expected to play a large part in policing



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how the helipad is used. It is their responsibility to collect details of the flight path to be used and how the information will be retained to confirm the information for each movement.

Bartlett must keep a "complete and accurate log of all helicopter movements to and from the site".

The log is to include the date and time of each flight, whether there was any deviation from the consented path, altitude data if available, the company, tail number and the helicopter model type. The logs (including GPS tracking data) must be made available to council officers within 10 working days on request.

The consent holder must also ensure all arriving and departing helicopters remain within the designated flight path and that the noise associated with the use of the landing area on the site does not exceed a noise limit of Ldn 50dBA over a three-day rolling average.

Meanwhile, other conditions stipulate that flights can occur only between 8am and 10pm, and, on Sundays and public holidays, no flights can take place before 9am and after 6pm.

Provided council's specific conditions are implemented, the decision says compliance with the required noise standard for helicopters will be achieved and "the adverse effects of air travel will be mitigated".

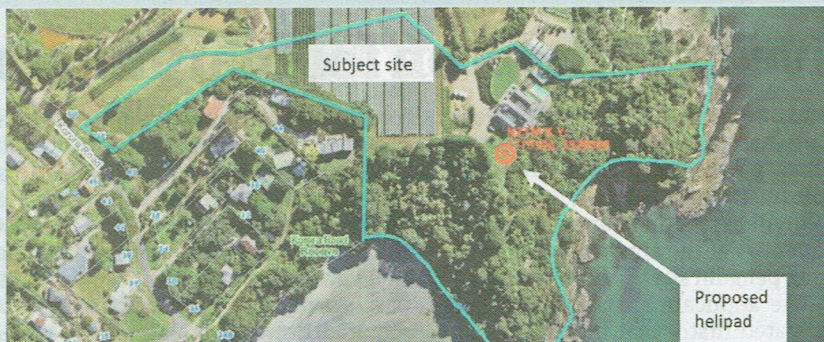
Overall, council's decision considers that the use of a helipad within the rural residential environment will "continue to protect the rural residential style of living without compromising the amenity and landscape values of the area".

In terms of positive effects, council's decision says the proposal "provides for an alternative mode of transport for the applicant and visitors to their property".

The resource consent approval also says no offsetting or environmental compensation measures were proposed or agreed to by the applicant to ensure positive effects on the environment.

• *Sophie Boladeras*

...and still more on the way



Plans for a helipad at a \$9 million four-hectare Oneroa property are under way.

Despite Quiet Sky Waiheke and local board opposition to the cumulative effects of helicopters over Waiheke, the island's helipad count could soon surpass 50, with council processing two recent applications.

Mark Wheeler and Deborah Simpson are seeking land use consent for a helipad at an undeveloped 6.8-hectare section at 380a Cowes Bay road.

Their unoccupied section above Awakiriapa Bay is blanketed in regenerating native bush apart from several cleared access tracks, which intersect close to the site's northern boundary.

The proposed helipad would be around 200 metres from the closest dwelling and would occupy an open area immediately adjacent to the track's intersection.

Two helipads with existing use rights are within 260 metres of the proposed helipad, one at 378 Cowes Bay Road and another at 370B Cowes Bay Road.

According to the application lodged by Isle Land Planning, the new helipad wouldn't require any earthworks, construction, or other physical works, and the applicants are seeking up to 12 single-engine helicopter movements per three-day rolling average period or a maximum of eight single-engine helicopter flights per day.

If noisier twin-engine helicopters are used, up to eight movements per three-day period or a maximum of five flights in any single day would also meet the noise limit, reads the application.

Meanwhile, plans for a helipad at a \$9 million four-hectare Oneroa property at the north-western end of Oneroa beach are also under way.

The applicant, Craig Greenwood, plans to use an existing grassed outdoor area close to the site's dwelling as a helipad for private helicopter transport operations. No earthworks, construction, or other physical works would be required.

Flights would be limited to daytime, with only single-engine helicopters recommended in the application to minimise noise levels and ensure compliance with the district plan limit.

Up to four single-engine helicopter movements per three-day period, or a maximum of two single-engine helicopter movements per day, is proposed.

A single "eastern" (135 degrees) route is also proposed as it would only pass over the subject site and reduce noise emissions to nearby dwellings.

The closest helipad is at 55 Korora Road, 450 metres to the west. • *Sophie Boladeras*



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