

Specialist Response – Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Substantive Application

1. Application Summary

Project name	Kings Quarry Expansion – Stage 2
Applicant	Kings Quarry Limited
Site address	Pebble Brook Road, Wainui
Fast-track reference number	FTAA-2502-1018
Types of approvals sought	Application for resource consents (as a non-complying activity overall under the RMA) relating to proposed vegetation removal, earthworks and land disturbance, stream reclamation, diversion / dewatering of groundwater and discharges to air.
Council reference numbers	BUN60450001 (LUC60450002 / WAT60450003 / WAT60450004 / DIS60450005 / LUS60450006)
Description of the proposal	To expand existing quarrying activities to enable the extraction and processing of up to 500,000 tonnes (approximately) of aggregate per annum for up to 45-years. Includes the removal of approximately 28.97ha of existing indigenous SEA vegetation and 2,439 lineal metres of existing stream habitat. Also includes proposed remediation planting and offsets.

2. Specialist Response Details

Author: Peter Kensington, consultant landscape architect

Specialist Area: Assessment of landscape and visual effects
Tāmaki Makaurau Design Ope, Planning and Resource Consents

Date: 3 July 2025

3. Executive Summary

The application contains an assessment of landscape and visual effects prepared by Helen Mellsop Landscape Architects, dated March 2025 (application Appendix 34), supported by visual simulations (application Appendix 35). I generally concur with the findings of this assessment; however, I suggest that further information and analysis is required to reach a definitive conclusion on the scale of adverse landscape and visual effects that may arise.

4. Specialist Assessment

I confirm that I have visited the site and surrounding area, including viewing the site from the representative public viewpoints assessed by Helen Mellsop. I also visited the general area of one of the proposed locations for ecological off-setting (at Oldfield Road near Wellsford), noting that, while this site is also within the catchment of the Kaipara Harbour, it is very removed from the localised rural area proximate to the site where the adverse effects are being generated (the second offset site at Hellyer Road is closer). The proposed off-setting measures will improve landscape values in those off site areas, noting that the proposed predator proof fence at the Oldfield Road off-set site may require separate resource consenting considerations relating to landscape effects.

I am conscious that an earlier application for fast-track consent for this proposal has been considered and refused, with a copy of that decision provided with the application (application Appendix 4). I note that specialist assessment commentary from landscape architect Stephen Brown was considered by decision makers on that application; however, I have not viewed this specialist assessment information, so cannot take this into account.

I note that the applicant's engagement with tangata whenua is ongoing and that it might be possible that relevant information emerges from those discussions that could be of relevance to an assessment of landscape effects under Te Tangi a te Manu¹.

I note that visual simulations of the proposal have only been prepared for one representative public viewpoint. I recommend that it would be of assistance for further visual simulations to be prepared, including from Viewpoint RVP-3 on Haruru Road. I also suggest that the application assessment of landscape and visual effects would benefit from analysis of a GIS produced zone of theoretical visibility analysis. Such an analysis would confirm that the location of representative public viewpoints utilised by Helen Mellsop is accurate and can be relied upon to make the statements within the assessment that the proposal has a relatively confined visual catchment. For example, I note that the extent of proposed quarry area will extend further to the west than the upper extent of the main existing ridgeline on the site, which may increase visibility for people viewing the activity and resultant landform from areas north of the site, in locations on or near Haruru Road.

I acknowledge that there is a tension between the underlying zoning for the site (being Special Purpose – Quarry Zone) and the immediately adjacent context of land outside of this zone, which has a Natural Heritage Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) Overlay. While no physical works are proposed within the land which has an ONL Overlay, works within the Quarry Zone will inevitably result in a diminishing of the identified ONL values (as recorded within Schedule 7 of the AUP(OP) under ONL 9 Kaukapakapa). It is also acknowledged that the spatial extent of ONL 9 is relatively large; however, equally the spatial extent of the Quarry Zone beyond the current proposed quarry footprint is also

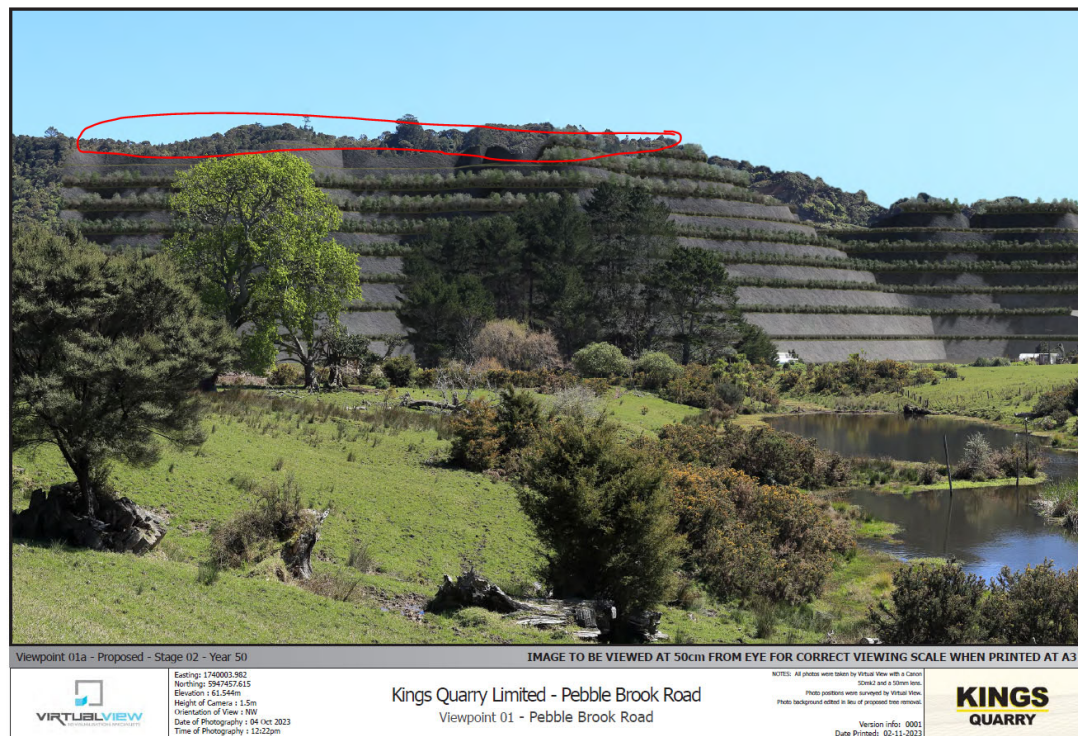
¹ Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022

relatively large. Over time, I anticipate there could be significant cumulative adverse effects on the overall landscape values of ONL 9, with this application being one of the first to start this long term erosion through landform modification – acknowledging that the earlier quarrying activity on the site and the continued quarrying through the consented Stage 1 works have already had some adverse effects on landscape values.

The extent of proposed Stage 2 works will result in a much greater visual impact than the existing and currently consented quarry activity, with a large extent of unnatural horizontal benching / terraces and associated vertical faces becoming visually prominent in the localised landscape. While mitigation in the form of planting on the completed benches is proposed, the final landscape outcome will appear unnatural and clearly quarried.

However, given the zoning of the site, such an outcome is likely anticipated, such that the degree of adverse landscape and visual effects must be cognisant with this statutory context. This is a matter which the Helen Mellsop assessment (and the application AEE) has factored into their analysis and assessment conclusions, resulting in an overall conclusion that the adverse landscape and visual effects of the proposal will not be significant. I currently concur with this overall finding, pending viewing the additional visual simulation that I have suggested is required from Viewpoint RVP-3 on Haruru Road.

When confirming these assessment findings, it would be helpful for the applicant to confirm that the visual simulation images for Viewpoint RVP-1 have correctly illustrated the extent of existing mature vegetation that is shown to remain at the ridgeline to the west of the proposed quarry face (within the red circled area in the image below). I suggest that it would be helpful to view the 3D-model base for these images to confirm understandings.



I confirm that I concur with the Helen Mellsop assessment that the majority of private viewing audiences are likely to be located within properties within Pebble Brook Road that are located with land that has a Quarry Buffer Overlay, such that there is an expectation of quarrying activity to be a component of outlook from these locations. Having said this, I note that the Quarry Buffer Overlay does not extend to properties on Haruru Road.

5. Comment on Proposed Conditions

I have reviewed the proposed draft conditions provided with the application (Appendix 25). There appears to be some disconnect between requirements to implement the proposed Ecological Management Plan (EMP) (application Appendix 19) and the proposed Landscape Remediation Planting Plans (LRPPs) (application Appendix 20 – labelled ‘Quarry Management Plan’). For example, the proposed edge effects and buffer planting shown on Figure 32 of the EMP does not appear to correlate with the proposed LRPPs.

In my experience with similar restoration proposals, it is often beneficial to prepare a combined landscape and ecological restoration plan, with associated drawings and specifications, for ease of implementation and to ensure a comprehensive outcome on the site. It is my impression that the EMP and related conditions primarily seek to address the offset work; however there is also some ecological mitigation work required on site. Proposed conditions of consent 86-87, under the current heading ‘Remediation Planting’, might be better linked into a wider landscape and ecological management plan approach.

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