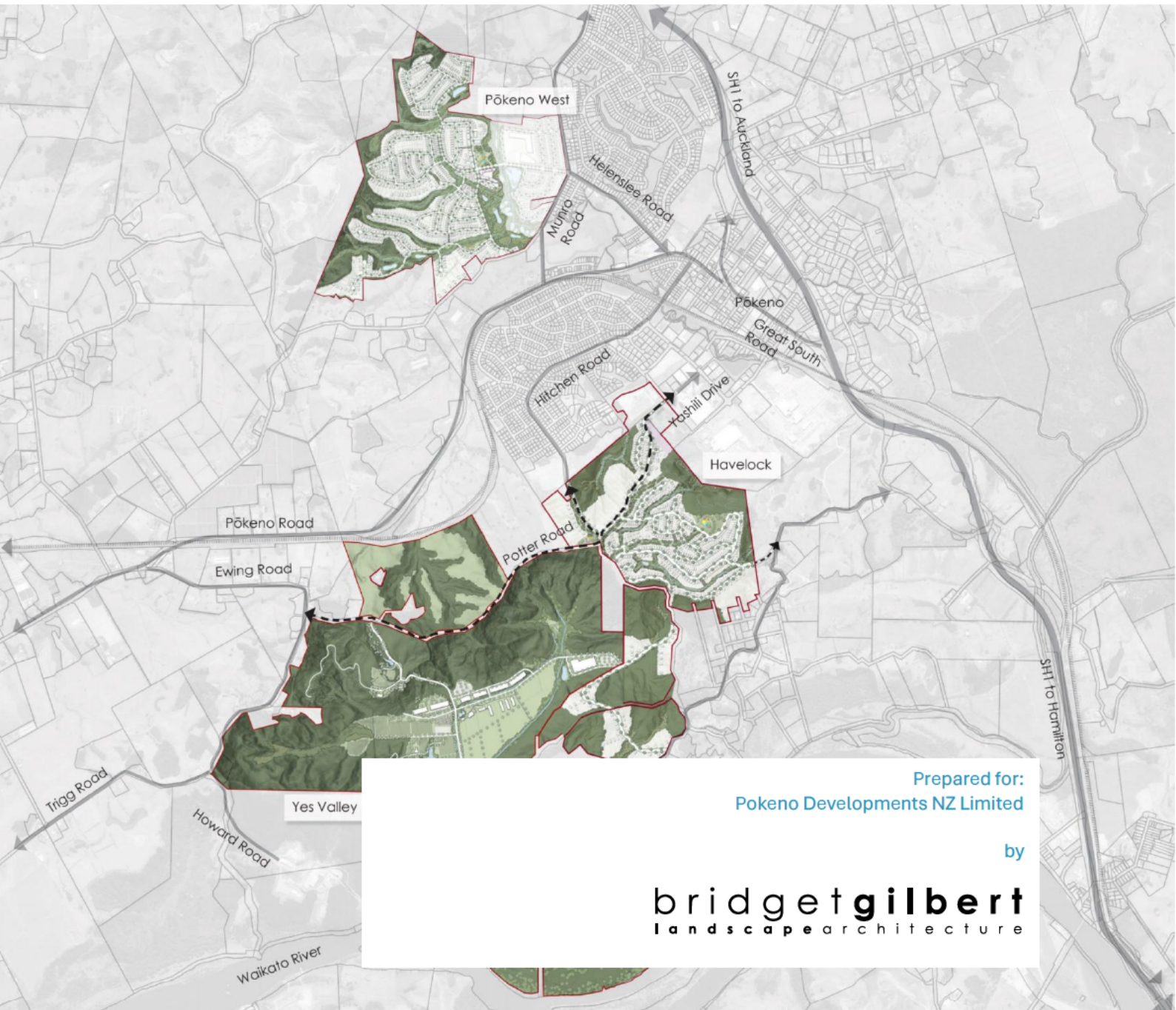


The Pokeno Housing and Tourism Project

Landscape Review



Prepared for:
Pokeno Developments NZ Limited

by

bridgetgilbert
landscape architecture

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FINAL

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bridget Gilbert Landscape Architecture Limited (**BGLA**) has been requested by Pokeno Developments NZ Limited to provide a landscape review for the purposes of a referral application to the Fast Track Application Act (FTAA) for The Pokeno Housing and Tourism Project.
- 1.2 The following landscape comments have been prepared by Bridget Gilbert and relate to three distinct areas at Pokeno: Pokeno West, Havelock/Pokeno South and Yes Valley (as shown on the *Pokeno Fast Track, Indicative Masterplan, Wider Pokeno Area*). Collectively, these areas are referred to as the ‘application site’.

Expert Qualifications and Background Experience

- 1.3 I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Horticulture from Massey University and a postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Lincoln College. I am an associate of the Landscape Institute (UK) and a registered Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
- 1.4 I have practised as a Landscape Architect for almost thirty years in both New Zealand and England.
- 1.5 During my career, I have been involved in a wide range of work in expert landscape evaluation, assessment, and advice throughout New Zealand, including:
- landscape assessment in relation to Regional and District Plan policy;
 - preparation of structure plans for rural, coastal, and urban developments;
 - conceptual design and landscape assessment of infrastructure, rural, coastal, and urban development; and
 - detailed design and implementation supervision of infrastructure, rural, coastal, and urban projects.
- 1.6 I am an Independent Hearing Commissioner for Auckland Council and, until recently, was a panel member of the Auckland Urban Design Panel (with a Chair endorsement).
- 1.7 Of particular relevance to the referral application, I served on the Fast Track Consent Panel for the Kepa Road Apartments project in Auckland. I was also engaged by the Fast Track Panel to provide an independent expert report for The Pitau project (Mount Maunganui). Both projects were approved under the Covid 19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020.
- 1.8 With respect to more detailed knowledge of the application site and its landscape planning context, I have provided expert advice in relation to: the settlement of Environment Court appeals in relation to the Havelock land; the (approved) Stage 1 subdivision resource consent for the West Pokeno land; and the resource consent for the Tata Valley Zone access road which links between Pokeno and the Yes Valley land.

Documents Relied on

- 1.9 The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of these landscape comments:
- a) Pookeno Fast Track, Indicative Masterplan, Wider Pookeno Area (**Indicative Masterplan**).
 - b) The landscape assessments that informed the recent live zoning of the application site for urban and tourism related uses.
 - c) Technical landscape analytical mapping for the application site (refer **Appendix A** for mapping examples).
 - d) A briefing paper prepared by Tollemache Consultants Limited, outlining the overall referral application, including the background information relevant to the referral application, guidance with respect to the FTAA process, and scoping of the various expert briefs required to support the FTAA referral application.
- 1.10 I am familiar with the application site and local area, having visited the area on numerous occasions over recent years (including with iwi representatives). I have undertaken a specific site visit in relation to this review on 21 August 2025.
- 1.11 I have also had the benefit of a thorough briefing by the author of the Indicative Masterplan upon which these comments are based. This has given me a clear understanding of the landscape opportunities and constraints associated with the application site, along with an appreciation of how the indicative masterplan layout responds to those matters.

2 Landscape Assessment Methodology

- 2.1 In keeping with landscape assessment best practice, I confirm that the following landscape comments have been prepared applying the landscape assessment methodology outlined in *Te Tangi a te Manu (TTatM)* (Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, noting that I was one of the peer reviewers of TTatM prior to its adoption by the NZILA).

3 Application Site: Existing Landscape Characteristics and Values

- 3.1 All of the parts of the application site where development is proposed have been live zoned for either urban or resort land use via recent district plan review processes. This is an important starting point for my landscape assessment as it signals that an appreciable change to the current (or existing) 'rural' landscape character of the application site is anticipated.
- 3.2 At a more detailed level, for each of the three areas encompassed in the application site, a location specific live zoning strategy applies that draws from extensive landscape evidence tested via District Plan or Environment Court processes and responds appropriately to the landscape characteristics and values of the specific area. Importantly, while the landscape is anticipated to change in character, the landscape effects will be appropriately managed and mitigated by the live zone provisions.

- 3.3 It is confirmed that none of the sites contain any Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) or Outstanding Natural Features (ONF) as mapped by any Regional or District planning document, excepting small slivers of the Waikato River ONL (identified in the Waikato District Plan (WDP)), that overlap the southern margins of the Yes Valley land (as illustrated in **Figure 1** below).



Figure 1: Waikato District Plan ONL mapping (green hatching shows the extent of the Waikato River ONL; red line boundary defines Yes Valley landholding).

- 3.4 The WDP includes a Schedule of Landscape Values for the Waikato River ONL which advises the key (or important) landscape attributes and values that make the awa outstanding. The schedule also advises the threats to the character and qualities of the ONL as follows:
- a) Earthworks, quarrying and excavation along the margins of the river corridor disrupting natural vegetation patterns.
 - b) Modification of natural river patterns within the braided delta resulting in biophysical changes to the natural elements, patterns and processes.
 - c) Built development resulting in loss of dominant vegetation cover and clearance of native bush cover contributing to the overall aesthetic coherence. Recognising some purpose-built development exists within these areas and can be accommodated through sensitive design.
 - d) Modification to geopreservation sites disrupting the natural formations.
 - e) Loss or modification to cultural and historic heritage features along the river margins.
 - f) Loss of public visual relationship with the river from State Highway 1.
 - g) Introduction of dominant structures or activities within the Waikato River Margins and Wetlands area.
- 3.5 The location specific zoning strategy for the Tata Valley Zone responds to the proximate and, in places, slightly overlapping Waikato River ONL and ensures that development within the zone avoids adverse effects on the landscape characteristics and values that contribute to the outstanding landscape values of the awa. Further the development anticipated by the Tata Valley Zone does not comprise a layout, scale or character that represents the identified threats to the ONL.

- 3.6 The specific live zoning strategy for each area articulates a number of fundamental landscape principles which can be summarised as follows:

Pokeno West (refer Figure 2)

- a) Creating a well-connected and high-quality residential neighbourhood that complements the adjacent existing urban grain and pattern, and incorporates a neighbourhood centre, school, open space areas, street planting, and a well-connected walkway/cycleway network.
- b) Native restoration of stream corridors, wetland, pond (including stormwater ponds) and flood-prone areas.
- c) Coordination of open space areas, street tree planting and riparian corridors to create a cohesive landscape framework for the residential development.

Havelock/Pokeno South (refer Figure 3)

- d) Creating a well-connected and high-quality residential neighbourhood that:
 - i. Reinforces the role of the elevated landforms framing the south and south-western side of Pokeno in providing an attractive backdrop to Pokeno via the integration of a largescale and cohesive landscape framework throughout the ridgeline areas.
 - ii. Avoids built development on land that has high cultural landscape importance and allows for open space uses and the incorporation of cultural markers and heritage interpretation in those areas.
 - iii. Aligns roading along ridgelines and spurs to minimise earthworks effects.
 - iv. Requires the native restoration of stream corridors, wetland, and pond (including stormwater ponds) and steeply sloping areas.
 - v. Incorporates a spatial strategy (via configuration of built development areas and landscape framework) that appropriately manages the interface between new urban residential development and established industrial development.
 - vi. Promotes the co-ordination of open space areas, street tree planting and riparian corridors to create a cohesive landscape framework for the residential development.
 - vii. Requires a more spacious development pattern throughout steeper land that requires a percentage of each lot to be in native revegetation.
 - viii. Introduces building colour controls across parts of the area that are visible from Pokeno to minimise their visual prominence in views from the existing urban area.
 - ix. Requires a more spacious development pattern in the southern part of the area (i.e. on the south side of the elevated landforms framing the south and south-western sides of Pokeno) that relates to a more rural landscape setting.

Yes Valley (refer Figure 4)

- e) Creating a well-connected and high-quality resort zone that:
 - i. Avoids built development on land that has high cultural landscape importance.
 - ii. Locates built development and other land modification
 - iii. Requires extensive native restoration that takes in steeply sloping areas, stream corridors, wetland areas, ponds (including stormwater ponds) and flood-prone areas to form a comprehensive and coordinated natural landscape framework for the resort development.
 - iv. Aligns roading along ridgelines and spurs to minimise earthworks effects.
 - v. Focuses built development in more visually discreet locations, that correspond to more gently sloping or flat land.
 - vi. Guides a development outcome that protects the landscape characteristics and values of the Waikato River (ONL). This includes: the protection of the high cultural landscape values connected with the awa; positioning landform disturbance and built development well back from the river edge; encouraging a gradation of activities throughout the southern part of the area which sees very low-key activities in the southern portion of the zone; and envisages extensive landscape restoration and enhancement along the river edge.

4 Proposed Development Strategy

- 4.1 The proposed development strategy as illustrated in the Indicative Masterplan (reproduced below for convenience), builds on these fundamental landscape principles to ensure a development approach that is appropriate from a landscape perspective.
- 4.2 More specifically detailed GIS mapping of the landform (contour elevation and slope analysis mapping), SNAs, watercourses, flood, and cultural areas along with the interpretation of vegetation characteristics and visual sensitivity via field survey and desktop review of aerial photography (with contours) has informed the development of the Indicative Masterplan. (Refer **Appendix A** for examples of the analytical mapping that has been relied on in this regard.)



Legend

- 1. Vacant lot residential subdivision in stages for approximately 1,500 dwellings
- 2. Future neighbourhood centre
- 3. Future MoE School site
- 4. Required infrastructure within the Pōkeno West site including, new roads, water supply network, stormwater management devices and network
- 5. Reserve areas and recreational trails
- 6. Local parks and play opportunities
- 7. Enhancement of streams, wetlands and steep slopes

Figure 2: Indicative Masterplan for Pokeno West



Legend

1. Vacant lot residential subdivision in stages for approximately 750 dwellings
2. Vacant lot slope residential subdivision
3. Vacant lot rural residential "cluster-style" subdivision
4. Required infrastructure within the Havelock site including, new roads, water supply network, stormwater management devices and network
5. Reserve areas and recreational trails
6. Local parks and play opportunities
7. Enhancement of ecological areas, streams, wetlands and steep slopes
8. Ridgeline plantings
9. General industrial zone

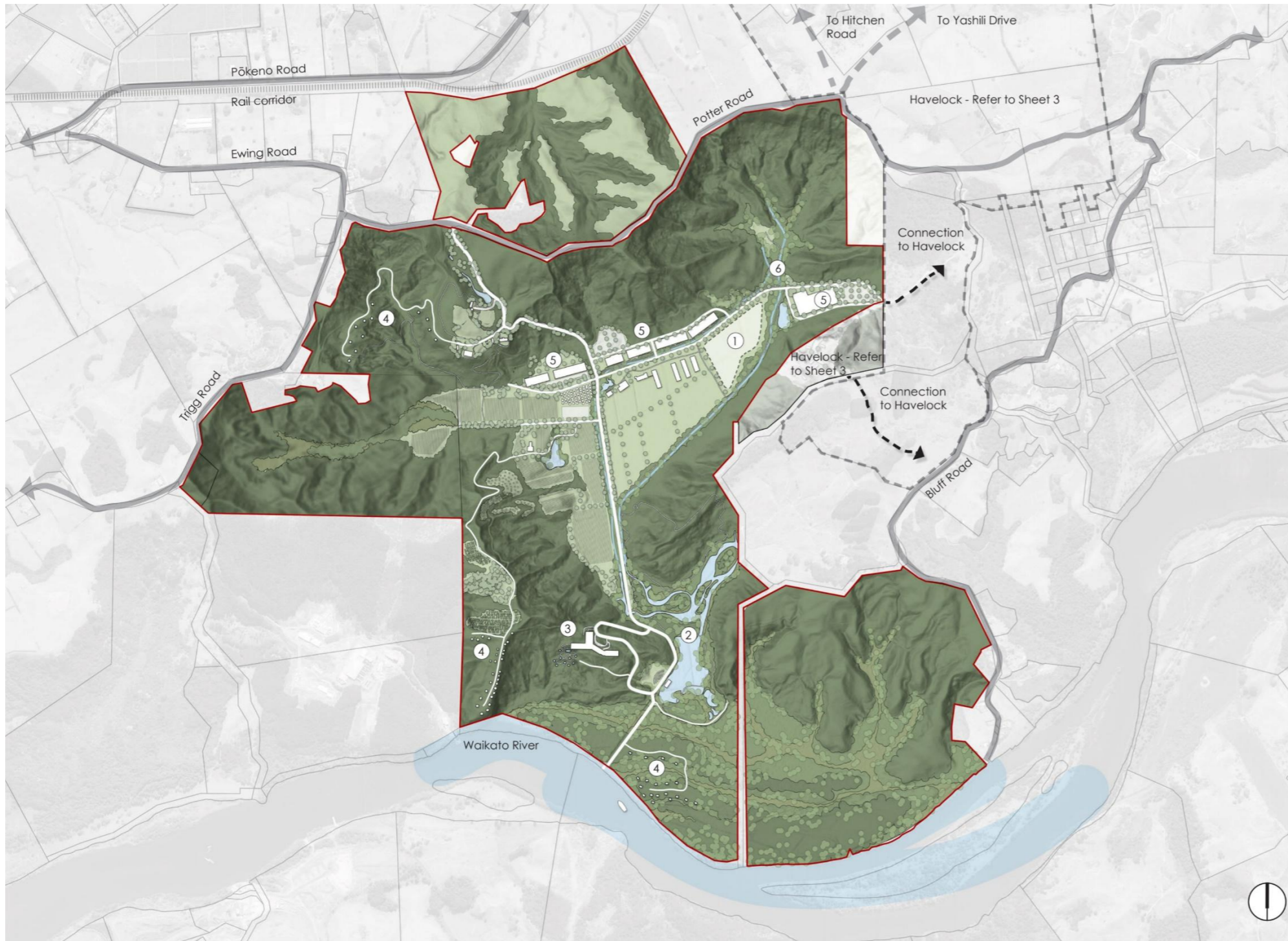
ED | EARL
DESIGN
URBAN DESIGN + LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



Date. 17.12.2025
Scale. 1:10,000 at A3
Sheet. 3/4
Drawn by. J.Earl
Revision. E

Pōkeno Fast Track
Indicative Masterplan
Havelock / Pōkeno South

Figure 3: Indicative Masterplan for Havelock / Pokeno South



Legend

- 1. Central MBR location
- 2. Wetland
- 3. Hotel site
- 4. Glamping
- 5. Buildings and car parking for zoned visitor attractions / New Zealand showcase
- 6. Stream, wetland and steep slope planting enhancements

Figure 4 Indicative Masterplan for Yes Valley

- 4.3 It is envisaged that the detailed design process under subsequent consent application processes will include:
- a) native restoration where appropriate (including within larger lots);
 - b) careful consideration of the detailed siting and design of large-scale buildings and infrastructure elements in the Yes Valley area;
 - c) lot density that responds to the localised steeper slopes; and
 - d) the incorporation of a native planting palette that accords with previous iwi consultation on appropriate plant species.

5 Evaluation of Landscape Related Effects

- 5.1 Assuming the incorporation of the limited refinements envisaged as part of the consent level detailed design process (outlined in paragraph 4.3 above), I consider that the development strategy illustrated in the Indicative Masterplan aligns with the fundamental landscape principles for each of the areas within the application site, outlined in Section 3.
- 5.2 Specific site design and details will form part of the substantive application and will assist in integrating the development with the respective landscape. Specific details are likely to include;
- a) Treatments to the façade of buildings to reduce visual impacts where required including a restrictive colour palette;
 - b) Detailed planting for restoration of natural streams, wetlands and significant natural areas;
 - c) Detailed planting within the Yes Valley to further integrate the hotel and associated buildings within the landscape;
 - d) Refinement of lot densities to respond to localised steeper slopes;
 - e) Native restoration planting across steeper slope areas within larger lots; and
 - f) The incorporation of a native planting palette that accords with previous iwi consultation on appropriate plant species.
- 5.3 Importantly, this will see the enhancement of landscape values via strategies such as:
- a) The native restoration planting of streams, wetlands, ponds, and steep slopes.
 - b) The ongoing management of existing and proposed native planting areas.
 - c) The reinforcement of the identity of the elevated landforms framing the south-western side of Pokeno in providing an attractive backdrop to Pokeno.
- 5.4 The creation of a coordinated and high amenity network of open spaces connected via high quality streetscapes. For these reasons, I consider that the proposed development contemplated by the Indicative Masterplan will maintain or enhance the key landscape characteristics and values associated with the application site and will avoid adverse effects on the characteristics and values

that contribute to the outstanding values of the Waikato River ONL , making it appropriate from a landscape perspective. For completeness, I also consider that the proposed development contemplated by the Masterplan will not generate significant adverse landscape effects.

- 5.5 A detailed Landscape and Visual Assessment (following the concepts and principles outlined in *‘Te Tangi a te Manu’* (Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines), 2022 and detailed planting / landscape concept plans will be provided as part of the substantive application

Bridget Gilbert

Landscape Architect

B. Hort. Dip. L.A. ALI NZILA (Fellow)

BRIDGET GILBERT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE LTD

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APPENDIX A: Examples of Landscape Analytical Mapping supporting the Indicative Masterplan

Pokeno West

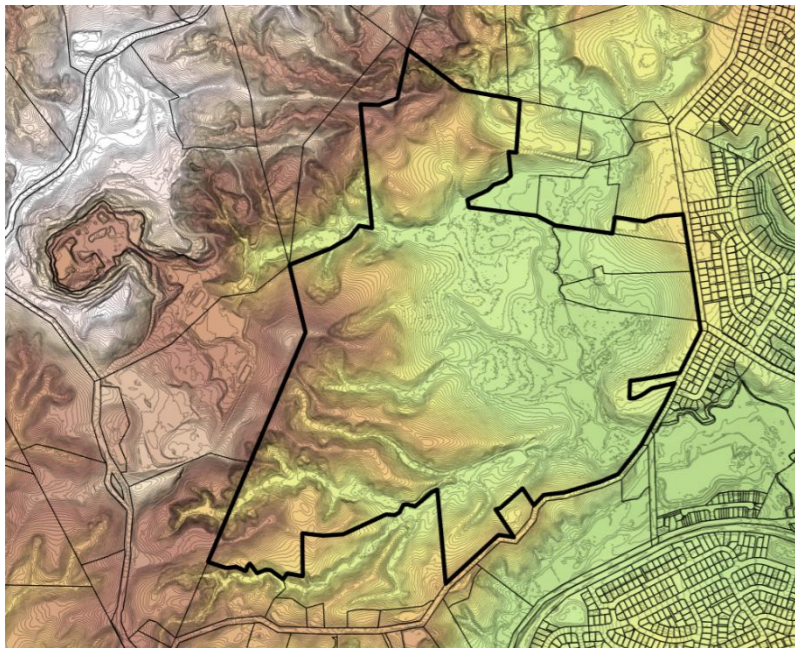


Figure 1: Contour Elevation Mapping

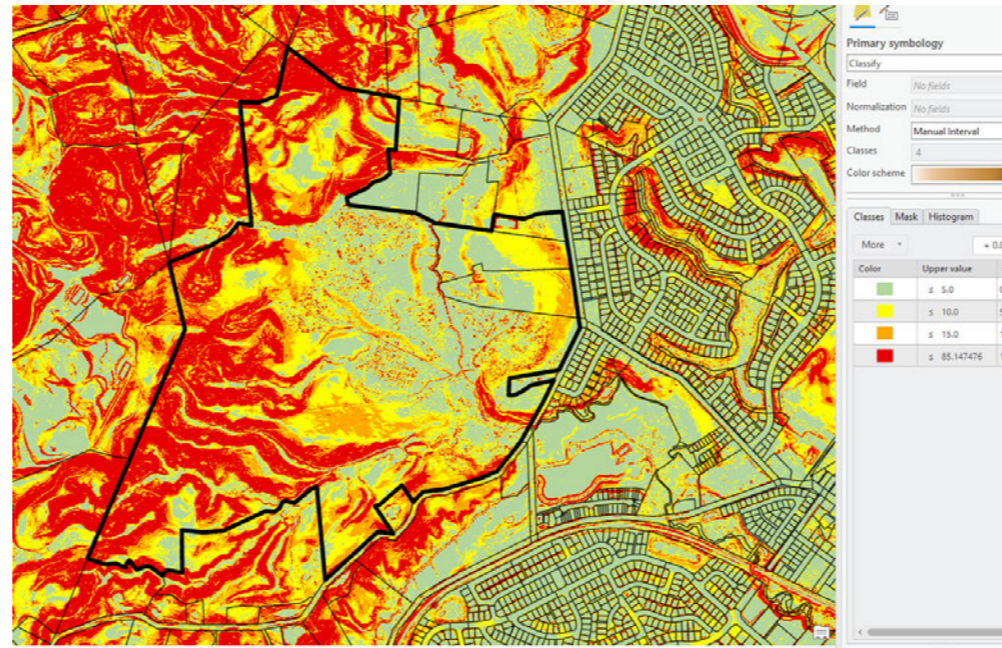


Figure 2: Slope Analysis Mapping



Figure 3: SNA Mapping

Havelock/Pokeno South

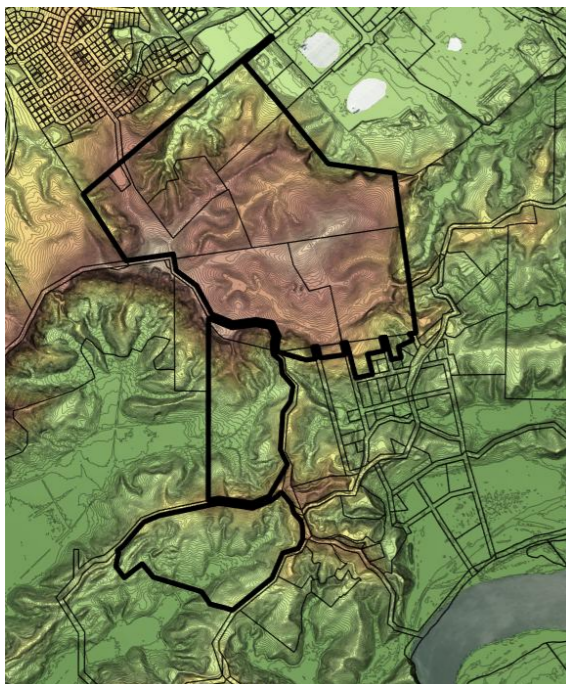


Figure 4: Contour Elevation Mapping

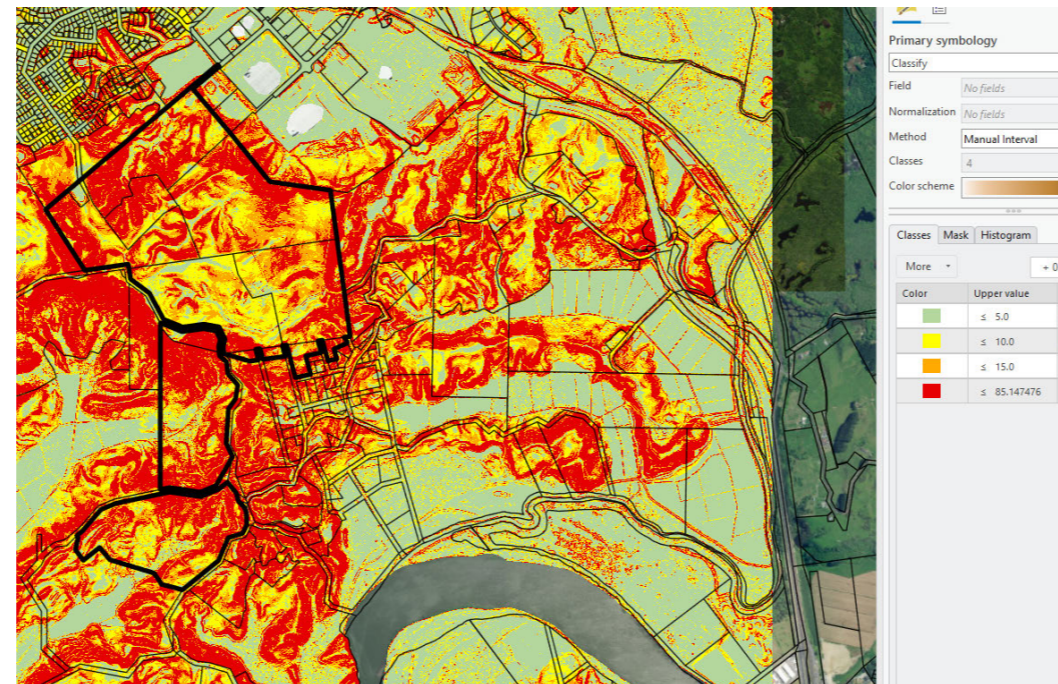


Figure 5: Slope Analysis Mapping

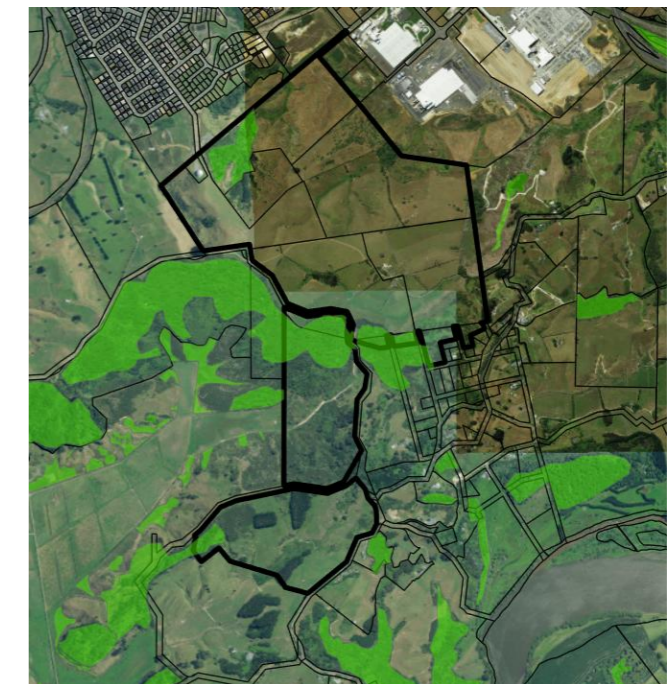


Figure 6: SNA Mapping

Yes Valley

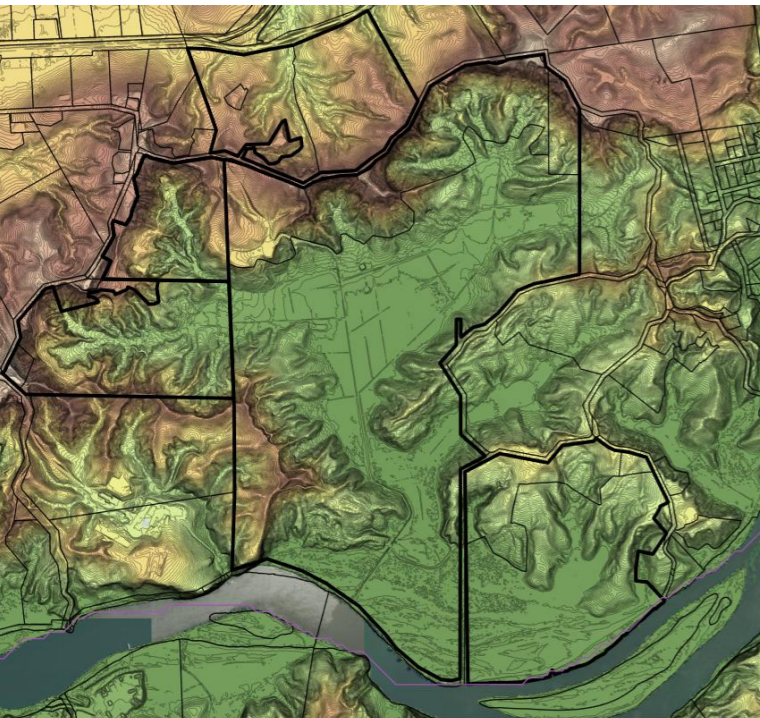


Figure 7: Contour Elevation Mapping

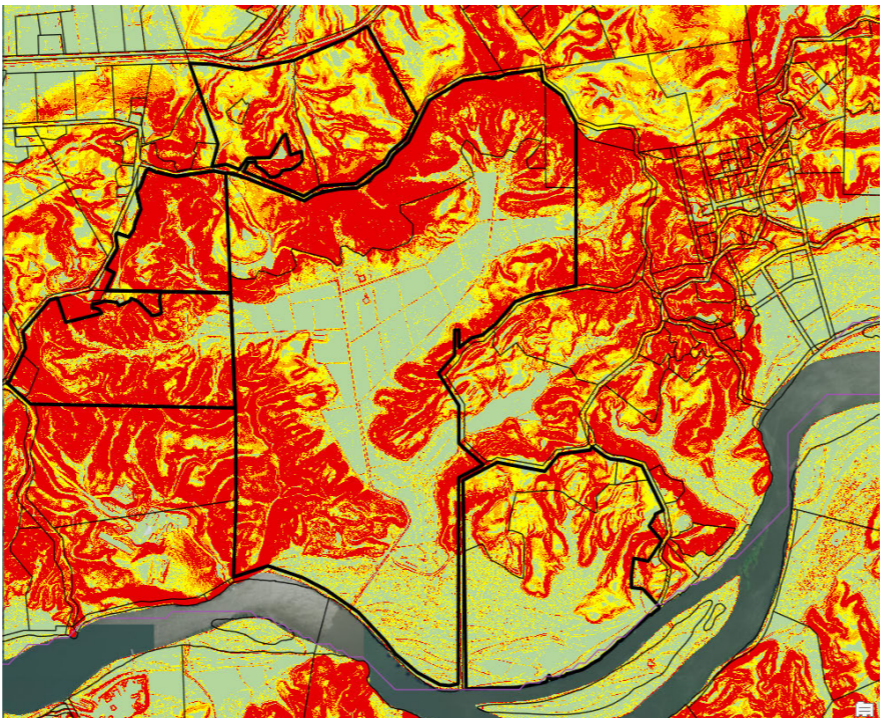


Figure 8: Slope Analysis Mapping

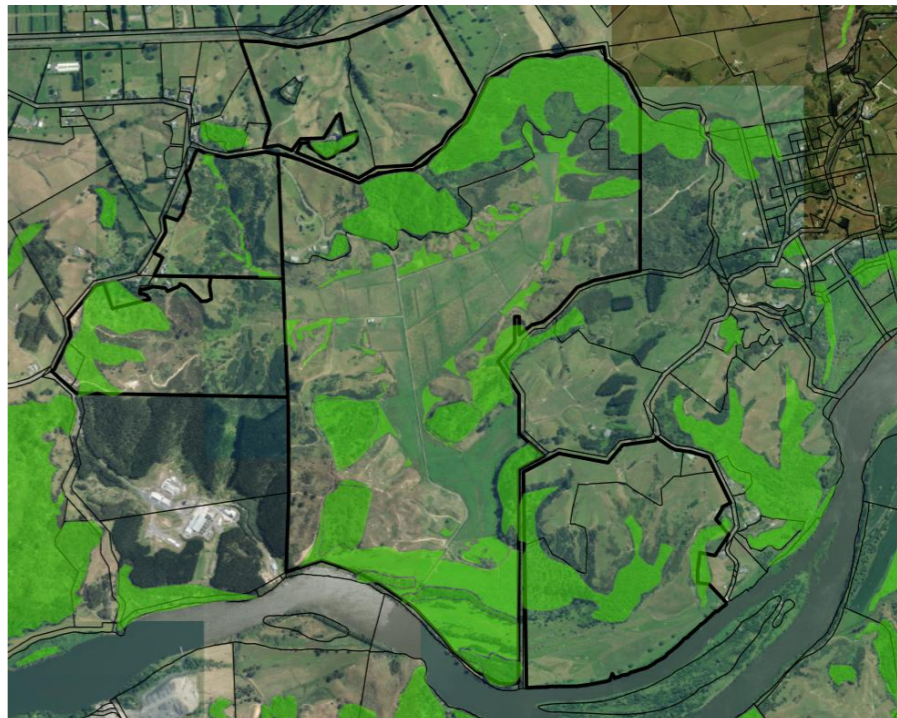
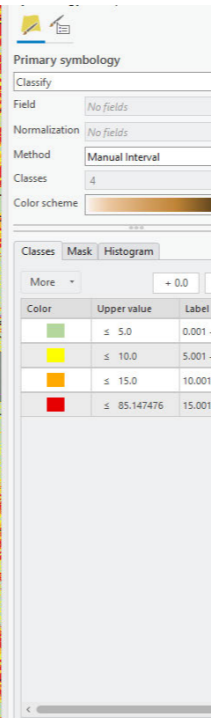


Figure 9: SNA Mapping

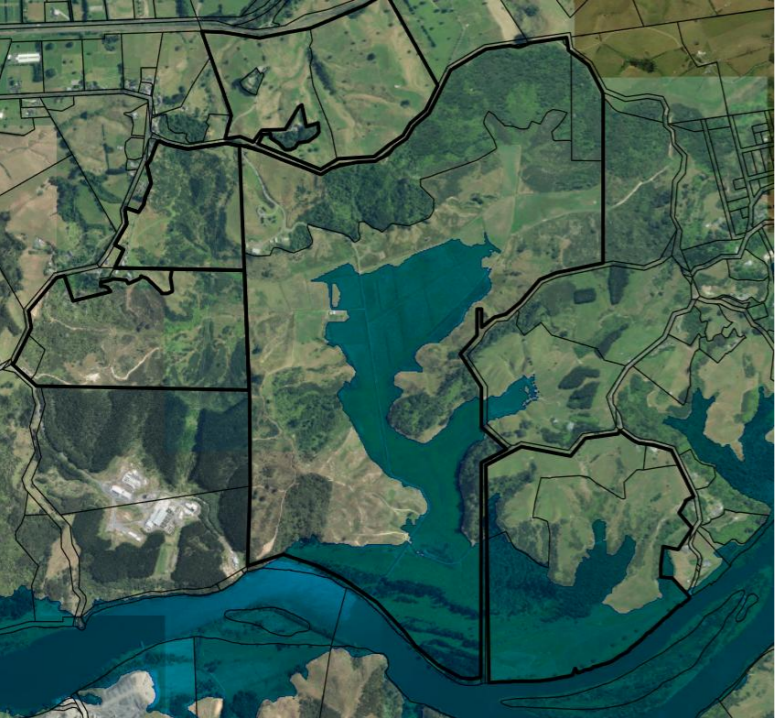


Figure 10: Flood Mapping