



Lizard Habitat Assessment at the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile Development

Prepared for:	Simplicity Living Ltd	Reviewed and approved for release by:  Samantha King Associate Principal Ecologist and Herpetologist
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1.0 Introduction

Simplicity Living Ltd is preparing a substantive application under the Fast Track Approvals Act (2024) for the 'Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile' urban development at 12 Lower Shotover Road, Queenstown. The construction of a water pipeline is also planned as part of the development, close to Old School Road, Twin Rivers Trail, and adjacent private properties along the true left of the Shotover River. The pipeline footprint is proposed to go through a section of the Department of Conservation (DOC) 'Marginal Strip – Kawarau River' protected area (hereafter referred to as the Kawarau River marginal strip) close to the Shotover River.

A lizard habitat assessment of the pipeline footprint was undertaken on 30 June 2026 within the Kawarau River marginal strip, which identified potential lizard habitat (Wildlands 2026).

Following the 30 June site visit, Simplicity Living Ltd requested a site visit to assess potential lizard habitat within the main development area at 12 Lower Shotover Road and the pipeline footprint outside of the Kawarau River marginal strip. This site visit was undertaken on 14 July 2026.

All indigenous lizard species are protected by the Wildlife Act (1953, s63 (1) (c)), which is administered by DOC. Under the Act, lizards must not be harmed, disturbed or killed without a Wildlife Act Approval (WAA) from DOC. A WAA must be obtained from DOC before any protected wildlife (and/or their habitats) can be disturbed, handled, translocated or killed. It is standard practice for a Lizard Management Plan (LMP) to be prepared and provided with a WAA.

This report includes the results of the lizard habitat assessment and further recommendations for lizard effects management for the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile project.

2.0 Lizard Habitat Assessment

2.1 Overview

A walkover at 12 Lower Shotover Road and of the pipeline footprint outside of the Kawarau River marginal strip was completed on 14 July 2026. Potential lizard habitats identified included areas of exotic rank grassland.



2.2 Lizard habitats

2.2.1 12 Lower Shotover Road

Potential lizard habitats identified at 12 Lower Shotover Road include areas of rank grassland which are widely distributed across the site, including in the following areas:

- Along the Lower Shotover Road road margin, and between Lower Shotover Road and State Highway 6 and the paddocks on site (Plate 1).
- In small fenced-off areas, including south-west of the dwelling and in the north-west corner of the eastern paddock.
- Within the majority of the western paddock (Plate 2), parts of the central paddock and northern paddock, and around the margins of the eastern paddock (Plate 3).
- In patches adjacent to the 12 Lower Shotover Road house driveway and around the containers and equipment in the south-west of the eastern paddock.

The majority of the eastern paddock and parts of the central, western and northern paddocks was well maintained and therefore did not provide lizard habitat.

2.2.2 Pipeline footprint outside of the Kawarau River marginal strip

Potential lizard habitats identified within the pipeline footprint outside of the Kawarau River marginal strip include discrete areas of rank grassland along Twin Rivers Trail (Plate 4), along driveways off Old School Road, and adjacent to State Highway 6.

2.3 Lizard species

Two species of indigenous lizards may be present on site based on the location and habitat present (Table 1).

Table 1 – Potential lizard species present at the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile development area.

Species	Common Name	National Threat Status ¹	Regional Threat Status ²	Likelihood
<i>Oligosoma maccanni</i>	McCann's skink	Not Threatened	Regionally Not Threatened	Highly likely – appropriate habitat on site and widespread in the region
<i>Oligosoma chionochloescens</i>	Southern grass skink	At Risk – Declining	Regionally Declining	Possible – appropriate habitat on site but patchily distributed in the region

McCann's skink are highly likely to be present on site as this species is known to be widespread and abundant in the region, including in marginal habitats such as rank grassland in farmland and suburban areas, where the species can often be found at high densities.

Southern grass skink may be present as they can also be found in rank grassland, but this species is patchily distributed and generally found at significantly lower densities than McCann's skink in lowland areas around Queenstown and Central Otago.

¹ National threat statuses as per Hitchmough *et al.* (2026).

² Regional threat statuses as per Jarvie *et al.* (2025).



3.0 Recommendations

3.1 Lizard survey

A lizard survey should be undertaken within potential lizard habitats at the 12 Lower Shotover Road development site and within the pipeline footprint to determine the lizard species present and their distributions and relative abundances. Lizard surveys must be undertaken during the lizard survey season (October–March inclusive) during warm, calm and dry weather conditions to accurately determine lizard values.

3.2 Lizard Management Plan and Wildlife Act Approval

An LMP is currently being prepared to manage effects to lizards at the Kawarau River marginal strip. If lizards are detected during surveys in the remaining development areas described above, the LMP should be updated to incorporate these sites. The LMP should follow the principles outlined by DOC in their guidelines (DOC 2019). These principles describe steps to take to enable the outcome of successful lizard management (including salvage, if determined to be the right mitigation option), and include undertaking a thorough assessment of the lizard values and site significance, both at the site of impact and potential release sites, and an assessment of the actual and potential effects of the works impact on the lizards present.

Based on the anticipated lizard values at the site, it is expected that effects to lizards can be appropriately managed through management actions detailed in the LMP.

4.0 Summary

Potential lizard habitat (rank grassland) is present at the 12 Lower Shotover Road development site and within the pipeline footprint. A lizard survey of potential lizard habitats should be undertaken during the lizard survey season.

A LMP is in preparation for the pipeline construction within the Kawarau River marginal strip and should be updated to incorporate the additional project areas if lizards are detected during surveys.



5.0 Photographs of Potential Lizard Habitats

All photos taken 14 July 2026

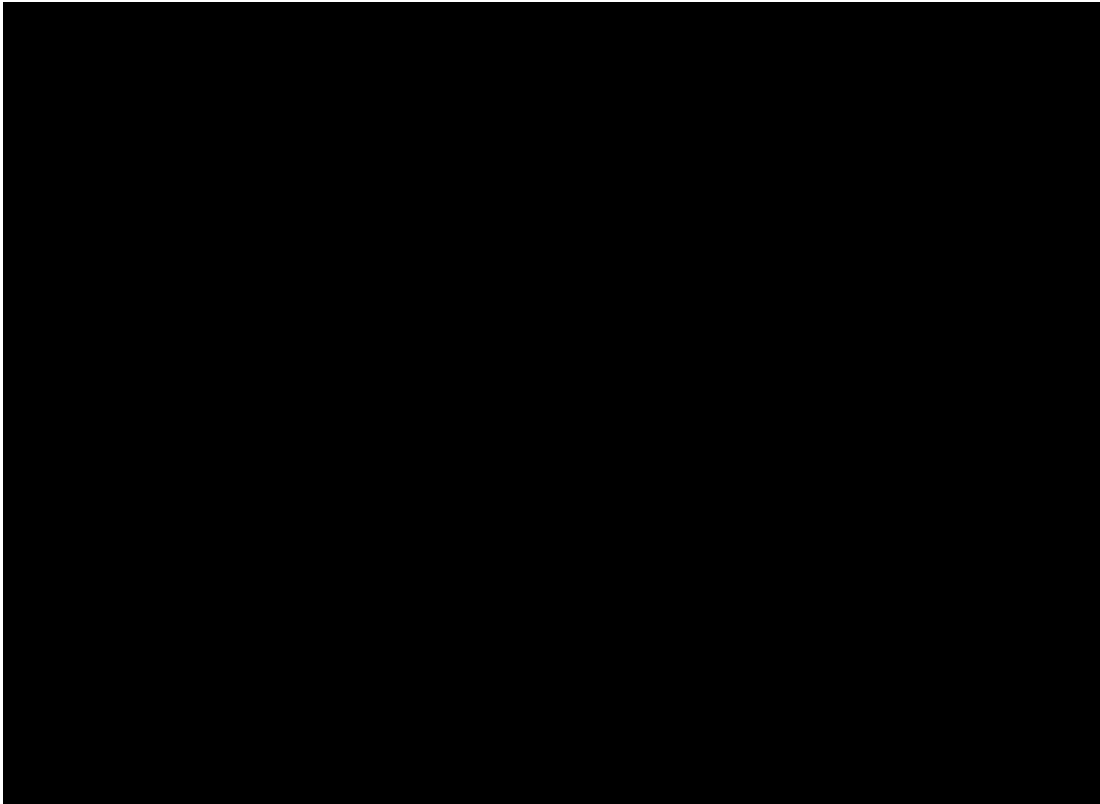


Plate 1 – Rank grassland between Lower Shotover Road and the central paddock on site.

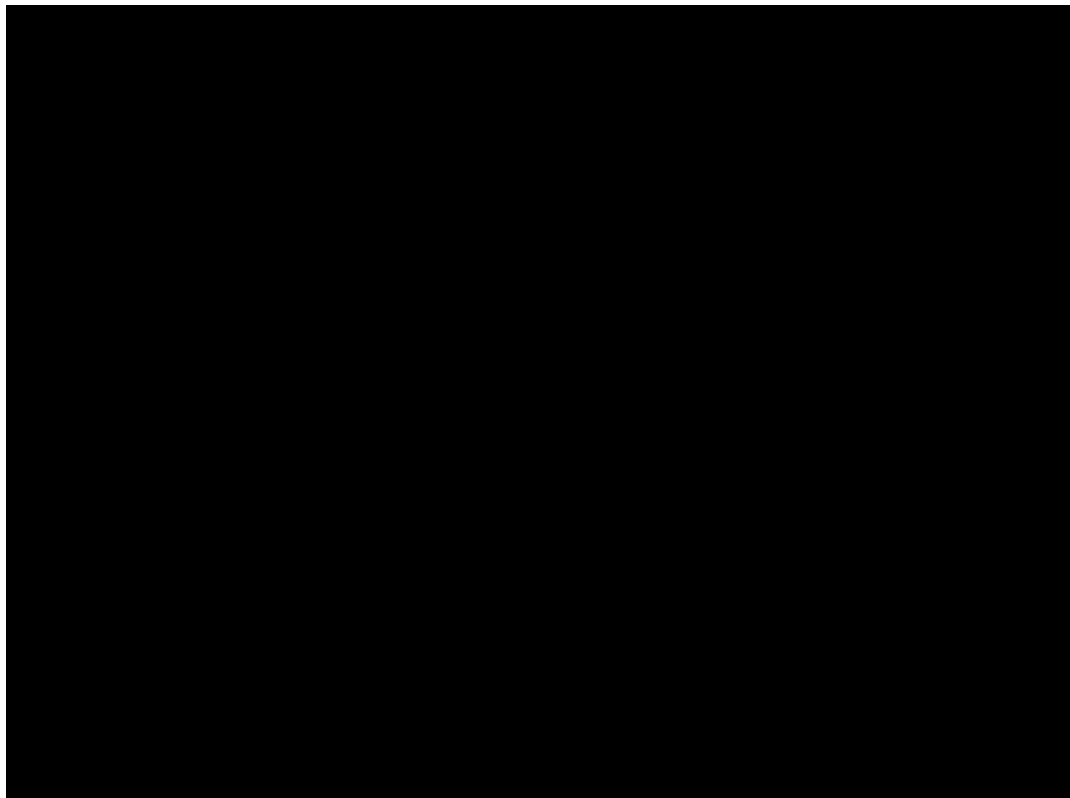


Plate 2 – Rank grassland within the western paddock.

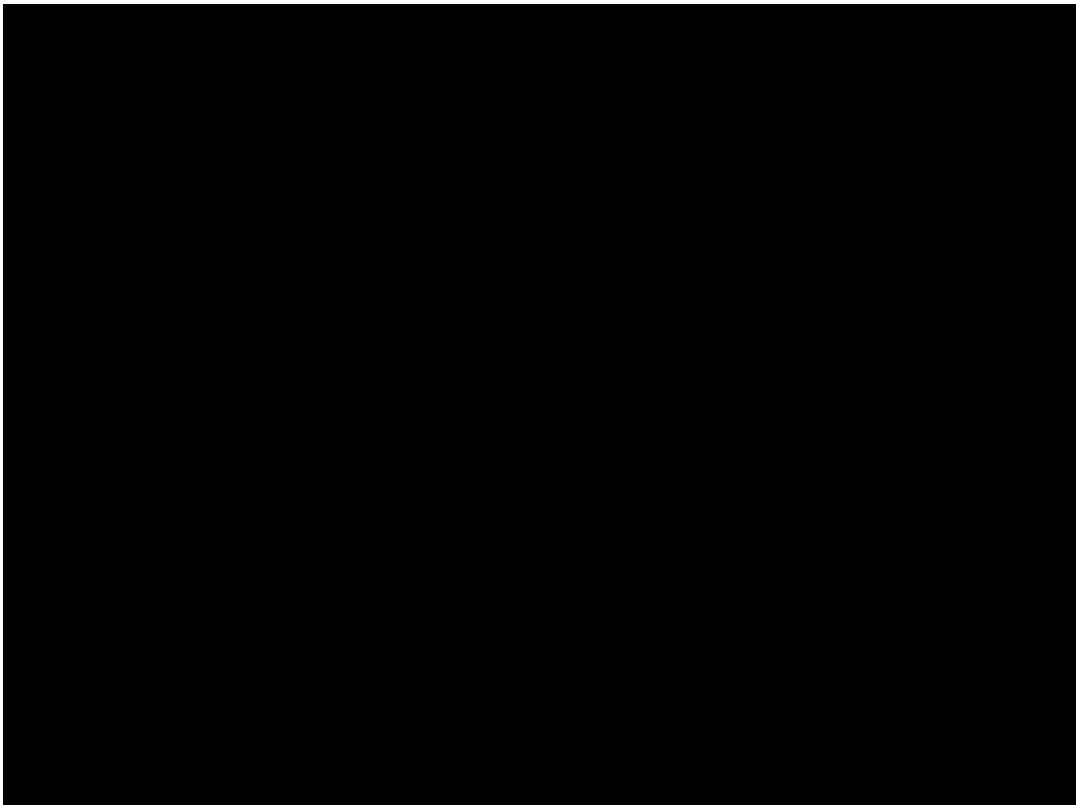


Plate 3 – Rank grassland in the north-west of the eastern paddock.

Pipeline footprint

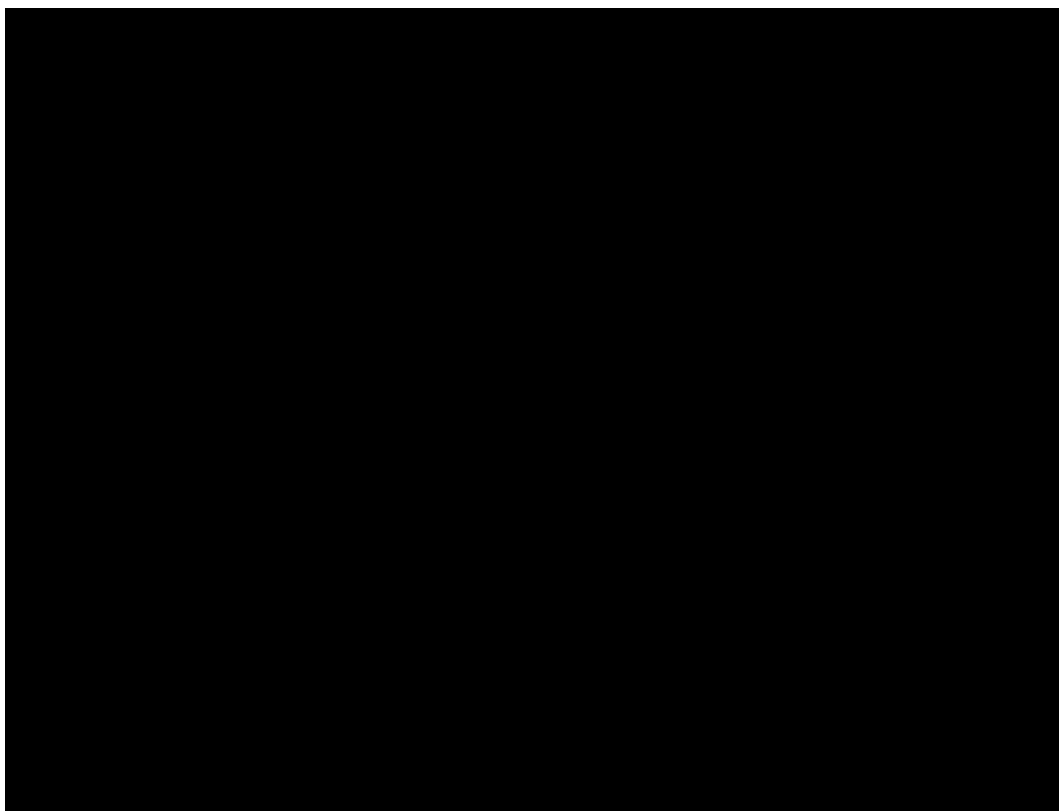


Plate 4 – Rank grassland along the western margin of Twin Rivers Trail.



Acknowledgments

Mitchell Holyoake (Simplicity Living Ltd) is thanked for facilitating the project. Jo Skuse (The Property Group) is thanked for providing additional information about the project scope.

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- Jarvie, S., Campbell, C., Knox, C., Monks, J., Purdie, S., & Reardon, J. (2025) *Conservation status of reptile species in Otago, 2025*. April 2025 – Otago Threat Classification Series 11. Otago Regional Council.
- Wildland Consultants Ltd (2026). *Lizard habitat assessment at the Kawarau River Marginal Strip, Queenstown*. Wildland Consultants Contract Report No. 8026. Prepared for Simplicity Living Ltd. 6pp.





Lizard Habitat Assessment at the Kawarau River Marginal Strip, Queenstown

Prepared for:	Simplicity Living Ltd	Reviewed and approved for release by:  Samantha King Associate Principal Ecologist and Herpetologist
Author:	Lucian Funnell	
Report No:	8026	
Date:	July 2026	

1.0 Introduction

As part of its Fast Track Approval Act (FTAA, 2024) application for ‘Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile’, an urban development of approximately 1,100 residential units in Frankton, Simplicity Living Ltd is planning to construct a water pipe through the Department of Conservation (DOC) ‘Marginal Strip – Kawarau River’ protected area at Ladies Mile, Queenstown. The DOC ‘Marginal Strip – Kawarau River’, hereafter referred to as the Kawarau River marginal strip, is one of many marginal strip protected areas along the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers.

Simplicity Living Ltd is preparing its substantive application for its development and has requested the footprint of the pipeline within the Kawarau River marginal strip be assessed for lizard habitat. Approximately 110 metres of the upstream section of the Kawarau River marginal strip was assessed. This section is on the true left of the Shotover River. The entire marginal strip is c.4.5 kilometres long and continues downstream of the Shotover River to the confluence of the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers and continues down the true left of the Kawarau River.

All indigenous lizard species are protected by the Wildlife Act (1953, s63 (1) (c)), which is administered by DOC. Under the Act, lizards must not be harmed, disturbed or killed without a Wildlife Act Approval (WAA) from DOC. A WAA must be obtained from DOC before any protected wildlife (and/or their habitats) can be disturbed, handled, translocated or killed. It is standard practice for a Lizard Management Plan (LMP) to be prepared and provided with a WAA.

The scope for this project is to assess potential lizard values for a water pipeline footprint within the Kawarau River marginal strip, and to provide any recommendations for lizard effects management that may be required.

A site visit was undertaken by a Wildlands ecologist on 30 June 2026. The area that was assessed is based on the proposed pipeline construction footprint (and surrounding area within the Kawarau River marginal strip), which is outlined in Figure 1.

2.0 Habitat Assessment

2.1 Assessment area

The assessment area within the Kawarau River marginal strip was approximately 0.3 hectares. The assessment area was adjacent to two private properties:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]



It was apparent during the site visit that the properties have domestic gardens that appear to be encroaching on the marginal strip.

██████████: The majority of the area contains short, well-maintained mown grass with several deciduous ornamental trees (Appendix; Plate 4).

██████████: The garden overlapping with the marginal strip contained short mown grass, with several garden beds, ornamental trees and bushes (Appendix; Plate 5). The garden beds currently have little live vegetation, likely due to the time of year. Stacked timber, a shed, a glasshouse, a caravan, and a fenced-in area for chickens were also within the garden area.

An exotic hedge of Mexican orange (*Choisya ternata*) separates the two garden areas of each property, with a small area of rank grass (cocksfoot) on the northern side (Plate 1).

2.2 Potential lizard habitats

Of the approximately 0.3 hectares assessed within the Kawarau River marginal strip, three areas of potential lizard habitat were identified which totalled approximately 0.02 hectares (see Figure 1 for the location of the assessment area and areas of potential lizard habitat).

The lizard values within the assessed area of the Kawarau River marginal strip are low, with no high-quality lizard habitat observed during the site visit (e.g. dense, extensive or contiguous areas of habitat). The only possible lizard habitat is the Mexican orange hedge between the two properties and the garden beds at 54 Old School Road (Plates 1–3). The hedge between the properties, including the long grass on the northern side, possibly provides lizard habitat (Plate 1). The garden beds at 54 Old School Road may currently provide lizard habitat, but these are likely subject to periodic maintenance that reduces the likelihood of lizards being present (Plate 3).

As the area assessed is within areas that are maintained as private gardens, it is possible that the areas may be modified by the residents. If the maintenance of these areas changes, or the areas are planted out with different vegetation, the lizard habitat values at the site may change.

3.0 Lizard Species

McCann's skink (*Oligosoma maccanni*; Not Threatened¹) is the lizard species most likely to be present within the site due to its known distribution and habitat preferences. McCann's skink often occupies highly modified grassland habitats, and this species has previously been recorded within Frankton and Speargrass Flat. One of the residents regularly observes lizards in the garden of 54 Old School Road during the summer (Pers comm 54 Old School Road resident, June 2026).

¹ Hitchmough, R. A., Barr, B., Knox, C., Lettink, M., Monks, J. M., Patterson, G. B., Reardon, J. T., van Winkel, D., Makan, T., & Michel, P. (2025). *Conservation status of reptiles in Aotearoa New Zealand reptiles, 2025. New Zealand Threat Classification Series 50*. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 32pp.

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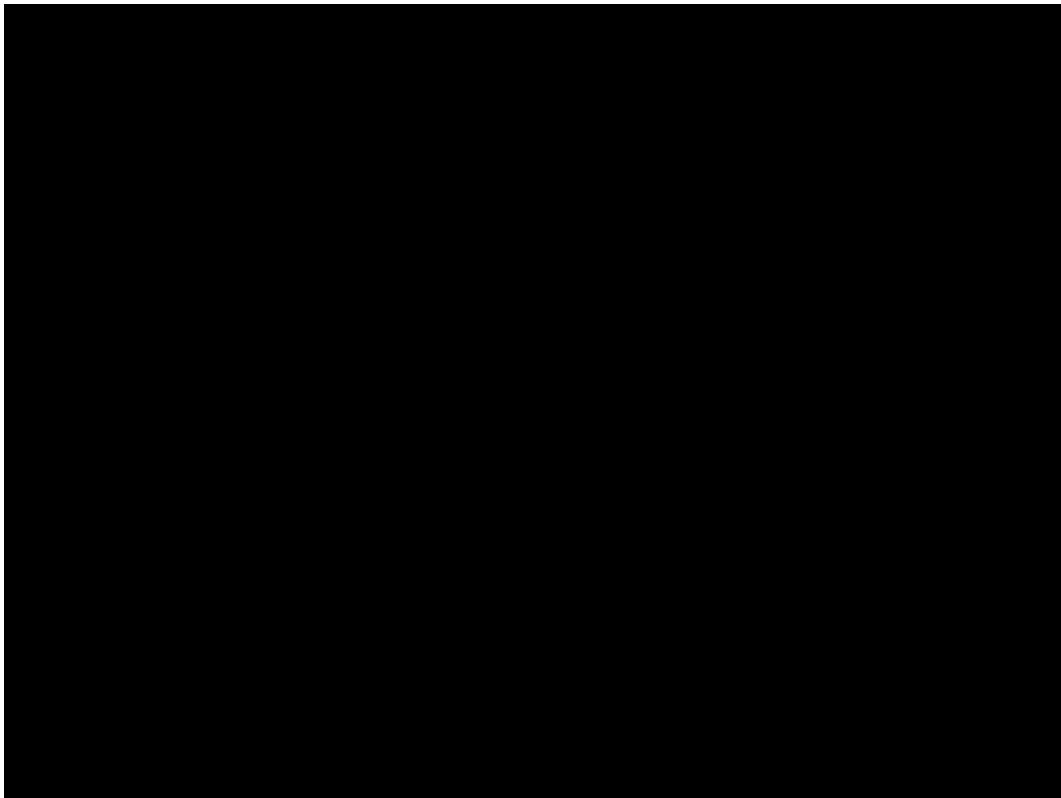


Plate 1 – Small area of rank cocksfoot on the northern side of the Mexican orange hedge.

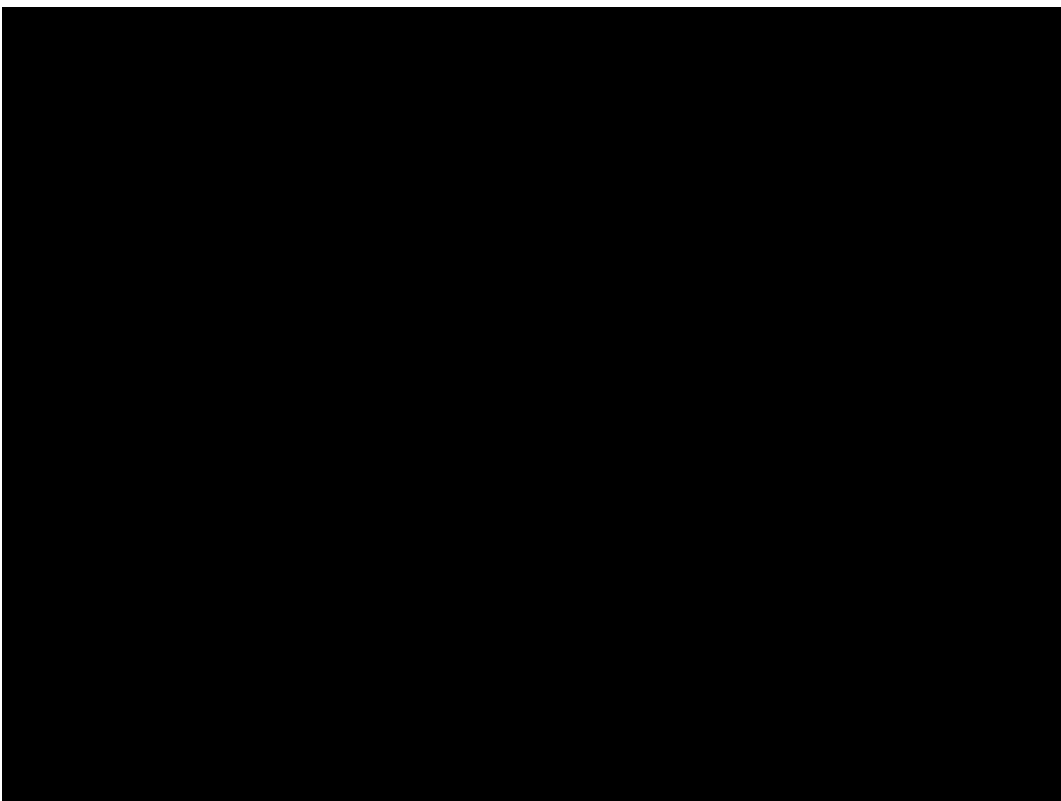


Plate 2 – Southern side of the Mexican orange hedge.

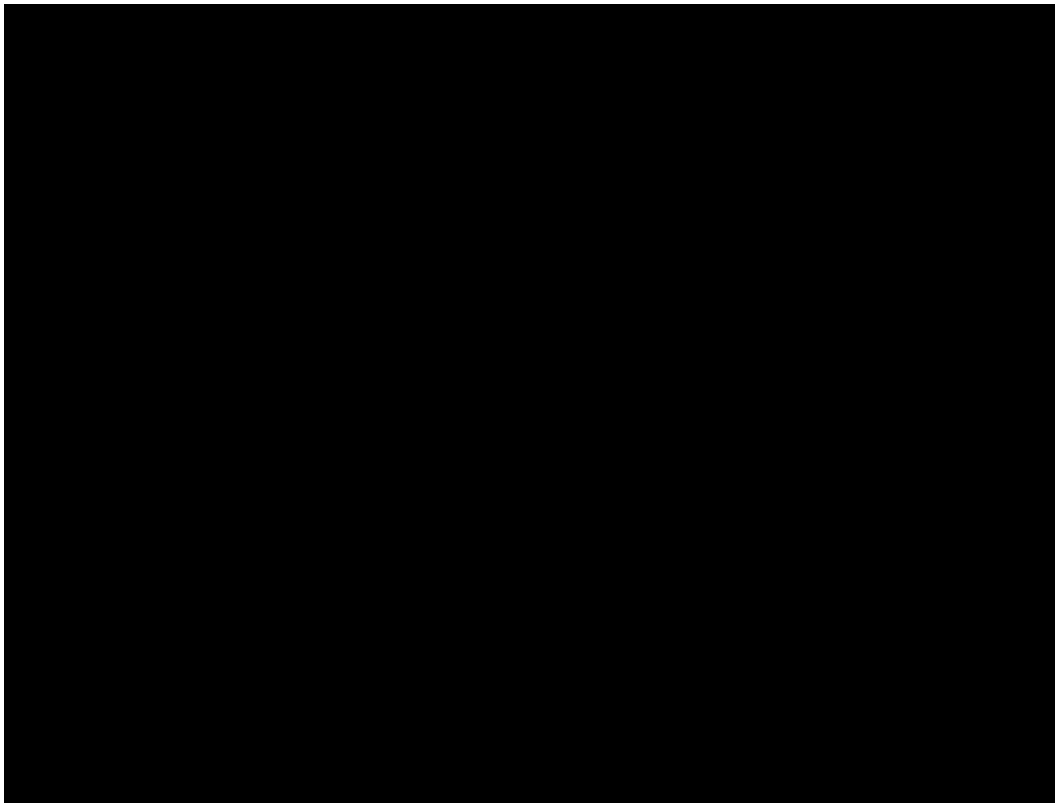


Plate 3 – A garden bed within the private garden of [REDACTED] which appears to be periodically maintained.

4.0 Recommendations for Lizard Management

4.1 Overview

Lizards are potentially present within the habitats at 54 Old School Road and the hedge between the properties assessed. Lizards have been seen regularly, but the habitat within the project footprint is not extensive (and therefore unlikely to support a large population of lizards). Dependent on the actual earthworks required to trench the pipeline, lizard management may be required. A survey is not considered necessary, given the lizard values are well understood, and the habitat is not extensive. However, if excavation for the pipeline is expected to disturb a large area of habitat, we recommend that a Wildlife Act Approval (WAA) is sought as part of the substantive application for Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile. This will enable the management of effects to McCann's skink present at this site.

4.2 Works outside of identified lizard habitats

Site works may occur in areas of the footprint outside of lizard habitats, provided that appropriate buffer zones are established between the works area and any lizard habitat. If possible, the pipeline route should be considered to avoid lizard habitats within the Kawarau River marginal strip.

4.3 Ongoing site maintenance

The areas of mown lawn should continue to be maintained to prevent the establishment of lizard habitat across the site. If the mown lawns are left to grow unmanaged for a long period of time, the areas could become lizard habitat, and the site would require reassessment and possible lizard management.



4.4 Lizard Management Plan and Wildlife Act Approval

Within the assessed area of the Kawarau River marginal strip, there is one area where the works to install the proposed pipeline may directly impact lizard habitat, which is the exotic hedge between the two properties (Figure 1). This area contains a strip of possibly low-quality lizard habitat that cannot be avoided if the pipeline runs through the marginal strip. If this area is unavoidable, an LMP and WAA may be required before work takes place to address effects to lizards at the site. Because the site is small and the lizard populations are not significant in size, the LMP is recommended to cover:

- Ways to avoid lizards and their habitats where possible.
- A thorough assessment of alternatives to lizard salvage, such as progressive habitat clearance and reduction (detailed below).
- An Incidental Discovery Protocol (IDP) for lizards encountered during earthworks, post management.

4.4.1 Suggested management

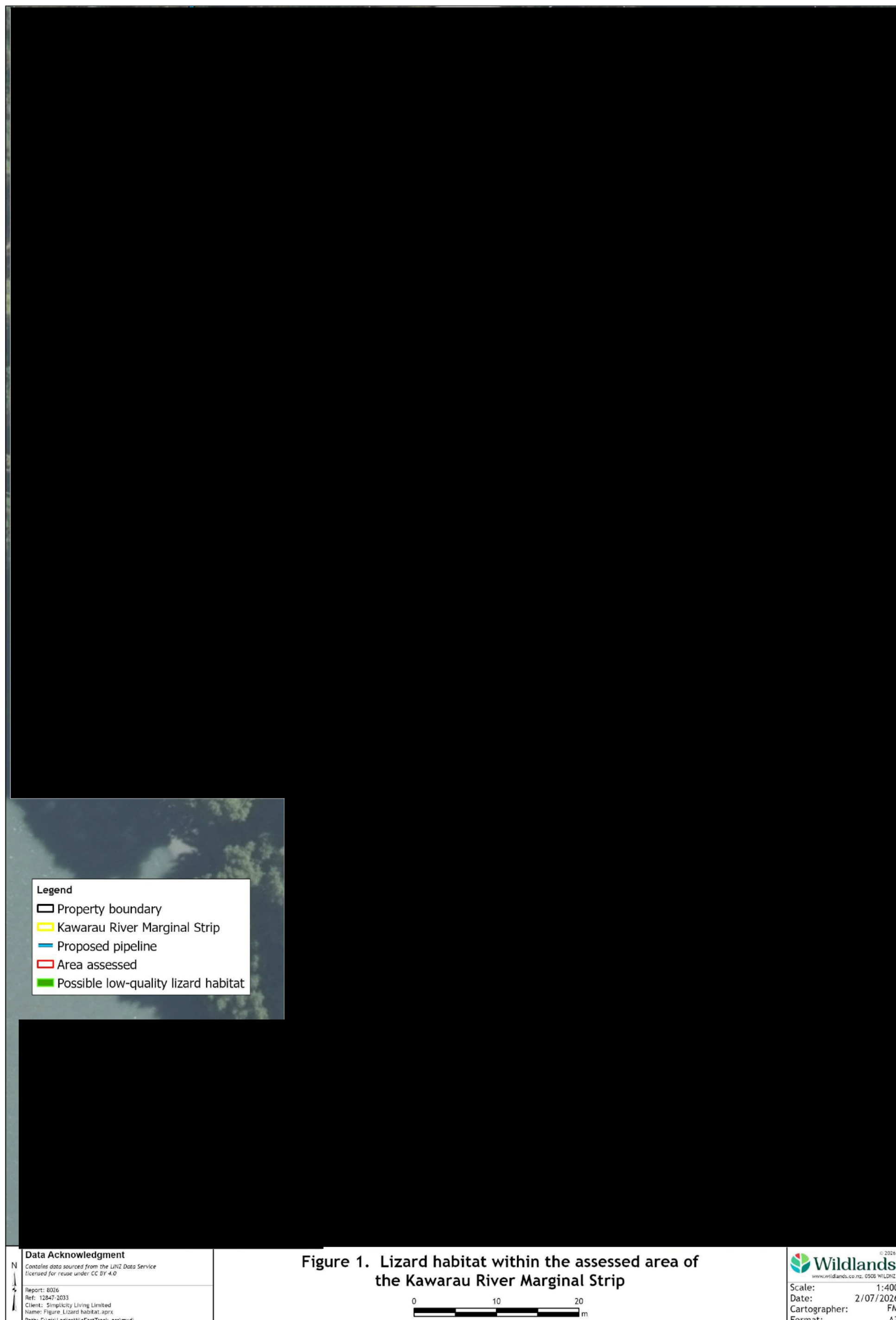
The LMP could detail progressive habitat reduction. This could include removing habitat by non-powered tools (hand saw, shovel), as much as reasonably practicable. If this is not feasible, progressive vegetation clearance of potential lizard habitat can be undertaken with power tools (chainsaw, scrub bar). Progressive vegetation using power tools could also be undertaken to minimise the likelihood of impacting lizards during vegetation clearance, using the following process:

1. All the grass, hedge and any other vegetation within the footprint will be cut to a height of 20–30 centimetres at the site. Then remove the loose vegetation by hand.
2. The vegetation will then be cut down to a height of 10 centimetres. Then remove the loose vegetation by hand.
3. The remaining vegetation can be completely removed.

The LMP should also provide guidance around seasonal constraints for effects management.

5.0 Summary

Construction of the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile pipeline will avoid most of the possible lizard habitats, but it is expected that some lizard habitats will require removal. Of the approximately 0.3 hectares assessed within the Kawarau River marginal strip, there is approximately 0.02 hectares of potential lizard habitat (Figure 1). This lizard habitat includes the Mexican orange hedge between the two properties and the garden beds. A Wildlife Act Approval should be sought as part of the substantive application, following the recommendations provided in this report.





6.0 Appendix

All photos were taken on 30 June 2026.

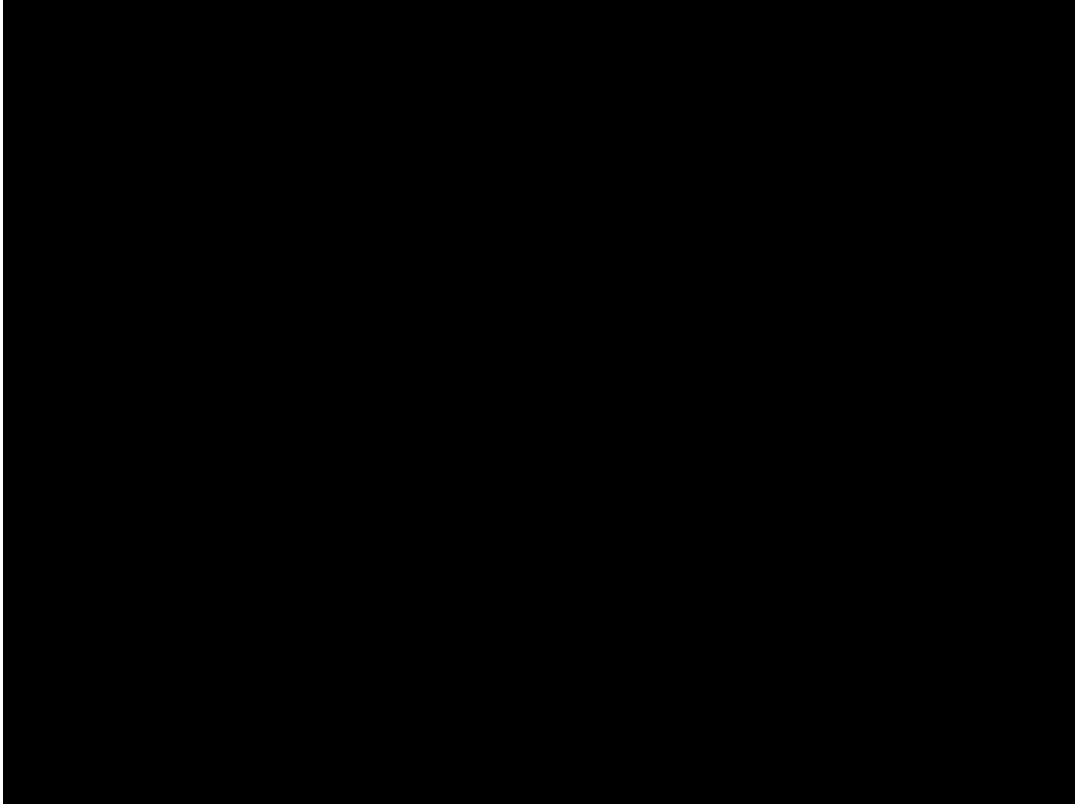


Plate 4 – Short, well-maintained mown grass with several deciduous ornamental trees in the background in the private garden of [REDACTED]

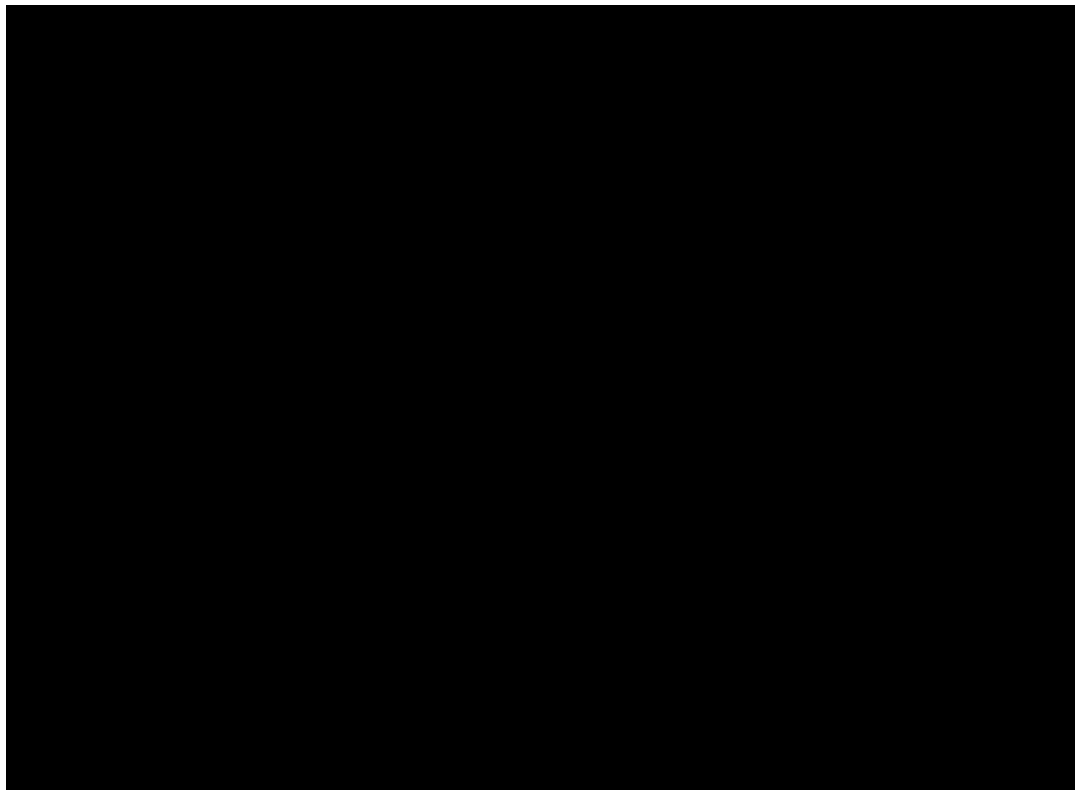


Plate 5 – The mown grass, with a garden bed in the background, within the private garden of [REDACTED]

