

BEACHLANDS SOUTH FAST TRACK APPLICATION LANDSCAPE & NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Prepared For:

Beachlands South Limited Partnership

1. Introduction

This report has been prepared in support of a substantive application (Application) submitted by Beachlands South Limited Partnership (BSLP) under the Fast-track Approvals Act (FTAA). The Project name is 'Beachlands South' and is included in Schedule 2 of the FTAA as a Listed Project with significant regional or national benefits. The Project location or Site is located across approximately 159.58 hectares of live zoned land and approximately 108.6 hectares of Future Urban zoned land at 110 Jack Lachlan Drive, and 620, 712, 758 and 770 Whitford-Maraetai Road, Beachlands. Key components of the Project include:

- Residential activities comprising approximately up to 2,000 dwellings in a variety of housing types, densities and vacant sites for future residential development;
- Establishment of a commercial local centre supported by employment opportunities within and around the periphery of the local centre and on the Whitford-Maraetai Road frontage comprising approximately 27,000m² of commercial GFA and 30,000m² of light industrial GFA;
- Education facilities comprising the development of both primary and secondary schools;
- Establishment of an Ecological Protected Area Network (EPAN) comprising (approximately) 75 hectares of land that is to be revegetated, maintained and enhanced, around a series of streams and their margins;
- A series of open spaces including a suburban park, neighbourhood parks, the Fairway Reserve, golf course, esplanade reserve and riparian margins;
- Provision of public access to and along the coastal marine area and the creation of a quality coastal pathway;
- Public transport enhancements and integrations, including expanded ferry passenger capacity;
- Staged road upgrades including the provision of pedestrian and cycling facilities along Jack Lachlan Drive, the upgrade of Whitford roundabout, a series of intersection upgrades; and
- Establishment of infrastructure to service the project, including wastewater, water supply, stormwater, telecommunications and power.

The Project is broadly consistent with the outcomes, scale and pattern of development contemplated by the Beachlands South Precinct (Precinct), which were comprehensively addressed in the Plan Change 88 process. The Project includes the following infringements of the Precinct height control standards:

- a) The heights of the apartment buildings near the Town Centre are generally increased from 16m under the operative Precinct provisions (for the Residential - Terrace House and Apartment Building Zone to 22m for the Project (in line with the height standard proposed

for the THAB zone under proposed Plan Change 120). This represents an increase in height of between 1-2 levels above the originally modelled heights for the plan change; and

- b) Three other buildings spread around the site infringe the Precinct height controls, including:
 - i) A northern apartment building with a maximum height of 26.5m (plus 1.0m for roof form) – 15.5m above the Residential – Mixed Housing Urban Zone (MHU) Zone permitted building height standard of 11m that applies to the subject site under the operative Precinct provisions;
 - ii) A western apartment building with a maximum height of 40.1m (plus 1.0m for roof form) – 30m above the MHU Zone permitted building height standard of 11m that applies to the subject site under the operative Precinct provisions; and
 - iii) A central hotel building with a maximum height of 24.5m (plus 1.0m for roof form) – again, approximately 6.5m above the Business Mixed Use Zone permitted building height standard of 16m + 2m for roof that applies to the subject site under the operative Precinct provisions.

The landscape and natural character effects of the PC88 proposal – now incorporated in the Precinct – were addressed in an AEE report prepared by Brown NZ Ltd (April 2023) (2023 AEE), together with a related evaluation of the existing Beachlands Residential Settlement and its character (July 2023), and a response to questions raised by Rebecca Skidmore in her Clause 23 review of the PC88 application on behalf of Auckland Council. Key components of the original AEE are carried over to this report, while **Appendices A and B** contain the Clause 23 Response and the Beachlands Residential Settlement Assessment (respectively).

Consequently, this report comprises an updated version of the 2023 AEE, focusing on the changes now proposed for the Site. This is supported by an updated set of ‘before’ and ‘after’ images – photos and photo simulations – for key viewpoints employed in the 2023 AEE, which have been prepared by Virtual View. These address the following:

- a) The Beachlands South landscape and coastal environment of 2023;
- b) The form, scale, height and distribution of buildings enabled by the Precinct and shown on the masterplan prepared in 2023; and
- c) The form, scale, height and distribution of the development now proposed at Beachlands South in the FTAA Application, subject to the changes described above.

For the most part, the viewpoints employed now remain the same as in 2023, except that views from the previous Viewpoint 4 have been obscured by recent housing development on the former horse paddocks next to Beachlands Road, and Viewpoints 6 and 7 would not be exposed to the modified development proposals. As a result, these viewpoints are excluded from this assessment. The effects of the revised Beachlands South proposals on Viewpoints 1-3, 5, and 8-12 are addressed, providing the basis for findings about the development’s effects in relation to its wider landscape setting and coastal environment.

This report is subdivided into the following sections:

- Section 2.** Analysis of key higher-order provisions in the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) and the Beachlands South Precinct Plan that are relevant to the FTAA Application.
- Section 3.** Analysis of the ‘existing landscape’ context for the FTAA Application – as assessed in 2023 and which is similar today. This analysis is largely drawn from evidence presented to the hearing panel for the 2023 PC88 application.
- Section 4.** Discussion of effects in general, focusing on the key differences between visual, landscape, natural character and amenity effects.
- Section 5.** Evaluation of the Project's effects, focusing on those effects that would arise from the FTAA Application, above and beyond those identified for PC88.
- Section 6.** Description of key findings in relation to the additional effects that would be generated by the proposed changes to building locations, heights and form at Beachlands South.
- Section 7.** Conclusions.

2. Statutory Framework

The Beachlands South Project is a listed project under the FTAA. Its effects need to be evaluated in the context of the urban zoning provisions of the Beachlands South Precinct that were approved under PC88. As a result, this assessment addresses the full extent of development now proposed, but focuses primarily on the incremental effects that the Project would give rise to, above and beyond those already enabled by the operative Precinct provisions.

The decision-making process and requirements of Schedule 2 of the FTAA require an assessment of those (actual or potential) effects on the environment, with regard to identified provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Those of most relevance to the Project are found within Section I458 of the AUP, which addresses the Beachlands South Precinct as follows:

I458 Beachlands South

I458.2. Objectives (precinct-wide) [rp/dp]

- (4) *Development of Beachlands South creates a distinctive sense of place which maintains and enhances significant ecological features, and responds to natural site features, landform and mana whenua values.*
- (13) *Adverse effects on the receiving environment including the natural coastal environment and significant ecological areas are avoided as far as practicable, or otherwise minimised and appropriately offset and/or compensated.*
- (16) *Development in Beachlands South integrates the built environment with the natural environment and coastal setting.*

Sub-precinct A: Marina Point

- (17) *The highest density urban living is developed in sub-precinct A closest to the Pine Harbour Ferry berths and along key planned public transport routes and the Fairway Reserve.*

Sub-precinct B: Town Centre

- (20) *A built form featuring a variety of mixed-use and multi-level buildings with increased vertical density that supports the social, economic and cultural well-being of the community.*

I458.3. Policies [rp/dp]

Built Form

- (22) *Manage building height and form to:*
 - (a) *Maximise densities close to the Pine Harbour Ferry berths, the planned public transport network and around the Town Centre;*
 - (b) *Enable greater building height in the Town Centre to reinforce sub-precinct B as the commercial core of Beachlands South;*
 - (c) *Contribute positively to Beachlands South's sense of place, including by:*
 - (i) *Responding to landform and the coastal environment; and*
 - (ii) *Transitioning the scale of built form to visually integrate with adjoining areas.*
- (23) *Promote high-quality and diversity in architecture and urban design that enhances the relationship of buildings with public open spaces and reflects the coastal character of the precinct.*

In addition, AUP provisions addressing the MHU and THAB zones are also relevant to the application. These include the following:

Residential Mixed Housing Urban Zone:

H5.2. Objectives

- (1) Land near the Business – Metropolitan Centre Zone and the Business – Town Centre Zone, high-density residential areas and close to the public transport network is efficiently used for higher density residential living and to provide urban living that increases housing capacity and choice and access to public transport.*
- (2) Development is in keeping with the neighbourhood's planned urban built character of predominantly three-storey buildings, in a variety of forms and surrounded by open space.*

H5.3. Policies

- (1) Enable a variety of housing types at higher densities, including low-rise apartments and integrated residential development such as retirement villages.*
- (2) Require the height, bulk, form and appearance of development and the provision of sufficient setbacks and landscaped areas to achieve an urban built character of predominantly three storeys, in a variety of forms.*
- (4) Require the height, bulk and location of development to maintain a reasonable standard of sunlight access and privacy and to minimise visual dominance effects to adjoining sites.*

H6 Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone

H6.2. Objectives

- (2) Development is in keeping with the area's planned urban built character of predominantly five, six or seven storey buildings in identified areas, in a variety of forms.*

H6.3. Policies

- (2) Require the height, bulk, form and appearance of development and the provision of setbacks and landscaped areas to achieve a high-density urban built character of predominantly five, six or seven storey buildings in identified areas, in a variety of forms.*
- (4) In identified locations adjacent to centres, enable greater building height through the application of the Height Variation Control where the additional development potential enabled:
 - (a) provides an appropriate transition in building scale from the adjoining higher density business zone to neighbouring lower intensity residential zones, and;*
 - (b) supports public transport, social infrastructure and the vitality of the adjoining centre.**
- (5) Manage the height and bulk of development to maintain daylight access and a reasonable standard of privacy, and to minimise visual dominance effects to adjoining sites and developments.*

3. The Existing Beachlands Landscape & Coastal Environment

The following description of the Site, the existing Beachlands settlement (2023) and the area's wider landscape setting is drawn from evidence I prepared in 2023. It still provides an accurate overview of the Beachlands area and the western Maraetai Peninsula.

The Subject Site

As I have already indicated, the greater bulk of the Site occupies the current Rydges / Formosa Golf Course and Resort. While the golf course / resort's core accommodation facilities and clubhouse are in relatively good condition, the same can't be said of the actual golf course, with its fairways, golf cart paths, margins and the adjoining recreation centre all in need of maintenance and rejuvenation. The gullies between the fairways, many of which extend towards the coast, are either largely filled with pines or dominated by weed species: pampas, gorse, tobacco weed, woolly nightshade, etc. A few stands of manuka are also found within some gullies, but there are few native species across the course as a whole. Indeed, the Phoenix Island palms relocated to the golf course at its inception remain its 'signature' species.

The terrain between the gullies just described, comprises a series of sedimentary cliffs that line the outer edge of the golf course (holes 11-15) and, further south, the adjoining farm. Inland of these cliffs, the land rises up gradually – via a series of secondary ridges and shallow valleys – towards Whitford-Maraetai Road. Most of the golf course also slopes from south to north, so that it faces into the valley system shared with Pine Harbour Marina, looking towards the existing residential development on the northern side of the intervening valley. However, a broad ridge – extending from above Whitford-Maraetai Road directly towards the sea – also splits the wider PPC88 Site in half, with the southern farm sitting within a shallow valley of its own. This is enclosed by Whitford-Maraetai Road to the south and east, the coastline and sea to the west, and both the golf course and previously described lifestyle blocks to the north.

Whereas the farm now mainly comprises pasture intersected by several major gullies containing stands of manuka / kanuka and totara, the adjoining lifestyle blocks mostly contains large dwellings set amid spacious grounds that are demarcated by hedgerows, shelterbelts and amenity planting. A few old farm sheds are scattered though these properties, but they essentially comprise residential properties that are screened from Whitford-Maraetai Road by amenity planting, hedges and fencing. When viewed from the existing golf course, both the lifestyle properties and their dwellings dominate the crown of the ridge and higher ground close to Whitford-Maraetai Road.

The Existing Beachlands Settlement

*I have also undertaken a detailed evaluation of the current Beachlands settlement, including its pattern of subdivision, built forms, connections and linkages, open spaces and reserves (Beachlands Settlement and Landscape Character Analysis, Brown NZ Ltd, June 2023, attached as **Appendix B**). In evaluating the existing settlement, the transition from a historic 'garden suburb' by the sea, circa 1923, into a matrix of more expensive and compact coastal suburbs in the early 21st Century (including Pine Harbour, Spinnaker Bay and Pony Park) has been very marked. This is closely aligned*

to the built form of different residential eras that remains clear at Beachlands and the physical location of those eras, which also remains, for the most part, still quite obvious.

Topographically, the area of the present settlement and its immediate surrounds is notable for four key features:

- (a) its mixture of sandy to shoal-lined beaches and bays, and intervening headlands, both north and west of the current village, that empty into the open expanse of the inner Hauraki Gulf;*
- (b) A sequence of largely east-west aligned ridges that underpin both the layered slopes which fall towards the northern bays and headlands – from Sunkist Bay to Kelly’s Beach fronting Te Puru Park – and the southern valley corridor descending to Pine Harbour Marina;*
- (c) The more febrile and complex layering of streams, overland flow paths and water catchments that intersect the areas between those ridges; and*
- (d) A relative absence of native or other vegetation cover, other than in small pockets around some bays, beaches and headlands.*

The array of sedimentary cliffs, headlands, shoals, beaches and coves around the edge of the settlement, linked to nearby Motukaraka Island and often reinforced by pohutukawas and coastal shrubs, express its coastal location and character. These features lie at the core of Beachlands’ identity and provide an important focus for recreational activity as well. This is particularly apparent in the vicinity of Sunkist Bay. At the same time, the key ridgelines and associated slopes backing those coastal margins have provided the physical foundation for most of its grid-like network of key roads and the greater bulk of its suburban residential development, cascading down towards the sea.

The mixture of land uses and activities found at Beachlands are closely linked, unsurprisingly, to the evolution and physical spread of its residential area. Thus, for example, the Wakelin Road shopping centre, nearby primary school, two preschool facilities, and even the local Anglican and Baptists Churches, lie at the epicentre of the broad east-west aligned subdivision first conceived by Richard Kipplewhite.

Today, the one-storey shopping centre continues to be centred on Wakelin Road, with its mixture of superette, bakery, cafes, liquor outlet, laundry, vet and other low-key premises offering street-side convenience and a reasonable degree of variety for the local community. Physically, the centre sits comfortably within its wide catchment of mostly single-storey residential development – much like the nearby Montessori centre, primary school and church. Nearby a number of domestic scale offices, mechanical workshop and the local Baptist Church stretch along Third View Avenue, while a Mitre 10 building supply centre is also located nearby, at the foot of Bell Avenue.

However, development in the course of this century, has shifted the settlement’s centre of gravity to the east and south. At the same time, development within nearby Maraetai and the increased use of Umupuia Beach and Duder Regional Park for recreation by the wider populace of South Auckland has increased the significance of Whitford – Maraetai Road as a transport corridor. These changes, together with the increased population of Beachlands in its own right, have resulted in the

emergence of Te Puru Park – as the settlement’s new recreational hub – and, more recently, the Pohutukawa Coast Shopping Centre off Beachlands Road.

Anchored by a Countdown Supermarket, a large, centralised car park and a modern Mitre 10 store, this shopping centre serves communities stretching well beyond Beachlands, to Maraetai, Whitford, and beyond. Its central car park is also lined by a café and “The Franklin Taphouse”, while hairdressers, real estate agents, and a variety of other retail outlets combine with first-floor offices to line the western end of Kouka Road in a more traditional manner – not unlike Wakelin Road, but displaying a slightly more intimate, modern and less car-focused streetscape. This edge of the shopping centre backs directly into a line of terrace housing development to the immediate south, running down the northern side of Seventh View Avenue.

While the Pohutukawa Coast Shopping Centre sits near the elevated head of Beachlands ‘southern valley’, the foot of that same corridor is dominated by the berths and immediate hinterland of the Pine Harbour Marina, which has established the settlement’s third commercial centre, albeit one with a very strong marine services focus. In addition to providing a ferry service to central Auckland and haul-out facilities for launch and yacht owners, the marina also offers a large café, restaurant and weekly market.

The broad matrix of residential development at Beachlands can be divided into two main periods of development: from 1923 to the mid-1960s when the bulk of housing emerged across the settlements’ northern slopes and since 2000 with the emergence of the Pine Harbour Marina, Formosa Country Club and the Pohutukawa Coast Shopping Centre providing much of the impetus for the Spinnaker Bay subdivision, then the sequence of development in the ‘southern valley’ from 2017 onwards – at first affirming Beachlands’ suburban ‘bungalow’ character, then transitioning into the terrace housing, apartments and retirement village now found close to the marina.

The vast majority of this development has remained single-storey, although two-storey development is more prevalent within some pockets of infill and redevelopment near the coast, most notably either side of the marina, within Spinnaker Bay, and within the more recently developed area of the ‘southern valley’ stretching down towards Pine Harbour Marina. Even so, at the foot of that valley corridor, near Pine Harbour Marina, this transitions into two and (some) three-storey apartments, and the five storeys of the West Quarter complex. The fuller sequence of residential development found at Beachlands covers the following periods and locations:

- (a) Mainly transitional villa development on farm properties prior to and through to 1923;*
- (b) The emergence of detached housing on individual sections from 1923 to the 1960s – comprising a mixture of pitched roof weatherboard dwellings, fibrolite baches, some stucco ‘moderne’ / Art Deco dwellings and a wide array of 1950s / ‘60’s brick, weatherboard and tile bungalows – on quarter-acre sections;*
- (c) In-fill development, mostly comprising weatherboard, brick and monolithic-clad housing within pockets near Shelly Bay Road and the end of Third View Avenue in the 1990s and early 2000s – mostly in a single-storey bungalow style with pitched roofs flanked by more compact and ‘designed’ gardens on sections getting down to 700m²;*

- (d) Redevelopment of the cliff-top ridges either side of Pine Harbour Marina in the early-mid 2000s, with a wider array of housing styles on 650-700m² lots – often employing a mixture of brick, weatherboard, sheet cladding and plaster walling, larger areas of glazing, and two-storeys in a ‘Mediterranean / palm tree resort’ vernacular, albeit still with mostly pitched roofs and smaller, more strongly articulated gardens;*
- (e) The Spinnaker Bay subdivision in the mid-2000s at the eastern end of the northern slopes closer to Te Puru Park, with one and two-storey bungalows employing a wide variety of modern materials and ‘designed’ gardens typical – on 800-1100m² lots framed by the Leigh Auton and Liberty Reserves connected to Te Puru Park;*
- (f) Two-storey terrace housing within part of Seventh View Avenue next to the Pohutukawa Coast Shopping Centre – with a mixture of weatherboard-type cladding, flat roofs and tight garden spaces (150m² sections) complementing the shopping centre from 2017 onwards;*
- (g) A variety of one and two-storey detached ‘bungalows’ employing a wide range of building materials and (mostly) pitched roofs on small (800-900m² typical) sections within the southern valley – facing towards the Rydges Formosa Golf Resort to the south and the sea past Pine Harbour Marina to the west, with large stormwater reserves following the valley floor and feeding down into it;*
- (h) Two and (to a lesser degree) three-storey terrace housing that has emerged over the last 2-3 years, employing flat roofs and a variety of modern cladding systems (from timber to long-run iron) on aggregated sections (each around 200m² in area) around the bottom of Jack Lachlan Drive, Gateway Avenue and Seventh View Avenue;*
- (i) Metlifecare’s “Pohutukawa Landing” retirement village, comprising a mixture of attached, single-storey housing units off Eighth and Ninth View Avenues, and Sunkist Bay Road focused on a series of internal (limited access) lanes, together with a two-storey apartment complex at the eastern end of the village; and*
- (j) The West Quarter complex anchored by its five-storey apartment building directly opposite the main entrance to the Pine Harbour Marina and an historic motorcycle ‘showroom’.*

(See Figure 6, overleaf)

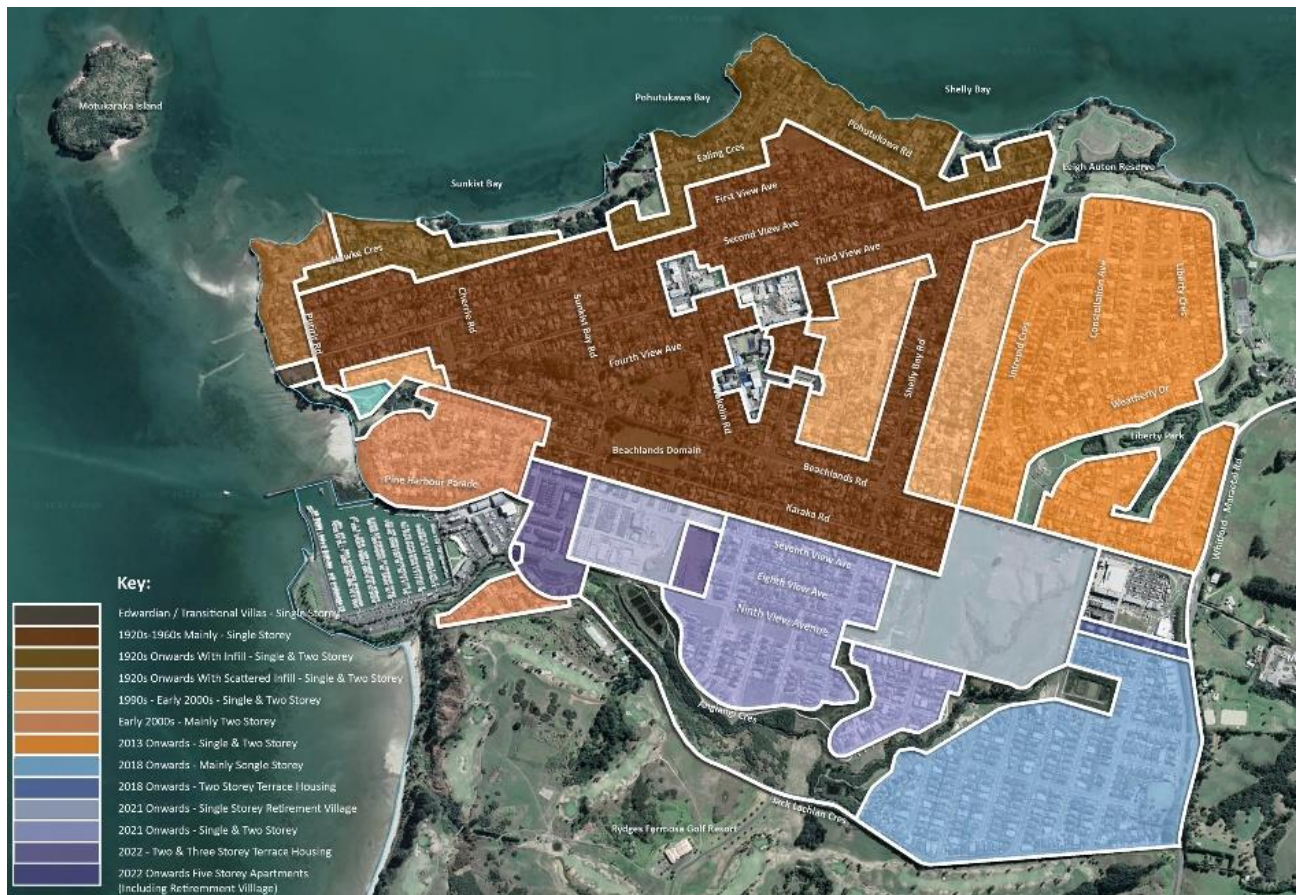


Figure 6. Beachlands Built Form – Composite Residential Character & Scale

Overall, there has been a significant degree of change since Richard Kipplewhite subdivided its northern slopes in 1922. Over more recent decades, the emergence of a complex mosaic of increasingly intensive residential development, the Pine Harbour Marina and Pohutukawa Coast Shopping Centre, and – even more recently – both the Pohutukawa Landing Retirement Village and West Quarter complex has fundamentally changed the ‘face’ and nature of Beachlands. It is no longer the relatively simple and laid back seaside settlement that it once was.

The Site’s Wider Landscape Setting

Beachlands and Maraetai are the two major population hubs east of Whitford. Both are beach settlements, although Beachlands has become a substantial dormitory suburb, whereas Maraetai is still much more physically hemmed in by both its beach, facing out into Tamaki Strait, and rising land behind it. As a result, Maraetai has retained more of the feeling of a contained beachside community.

Between and around these settlements, open farmland dominates the more elevated slopes that rise up towards the crest of the Maraetai ridge – separating Beachlands and Whitford to the west from Umupuia and the outer Clevedon / Wairoa River valley to the east. Much of the crest of this landform is, in turn, dominated by production forestry. While large stands of native forest still also exist east of that ridge crest, most of Beachlands’ hinterland comprises a working landscape that is dominated by primary production. Consequently, even though the area closer to Whitford-Maraetai Road is also dotted with residential properties, shelterbelts and smaller stands of amenity planting, overwhelming

impressions remain of a landscape that is both rural and rather utilitarian. Such impressions are reinforced near the entrance to Beachlands, both by a quarry (operated by Manukau Quarries) within the rural catchment directly opposite (east of) Beachlands Road and the 'hard' environment of its conventional, very traditional, shopping centre and car parking immediately west of Whitford-Maraetai Road.

Two existing residential subdivisions are also found on the southern and eastern sides of that major road corridor, opposite the 'farm area': "Waikopua" next to Maea Rise and a 5-lot lifestyle estate at 631-645 Whitford-Maraetai Road. The first of these, with 19 sites either sold or for sale, sits on elevated ground that is naturally oriented towards the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto, with the PPC88 Site in the foreground of such views, while the smaller rural-residential development slightly further to the north is located within a large valley system shared with Okaroro Drive. It drops away from Whitford-Maraetai Road to the east and has no direct contact with the site.

All of this contrasts very markedly with Omana Regional Park, just under 1km to north-east of Beachlands, which is flanked by native bush following natural stream courses down to the Tamaki Strait shoreline. Blocks of residual pasture and picnic areas are framed by tracts of native revegetation, while elevated vantage points within the regional park offer highly appealing views across Tamaki Strait to the southern coastline of Waiheke Island and the iconic outline of Rangitoto.

Directly 'next door', the recreation area of Te Puru Park acts as a buffer between Omana Regional Park and the north-eastern edge of the Beachlands settlement. Its broad, low-lying cricket ground extends out to Shelly Beach at the edge of the Strait (much like the sequence of beaches, from Sunkist Bay to Shelly Bay, on the edge of Beachlands to the west) and it is enclosed by rising ground next to Beachlands, as well as Te Puru Stream. This stream is backed by rising banks and the more elevated bush margins of the regional park immediately beyond it. Further enclosed at its western end by a line of planted pohutukawas, Te Puru Park displays significant appeal for both active and passive recreation activities, with a cricket club, tennis club and community centre all located on its margins. A walkway / cycleway also connects it with both Beachlands and the regional park – over Te Puru Stream. Nevertheless, it is the park's open 'window' to Tamaki Strait that is its most obvious feature and the one that is most significant for the wider community using Whitford-Maraetai Road.

At the opposite end of the PPC88 Site, a large estuary and wetland frame the outer reaches of Waikopua Creek, separating its southern end from another peninsula that projects northwards from Whitford. Much of this area is gently rolling and lower lying than the terrain closer to Beachlands, with a low coastal shelf and beach edge projecting forward from the peninsula below Clifton and Porterfield Roads – most of which is now subdivided into lifestyle blocks, Although some farms remain intact away from the coast, nearly all of the properties facing towards Beachlands and the PC88 Site are primarily used for a mixture of residential activities and hobby farming.

As a result, the area is generally notable for its array of large, to quite stately, dwellings that are enclosed by a mixture of shelterbelts and amenity planting. Part of the coastal flats below this residential area are also occupied by a local pony club's paddocks and arena, while other property-owners appear to graze their land intermittently, and – in one case – appear to be re-creating a series of wetlands. As with many of the lifestyle properties within the PC88 site, most local landowners

make the most of expansive views out over the coastal terraces and beach, towards the Hauraki Gulf, Rangitoto and the coastal landscape south of Beachlands (Attachments 15-18).

Identified Values:

*Although Motukaraka Island off Sunkist Bay is identified as part of the coastal environment that has high natural character value (**HNC**) in the AUP, no other areas of High or Outstanding Natural Character (**ONC**) are found down the coastline of the Site. Similarly, while Omana Regional Park near Maraetai is identified as an Outstanding Natural Landscape, no other ONLs or Outstanding Natural Features (**ONFs**) are found within or near the Site.*

4. Effects in General

Assessments addressing changes to the various landscapes and environments, and the community perceptions of such change, often refer to a range of effects on visual, landscape, natural character and amenity values. The following descriptions of each type of effect are designed to help clarify their areas of commonality and difference, which, in turn, affects how they have been addressed in this report.

Visual Effects

‘Visual effects’ reflect changes to the visual composition, configuration and character of a locality or landscape, together with the perceived magnitude or scale of such change(s) – in terms of their relative legibility and prominence. However, an assessment of visual effects does not address the values (including community values) associated with such change, which are more appropriately addressed in relation to the landscape, natural character and amenity attributes of an area. Visual change and ‘effects’ are, in effect, devoid of value: they convey a sense of the magnitude of visible change that would be experienced from a viewpoint or viewpoints, but not the impact that this would have on the character, values and identity of the subject site and its surrounds. As such, visual ‘effects’ are no more than a stepping stone to addressing effects on landscape, amenity and natural character values, which are ultimately much more meaningful precisely because such assessment focuses on how such changes would actually impact on public and private perceptions of the subject landscape / environment.

Landscape Effects

“Landscape” is an all-encompassing term. The NZ Institute of Landscape Architects’ Charter (2010) describes “*Landscape*” as being “*the cumulative expression of natural and cultural elements, pattern and processes in a geographical area.*” Moreover, the Charter’s Preamble offers the following, slightly more fulsome, description of landscapes – as follows:

“Landscapes are the result of unique combinations of biophysical, cultural and social processes, evolving over time and interwoven with memory, perception and tradition. They include land, water systems and marine areas, and play a vital role in human nurture, fulfilment and in shaping individual and collective identity. Landscapes range from the outstanding and the memorable, to the familiar and commonplace”

In addition, the NZILA’s *Te Tangi A Te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2021* (p. 35, section 4.22) identifies landscape values as comprising three ‘layers’ of attributes:

Physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions

The current professional practice of conceptualising ‘landscape’ as the overlap of its physical, associative, and perceptual dimension is reflected in ‘case law’ including the following recent decision¹:

“Landscape means the natural and physical attributes of land together with air and water which change over time and which is made known by people’s evolving perceptions and associations.”

¹ [2011] NZEnvC 384, *Mainpower NZ Limited v Hurunui District Council*, (‘Mount Cass Wind Farm’), paragraph 300-301

“In keeping with the Act such a definition enables the development of landscape assessment which takes account of:

- (1) natural and physical environment: and*
- (2) perceptual; and*
- (3) associative aspects (beliefs, uses, values and relationships)*

which may change over time”

In relation to most urban and suburban environs, the latter two layers are typically of greater concern and relevance, whereas in more rural or natural environments, the biophysical state and values of that environment can be more significant.

Within Auckland’s coastal and rural areas, landscape effects therefore relate to modification of both the biophysical and sensory (or perceptual) characteristics and values of an environment. Often, these are addressed in terms of changes to the landforms, vegetation cover, sea / water forms, biota and land uses within a landscape, together with the visual legibility, expressiveness, aesthetic value, transient values and other ‘associative’ matters. However, changes to the character of a landscape may also affect people’s appreciation of its ‘shared and recognised values’ and identity (reflecting appreciation of a landscape by local communities and the public at large), together with its cultural dimensions and historical values, which overlap with effects on amenity values.

Natural Character Effects

Natural character effects overlap with landscape effects, with emphasis on effects that impair, or otherwise alter, the naturalness of the coastal environment in terms of its biophysical attributes and perceived character. Policy 13 (2) of the NZ Coastal Policy provides further direction in this regard, by identifying some of the elements / features / characteristics associated with natural character values, including:

- (a) natural elements, processes and patterns;*
- (b) biophysical, ecological, geological and geomorphological aspects;*
- (c) natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, ... and surf breaks;*
- (d) the natural movement of water and sediment;*
- (e) the natural darkness of the night sky;*
- (f) places or areas that are wild or scenic;*
- (g) a range of natural character from pristine to modified; and*
- (h) experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and their context or setting.*

These elements and characteristics are not exclusive, however, and the significance of effects in relation to any one factor (or more) need to be considered with regard to the particular elements, patterns and processes that contribute to the natural character values of any coastal environment. Thus, coastal environments that are highly natural will be much more sensitive and susceptible to the effects of change than those that are already highly developed and modified – or within those where such change is anticipated by relevant statutory instruments.

Amenity Effects

Again, effects on amenity values overlap with effects on the 'sensory' and 'associative' qualities of landscape, and the meaning attributed to Amenity Values in the RMA describes them as being:

those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.

This indicates that 'amenity' pertains to areas that are known, understood and appreciated by those who live within them or visit them – often on a reasonably regular basis. Amenity values also relate to such factors as noise, lighting, smells and awareness of activity and movement; in effect, the fuller spectrum of sensory factors that contribute to perception and appreciation of an area's character, pleasantness and aesthetic coherence. Inevitably, this also brings into play perceptions of identity and sense of place that reflect the more particular, even unique, qualities of a locality or environment. Concepts of familiarity, shared ownership (in a figurative sense) and pride of place are also important in this regard. Moreover, Section 7(c) refers to "*cultural and recreational attributes*", which often pertains to areas used for walking, cycling, coastal activities and passive recreation.

5. Evaluation of Effects

The catchments and audiences exposed to the Project remain much as described in Section 5.3 of the 2023 AEE. As such, the key receiving environments exposed to the Site and future development on it still comprise:

1. Beachlands village – embracing the more traditional village around, and north of, Beachlands Road from its shopping centre off Whitford – Maraetai Road to Pine Harbour Parade above the marina;
2. Whitford-Maraetai Road near the lifestyle blocks included in the FUZ;
3. Whitford Maraetai Road south of those same lifestyle properties;
4. A sizeable lifestyle ‘precinct’ across the Waikopua Creek estuary – around Clifton and Porterfield Roads; and
5. The coastal marine Area (CMA) off Beachlands and Waikopua Creek.

The audiences associated with these key receiving environments and vantage points comprise:

- Beachlands residents;
- Occupants of the lifestyle properties next to Whitford-Maraetai Road;
- Occupants of the lifestyle area across the Waikopua Creek estuary;
- Users of the Beachlands Shopping Centre;
- Users of the Pine Harbour Marina;
- Users of the (future) residual Formosa Golf Course;
- Motorists on Whitford-Maraetai Road;
- Users of the Pine Harbour Ferry service and boaties off Beachlands and Howick.

The Site’s Wider Landscape Setting

In line with the 2023 AEE and response to Auckland Council’s Clause 23 review, this report employs the following viewpoints to evaluate the effects of the (now) proposed development within the Beachlands South site:

- Viewpoint 1. **Winterman Road** (below Karaka Road)
- Viewpoint 2. **Keshvara Road** (at the intersection with Eighth View Avenue)
- Viewpoint 3. **Angiangi Crescent**
- Viewpoint 5. **Whitford - Maraetai Road South of Jack Lachlan Drive**
- Viewpoint 8. **The Clifton Road Walkway** (on the edge of the Waikopua Creek estuary)
- Viewpoint 9. **The Pine Harbour Ferry Route**
- Viewpoint 10. **The Pine Harbour Marina Ferry Terminal**
- Viewpoint 11. **The Marina Beach (North)**
- Viewpoint 12. **The Marina Beach (South)**

In assessing the extent and nature of such effects for each viewpoint (and surrounding locality, where applicable), I have developed and employed the following checklist of key matters that need to be addressed:

A. Natural Character Values:

- 1) *Any effects in relation to the biophysical characteristics and naturalness of the Beachlands South site, taking into account the coastline's current state;*
- 2) *Any effects in relation to the perceived naturalness and remoteness of the Beachlands South coastline;*
- 3) *Effects on key views to / from the CMA and coastal / CMA features.*

B. Landscape (including Amenity) Values:

- 4) *Impacts on landscape elements, patterns and features;*
- 5) *Effects in relation to its perceived naturalness, expressiveness, aesthetic value, legibility; transient values and 'shared and recognised' values;*
- 6) *Intrusion into, or loss of, key views and landscape features;*
- 7) *Any effects in respect of Beachland's identity and sense of place*

In addressing these 'matters', the Project has been evaluated in the context of the landscape found at Beachlands, subject to the modification and development that the Precinct Provisions accommodate. Consequently, the Project is assessed with a strong focus on the additional effects that would arise from the Project, above and beyond those identified in 2023 for PC88.

The effects ratings in relation to each viewpoint are 'scored' in accordance with the following rating scale, which is found in section 6.39 of *Te Tangi a te Manu*:

SIGNIFICANT						
LESS THAN MINOR	MINOR	MORE THAN MINOR				
VERY LOW	LOW	LOW-MOD	MODERATE	MOD-HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH

In relation to this scale, it is important to note that the 'guidelines' comment as follows about the magnitude and meaning of some key RMA terms that address effects:

- 6.39
 - 'More than minor' can be characterised as 'moderate' or above.
 - 'Minor' adverse effects means some real effect, but of less than moderate magnitude and significance. 'Minor' can be characterised as 'low' and 'low-moderate' on the 7-point scale.
 - 'Less than minor' means insignificant. It can be characterised as 'very low' and overlapping with 'low' on the 7-point scale.
- 6.42 Significant adverse effect means of major magnitude and importance. A significant effect can be characterised as 'high' or 'very high' on the 7-point scale.

Viewpoint Assessments

The following assessments for individual viewpoints are, in many respects, very similar to those undertaken in 2023. However, the live zoning of the Site through PC88 has removed the issue of effects on the AUP's urban-rural boundary, and effects on rural values within the Site – although not on the character of the wider Maraetai Peninsula. It has also somewhat reduced the importance of integration between the existing village and new development at Beachlands South, although this matter is still commented on in respect of most viewpoints.

Viewpoint 1. Winterman Road

Effects on Natural Character Values:

Views from Winterman Road, running up from the valley floor near Jack Lachlan Drive to Karaka Road, are strictly confined by existing terrace housing and other residential development. As a result, they are either aligned on the valley corridor below or a confined part of the Karaka Road / Beachlands Road above. One's eye is, at present, inevitably drawn towards the green sward and distinctive Phoenix palms of the current Formosa Golf Course – rising above a quite dense matrix of housing – whereas the Hauraki Gulf, although physically nearby, is completely screened from view.

The consented Beachlands South Precinct would change the nature of the outlook and views from this quarter by replacing the existing golf course with multi-unit development. It would also locate the Northern Apartment Building and a series of apartment blocks on the coastal ridge south of the Pine Harbour Marina. However, it would not alter this viewpoint's already very limited sense of connection with the nearby sea and coastline. As a result, the current Project would have no effect on the character of the CMA and perception of the Beachlands' wider coastal environment from this viewpoint.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Effects on Landscape Values:

Views from this vantage point are largely dominated by both existing and emerging residential development. The grass and vegetation of the Formosa Golf Course, including pampas and other weeds on the slopes near the course maintenance sheds, are visible, but appear somewhat remote. They provide contrast with the mixture of bungalows and terrace houses that dominate the foreground to middle distance of current views down Winterman Road. Consequently, the displacement of the current golf course's fairways, greens and stands of trees would be significant in its own right.

However, the Precinct plan foreshadows removal of all of the greenery and open space presently associated with the Formosa Golf Course and Resort, replacing it with the complex layering of mainly multi-unit housing, then apartment (THAB) and Business development closer to, and on, the ridge crest to the right. The apartment buildings and Town Centre now proposed, as part of the Project, would not appreciably alter this situation, with tiers of development culminating in the Northern Apartment Building still dominating the coastal ridge – as consented – and stretching back to the main body of the Town Centre and its Hotel.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Viewpoint 2. Keshvara Road

Effects on Natural Character Values:

Views from the intersection of Keshvara Road and Eighth View Avenue currently capture both the Formosa Golf Course and, more obliquely, an embayed part of the Hauraki Gulf with the Howick / Eastern Beach coastline beyond. Enclosed by headlands both sides of the Pine Harbour Marina, and with both the marina's moorings and some of the more recent terrace housing development nearby 'frittering' its base, the sea is clearly discernible, but views to it are far from all-embracing or sweeping. Even so, it remains a key component of Beachlands' identity, contributing to both its aesthetic appeal and feeling of being a coastal settlement.

The assessment undertaken for PC88 considered that development on the Beachlands South site would compound the visual framing and enclosure of the current village and this pocket of sea by the coastal ridge and headland rising up directly south of the Pine Harbour Marina. At the same time, apartment and multi-unit development spread across the Site would displace that ridge's existing fairways, the pines found between them, and a scattering of other trees that demarcate the seaward edge of the current golf course. It would not, however, encroach on the area of sea just described and, overall, would have little, if any, impact on public exposure to, and appreciation of, the coastline and maritime environments associated with Beachlands.

The Project, including its apartment blocks and the Northern Apartment Building perched on the coastal ridge at the end of the current golf course, would not appreciably alter this situation. If anything, the looser spacing of those blocks across the ridge would increase the feeling of visual permeability in the general direction of the nearby sea, but it would not alter the CMA's visibility or the sense of connection with Beachlands' coastline.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Effects on Landscape Values:

Views towards the Formosa Golf Course currently reveal a relatively open sequence of fairways, Phoenix palms, pines, stands of manuka, and other trees flanking the clubhouse and associated buildings, while part of the headland around Holes 15 and 16 is also revealed closer to the marina and sea. However, these two parts of the course are connected by little more than a narrow sliver of tree canopies on the skyline, with housing in the foreground – directly below Eighth View Avenue – screening out the rest of the course.

The assessment undertaken for PC88 recognised that the amalgam of multi-unit (apartment Town Centre and Hotel development) would displace most of the existing Formosa Golf Course – including parts of it that stretch out across the coastal ridge to the west – and much of the greenery and open space associated with the southern side of the valley. Presently, this provides a very obvious counterpoint with the suburban housing development found north of Jack Lachlan Drive. In the future, layers of multi-unit housing and the proposed school development enabled by the Precinct would dominate more proximate parts of the valley corridor, while the sequence of apartment buildings on the coastal ridge would segue into the Town Centre and Hotel to the south. This development would also be interspersed with some of the Formosa Golf Course's residual fairways, associated vegetation, and street trees.

Even so, the loss of open space, greenery, and the largely manicured fairways and greens of the current golf course would clearly affect the outlook of local residential and visitors alike. Part of Beachlands' identity is still linked to the Formosa Golf Course, and it offers an appealing degree of contrast with the matrix of suburban development otherwise dominant around Keshvara Road. On the other hand, the Project would mainly affect areas of development already provided for in the Precinct provisions, including the school site directly south of Jack Lachlan Drive, and the more distant areas of apartment and Town Centre development also provided for under the Precinct provisions, together with the proposed Hotel.

Under the Project, the Town Centre and nearby Hotel would be less pronounced than was assessed as part of the PC88 process, whereas the main school building would be more prominent. At the same time, the apartment buildings on the western ridgeline – together with the Northern Apartment Building – would appear more spaced out and ‘gap-toothed’ than was previously anticipated. They would be slightly higher and more standalone, but less intensive, overall. The new school building would be appreciably larger than was contemplated under PC88, but it would also remain almost entirely ensconced within the area of school and residential multi-unit development addressed under PC88, near Jack Lachlan Drive.

Furthermore, the other buildings now proposed would be too distant to appear over dominant, although the double lines of apartment blocks proposed on the coastal ridge at the edge of the existing golf course would have a profile that is quite distinct from both the multi-unit development closer at hand, and the patina of single-storey bungalows already established in the immediate foreground, north of Jack Lachlan Drive.

That sequence of apartment buildings would benefit from its looser spacing and the open space gaps between it – to some degree at least. However, the sequence of similarly scaled blocks, without a great deal of modulation or variety, would also be very prominent of the western skyline, evoking a feeling of appreciable change in relation to most of Beachlands, which has a much more laid back, less intensive, character at present. Such perceptions would be partly allayed by the visual linkage of the proposed development to that already found near the Pine Harbour Marina – anchored by the West Quarter complex and Pohutukawa Landing Retirement Village.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Viewpoint 3. Angiangi Crescent

Effects on Natural Character Values:

Views from this vantage point and nearby are totally dominated by a stream corridor, stormwater management system, and associated open space directly 'in front of' it. This merges with expansive views out across the Formosa Golf Course. However, much as described in relation to Viewpoint 2, the sea – backed by the Eastern Beach Peninsula and Musick Point – is much more oblique to the main viewing axis. In this instance, it again appears quite remote, with just a small 'pocket' of open water visible between nearby housing and the headland immediately south of the Pine Harbour Marina. Together with a partial view of Rangitoto, which is likely to be lost behind emerging housing, this glimpse of the sea remains important in terms of Beachlands' identity and sense of place but lacks real presence. It, like the view of Rangitoto, looks likely to remain only until new housing emerges west of this viewpoint – between Angiangi Crescent and the Pine Harbour Marina.

Even if this were not the case, development assessed in relation to PC88 will – as for Viewpoint 2 – remain to the left of the visible sea and its coastal margins. The Project would not change this situation: although the apparent scale of development on the headland framing the left-hand side of the CMA would 'increase' slightly, it would avoid the visible sea. As a result, it would not change the CMA's visibility or the degree of perceived connection with Beachlands' coastline.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Effects on Landscape Values:

As indicated above, views from this quarter traverse a major stream corridor, then the fairways and greens of the Formosa Golf Course, together with the built profile of its clubhouse and its former recreation centre, and – less obviously – some of the houses on lifestyle blocks above it. This outlook is largely 'green', but is also largely cultural (or man-made), with views contextualised by existing development around Angiangi Crescent, Cadwil Drive and Kahawairahi Drive, as well as the aforementioned stream corridor.

The development assessed in relation to PC88, on the far side of Jack Lachlan Drive would be bisected by the stream course, gully and associated vegetation within the current golf course beyond Jack Lachlan Drive and the fairways that spread outwards from the stream corridor. This would effectively split the main development areas on the Beachlands South site in two, with the proposed school campus and multi-unit development at the 'front of' the main development area spreading westwards of the central stream system – backed by the Town Centre, related apartment development, and more distant Hotel.

To the east, a smaller pocket of residential multi-unit development would stretch towards Whitford-Maraetai Road, left of the stream gully. As for Viewpoint 2, the loss of open space, greenery, and some of the more open fairways that are currently exposed to Beachlands' village would undoubtedly have an adverse impact on the perceived naturalness and legibility of the landscape exposed to this vantage point, its aesthetic appeal, and even the sense of place that locals derive from it. They would, however, be limited by the retention of the stream corridor directly adjacent to Angiangi Crescent, which would keep much of the proposed development at 'arm's length' and the integration of its gully system and vegetation with the open space and planting on the far side of Jack Lachlan Drive.

The Project would not greatly alter the basic composition of the proposed development and, for the most part, its apparent scale – including the apartment development closer to Beachlands' coastline. However, the enlarged School Building envelope would be more prominent, to the point where it would obscure most of the more distant Town Centre and Hotel. As such, it could conceivably dominate the skyline to the south-west of this vantage point, becoming a significant to prominent feature in its own right. However, it would remain within

the broad footprint already anticipated for such development, solidly flanked by multi-unit housing and other development extending towards the Town Centre, and it would not change the degree of interplay between built and 'green' areas assessed as part of the PC88 process. Although the envelope's increased height would increase the school's visual prominence, this has to be balanced against the positive perception of it as a major community facility (by the local community), while its height and scale would not be inordinate relative to the other layers of development found around it.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Viewpoint 5. Whitford – Maraetai Road South of Jack Lachlan Drive

Effects on Natural Character Values:

When travelling along Whitford-Maraetai Road from Whitford and approaching Beachlands, the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto are briefly visible as vehicles get close to Jack Lachlan Drive – looking out over a valley system near golf holes 3 to 5. However, that view is soon curtailed by the Phoenix palms lining the golf course and pines near Jack Lachlan Drive. It is also offset well to the left of the curving road corridor, so that views are fleeting at most. Proposed development anticipated under PC88, directly below Whitford-Maraetai Road, would largely comprise Business - Light Industrial development subject to a range of design controls. This would intrude into the view from Whitford-Maraetai Road initially, but it would be progressively superseded by the 15m deep strip of buffer planting proposed along the edge of both Whitford-Maraetai Road and Jack Lachlan Drive. Travelling in the opposite direction, the current golf course and nearby lifestyle housing is clearly visible, but little more than small patches of the sea – near Howick and Eastern Beach – are again fleetingly glimpsed between vegetation on the golf course. Those ‘patches’ are well to the right of the road axis and offer a very limited sense of contact with the CMA.

Consequently, the assessment for PC88 determined that this would have a quite limited impact on public perception and appreciation of Beachlands’ CMA and coastal margins – particularly so in the longer term. The Project would not appreciably change this situation.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Effects on Landscape Values:

Viewpoint 5 reveals a valley system that opens out between the lifestyle properties to the south (within the proposed FUZ) and Jack Lachlan Drive. The valley landform, combined with the trees both framing and lining the golf course, the bush lower down and even the defined ‘corridors’ of golf fairways and greens have appreciable appeal. For those travelling towards Beachlands and Maraetai, this is subtly amplified by the brief glimpses of Rangitoto and the sea described above. At present, this marks the point of arrival at, and departure from, Beachlands – with the open space of the Formosa Golf Course and some of the lifestyle blocks on rising ground to the south complementing the farmland that dominates the local landscape east of Whitford – Maraetai Road. Even so, there are clear differences between the manicured, structured character of the golf course and that of the paddocks and farmland across this key thoroughfare. The golf course comprises carefully articulated, ‘manufactured’ countryside, while the farmland opposite has a truly rural demeanour.

The PC88 assessment considered that the light industrial development directly below the road corridor would initially be quite prominent, with a mixture of buildings, storage areas, parking bays, service areas, docks, security fencing and lighting all signalling a significant departure from the current golf course dominated environment that passing motorists are exposed to. However, in the longer term (beyond approximately 8-10 years), most, then all, of this development would be screened from view by the mass native planting next to Whitford-Maraetai Road. The Project would not change this situation.

Effects Rating: **Very Low**

Viewpoint 8. The Clifton Road Walkway

Effects on Natural Character Values:

The shallow bay at the mouth of the Waikopua Creek dominates views from this viewpoint and adjoining parts of both the Clifton Road Walkway and the lifestyle properties both behind and near it. Views across the bay are backed by the rising escarpment at the edge of the Plan Change land, with a mixture of unkempt pasture, pines, and scattered pockets of native shrubland and trees dotting its slopes. The terracotta roofs and cream walls of the Rydges / Formosa chalets south of the current clubhouse are also visible atop the escarpment's ridge crest.

In relation to PC88, it was considered that the main slopes across Beachlands' coastal escarpment would remain much as at present initially, although the crest of the ridge would be lined by a mixture of Large Lot housing and multi-unit residential development, interspersed with existing and new vegetation. This would be backed by apartment blocks closer to the Town Centre and Hotel – on high ground beyond. This change would be accentuated by the removal of pines and other weed / exotic species across the ridge (as well as elsewhere). Over time, however, nearly all of the coastal edge would become afforested, with much of the lower-lying Large Lot and multi-unit development being at least partly screened by it. All of the taller development around the Town Centre would remain visible, but this would typically appear quite distant, with the foreground to middle distance remaining – as now – dominated by the coastal flats below Clifton and Porterfield Roads, its beachline, then the embayed area off Waikopua Creek. The coastal edge in 'front of' the proposed residential areas and the Village Centre would become progressively more 'natural' (albeit as the result of human intervention) as the revegetation matures across it, and the bush within the gully systems penetrating inland from the escarpment would also gradually increase in scale – though to a more limited degree.

The PC88 assessment considered the proposed development would not affect the CMA, nor would it reduce the visual primacy of both Rangitoto and the island of Motukaraka in views towards the Hauraki Gulf. Moreover, even though that part of the Site currently occupied by the Formosa Golf Course, adjoining lifestyle development, and the PC88 'farm' (the southern half of the Beachlands South site), would be significantly modified by the Plan Change, it would be increasingly screened, over time, by the revegetation of much of the coastal escarpment and its Large Lot margins. As a result, the Precinct development would be mitigated by the avoidance of any impact on key views to Rangitoto and Motukaraka and the enhancement of Waikopua Bay's estuarine margins and backdrop.

The Project would alter this situation by increasing the height of the apartment development behind the coastal edge and introducing the 12-storey Western Apartment Building to the adjoining ridgeline. In a comparative sense, this would also make the Town Centre appear slightly lower. Viewed 'in the round', the Western Apartment Building is perhaps the most significant of these changes, although the degree of modification associated with the wider coastal ridge would, overall, be affected by its presence to a limited degree. Consequently, even though the Western Apartment Building would add another layer of development to the coastal escarpment, its impact on the interplay between two contrasting environments on the far side of Waikopua Bay would be incremental. This is also the case in relation to the proposed apartment development.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Effects on Landscape Values:

The rolling slopes on the far side of the Waikopua Creek estuary and bay are prominent in views from this quarter. However, the flat angle of viewing across the bay results in the slopes directly above the shoreline being more prominent, whereas those beyond this outer coastal edge are more difficult to clearly discern. Initially, therefore, the buildings and general modification assessed in relation to PC88 would generate effects similar to those described above, with its apartment development, Town Centre, and proposed Hotel, capping the lower-lying Large Lot and residential multi-unit development closer to the coastal escarpment. Existing and proposed vegetation along that landform would progressively soften the margins of that combined housing area, including the more intensive development behind it.

Again, the Project would not greatly alter this situation, even though the taller Western Apartment Building and apartment blocks west of the Town Centre would be slightly more visually prominent than was previously anticipated. Over time, revegetation of the coastal escarpment – including planting up the gully corridors that penetrate the coastal ridge – would still make this complex sequence and layering of development appear slightly more recessive over time. Moreover, the viewing distance from this vantage point, the avoidance of any encroachment into the CMA (which is the centrepiece of views from near this viewpoint), and the absence of any effects in relation to views of Rangitoto and Motukaraka, would all be mitigating factors that help to offset some of the effects anticipated.

Even so, the Western Apartment Tower and other taller building elements would still erode some of the intrinsic naturalness, aesthetic appeal, cohesion and pleasantness associated with current views across the Waikopua Creek estuary and bay, albeit to a limited degree in the context of the development accommodated by PC88 and its skyline profile.

Effects Rating: **Low-Moderate**

Viewpoint 9. The Pine Harbour Ferry Route

Effects on Natural Character Values:

The coastline of Beachlands is currently dominated by the Pine Harbour Marina, and boats along its seaward edge, the grassed knoll at its southern end, and residential development both next to, and behind, it. The slopes south of the marina are mostly covered in pine trees that are to be removed in the course of the development assessed as part of the PC88 process. The Precinct provisions envisage that development would stretch from near the marina to the coastline approaching Waikopua Bay. Fronted, for the most part, by apartment development, this line of buildings would merge with the new Village Centre and its Hotel, exacerbated by the clearance of pines and other vegetation on the coastal escarpment and ridge – at least in the short term. As a result, the ridgetop landscape south of the current Beachlands Settlement and Pine Harbour would go through a quite fundamental transition under Precinct provisions.

More positively, however, the resulting sequence of development would be sufficiently close to both the current ‘village’ – including its more recently constructed apartment complex – that there would be a feeling of connection with that existing node. Moreover, revegetation of the coastal escarpment, would offer the sort of mediation and mitigation described in relation to Viewpoint 8, helping to soften the visible edge of development near the town centre and, over time, helping to subtly lower its apparent scale. The multi-unit residential development further south would also be increasingly screened by that same vegetation in the longer term, not unlike the situation now evident at Hobsonville Point. This means that the coastal escarpment and ‘edge’ would be increasingly demarcated by two layers: the dark line of native vegetation rising up from the CMA to the crest of the escarpment, then the matrix of different built forms creating a new skyline above it. In between that coastal edge and this viewpoint, the expanse of sea in the immediate foreground would retain its visual primacy.

The Project would add to these changes further through the addition of the rather solitary Western Apartment Building to the coastline south of the Town Centre, and the one to two storey ‘uplift’ of the other apartment development on the coastal ridge, culminating in the Northern Apartment Building close to Pine Harbour Marina. These buildings would either appear spaced apart (as shown in Virtual View’s ‘proposed’ photo simulation) or compressed together – depending on the exact angle of viewing. In some cases, this would create the impression of a series of evenly spaced, but separate, towers extending down the coastal ridge, or a more solid line of development, which is elevated above that anticipated by the Precinct. As such, it would create a new, artificial skyline that not only climbs well above the undulating profile of the coastal ridge but is also elevated well above the adjoining Town Centre and its Hotel. Consequently, this double line of apartment buildings would – together with the Western Apartment Building – dominate the skyline of Beachlands’ southern coastline and its CMA. As a result, the intrinsic naturalness and cohesion of the Beachlands’ coastline would be further diminished.

In saying this, it is also accepted that the Project would remain within the combined envelope of ‘existing development’ created by both the present village and the Precinct, although it is equally clear that the greater elevation and articulation of the key apartment building elements (described above) would have an obvious effect on the natural qualities of the Beachlands coastline from a range of vantage points along the ferry route. Although the proposed revegetation of the coastal escarpment would soften these effects over time, to some degree, such mitigation would take decades to unfold.

Effects Rating: **Moderate-High**

Effects on Landscape Values:

The replacement of the course's grassed spaces and 'shelterbelts' by built forms, as assessed for PC88, would also result in the diminution of the coastline's rural qualities and perceived (as opposed to biophysical) naturalness. In places, the coastal edge could well appear raw and 'damaged' initially. Eventually, however, the native revegetation closer to the shoreline, would compensate for some of the anticipated change by creating a more natural and cohesive 'blanket' of native shrubs and trees that is spread across the escarpment at the near edge of the PC88 Site. This would not entirely offset the loss of landscape values associated with the golf course and its coastal edge, as development unfolds across the Precinct in the foreseeable future; but as discussed in relation to natural character effects, it would help to soften the profile and margins of the development associated with PC88. Of just as much importance, there would be a degree of synergy between the current Beachlands settlement (including its apartments behind the marina) and the development anticipated. under the Precinct provisions.

Even so, the increased elevation and – in some views – seemingly more spaced-out, and crenelated, sequence of apartment development now proposed by the Project, together with the somewhat isolated, stand-alone form of the Western Apartment Building, would exaggerate this transition. In particular, the twin layers of apartment development now proposed, together with both the Western and Northern Apartment Buildings, would stamp their mark on the coastal landscape and further elevate both the profile and visual presence of the Precinct's built forms. Even though they would – in some views – appear more spaciouly located than the built forms assessed in relation to PC88, their height and bulk would be increased, to the point where the Precinct's Town Centre would appear to sit lower down and appear more recessive, in a comparative sense. Consequently, even though the development proposed for the Project would follow in the footprint of that proposed under PC88, it would further affect both the content and character of Beachlands' coastal landscape and that of the wider, western Maraetai Peninsula.

As such, it is anticipated that the new skyline created by the Project's more elevated built forms would also add to the erosion of the local coastline's naturalness, aesthetic appeal and cohesion. Inevitably, this would also have an impact on Beachlands' identity and sense of place, although such impressions would be tempered by the appreciably modified nature of that coastline at present and the effective melding of the PC88 Precinct with the current village. As such, those using the ferry service clearly anticipate arriving at a coastal settlement and landscape that is already shaped by a complex mix of natural and cultural / man-made elements. It is far from pristine.

Effects Rating: **Moderate**

Viewpoint 10. The Pine Harbour Marina Ferry Terminal

Effects on Natural Character Values:

Current views from near the Pine Harbour Marina's ferry terminal are dominated by three 'layers' of elements: the ferry terminal shed, concourse and Marina Drive in the immediate foreground, a steep escarpment directly beyond that is immersed in pohutukawas and coastal shrubland, and the crenelated profile of mainly two-storey houses (in some cases, three-storey) on the crest of that cliff-line – off Tui Brae. For the most part, the environment around this viewpoint is highly modified and 'cultural', with the main marina and offices behind it, while both marina and ferry infrastructure – including a Gulf Stream caravan coffee stop – dominates the immediate foreground, and housing dominates the crest of the escarpment across the marina drive. This is counterbalanced, to a degree, by the pohutukawas and other vegetation covering most of that escarpment / cliff face, but the area around both this vantage point and the ferry terminal remains highly modified – or of low to low-moderate natural character value overall.

In relation to PC88, it was anticipated that just the top two storeys of the 11m high Northern Apartment Building would climb above the line of housing on Tui Brae (road), which marks the top of the coastal cliff-line and escarpment next to Pine Harbour Marina – with all other PC88 development fully screened from view. In addition, the apartment building was to be set back from both the existing line of residences on Tui Brae and the clifftop below it. Consequently, the Northern Apartment Building would be closely linked to the existing housing and, although sufficiently apparent that it would add to their combined profile and mass, it would not change the general character of that development or greatly alter the Tui Brae skyline.

By contrast, a 26.5m high (plus 1.0m for roof form) Northern Apartment Building, as now proposed for the Project, would be more readily apparent, with its top three levels climbing above the existing housing matrix on a steeply sloping, Tui Brae. Its multiple levels would also contrast with the detached housing development directly 'in front of' it. On the other hand, the apartment building would remain surrounded by existing housing, effectively isolated from the nearby marina, the coastal escarpment, and other development within the Precinct.

Consequently, much as the 'new' apartment building would amplify the modified nature and built content visible atop the coastal escarpment from this quarter, it would have a quite limited impact on the broader interplay between developed-modified and more natural parts of the coastal environment. The balance between that environment's natural and modified 'halves' would stay much as at present.

Rating: **Low**

Effects on Landscape Values:

As indicated above, the Project's Northern Apartment Building would reinforce the built nature and content of the residential landscape found at the southern end of the Pine Harbour Marina – near its entrance – and it would introduce a new type of residential development to this environment.

However, it would not change the fundamental character of the local landscape. As under the Precinct provisions, both the marina and its commercial area near Marina Drive would be solidly flanked by the landform of the coastal escarpment and its pohutukawas lower down, then the housing of both Tui Brae and the Precinct higher up. With the Northern Apartment Building firmly embedded in this area of development, it would have a quite limited impact on the marina's overall naturalness, its aesthetic character, even its memorability and identity.

Effects Rating: **Low**

Viewpoint 11. The Marina Beach (North)

Effects on Natural Character Values:

Looking inland from the beach area south of Pine Harbour Marina, the current beachfront retains an unusual level of separation from both the adjoining marina and Marina Drive, and the golf course that marks its inland edge at present. In fact, the marina is largely screened or filtered from the beach by a line of pohutukawa next to Marina Drive (and the stream corridor next to it), while the existing Formosa Golf Course is largely hidden by the escarpment at the back of the beachfront, together with the pines and other vegetation that dominate its upper slopes. Closer at hand, this vegetation cover transitions into patches of pampas, Muehlenbeckia and other coastal species that then merge with salt marsh, small pockets of wetland and low dunes shelving down to the sea. Consequently, the current beachfront appears largely devoid of development or human structures, notwithstanding the 'presence' of the Northern Apartment Building, assessed as part of the PC88 process, that would remain partly visible from the beachfront. The upper levels of some of the other apartment development assessed in relation to PC88 would also be partly visible, between and through the aforementioned pines, but would have a much more limited impact on the beach environs.

However, the revised Northern Apartment Building proposed as part of the Project, together (possibly) with the Western Apartment Building much further south (not shown in the photo simulations) would have significantly more visual presence. As shown in Virtual View's photo simulations for Viewpoint 11, the 'new' Northern Apartment Building would be taller than its predecessor, appearing much closer to the beachfront and more visually prominent, and potentially dominant. Although still partly screened by the remnant pines along the coastal escarpment, it would rise well above that landform, eroding at least some of the beach's inherent naturalness, together with its sense of solitude, and (relative) remoteness.

More positively, the escarpment and planting along it (both existing and proposed) would still frame and clearly demarcate the beach area and its more immediate coastal curtilage, reinforcing the current feeling of division between those parts of Beachlands that are more developed – away from the beach area – and more natural – closer to the CMA. Importantly, the proposed apartment development would not physically encroach on the Beach area or its immediate curtilage, while the native revegetation required under the Precinct provisions, would reinforce the feeling of separation just described. Importantly, it would also progressively soften and screen much of the proposed building from parts of the beachfront and wider coastal environment. Over time, that planting would help to enclose the beach again, elevating the beach's sense of naturalness and seclusion – if not its sense of remoteness.

Effects Rating: **High** (short to medium term: 10-15 years) to **Moderate** (longer term: beyond 10-15 years)

Effects on Landscape Values:

As described above, the Northern Apartment Building, as proposed for the Project – potentially in conjunction with the Western Apartment Building – would clearly encroach on the beachfront and its margins to a greater degree than was anticipated under PC88. In turn, the anticipated level of visual interaction between the apartment building and nearby beachfront would undoubtedly erode some of the latter's landscape qualities, including its sense of cohesion, intactness, and aesthetic appeal.

On the other hand, the Northern Apartment Building would remain relatively isolated and set back from the beachfront. Its effects would be progressively reduced by the planting already described. In addition, the beach area would become a significant asset for the occupants of the Precinct, enhancing the wider development's landscape values and aesthetic appeal, together with its recreational value. Consequently, much as the Northern Apartment Building might well be regarded as intrusive in relation to those parts of the beach that are

more exposed to it (and its users), other parts of the beach would remain more isolated from the proposed development. Moreover, while awareness of the proposed building would undoubtedly affect the naturalness of the local coastal environment, its effects on the beach's aesthetic qualities and other values described above would be more limited. Over time, the replacement planting of the current pines and other weed species would have much more than just a screening function, helping to significantly enhance the beach's natural qualities, its aesthetic appeal and pleasantness (including its sense of attractive seclusion and enclosure), its related appeal for those residing in and visiting Beachlands, and its cohesiveness.

Effects Rating: **Moderate**

Viewpoint 12. The Marina Beach (South)

Effects on Natural Character Values:

See Viewpoint 11. Many of the effects identified in relation to Viewpoint 11 are also applicable to this vantage point, although in this instance it would mainly be affected by the Project's Western Apartment Building; much less so the Northern Apartment Building. Moreover, the recent removal of pines near the southern beach area, together with the 12-storey height of the Western Apartment Building, suggest that it would be even more apparent than the Northern Apartment Building assessed in relation to Viewpoint 11. In fact, the proposed building is likely to appear even more one-off and stand-alone than the Northern Apartment Building, with any screening and related buffering of its profile almost entirely reliant on fine-tuning of its placement and the terrain of the intervening escarpment and ridgeline.

As shown in Virtual View's photo simulations, the Western Apartment Building now proposed within the Project would clearly overlook, and be exposed to, virtually all of the southern end of the Beachlands South beachfront, while its location 'forward' of other apartment development and the Town Centre would exacerbate its sense of isolation from the rest of the Precinct. As a result, it would have a significant impact on the naturalness of the immediate coastline, together with its sense of remoteness and isolation – from both the Precinct and Beachlands settlement as a whole.

Over time, the vegetation planted on the escarpment would gradually screen the apartment building's lower to middle levels, and this would also help to re-naturalise the beach and its coastal curtilage, much as described in relation to Viewpoint 11. Again, though, it is anticipated that this would take at least a decade to start to offer any real mediation between the beach and proposed apartment building.

Effects Rating: **High** (short to medium term: 10-15 years) to **Moderate** (longer term: beyond 10-15 years)

Effects on Landscape Values:

See Viewpoint 11.

Effects Rating: **Moderate**

6. Key Findings

The following table summarises the effects ratings for all 9 viewpoints:

	Viewpoint:	Effects on Natural Character Values:	Effects on Landscape Values:
1.	Winterman Road	Very Low	Very Low
2.	Keshvara Road	Very Low	Low
3.	Angiangi Crescent	Low	Low
5.	Whitford – Maraetai Road South of Jack Lachlan Drive	Very Low	Very Low
8.	The Clifton Road Walkway	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
9.	The Pine Harbour Ferry Route	Moderate-High	Moderate
10.	The Marina Ferry Terminal	Low	Low
11.	The Marina Beach (North)	High (short to medium term) Moderate (longer term)	Moderate
12.	The Marina Beach (South)	High (short to medium term) Moderate (longer term)	Moderate

Assessed in the context of the Precinct provisions and the permitted building heights that they provide, the majority of effects identified for the Project could be regarded as incremental. This is especially so in relation to the effects on views from the existing Beachlands settlement, north of Jack Lachlan Drive, from the Ferry Terminal and its marina surrounds, and from Whitford - Maraetai Road.

This is also largely the case in respect of views from the Clifton Road Walkway and the lifestyle catchment near it, although views from this quarter also start to pick out the 12-storey Western Apartment Building as a somewhat isolated outlier to the Town Centre. However, the focus on this building, together with the Northern Apartment Building, becomes much sharper in views from out at sea – following the ferry route to Beachlands – as well as from the beachfront and coastline south of the Pine Harbour Marina. In the short to medium term (10-15 years), both buildings would ‘pop up’ above the coastal escarpment that separates the beachfront and its margins from the Precinct. They would loom large in relation to a coastal environment that is largely isolated from most of the development within the Beachlands settlement and Formosa Golf Course at present.

In views from both the ferry route and wider CMA, both buildings would also feature amid a wider array of elevated THAB blocks perched on the coastal ridge at the western edge of the current golf course. Spaced apart from one another, this series of buildings would have a crenelated profile that shifts Beachlands South’s apparent ‘centre of gravity’ to the north, away from the Town Centre, while the Western Apartment Building would often read as a somewhat isolated and disparate outlier to both the Town Centre and the twin lines of THAB development extending northwards from it. Viewed *en masse*, the proposed buildings would also clearly challenge the height scale and form of

development currently found within the Beachlands settlement, to a greater degree than that assessed as part of the PC88 process. At the same time, their elevation and distinctive forms would affect both the strip of coastline visible below the current golf course and the wider landscape of western Maraetai, which still retains a largely rural demeanour and values around Beachlands and the Precinct.

Natural Character Effects

As indicated above, the majority of adverse natural character effects would focus on the beach area south of Pine Harbour Marina and the CMA offshore of the marina, near and around the ferry route. Within the more expansive views obtained from the ferry route, the increased elevation of the Project's apartment development (Western and Northern Apartment Buildings) spread across the coastal ridge would leave a clear and distinctive imprint on views from the sea. This sequence of development would be higher than that assessed in relation to PC88, and this would alter the balance between natural and man-made elements in and around Beachland's coastal environment. In so doing, it would dominate the coastal ridge and narrow strip of vegetation flanking the narrow beachfront and littoral margins found south of the Pine Harbour Marina – to a degree that is greater than was assessed for PC88. As a result, the Project's effects on the ferry route are expected to reach a moderate-high level.

Looking inland from that beachfront and its margins, the Northern and Western Apartment Buildings would have a more direct impact on Beachlands' southern coastal environment. Although remaining set back from its margins, both buildings would be elevated well above the beach, conceivably dominating views both directly towards the current golf course, as well as up and down its beachfront. As a result, both buildings would have a significant impact on the beach's perceived naturalness and sense of (relative) remoteness. Initially, such interaction and exposure would be quite direct, resulting in effects that 'top out' at a high level in the short to medium term.

Over time, however, as the proposed revegetation across the escarpment starts to take hold and mature, the lower margins and profiles of both buildings would be softened, then they would be increasingly screened by an emerging tree canopy – although they would never be completely screened from the beachfront. This process is expected to take 10-15 years. Also taking into account the relative visibility of the apartment development enabled by the Precinct, it is therefore anticipated that this would result in a moderate level of effect in the longer term.

The Project would also be exposed to a range of much more remote coastal vantage points, including locations across Waikopua Bay and near Howick – well away from Beachlands and its southern beachfront – but the Project's impact on these areas would be much more incremental relative to the development assessed for PC88. This is, for example, reflected in the low-moderate level of effect identified for Viewpoint 8 addressing the Clifton Road Walkway and its lifestyle surrounds.

Landscape Effects

Under the Project, future Large Lot, multi-unit residential and Town Centre development would retain a profile and visual signature similar to that assessed as part of PC88. However, the proposed changes to the configuration and height of the apartment development, together with changes to

the Northern Apartment Building and the development of a Western Apartment Building, would stamp their mark on the Beachlands landscape. All would become more prominent, while the Western Apartment Building would emerge as a distinctive and somewhat isolated outlier to the Town Centre. In a somewhat different vein, the Project's apartment buildings, together with the Northern Apartment Building, would appear to branch out from the Town Centre and shift the whole development's centre of gravity northwards. This, combined with the linear, but also spread-out, nature of the proposed blocks, would make them appear somewhat detached from one another and, in part, from the Town Centre. This double line of buildings would occupy locations similar to the apartment development consented for PC88, but its greater height and combined mass could well appear to introduce a seemingly new urban development / built form typology to Beachlands and its southern coastal ridge.

All of these changes would be apparent, more readily from the ferry and other vessels offshore of Beachlands and the Pine Harbour Marina, but also from vantage points within parts of the current settlement either side of Angiangi Crescent. Although the assessment undertaken for PC88 anticipated a significant 'step up' in terms of development intensities and scale relative to the existing village – even near the West Quarter and Pohutukawa Landing developments – the apartment buildings now proposed appear to take this further, to the point where that development would be very different from the building and development typologies currently found at Beachlands. PC88 has significantly changed public expectations in relation to future development within the expanded settlement area. The Project development would stretch these expectations even further. Having said this, it is also apparent that the combination of open spaces and planting, both between and around the new building footprints, could offer a degree of mediation in this regard over time, while – in the context of PC88 – most of the changes described above would still be largely incremental.

The key exception to this general situation is found within the beachfront and coastline south of Pine Harbour Marina, due to the visual profiles and presence of the Northern and Western Apartment Buildings. Both buildings would clearly have an impact on the character and values of the adjoining beachfront, including its perceived naturalness, sense of intactness and cohesion – certainly in the short to medium term (10-15 years). Having said this, the beach's aesthetic value and recreational appeal would not be solely determined, or affected, by the visibility and presence of both buildings, while the proposed native revegetation of the beach's backshore area would result in multiple benefits that have already been traversed in relation to natural character effects. This includes making the beachfront and wider coastal domain increasingly appealing to future residents of the Precinct as that vegetation matures. These factors ultimately limit the buildings' impacts that the Project, as a whole, would have on the coastal landscape values associated with most viewpoints and viewing sectors.

Shifting the focus from this coastal arena to the existing Beachlands village, the Project's apartment development north of the Town Centre would be generally visible from the existing village - but especially so in the general vicinity of Viewpoint 2 and Keshvara Road facing across the valley system around Jack Lachlan Drive. Facing towards the coastal escarpment that terminates the current golf course, the line of proposed apartment buildings would rise above the line of development proposed for PC88, but not to the same extent as is described in relation to views from the CMA and southern beachfront. The change, in this instance, would be more subtle, with the open spaces around and

between the proposed buildings helping to reduce the degree of intensification associated with the Precinct as a whole.

Elsewhere, views from the area around Viewpoints 2 and 3 (Angiangi Crescent) would fall on the school that is proposed directly south of Jack Lachlan Drive. Viewed from Angiangi Crescent, in particular, the height and scale of the main school building, or complex, appears (in Virtual View's photo simulations) to be a significant feature of the current proposals. Yet, it would remain broadly within the building footprints and envelopes of the school and neighbouring residential multi-unit (MHU) development assessed in relation to PC88. Conceivably, a new main school building might be more bulky and visually prominent than was anticipated in 2023, but it would still be flanked by other multi-storey buildings. Moreover, it would have a clear civic /community function that is important in terms of public perception, and it would not reach the point of being overly dominant. As such, it is considered that the changes to the school building envelope seemingly shown in Virtual View's simulations would remain consistent with the pattern and scale of development assessed in relation to PC88.

Stepping well away from Beachlands, to the general vicinity of Clifton Road, its walkway and the wider environment west of the Waikopua Estuary, the Large Lot, multi-unit residential apartment and Town Centre development assessed in relation to PC88 would remain clearly apparent on the skyline on the far (eastern) side of Waikopua Bay. Although the Western Apartment Building becomes a new feature of this development matrix, emerging as a somewhat isolated outlier to the Town Centre, it would still be framed by the other development just described, while viewing distances from around Clifton Road and the angle of view – up and over southern Beachland's coastal ridge – would also help to reduce both its level of prominence and the effects of the Project as a whole.

Overall, the Project's longer-term landscape effects would reach a moderate level, not the point at which they become significant with reference to the Te Tangi a te Manu's rating scale. In reaching this conclusion, it is acknowledged that the Project's short to medium term effects on the adjoining beachfront would be higher. However, the changes already enabled under the Beachlands South Precinct will fundamentally reshape the landscape and coastal environment south of the current village and marina. As such, it is considered that more weight should be attributed to the permanent character of the area, rather than its state – and effects on it – during a period of significant transition.

7. Conclusions

On the basis of this assessment, it is considered that the proposed infringements of the Precinct's height standards would be acceptable from a landscape and natural character standpoint. They are also considered to be acceptable with reference to the AUP's H5 and H6 provisions, which focus more directly on the internal environments of developed and developing areas, rather than wider natural character and landscape considerations.

Focusing, then, on the Beachlands South Precinct provisions of Section I458, it is considered that:

- a) The development of Beachlands South would still create a distinctive sense of place which maintains and enhances significant ecological features and responds to natural site features and landforms.
- b) In the short to medium term, adverse effects on the Beachlands receiving environment, including its natural coastal environment, would not be avoided, although the revegetation of the coastal escarpment and its gully systems would help to progressively minimise, offset and compensate for the adverse effects identified in the longer term. In my view, it is appropriate to give more weight to the Project's longer-term effects, not those that would arise during a period of very significant transition and change at Beachlands South.
- c) The majority of development in Beachlands South would still integrate its built environment with the natural environment and coastal setting, although the Western and Northern Apartment Buildings would not be as well integrated with the Precinct as its other development components.
- d) The highest density urban living would clearly be developed in sub-Precinct A, although, again, the Western Apartment Building is somewhat of an outlier in this regard.
- e) The future Precinct would have a built form featuring a variety of mixed-use and multi-level buildings with increased vertical density that supports the social, economic and cultural well-being of the community.

In terms of the Precinct's Built Form Policies, the Project would:

- a) Maximise densities close to the Pine Harbour Ferry berths and the planned public transport network.
- b) Enable greater building height near the Town Centre and sub-Precinct B, although the changes to the proposed apartment development would challenge some of the centre's visual primacy, overall.
- c) Contribute positively to Beachlands South's sense of place, including by responding to the area's landform and the coastal environment.
- d) Would achieve a degree of cohesion and integration within the Precinct in terms of its built form.

Conversely, the proposed development would not as readily integrate with the existing Beachlands village, north of Jack Lachlan Drive, nor would the proposed apartment development – anchored by the Northern and Western Apartment Buildings – entirely support the centrality and primacy of the Town Centre.

On the other hand, it also needs to be acknowledged that the ratings attributed to individual vantage points (and the viewing sectors that they represent) respond to the worst-case and near worst-case scenarios depicted in Virtual View's photo simulations. In reality, many of the concerns raised in this assessment will inevitably become more muted over time, as actual buildings emerge – not just bland, computer-rendered blocks – and these are accompanied by the realisation of open spaces and tree planting around them, together with the proposed revegetation of the coastal escarpment and gullies.

On balance, it is considered that the Project's exceedances of the Precinct's permitted height standards are acceptable, although both of the apartment buildings discussed above contribute to a greater level of effect on natural character and landscape values than was anticipated for the Precinct under PC88.

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