

Kings Quarry Stage 2, Wainui

# Landscape & visual assessment



*March 2025*

*Prepared for*  
Kings Quarry Limited



# Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
1.0 Section One .....	2
1.1 Introduction .....	2
1.2 Scope .....	2
1.3 Qualifications and experience .....	2
1.4 Methodology.....	3
2.0 Section Two .....	5
2.1 Site location & description .....	5
2.2 Proposal .....	8
2.3 Relevant statutory planning context.....	9
3.0 Section Three.....	13
3.1 Landscape description and analysis .....	13
3.2 Visual effects .....	15
3.3 Landscape effects .....	20
3.4 Recommended mitigation measures .....	21
4.0 Section Four.....	21
4.1 Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) provisions .....	21
5.0 Section Five .....	22
5.1 Summary and conclusions .....	22

Appendix A – Relevant experience

Appendix B - Location & representative viewpoint map

Appendix C - Photographs from representative viewpoints

Appendix D - Visual simulations, including methodology statement (VirtualView 3D Visualisation Specialists)

## Executive Summary

Kings Quarry Limited is seeking consent under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 to expand an existing quarry at Pebble Brook Road, Wainui, North Auckland. The Proposal involves vegetation removal, stream reclamation, overburden removal and disposal, and rock extraction and processing over a 45-year period. Enhancement of retained forest within the wider property, on- and off-site ecological offsetting, and remediation of overburden fill and terraces in the completed quarry are also proposed.

This report provides an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposal.

The site is located in steep mainly forested hill country immediately north of the formed portion of Pebble Brook Road, and is zoned Special Purpose – Quarry Zone in the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part). The landscape context includes forested hill country to the west, north and east and largely open rural land to the south, with a mixture of rural living, pastoral farming and rural industrial uses. Much of the hill country outside the Quarry Zone has an Outstanding Natural Landscape overlay.

The mineral extraction works would have a relatively confined visual catchment, with closer views being limited to Pebble Brook and Haruru roads and adjoining properties. Adverse visual effects would be moderate in extent from part of Haruru Road and an adjoining property for the first 15 years, but would otherwise be very low to low-moderate in extent from other vantage points and in other time periods. Remediation planting of overburden fill and quarry benches would effectively mitigate adverse visual effects as it matures.

Expansion of quarrying over a 45-year period would inevitably have adverse effects on the valued physical, associative and perceptual attributes of the wider landscape, but these would be low-moderate in extent. The naturalness of the landscape would be largely restored by proposed remediation planting and off-setting, and rural character and amenity would not be affected outside the Pebble Brook Road Quarry Buffer Area and a confined area on Haruru Road. While the landform of the distinctive ridge within the site would be modified, a lower vegetated ridgeline would be created and the summit of Te Rite-a-Kawharu would be unaffected.

None of the identified landscape and visual effects would be significant in magnitude and importance. Further expansion of the existing mineral extraction activities within the Quarry Zone is anticipated, and visual effects of a more than low-moderate magnitude are of brief duration, temporary in nature and/or experienced by a small number of people.

## 1.0 Section One

### 1.1 Introduction

Kings Quarry Limited is seeking consent under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 ("**Fast-track Act**") to expand an existing quarry at Pebble Brook Road, Wainui, North Auckland ("**Site**"). In 2021, resource consent was granted for re-establishment of quarry operations (Stage 1) at the 152.3-ha site, which had been previously quarried between the 1930s and 1995. The Stage 2 consent currently sought involves vegetation removal, stream reclamation, overburden removal and disposal, and rock extraction and processing over a 45-year period ("**Proposal**"). The total area affected would be approximately 32.5ha. Enhancement of retained forest within the wider site, on- and off-site ecological offsetting, and remediation of overburden fill and terraces in the completed quarry are also proposed.

The Site is zoned Special Purpose – Quarry Zone in the Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) (**AUP**), apart from the accessway connection from Pebble Brook Road, which is zoned Rural – Rural Production. An Outstanding Natural Landscapes overlay (Area 9 – Kaukapakapa) encroaches slightly into the Site, and most of the Site has a Significant Ecological Area (**SEA**) overlay (SEA\_T\_6454). I understand that the overall activity status of the Proposal is non-complying, as a result of proposed reclamation of water bodies within an SEA. The proposed mineral extraction within the Quarry Zone is a controlled activity.

### 1.2 Scope

Helen Mellsoy Landscape Architect has been engaged by Kings Quarry Ltd to provide an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposal. The assessment includes:

- Descriptions of the Site location, attributes and context;
- Description of the Proposal;
- A summary of the relevant statutory context;
- An analysis of the existing landscape attributes, character and values;
- Identification of the visual catchment, key views and viewing audience;
- An assessment of the visual amenity effects of the proposal and their magnitude;
- An assessment of the landscape effects of the proposal and their magnitude;
- Recommended mitigation measures; and
- An assessment against the relevant landscape-related planning provisions.

### 1.3 Qualifications and experience

I (Helen Mellsoy) am a consultant landscape architect, registered with Tuia Pito Ora, the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA), and the Director of Helen Mellsoy Landscape Architect. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from UNITEC Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Human Biology from the University of Auckland and Diploma of Horticulture (Distinction) from Lincoln University. In terms of my experience, I have been practicing as a landscape architect for over 22 years, with a focus on landscape planning and landscape and visual assessment over the past 17 years. I have appeared frequently as an expert witness at Council

Hearings and have also participated in numerous Environment Court mediations and prepared numerous briefs of evidence for appeal hearings in the Environment Court. I am accredited to sit on Resource Management Act (**RMA**) hearing panels under the Ministry for the Environment's 'Making Good Decisions' programme and was appointed to Auckland Council's independent commissioner panel for the 2021-2023 and 2024-2026 terms. A summary of my relevant experience is included in **Appendix A**. This includes the landscape and visual assessment for the following fast-track consenting projects:

- Peachgrove Mixed-Use Precinct, 2023 – a visitor accommodation and residential development on a large site in Hamilton East;
- Verran Mews, Birkenhead, 2023 – a 110-unit integrated residential development adjoining a Significant Ecological Area;
- Brickfields integrated residential development, Scotts Point, 2021 - a 418-unit integrated residential development adjoining the Waitematā Harbour at Scotts Point; and
- Nola Estate integrated residential development, Glen Eden, 2021 – a 246-unit integrated residential development in west Auckland.

## 1.4 Methodology

An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on a landscape's values, derived from each of its physical, associative and perceptual dimensions. Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects, and comprise effects on landscape values as experienced in views.

This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the NZILA Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines July 2022. The magnitude of adverse landscape effects has been rated on a 7-point scale from very high, high, moderate-high, moderate, low-moderate, low, to very low, (consistent with Te Tangi a te Manu guidelines). The Te Tangi a te Manu guidelines recommend that where the terms "minor", "less than minor" and "more than minor" apply to non-complying activities or to notification decisions, the following table demonstrates how these terms could apply to the 7-point scale<sup>1</sup>.

Very low	Low	Low-mod	Moderate	Mod-High	High	Very high
Less than minor	Minor	More than minor				

The assessment has been carried out after a desktop study of the landscape context and two visits to the Site and surrounding area. Photographs in this report were taken with a Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ110 digital camera set at a 50mm equivalent focal length (giving horizontal and vertical fields of view of 39° and 27°, respectively), except where indicated otherwise.

<sup>1</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu guidelines, p151.

Documents referred to in the preparation of this report include:

- Ecological Impact Assessment: Kings Quarry Proposed Stage 2, Biosearches, March 2025;
- Biodiversity Offset and Compensation Plan for Freshwater Ecology Values, Biosearches, 22 February 2025;
- Residual Effects Planting and Enhancement Plan, Biosearches, 28 February 2025;
- Kings Quarry expansion archaeological assessment, CFG Heritage, 18 September 2023;
- Kings Quarry Dust Management Plan, Air Matters Ltd, 13 October 2023;
- Cultural Values Assessment, Te Kia Ora Marae – Kakanui, Ngāti Rango, October 2023; and
- Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part).

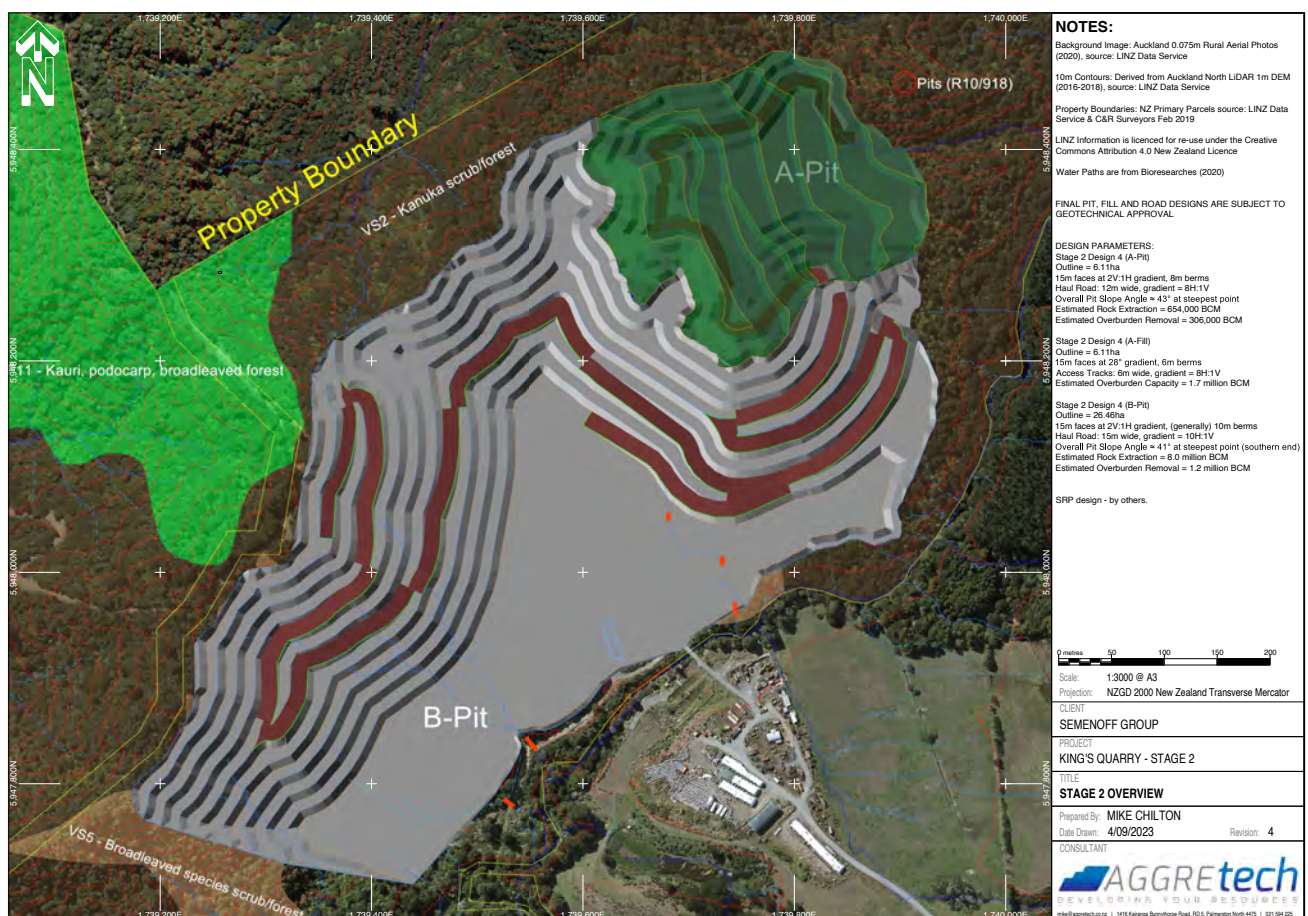


## 2.0 Section Two

### 2.1 Site location & description

The Site is located in steep mainly forested hill country immediately north of the formed portion of Pebble Brook Road. It is about 5.5km north-east of Waitoki settlement and about 10km west of SH1 at Orewa, accessed via Wainui, Waitoki and Pebble Brook roads.

The proposed Stage 2 area (**Figure 1** below, subsequently referred to as the project area) is mainly on the south-east faces and crest of a prominent relatively level ridge, which extends for about 800m at a height of between 180-188 masl. The area encompasses an historic quarry and the Stage 1 works, which are currently underway (refer **Photograph 1** below). The proposed A-Pit, which is to receive overburden from the Site, is north-east of the ridge in a broad enclosed stream catchment.



**Figure 1:** Proposed Stage 2 overview, showing surrounding vegetation types.





**Photograph 1:** View from Pebble Brook Road at quarry entry (photograph taken at 50mm lens equivalent at 10.30am on 09/08/23).

The underlying rock of the site is Albany Conglomerate, suitable for metal aggregates, construction sand and decorative pebbles. Outside the Stage 1 area, the proposed pit areas are clothed in intact regenerating kānuka forest or broadleaf species scrub. There are occasional emergent mature pines on the ridge top and some pampas grass and gorse on quarry faces and track edges, but there is otherwise very little exotic weed infestation.

An archaeological site (R10/918) containing two pits is located on a knoll north-east of the proposed A-Pit area (see **Figure 1** above).

A branch of the Waitoki Stream flows south-west along the base of the ridge slope, eventually joining the Kaukapakapa River, and smaller permanent or intermittent branches drain the gullies within the project area, including the larger A-Pit catchment north of the ridgeline.

Access from Pebble Brook Road crosses Waitoki Stream south-west of the existing quarry and follows the true right bank. There are also tracks leading up to and following the crest of the ridge, and areas of overburden deposition on and off-site (at 306 Pebble Brook Rd) that were consented as part of Stage 1 (refer **Figure 2** below). Built development on the Site includes the entry weigh station building (see **Photograph 1** above) and temporary sheds on the parking area and quarry floor. Extraction and processing equipment is present within the existing quarry extent.



**Figure 2:** Consented Stage 1 quarry overview.

The context of the Site includes forested hill country within the Quarry Zone to the west, north and east and largely open rural land to the south, with a mixture of rural living, pastoral farming and rural industrial uses.

## 2.2 Proposal

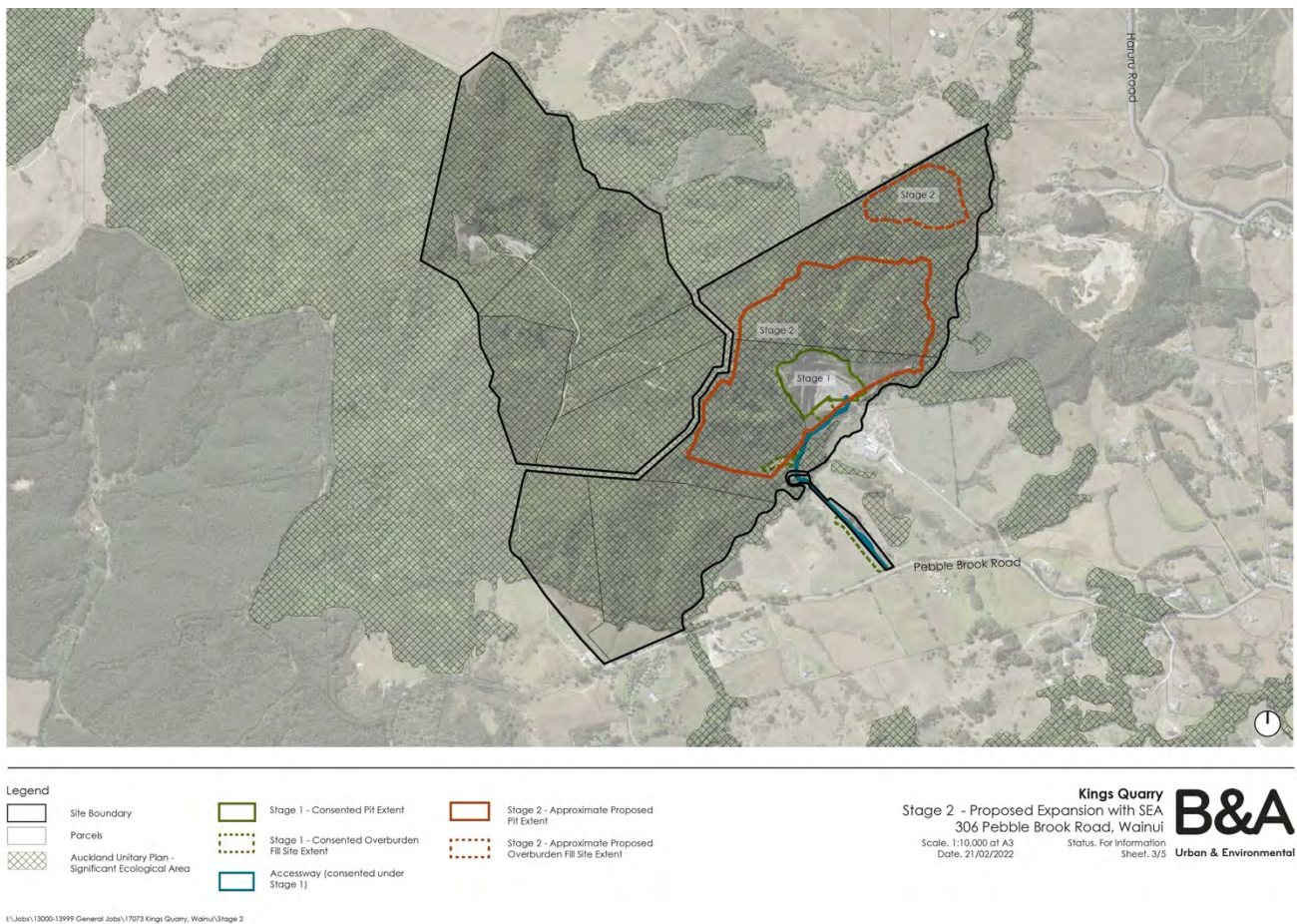
The Proposal is described in the Barker & Associates Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) and in the application plans, and involves:

- Access road construction, vegetation removal, stream reclamation, overburden removal/deposition and quarrying in A-Pit during Years 1-5;
- Vegetation and overburden removal in the upper areas of B-Pit and overburden deposition and commencement of staged revegetation A-Pit from Year 2;
- Progressive vegetation and overburden removal and quarrying in B-Pit over Years 6-45, extending from upper levels down towards the existing quarry footprint and the base of the ridge slopes. Progressive filling of A-Pit with overburden and staged revegetation of completed fill.
- Staged revegetation of quarry terraces in B-Pit from about Year 10;
- Plant and animal pest control in quarry pits and revegetation areas;
- Erosion and sediment control measures, including two ponds below the A-Pit catchment;
- Minimisation of ecological adverse effects through buffer planting, management of threatened and at-risk plants, lizards, invertebrates and long tail bats, and kauri dieback management.
- Residual ecological effects compensation involving predator-proof fencing (60ha), revegetation planting (61.8ha), pest browser control (57.52ha), enrichment planting (88.28ha) and weed control at Oldfield Road, Wellsford, within the Rodney Ecological District;
- Protection and enhancement of aquatic offset sites (within the Rodney Ecological District at 142 Oldfield Road and 158 Hellyer Road) for stream loss;
- Heavy traffic generation of approximately 94 loaded trucks per day (188 truck movements per day) or approximately 18 truck movements per hour on Pebble Brook Road and at the Waitoki Road and Wainui Road/Waitoki Road intersections; and
- Dust and noise generation, with dust emissions mitigated through a comprehensive suite of controls<sup>2</sup>.

The Proposal has been modified since the February 2023 application for referral under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (refer proposed plan in **Figure 3** below). The overburden fill site (A-Pit) has been relocated to reduce adverse visual impacts on properties to the north and to maintain a larger extent of contiguous regenerating bush.

<sup>2</sup> Kings Quarry Dust Management Plan, Air Matters Ltd, 1 November 2023.





**Figure 3:** Stage 2 proposal in 2023 COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act referral application.

## 2.3 Relevant statutory planning context

A full description of the statutory planning context for this proposal is contained within the Barker & Associates AEE.

A summary of the AUP provisions most relevant to this landscape assessment are set out below, and the zoning and relevant overlays are shown in **Figures 4 & 5** below.

### *Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part)*

#### Chapter 28 Mineral Extraction

##### **E28.2 Objective:**

- (1) Mineral extraction from the land and its delivery is efficient and meets Auckland's needs while significant adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

##### **E28.3 Policies:**

- (1) Avoid where practicable undertaking new mineral extraction activities in areas where there are natural and physical resources that have been scheduled in the Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal, historic heritage and special character.
- (2) Where it is not practicable to locate mineral extraction activities outside the areas identified in Policy E28.3(1), consideration will be given to all of the following:

- (a) *the benefits likely to be derived from the mineral extraction activities;*
  - (b) *any reduced transport effects from having a mineral extraction site closer to the area of demand;*
  - (c) *the extent to which significant adverse effects can be avoided; and*
  - (d) *the extent to which adverse effects can be remedied, mitigated or, where not mitigated, can be offset.*
- (4) *Avoid, remedy or mitigate as far as practicable significant adverse effects associated with mineral extraction activities.*
- (5) *Require proposals for new mineral extraction activities in rural areas to provide adequate information on the establishment and operation of the activity and demonstrate:*
- (c) *that adequate measures will be used to:*
    - (v) *mitigate significant adverse effects on visual and landscape values.*
- (10) *Require quarry operators to internalise the adverse effects associated with new mineral extraction activities as far as practicable while recognising the need to allow for the efficient ongoing extraction of mineral resources.*

#### H28 Special Purpose – Quarry Zone

##### **H28.2 Objectives**

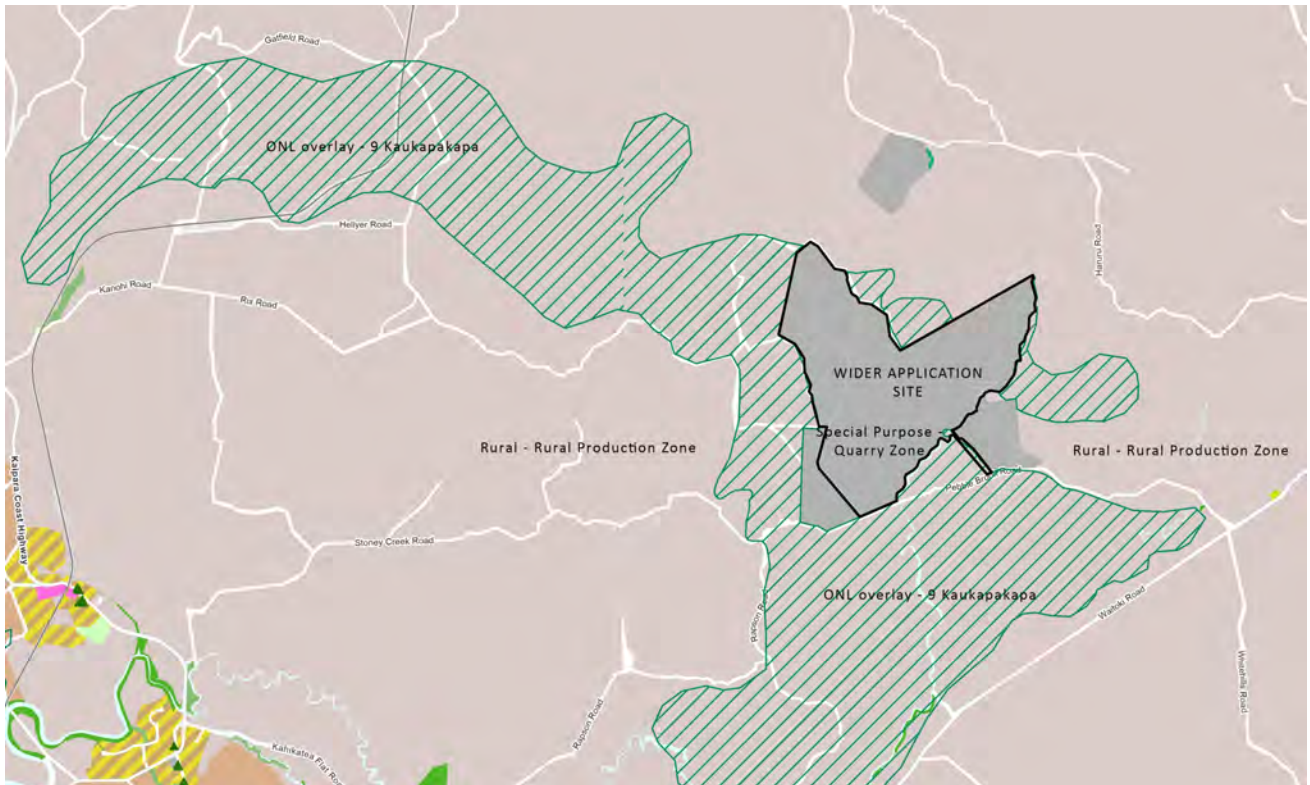
- (1) *Mineral extraction activities and appropriate compatible activities are carried out efficiently at significant mineral extraction sites.*
- (2) *The significant adverse effects associated with mineral extraction are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*

##### **H28.3 Policies**

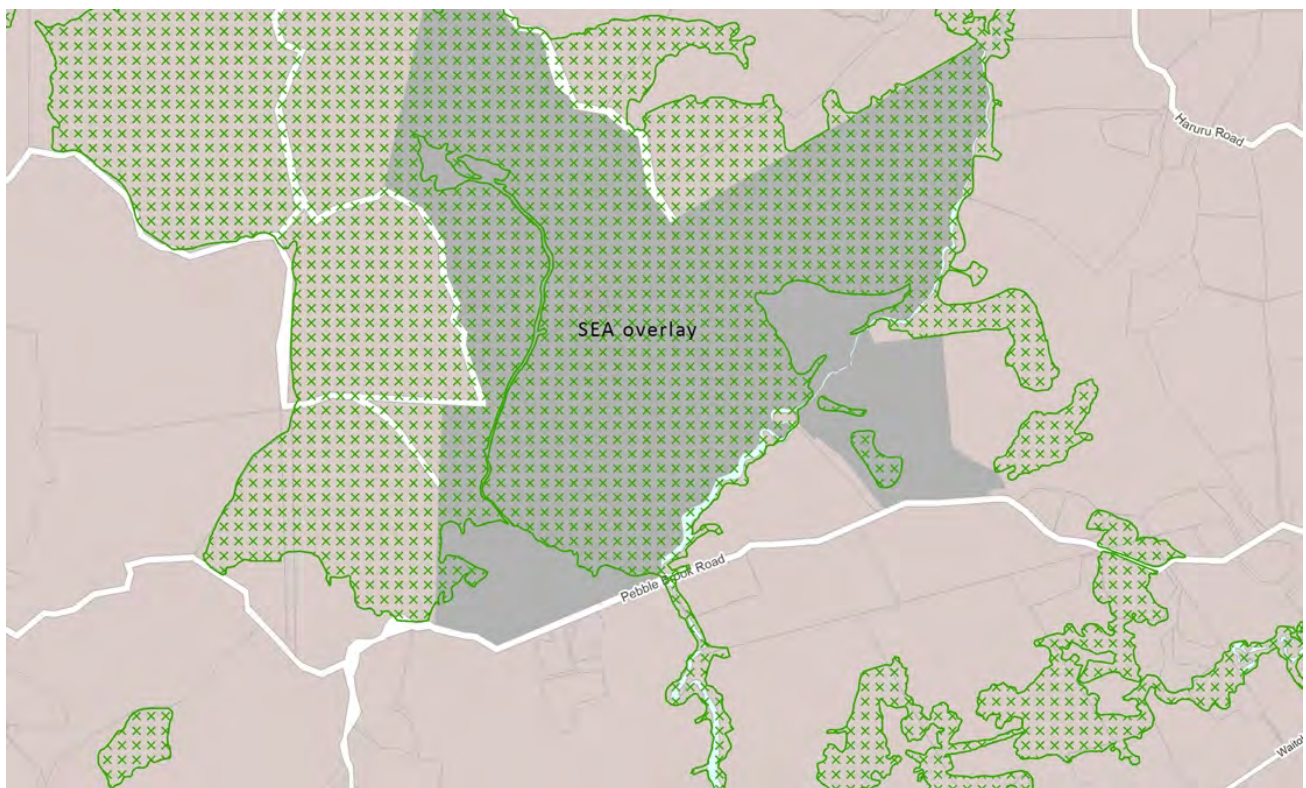
- (1) *Apply the Special Purpose – Quarry Zone to significant mineral resources and extraction sites that provide for mineral extraction.*
- (2) *Enable appropriate compatible land uses within or adjoining the zone, including mineral recycling activities and the manufacture of products using raw materials from mineral extraction activities.*
- (3) *Avoid where practicable, or otherwise remedy and mitigate significant adverse effects on areas where there are natural and physical resources that have been scheduled in the Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal, historic heritage and special character.*
- (5) *Require the rehabilitation of sites following mineral extraction activities to enable the land to be used for other purposes.*
- (7) *Require quarry operators to internalise the adverse effects associated with new or enlarged mineral extraction activities as far as practicable while recognising the need to allow for the efficient ongoing extraction of mineral resources.*

As can be seen in **Figure 3**, the application Site and the larger Quarry Zone are embedded within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (**ONL**) overlay. This ONL overlay extends onto the Site at the entry accessway from Pebble Brook Road and there are minor incursions on the eastern zone boundary, likely as a result of mapping inconsistencies. Works within the ONL overlay at the entry to the Site have already been consented as part of Stage 1 and no additional works are proposed in that area under the Proposal.



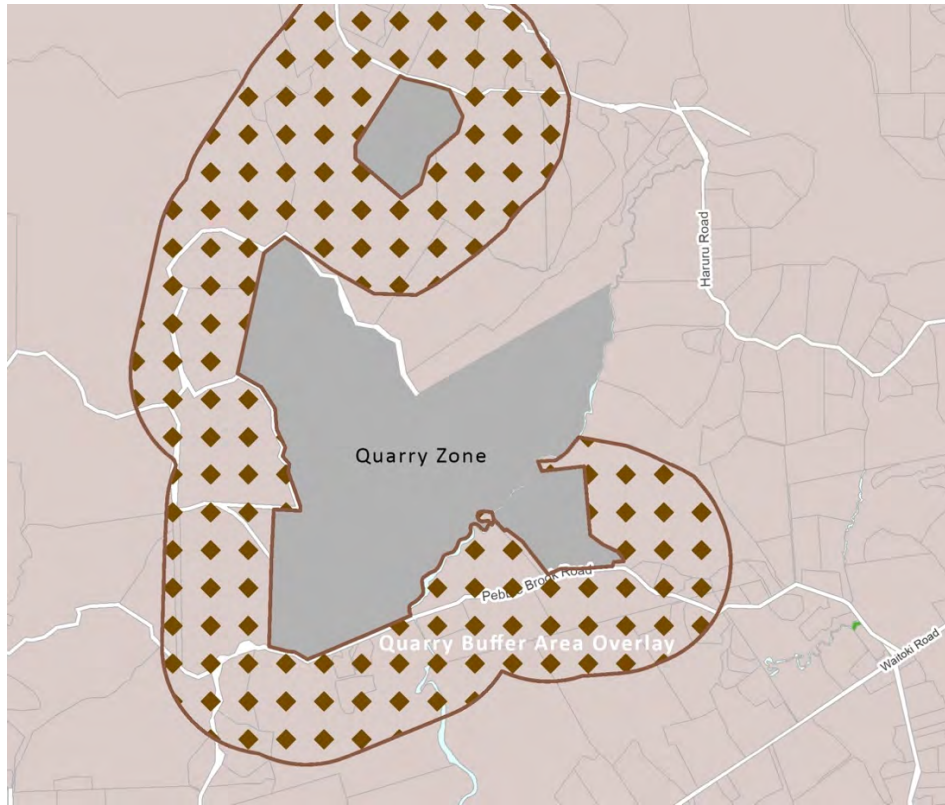


**Figure 4:** AUP zoning context of the site and ONL overlay (source: AUP maps).



**Figure 5:** SEA overlay in relation to the site (source: AUP maps).

The area immediately south of the Site is covered by a Quarry Buffer Area Overlay (refer **Figure 6** below). This overlay is intended to avoid reverse sensitivity effects on quarry operations that can result from development in close proximity. Certain activities are non-complying within the overlay and new dwellings are expected to be located and screened so that occupants are adequately separated and protected from the adverse effects of mineral extraction activities.



**Figure 6:** Quarry Buffer Area Overlay in relation to the Quarry Zone (source: AUP maps).



## 3.0 Section Three

### 3.1 Landscape description and analysis

Landscape embodies the relationship between people and place: it is in the character of an area, how the area is experienced and perceived, and the meanings associated with it.<sup>3</sup> The character of a landscape is determined by the particular combination of physical, perceptual and associative factors which contribute to it.

The landscape setting for the Proposal is the rural North Auckland area of Wainui/Waitoki, as far north as Haruru Road and the Flat Top quarry.

#### *Physical attributes*

The topography of the landscape is predominantly steep to rolling hill country, dissected by stream gullies. Waitoki Road follows the flat alluvial valley of the main Waitoki Stream branch, with lower mudstone hills enclosing the valley to the south. The highest hills and ridges are within or adjacent to the Quarry Zone, with Te Rite-a-Kawharu Hill, at 251 masl, being the highest point.

Remnant or regenerating indigenous vegetation is common within the landscape and has high ecological value as a large relatively continuous area of intact forest, with high biodiversity and some endangered forest types (kauri, podocarp, broadleaf forest) and fauna. The bush areas support threatened species such as the long-tailed bat and kauri, and at risk or locally uncommon species such as copper skink, geckos, wētā, land snail, short hair plume grass and kaikomako<sup>4</sup>. Where land is farmed, there are patches of regenerating bush in gullies and on escarpments. Radiata pine plantations are present both west and east of the Quarry Zone.

The main watercourse within the landscape is the Waitoki Stream, with numerous branches draining the hill country and flowing west to join the Kaukapakapa River near Waitoki settlement. Wetlands and ponds, both natural and constructed, are frequent within the farmlands, and there is a series of ponds and a large raupo-dominated wetland immediately south of the existing quarry.

Land use within the context landscape is predominantly farming, rural living/hobby farming and forestry. There are two operational quarries – Kings Quarry and Flat Top Quarry – as well as a cleanfill operation east of the Quarry Zone at 782 Haruru Road. Although Flat Top Quarry is largely screened by vegetation and it is understood that the cleanfill operation is now closed, quarrying/cleanfill activity is historically typical of the localised area around Te Rite-a-Kawharu hill. Other land uses include rural commercial and industrial activities such as film studios, truck/road maintenance yards, other cleanfill sites, apiaries, poultry farming, and the equipment/baleage storage at 162 Pebble Brook Road. Rural living is most common on Pebble Brook Road and near Sharon Road and there are small rural settlements with schools at Waitoki and Wainui.

<sup>3</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu, page 76.

<sup>4</sup> Ecological Impact Assessment: Kings Quarry Proposed Stage 2, Bioresearches.

Te Rite-a-Kawharu Hill was the site of a heavily fortified pā (largely removed by the Flat Top quarry) and there was another fortified pā north of Haruru Road.<sup>5</sup> Two pits associated with Māori inhabitation are located on a small ridge north of the proposed A-Pit.

Natural elements, patterns and processes are present and intact in many parts of the landscape, and it has an overall moderate-high level of naturalness.

#### *Associative attributes*

The Wainui and Waitoki area has a complex history of pre-colonisation settlement and was important as a portage route between Orewa and Kaukapakapa via the Waitoki Stream. The traditional names of Wainui and Waitoki relate to the use of the land and waterways and the travel from coast to coast over the Te Rite-a-Kawharu maunga.<sup>6</sup> The landscape has strong cultural associations for Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara.

The landscape has shared and recognised value for local residents and visitors as a prominent sequence of hill country, ridges and valleys with significant remnant and regenerating native forest interspersed with farmland and plantation forestry. This is evidenced by the ONL overlay on parts of the landscape.

#### *Sensory/perceptual attributes*

As a whole the landscape has a relatively complex pattern of open farmland interspersed with patches of indigenous and exotic vegetation, with an overall coherence to this structure of farmland and forest. The large areas of remnant and regenerating bush within the Quarry Zone and the ONL overlay contribute strongly to the perceived naturalness of the landscape. This is counter-balanced by the presence of frequent rural living and rural industrial activities, which, when combined with exotic forestry, detract from any picturesque qualities of the landscape.

The landscape is highly memorable and the landform sequences of ridges, hills and stream gullies are legible and expressive. Rural character is strong and there is a roughness and relative wildness to the landscape. Away from the main Waitoki Road, there is a sense of rural tranquillity and remoteness.

Where there is no roadside vegetation present, attractive views are available from Waitoki Road across open pastoral land to the low hills enclosing the valley to the north and south. From some points along Waitoki Road, the crest of the forested ridgeline within the Quarry Zone, and the pine plantation to the east of it, are visible above the intervening lower hills and provide a vegetated skyline in the outlook. Views from most other roads are more enclosed by topography and vegetation, but there are longer range open views to the coherent pattern of farmland and vegetation from Whitehills Road, Haruru Road and Sharon Road, with intact forest on the higher ridgelines. These views contribute to the scenic values of the landscape.

<sup>5</sup> Kings Quarry expansion archaeological report. CFG Heritage, 18 Sep 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Cultural Values Assessment, Te Kia Ora Marae – Kakanui, Ngāti Rango, October 2023.

### *Landscape character and values*

Overall the receiving landscape has a rural hill country character, with a stronger influence of farming and rural living/settlement along the main Waitoki Road valley. The key attributes and values of the landscape include:

- The landform patterns of ridges and hills dissected by frequent stream gullies, with these patterns being reinforced by remnant and regenerating indigenous vegetation;
- The ecological and naturalness values of the indigenous vegetation within the landscape, including the large continuous areas of vegetation within the ONL and SEA overlays;
- The habitat and naturalness values of watercourses and wetlands within the landscape, particularly those relatively unaffected by pastoral farming;
- The shared and recognised value of the landscape as a memorable, expressive and relatively natural rural area;
- The significant cultural values of the landscape to mana whenua;<sup>7</sup>
- The coherence of the landscape, experienced as consistent patterns of open farmland interspersed with patches of vegetation and generally continuous exotic or indigenous forest on higher enclosing ridgelines and hills;
- The moderate-high overall perceived naturalness of the landscape, with natural elements, patterns and processes predominating;
- The scenic attributes of intermittent open and long range views available from public roads.

## 3.2 Visual effects

Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects and are the consequence of change on landscape values as experienced in views. The following section describes the visibility of the Proposal and assesses potential effects on views and visual amenity. Visual amenity effects are also considered in the evaluation of landscape effects in Section 3.3 of this report.

### *3.2.1 Visual catchment*

The closer visual catchment for the Proposal is relatively confined, as views to the majority of the Proposal are enclosed within the Pebble Brook Road valley. Upper parts of the Proposal will however be visible from Waitoki Road and some adjoining properties, and both the overburden deposition pit and vegetation removal/quarrying above the existing quarry would be visible from a short stretch of Haruru Road and the surrounding area. At a greater distance the works would be potentially visible from a wide visual catchment to the south-west, south and south-east, when intervening landform or vegetation does not obscure views of the ridge. Representative viewpoints (RVP) have been chosen for different areas of the visual catchment (refer **Figure 3** in **Appendix B** and RVP photographs and simulations in **Appendices C** and **D**), as follows:

- Pebble Brook Road for an approximately 1km stretch between house Nos 126 and 251 (RVP-1 and RVP-2). These viewpoints are representative of views from Pebble Brook Road and from properties and dwellings within the valley;

<sup>7</sup>

Cultural Values Assessment, Te Kia Ora Marae – Kakanui, Ngāti Rango, October 2023.

- Haruru Road for an approximately 400m stretch north of house No. 778 (RVP-3). This is representative of views along the short section of Haruru Road and the properties at 782 and 778. The A-Pit and quarrying on the ridge within the B-Pit are also likely to be at least partially visible from elevated dwellings to the north on Haruru Road (Nos. 612, 614, 682 and 690 Haruru Road);
- Waitoki Road between Wainui Community Hall and Colgan Lane (RVP-4, RVP-5 and RVP-6). These viewpoints are representative of intermittent views north available from Waitoki Road.
- Whitehills Road as people descend northwards from the top of the hill at house No. 375, with the viewpoint being representative of views from Whitehills Road (RVP-7) and from dwellings west of the road that have open views to the north;
- More distant views from the surrounding rural area (RVP-8 and RVP-9).

The viewing audience for the viewpoints described above consists of people driving, cycling or walking along the roads, and residents of or visitors to the private properties. At a regional scale, the size of the viewing audience is small for Waitoki and Wainui roads, and very small for other viewpoints.

### *3.2.2 Pebble Brook Road (RVP-1 & RVP-2, visual simulations in Appendix D)*

The affected section of Pebble Brook Road is enclosed by low pastoral hills to the south and the prominent ridge of the Quarry Zone to the north. The existing quarry pit is clearly visible, surrounded by regenerating bush. The quarry entry building and weigh station and the stored machinery at No. 162 are also visible from places along the road. These rural industrial activities reduce the pleasantness and coherence of available views, and the relatively frequent truck movements consented under Stage 1 will further reduce visual amenity. The forested ridgeline and scattered patches of bush on the southern hills maintain a level of naturalness in the views.

The Proposal will be visually prominent from the road (refer visual simulations from RVP-1 in **Appendix D**), with the quarry pit eventually expanding to take up a substantially larger proportion of the northern view, and the eastern ridgeline being lowered by 35-45m. Retained forest on the crest of the western ridgeline and on northern slopes of the modified eastern ridgeline would still form the skyline view.

Works on the A-Pit during the first 5 years would not be visible, but vegetation/overburden removal and quarrying in the upper western part of B-Pit would start to be seen in Years 6-10. Retained vegetation on the lower slopes and on the eastern ridge spur would partially screen and surround the earthworks during this period. Adverse visual impacts would be greatest in Years 11-25 as vegetation clearance and quarry activity move down the ridge slope and remove the crest of the eastern spur. Following this period, proposed remediation planting on the quarry benches, which would commence about Year 10, would start to partially screen and soften the completed areas of the quarry and to augment the already vegetated crest of the lowered ridge.

Following completion of Stage 2, a modified but vegetated ridge crest would form the skyline, with the remediated overburden fill replacing the eastern spur at a similar elevation. Weathered quarry faces would still be prominent but would be integrated and partially screened by remediation planting on the benches. At Year 50, 5 years after completion of Stage 2, planting and natural regeneration on the upper benches would be 25-40 years old and is likely to have reached a height of 6-10m. Quarry faces of about 10m in height would be substantially screened. Lower areas of the quarry would have less mature remediation planting but would be progressively integrated over time.

Affected residents and visitors within the Pebble Brook Road valley are within the Quarry Buffer Area Overlay, where visual amenity impacts from quarrying are anticipated, and existing and consented extraction activities are currently visible. The main adverse visual effect would be the loss of the vegetated ridge crest until this is at least partially restored from Year 10 on. Given the existing modified character of the views, with rural industrial activities clearly evident, and the expectation of further extraction activity within the Quarry Zone, I consider adverse visual effects from Stage 2 would be **very low** in extent during Years 1-5, **low-moderate** in extent during Years 11-25, and **low** during and after other quarry stages.

Dwellings within the Quarry Buffer Area Overlay that would potentially have views of Stage 2 include those at 70, 162, 175, 217, 220 and 251 Pebble Brook Road, although views from the 175 dwelling are largely obscured by trees on the property. Future dwellings at 124 Pebble Brook Road would also be affected, and the level of visual effects would be similar to that identified for other Pebble Brook Road properties.

### 3.2.2 *Haruru Road (RVP-3)*

People travelling south on the affected stretch of road currently have direct views ahead to a pine-covered knoll and lateral views west across farmland to Te Rite-a-Kawharu Hill, including the ridge within the Site. The very northern part of the hill is open and pastoral and the remainder is clothed in regenerating forest. Scattered dwellings and farm buildings are visible in the foreground of the view, integrated by the complex gully vegetation, grassland and shelter tree patterns that are typical of the wider landscape. The rural view is scenic, with a moderate level of naturalness, but is experienced briefly from a relatively short section of narrow country road that is frequented by trucks accessing the cleanfill and quarry sites to the north.

The A-Pit of the Proposal would be directly visible from Haruru Road, in a broad stream gully that faces north-east. Vegetation removal/quarrying of the ridge above this gully would also be seen, particularly from more northerly places than RVP-3. Works on the ridge would only be visible in Years 6-15 until excavation lowers the quarry ground level below the northern pit boundary level. Quarrying and overburden deposition in A-Pit would be visible throughout operations of the Proposal, with adverse visual effects greatest in the Years 1-15 years. Progressive remediation of the overburden fill by grassing and native planting would commence at the lowest level in the first year, with substantial areas being revegetated in Years 6-15. By Year 35, almost the entire area of the A-Pit would have been revegetated and plants at the lower levels would have been maturing for 30-35 years. Growth rates on overburden would be greater than for the quarry benches and restored bush is likely to have reached heights of between 7 and 15m on the lower slopes.

At various times, the Proposal works would be prominent in views from the road and would detract from the scenic value and naturalness of the visible landscape. Adverse effects on visual amenity would be **moderate** in extent during Years 1-15, but would then be progressively mitigated by overburden remediation. Taking into account the zoning of the Site for mineral extraction, the brief duration of the view from the road, the small size of the viewing audience, the potential for future clearance of the plantation forest on the knoll, and the presence of other quarry and cleanfill activities along Haruru Road, I do not consider the adverse visual effects would be significant.

At the completion of the Proposal, the landform would be substantially altered but completely covered by native revegetation that is relatively coherent with the surrounding hill slopes. Adverse visual effects would be **low** in extent, reducing to **very low** as the revegetation planting matures further.

Private dwellings accessed off Haruru Road would also have views of the A-Pit works and ridgeline excavation. The house at No. 778 is below the Site but has views up the A-Pit stream gully, partially obscured by trees around the dwellings. Retained vegetation lower in the gully and progressive revegetation of the overburden fill would partially screen the earthworks, but there would be **moderate** adverse effects on the visual amenities of residents during years 1-15, due to their proximity to the Site and the duration of view from outdoor living areas.

Views similar to those from No. 778 would also be available from the driveway on No. 782 Haruru Road and from other parts of this property. The dwelling on this property is unlikely to have substantial visual exposure to the works as it is located in a low point close to Waitoki Stream and is enclosed on all sides by mature vegetation. There would be **moderate** adverse effects on visual amenity from parts of the property during years 1-15.

I do not consider the adverse visual effects from Haruru Road and from Nos. 778 and 782 would be significant<sup>8</sup> given the zoning of the site for mineral extraction, the temporary nature of the adverse effects, with progressive revegetation of the fill.

Works would also be potentially visible from elevated dwellings at Nos 612, 614, 648 B and C, 682 and 690. However, most of these dwellings have outdoor living areas on the northern side of the houses facing away from the application site. The lowering of the ridgeline and progressive filling of A-Pit would be noticeable from some parts of their properties, but adverse effects on their visual amenities would be **low-moderate** at most. The proposed A-Pit is 650 to 1100m from the dwellings and at this distance the visible works would form a small part of the panoramic views available to the south and west.

### 3.2.3 Waitoki Road (RVP-4, RVP-5 and RVP-6)

People travelling through the Waitoki Road valley between Wainui and Waitoki settlements are within a landscape with a strong rural character, enclosed by hills on either side. There are intermittent open views across pasture or cropping land where there is no roadside vegetation. The low hills north of the road generally obscure any visibility of the project area, but there are

<sup>8</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu guidelines state that a significant effect can be characterised as 'high' or 'very high' on the 7-point scale in Section 1.4, depending on the context.

occasional glimpses of the upper parts of the vegetated ridge above the existing quarry. The representative viewpoint photographs in **Appendix C** are taken from three places where the upper parts of the ridge are briefly visible as people travel along the road or visit Wainui Hall.

Vegetation/overburden removal as part of the Proposal and subsequent quarrying could be visible at these viewpoints, particularly from RVP-5. Proposed excavation would reduce the height of the ridge line by about 35 to 45m and it may therefore no longer be visible from some other vantage points along the road. If visible, retained vegetation north of the quarry would remain visible on the skyline. Apart from users of Wainui Hall, where very limited views of the quarry are likely, viewers would be travelling on a 100km straight flat road with only a lateral view to the Site. While changes to the ridgeline could attract attention, the brief glimpses are unlikely to have any more than a **low** adverse effect on the character, pleasantness and coherence of available views.

#### *3.2.4 Whitehills Road (RVP-7)*

Whitehills Road ascends the low hills south of Waitoki Valley, branching off Waitoki Road just opposite Pebble Brook Road. People descending the road from about the level of No. 375 have expansive views over the valley to the ridges and hills that enclose it to the north. Te Rite-a-Kawharu Hill is the highest point within the vista and the full extent of the hill and its associated forested ridgelines can be appreciated from RVP-7. The character of the visible landscape is typical of this part of North Auckland, with a complex pattern of rural living, pasture, shelter trees, bush patches and forested hills and ridgelines.

The existing quarry and the project area for the Proposal are seen in the foreground of the Te Rite-a-Kawharu summit. Proposed quarry activities would be clearly visible, particularly during vegetation clearance/overburden removal stages, but the higher parts of the hill would continue to provide a vegetated backdrop to the works. The dark colour of the Albany conglomerate would make quarry faces difficult to see in some light conditions at a viewing distance of 2.5 to 3 kilometres. Expansion of the quarry would reduce the coherence and naturalness of the view to some extent but would make up only a small part of the expansive vista. Adverse effects on visual amenity would be **low-moderate**, reducing to **low** as the quarry is progressively remediated.

Most of the dwellings accessed off this stretch of Whitehills Road would not have direct views to the Site, but views from Nos 407, 446 and 469 would be similar to those from the road.

#### *3.2.5 More distant viewpoints (RVP-8 and RVP-9)*

The high point of Te Rite-a-Kawharu Hill and the ridgeline within the project area are intermittently visible from a wide area to the south-west, south and south-east at distances of up to 7km or greater. RVP-8 and RVP-9 show examples of two places on Wainui Road where Stage 2 works would be briefly visible from travelling vehicles. The quarry would be difficult to see from more distant areas and would form only a small component of the view in the closer viewpoint, enclosed by a retained vegetated ridge on the skyline. Any adverse effects on the amenity of the view would be **very low** in extent.



### 3.3 Landscape effects

An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on the landscape as a resource. It considers how a proposal will affect the attributes and values that make up the landscape, its physical, perceptual and associative aspects, and its distinctive character.

The Pebble Brook Road Quarry Zone is essentially a cut-out of the Kaukapakapa ONL, which extends across the hill country to the north-west, south and east of the special zone. In people's perceptions it is not separated from the continuous wild nature of the ONL, despite the expectation of mineral extraction within the zone. The Proposal would inevitably have adverse effects on the valued physical, associative and perceptual attributes of the wider landscape. I consider these adverse effects would be **low-moderate** in extent, for the following reasons:

- The landform pattern of the ridgeline and ridge slopes within B-Pit and the stream gully within A-Pit would be permanently altered, but a lower vegetated ridgeline would be retained and the summit of Te Rite-a-Kawharu would be unaffected;
- Vegetation removal and quarrying would reduce the ecological and naturalness values of the landscape but quarry remediation planting, management of edge effects, minimisation of effects on flora and fauna, and off-site ecological compensation within the Rodney District would largely mitigate these adverse effects;
- The loss of the intermittent and permanent stream courses would be offset by protection and enhancement of sites within the same ecological district;
- The Cultural Values Assessment from Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara Hapu Ngāti Rango has given mana whenua support for the proposal, provided the recommendations of the assessment are implemented;
- Adverse impacts on the memorability, expressiveness and coherence of the landscape would be limited by the relatively enclosed nature of the Site, with changes to the Project Site only perceived from confined parts of the surrounding landscape. Perceptual landscape values experienced from the main Wainui-Waitoki Road route would not be affected to any more than a low degree;
- Adverse effects on the perceived naturalness of the landscape would be mitigated to a low level over time by native revegetation of overburden fill and quarry benches;
- As discussed in Section 3.2 above, there would be no significant adverse effects on the scenic attributes of the landscape, as experienced from public roads. Up to **moderate** adverse visual effects would be experienced from a section of Haruru Road during initial quarrying and overburden deposition in A-Pit, but these effects would be adequately mitigated as revegetation planting matures;
- The rural character and amenity of the landscape, including the existing level of quietness and remoteness, would not be affected outside the Quarry Buffer Area Overlay on Pebble Brook Road and the confined Haruru Road area east and north-east of the proposed A-Pit.

The adverse landscape effects of the Proposal would be cumulative with those of the existing and consented Stage 1 works. Given the longstanding presence of quarrying within the landscape, the confined extent of adverse effects on perceptual values, and the proposed remediation, adverse cumulative effects would be **low-moderate** in extent. The Proposal would not exceed the capacity

of the landscape to absorb mineral extraction activities without significant degradation of landscape character and values.

### 3.4 Recommended mitigation measures

Effective measures to mitigate adverse landscape effects, including adverse effects on visual amenity values, have been included as part of the application. No additional mitigation measures are recommended.

## 4.0 Section Four

### 4.1 Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) provisions

The Proposal requires non-complying consent overall, as it involves reclamation of a stream within an SEA. The other activities proposed require controlled, restricted discretionary or discretionary activity consent. In the case of a non-complying activity, any relevant matters can be taken into account in the assessment of environmental effects. The table below identifies AUP policies and assessment matters considered relevant to the landscape and visual effects of the proposal.

E28 Mineral extraction	
<p><b>E28.3 Policies</b></p> <p>(3) <i>Provide for existing and new mineral extraction activities of a significant size and scale by their inclusion in and management by a Special Purpose – Quarry Zone.</i></p>	<p>The proposed Stage 2 mineral extraction activities are of a significant size and scale but are completely within a Quarry Zone.</p>
<p>(4) <i>Avoid, remedy or mitigate as far as practicable significant adverse effects associated with mineral extraction activities.</i></p>	<p>As discussed above, Stage 2 would not result in any significant adverse effects on landscape or visual amenity values. Temporary adverse visual and landscape effects would be adequately mitigated over time by remediation planting, and perceptual adverse effects would be experienced by a relatively small audience.</p>
<p>(5) <i>Require proposals for new mineral extraction activities in rural areas to provide adequate information on the establishment and operation of the activity and demonstrate:</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>(c) <i>that adequate measures will be used to:</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>(v) <i>mitigate significant adverse effects on visual and landscape values.</i></p>	<p>The measures proposed to compensate for proposed loss of indigenous vegetation and water courses (terrestrial and aquatic off-setting), and the quarry remediation proposed in the Barker &amp; Associates plan, would adequately mitigate adverse effects on visual and landscape values. There would be no significant adverse effects, but impacts of a lower magnitude would be appropriately mitigated over time.</p>

H28.7. Assessment – controlled activities	
<p><b>H28.7.2 Assessment criteria</b></p> <p><i>The Council will consider the relevant assessment criteria below for controlled activities:</i></p> <p><i>(1) Mineral extraction activities:</i></p> <p>...</p> <p><i>(b) visual amenity:</i></p> <p><i>(i) whether mineral extraction activities in close proximity to dwellings mitigate significant adverse visual amenity effects through the use of screening and landscaping; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) whether buildings associated with mineral extraction activities are designed so that they are removable on completion of the mineral extraction activities.</i></p> <p><i>(c) site rehabilitation:</i></p> <p><i>(i) how the site will be rehabilitated after mineral extraction activities.</i></p>	<p>The closest dwellings to the mineral extraction activities that would have views of the Proposal are those at 220, 175 and 162 Pebble Brook Road (about 340, 590 and 600m from the activities, respectively), and at 778 Haruru Road (about 380m from the activities). Close views would also be available from the driveway to the dwelling at 782 Haruru Road (about 200-350m from the activities). As discussed in Section 3 above, there would be no significant adverse visual amenity effects on these dwellings or accesses if remediation planting is implemented in accordance with the Barker &amp; Associates plan. The elevated nature of the mineral extraction activities in relation to the dwellings means there is no potential for screening and landscaping on the Site to completely obscure the quarry. Proposed remediation planting, particularly in the A-Pit, would screen the activities over time.</p> <p>I understand that all buildings associated with the Proposal are removable on completion of mineral extraction activities.</p> <p>The Barker &amp; Associates landscape remediation planting plans provide information about the site rehabilitation during and after mineral extraction activities. The site preparation (including spread of subsoil and topsoil to a depth of 1m on the quarry benches), plant species mix and establishment and maintenance specification are appropriate and should ensure successful revegetation of overburden and quarry benches.</p>

## 5.0 Section Five

### 5.1 Summary and conclusions

The Proposal would substantially and permanently alter the project area in a way that is anticipated by the AUP Quarry zoning. The mineral extraction works would have a relatively confined visual catchment, with closer views being limited to Pebble Brook and Haruru roads and adjoining properties. Adverse visual effects would be moderate in extent from part of Haruru Road and some adjoining properties for the first 15 years, but would otherwise be very low to low-moderate in extent from other vantage points and in other time periods. Remediation planting of overburden fill and quarry benches would effectively mitigate adverse visual effects as it matures.

Expansion of quarrying over a 45-year period would inevitably have adverse effects on the valued physical, associative and perceptual attributes of the wider landscape, but these would be low-moderate in extent. The naturalness of the landscape would be largely restored by proposed remediation planting and off-setting, and rural character and amenity would not be affected outside the Pebble Brook Road Quarry Buffer Area and a confined area on Haruru Road. While the landform of the distinctive ridge within the site would be modified, a lower vegetated ridgeline would be created and the summit of Te Rite-a-Kawharu would be unaffected.

Overall there would be no significant adverse effects on visual and landscape values.

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**3 March 2025**

## Appendix A

### Selected relevant projects – landscape and visual assessment

#### Verran Mews, Birkenhead, 2023

Landscape design and landscape assessment of a 110-unit integrated residential development adjacent to a Significant Ecological Area in Birkenhead, Auckland.

#### Peachgrove mixed use precinct, Hamilton 2023

Landscape and visual assessment of a mixed use residential and visitor accommodation development on a large site in Hamilton East.

#### Summerset Retirement Village, Half Moon Bay, 2023

Peer review of applicant's landscape and visual assessment to assist the EPA fast track consenting panel.

#### Outstanding Natural Landscape/Outstanding Natural Feature Priority Area Landscape Schedules, Queenstown Lakes District, 2022

Preparation of schedules of landscape attributes, values, and development absorption capacity for selected Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Features. These are to be included in the District Plan.

#### Brickfields integrated residential development, Scotts Point, 2021

Landscape and visual assessment of a 418-unit integrated residential development adjoining the Waitematā Harbour at Scotts Point, consented under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020.

#### Nola Estate integrated residential development, Glen Eden, 2021

Landscape and visual assessment of a 246-unit integrated residential development in west Auckland, consented under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020.

#### Drive Holdings Ltd vs Auckland Council Environment Court appeal, 2020

Provision of expert evidence on the landscape and visual effects of a proposed redevelopment of the Mission Bay local business centre, on behalf of an affected s274 party.

#### Queenstown Lakes District Council, various 2008-2020

Peer review of applicant's landscape and visual assessments for over 300 resource consent applications in rural and urban locations within the Queenstown Lakes District. Presentation of expert landscape evidence on behalf of council in more than 15 Environment Court appeals.

#### Residential development, Ōrākei Basin outstanding natural feature, 2020

Landscape and visual assessment.

#### Lakeview development 2020, Queenstown

Landscape and visual assessment review of proposed urban development that exceeded the sub-zone height limits adjacent to Bob's Peak, Queenstown.

#### Commercial development, Mt Eden local centre, 2019

Volcanic viewshaft and height sensitive area assessment for a proposed retail/office building in the main street of Mt Eden village.

#### Rural visitor zone review, Queenstown Lakes District, 2019

Landscape assessment of existing and proposed rural visitor zones, in preparation for a review of the zoning in the Proposed District Plan.

Queenstown Lakes District Council, Proposed District Plan Environment Court appeals 2018-2020

Provision of landscape evidence in appeals to the strategic chapters of the Proposed District Plan.

Coastal residential development, Waiheke, 2018

Landscape and visual assessment.

Kennedy Point Marina, Waiheke, 2017

Landscape and visual assessment, on behalf of local residents who had submitted in opposition to the proposal.

Coastal residential development, Upper Waitematā Harbour, 2017

Landscape and visual assessment.

Retirement village, Ellerslie 2015

Landscape and visual assessment.

Coastal residential development, Titirangi 2015

Landscape and visual assessment.

Coastal retirement village, Hobsonville 2012

Landscape and visual assessment.

Stoney Ridge Quarry expansion, Waiheke 2012

Landscape and visual assessment.

Queenstown Lakes District Council, Queenstown Height Study, 2009

Investigation of the landscape and urban design implications of increasing the maximum allowable height limits in a high-density residential-zoned land adjacent to Bob's Peak in Queenstown.