

Landscape & Visual Effects Assessment

422A and 422B State Highway 59, Pukerua Bay, Porirua, Wellington

Status: Final

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Revision: -

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Prepared for:

Pukerua Property Group Limited Partnership ("the Applicant")

Report citation:

Blac 2025. Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment: 422A and 422B State Highway 59, Pukerua Bay, Porirua, New Zealand.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This landscape and visual effects assessment (“LVEA”) relates to the proposed residential development at 422A and 422B State Highway 59, Pukerua Bay, for which resource consents are being sought under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (“FTAA”). The subject site forms part of the Northern Growth Development Area and is zoned Medium Density Residential, Neighbourhood Centre, and Rural Lifestyle under the Porirua City Council’s District Plan. The site has been identified as a future growth area through various Porirua City Council planning processes since 2009, and most recently in the Structure Plan and related changes to District Plan.

The LVEA process involved:

- Reviews of the relevant statutory and planning framework as well as documentation that has been previously used to support or consider urban growth in the Pukerua Bay area.
- On-site visits and exploration of the surrounding areas, alongside ZTV mapping.
- Discussions with the other professionals involved in the proposal, particularly Dr Vaughan Keesing from BlueGreen Ecology.
- Assessing the effects of the proposal from five viewpoints in the surrounding area, while also taking into consideration other private and public viewpoints.

While the proposed development involves notable change to the site’s current rural character, including extensive earthworks and visual transformation, such changes are not inconsistent with the intent behind the Structure Plan and the District Plan to change the rural landscape to an extension of the Pukerua Bay residential area. The assessment finds that adverse visual and landscape effects—primarily from earthworks, vegetation clearance, subsequent development, and visual impacts from key public viewpoints—are generally of a **Very Low to Low-Moderate** magnitude. In resource management terminology these ratings could be considered **no more than minor** based on the NZILA guidelines. The adverse or neutral effects of the developed are balanced or outweighed by positive outcomes, including the retirement of grazing land, increased native vegetation, improved riparian conditions, and the creation of public reserves and accessways.

Overall, the proposed development is consistent with the planned character and landscape outcomes set out in the statutory and planning framework, and the adverse effects considered in this report can be effectively avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

1 INTRODUCTION

The proposal

1.1 The Applicant is seeking approvals under the FTAA for a development in Pukerua Bay, Porirua, Wellington which comprises the following parcels of land, as shown as the large parcel outlined in red in Figure 1 below:

- Lot 1 DP 608433, Lot 1000 DP 608433 (34 Muri Road);
- Lot 1 DP 534864 (422 State Highway 59);
- Lot 2 DP 534864 (422A State Highway 59);
- Lot 2 DP 89102 (422B State Highway 59);
- Part Lot 1 DP 89102 (422A State Highway 59); and
- Road Reserve (State Highway 59 corridor).



Figure 1: Site location plan prepared by Envelope Engineering.

1.2 The proposal involves

- 949 residential allotments sized between 316m² to 2386m² (to enable 949 future dwellings) with an average lot size of close to 523m²;
- A commercial centre;
- Associated infrastructure including wastewater (including wastewater storage facilities), stormwater, water reticulation, roading, and pedestrian and cycling trails;

- (the “**Proposal**”).

1.3 The scheme plan for the Proposal set out below in Figure 2, which has been prepared by Envelope Engineering shows the proposed locations and areas of the development (the “**Scheme Plan**”) and the extent of the land subject to the Proposal (the “**Site**”).

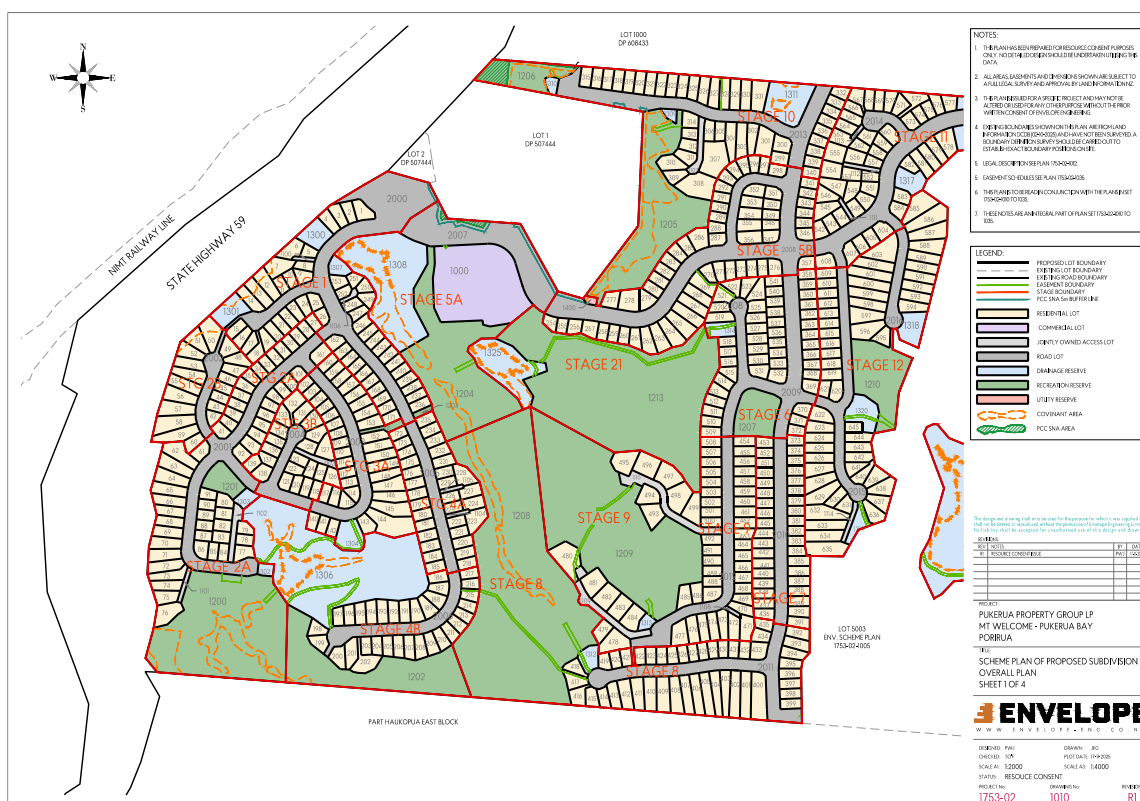




Figure 3. Plan showing the three sections of the Site: Lower Terrace, Upper Terrace, and Lucas Block.

The background

- 1.6 The Site is located within the jurisdiction of the Porirua City Council (“PCC”) and is therefore subject to the provisions of the PCC District Plan 2025 (“PDP”).
- 1.7 The Site is predominantly zoned Medium Density Residential under the PDP but it also has a Neighbourhood Centre Zone and the eastern portion of the site is zoned Rural Lifestyle. The background to the zoning (from predominantly rural in the previous district plan to residential in the PDP) is relevant for this assessment because it explains how changes to the Site, to create a dense residential area, have been considered, envisaged, and planned for. The background to the zoning is discussed in detail in the Statutory Context section below.
- 1.8 As part of the consenting process, the Applicant has requested that Blac Limited prepare this assessment to consider the landscape and visual effects of the Proposal. Blac Limited previously prepared a masterplan¹ for the Proposal, at the request of the Applicant, as part of the Applicant’s application to be listed in Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. As part of the masterplan process, the author visited the Site and gained insight to the landscape constraints and opportunities of the Site.

¹ https://environment.govt.nz/assets/what-government-is-doing/Fast-track-approved/Mt-Welcome-Pukerua-Bay-Porirua/134.13_058_Mt_Welcome_Concept_Masterplan_020524.pdf.

- 1.9 Alongside this assessment, Blac is also preparing the Strategy, which includes an updated masterplan, and LEP with Dr Vaughan Keesing from BlueGreen Ecology. The author therefore has a good understanding of the current ecological state of the Site and how development of the Site could either hinder or enhance that current state.

Landscape matters

- 1.10 This subsection sets out an overview of the main activities, considerations, and proposed changes that are relevant to this LVEA.

Stream Catchments + Wetlands

- 1.11 The Site is located within the Taupo Stream catchment and the Kakaho Stream catchment. The Site contains Moderate to Moderate-High priority riparian management areas (as assessed by the Council) due to the current nature and use of the Site.
- 1.12 Approximately 22,211 m² of natural inland wetland area will be affected by the proposal, of which 6,900 m² is proposed to be remedied. An additional 12,000 m² of wetland enhancement is proposed elsewhere on-site. After accounting for this, a residual area of 15,311 m² still requires offsetting, which will be addressed at a 1:1 ratio, resulting in an offset area requirement of 15,311 m².
- 1.13 In terms of stream habitat, 560 m (equivalent to 655 m²) of stream length will be impacted, with 450 m (600 m²) proposed for remediation. A further >450 m of enhancement is included in the proposal. The remaining 110 m (55 m²) of residual effect will require offsetting at a 1:75 ratio, resulting in an offset requirement of 193 m of stream enhancement.

Earthworks

- 1.14 The Engineering Plans, anticipate 1,927,500 cubic metres of cut (to a depth of 25m) and 1,792,500 cubic metres of fill (to a depth of 22m), over a total area of 81.46 hectares. As set out in the AEE for the Proposal, a number of consents are being sought in relation to the earthworks.
- 1.15 The topography of the Site is going to be altered by the extent of earthworks required to create the roading and stormwater infrastructure and building platforms. Most notably, the valleys' heads are going to be filled in order to create flatter areas or displace fill, and cut will lower ridgelines in the Upper Terrace and the Lucas Block.

Tangata whenua

- 1.16 The PDP notes the following about tangata whenua and the Porirua district (see the Tangata whenua chapter of the PDP):
- *"The entire Porirua area is considered significant to Ngāti Toa based on the principle of Ki*

Uta Ki Tai"

- *"Ngāti Toa [being mana whenua in the Porirua District] are not separate from Te Taiao (the environment). What people do impacts the whenua, this relationship is reciprocated in the health of the whenua and is an indicator of the health of the people. Ngāti Toa rely on Te Taiao for their physical and cultural wellbeing."*
- *"As mana whenua of the Porirua District, Ngāti Toa have kaitiaki responsibilities to protect our taonga and the mauri which is intrinsically linked with the natural environment. This can be exercised through participating in the resource management space with local councils, responding to resource consents and co-developing policies to protect our [mana whenua] interests."*

1.17 Consultation has been undertaken with Ngāti Toa by the Applicant in relation to the Proposal from which Ngāti Toa have provided written feedback where high-level principles were provided which are set out below:

- Engagement of mātauranga Māori in research, design [and monitoring] of water systems.
- Avoid the mixing of waters from different catchments.
- Treating stormwater by passing it through land or rock before it is released into receiving environments.
- Water conservation, including water harvesting, to preserve the resource and its mauri.
- Identification, recognition and appropriate protection/enhancement of culturally significant sites/features.
- Re-vegetation for stormwater management utilising indigenous plants.
- Protecting and restoring wetlands with the potential for use by communities.
- Protecting and restoring streams as taonga.

Vegetation

1.18 There is approximately 1,400 m² of terrestrial Significant Natural Area (SNA) that will be affected by the Proposal, with no opportunity for on-site remediation. This area will instead be offset at a ratio of 3:1, resulting in a total offset requirement of 4,200 m² of new or enhanced terrestrial habitat.²

1.19 The Strategy and LEP, as part of the Proposal, both present new planting of >25.8085ha native vegetation across the Site, and exceeds the requirement above to offset the loss of vegetation at a ratio of 3:1.³

1.20 There are two small areas in the north-western extent of the Site that are subject to Significant Natural Area ("SNA") overlays under the PDP, being SNAs 029 and 225. The roundabout forming part of the Proposal is also subject to SNA 027. These areas are shown in Figure 4 below. The PDP requires a buffer

² Ecological report prepared by Blue Green Ecology Limited as set out in the appendices of the AEE, Table 6.

³ Landscape and Urban Design Strategy prepared by Blac Limited as set out in the appendices of the AEE; Landscape and Ecology Plans prepared by Blac Limited and Blue Green Ecology Limited as set out in the appendices of the AEE.

of at least 5 metres between the Site and SNAs⁴, as well as a planting and management plan for that buffer area, and confirmation of how the buffer area will be protected in perpetuity following the implementation of the subdivision stage of the Proposal. On the eastern boundary of the land owned/to be owned by the Applicant, there is a small area that is subject to the Significant Amenity Landscape 006 overlay. This area is not included in the Proposal. Lastly, Figure 1 above sets out the locations where off-site wastewater works will be undertaken in relation to the Proposal. A portion of one of these areas is subject to the Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes overlay (ONFL 002).

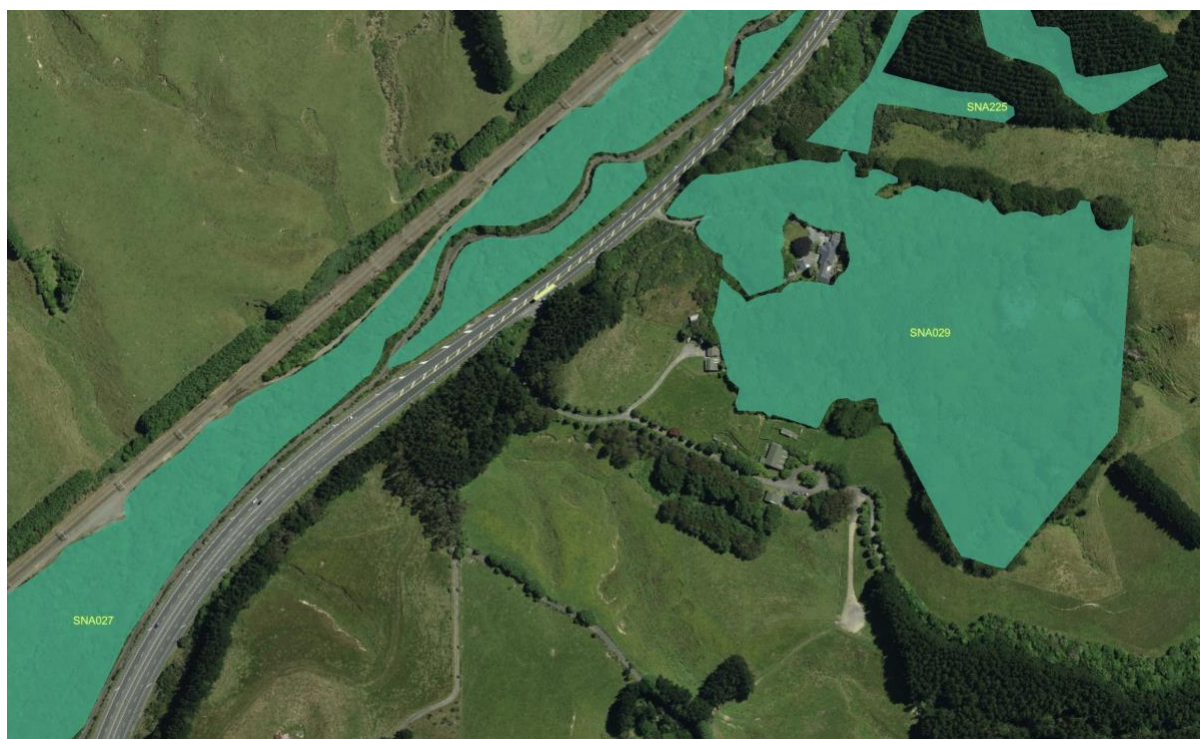


Figure 4. Porirua City Council District Plan 2025 plan of Significant Natural Area overlays relating to the Site.

Visual change

- 1.21 The Site is partly visible from the following public locations: local roads on the opposite side of State Highway 59 (i.e. Airlie Road), State Highway 59, Whenua Tapu cemetery, Greenmeadows Reserve in Pukerua Bay, and the Taua Tapu Track. Portions of the upper extents of the Site may also be visible from individual residential properties in Pukerua Bay and residential properties above Whenua Tapu cemetery. While the change from a rural landscape to a residential landscape is anticipated for the Site by the PDP, consideration needs to be given to whether the visual amenities associated with the Site are going to be adversely effected by the Proposal and if so, to what extent.

Planned character

- 1.22 The 'planned character' (as per the PDP) for the parts of the Site that are being developed includes both Medium Density Residential areas and a Neighbourhood Centre Zone area. The Statutory Context

⁴ Porirua City Council District Plan 2025, DEV-NG-R3(2).

section below elaborates on what each planned character means, and how the Proposal either aligns with, or differs from, those characters.

- 1.23 The Site is surrounded (directly to the north and south, and more distantly to the South at Plimmerton Farm) by rural areas that have been, or are in the process of being, zoned for dense residential development. In this regard the PDP anticipates clear visual and landscape changes to the land between Pukerua Bay and Plimmerton in the near future, which will include the Proposal.

Assessment information

- 1.24 The purpose of this assessment is to assess the landscape and visual effects of the Proposal.
- 1.25 This assessment has been carried out by the director of Blac Limited, Brad Dobson. Brad is a registered member of the NZILA and he has over 11 years' experience as a landscape architect.
- 1.26 While this is not a matter before the Environment Court, the author of this report has read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 ("**Code**"). The author has complied with the Code in the preparation of this report.
- 1.27 The data, information, facts and assumptions the author has considered as part of this report are set out in this report. The reasons for the conclusions of the report are also set out in this report. Unless stated otherwise, this report is within the author's expertise and the author has not omitted to consider material facts known to them that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The following methodology is based on the concepts and principles set out in the Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines ("**NZILA Guidelines**") and has been tailored to the nature of the Proposal and the Site.

Desktop research/review of the relevant statutory provisions and other documentation

- 2.2 The author has reviewed the following documents as part of this assessment:
- 2.2.1 Resource Management Act 1991.
 - 2.2.2 National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (October 2024 version).
 - 2.2.3 National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 - May 2022 version.
 - 2.2.4 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020.
 - 2.2.5 Greater Wellington Regional Council's Natural Resources Plan, including Plan Change 1.
 - 2.2.6 Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (2024 version).

- 2.2.7 Porirua City Council's District Plan 2025.
- 2.2.8 Porirua City Council Riparian Management Strategy for the Kakaho Stream catchment dated 30 April 2021.⁵
- 2.2.9 Porirua City Council Riparian Management Strategy for the Taupo Stream catchment dated 30 April 2021.⁶
- 2.2.10 Porirua City Council's Section 32 Evaluation Report for Variation 1 of the Proposed District Plan – dated August 2022 and relating to Part B: Northern Growth Development Area.⁷
- 2.2.11 The Applicant's listing application under the Fast-track Approvals Act.⁸
- 2.2.12 Plimmerton Farm Landscape & Visual Assessment – dated 3 December 2019 and prepared by local landscape architecture collective and Drake Williams Limited.⁹
- 2.2.13 Boffa Miskell's Landscape Statement for the Porirua Northern Growth Area dated 26 July 2022 (the "**Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement**"), prepared to support the above Section 32 Evaluation Report.¹⁰
- 2.2.14 Boffa Miskell's Urban Design Assessment: Northern Growth Area Plan Variation dated 26 July 2022.¹¹
- 2.2.15 Boffa Miskell's Ecology Assessment: Northern Growth Area Plan Variation dated 27 July 2022.¹²
- 2.3 The above three documents (2.2.13 to 2.2.15), were used by the author to gain further insight into the nature of the Site, planning history as it relates to the landscape, and to assess viewpoints for assessment.
- 2.4 This assessment has also been informed by other technical reports lodged with the Substantive Application including:
 - Assessment of Environmental Effects prepared by Incite ("**AEE**")
 - Landscape and urban design strategy and Landscape and Ecology Plans prepared by Blac as set out in the appendices of the AEE
 - Infrastructure and Engineering report and plans prepared by Envelope Engineering as set out in appendices of the AEE
 - Ecological report prepared by Blue Green Ecology as set out in the appendices of the AEE
 - Geotechnical assessment prepared by ENGEO as set out in the appendices of the AEE

⁵ https://storage.googleapis.com/pcc-wagtail-media/documents/Kakaho_Stream_catchment.pdf. The Riparian Strategies were reports used to identify priority areas in the catchment for a Riparian Management Programme.

⁶ https://storage.googleapis.com/pcc-wagtail-media/documents/Taupo_Stream_catchment.pdf. The Riparian Strategies were reports used to identify priority areas in the catchment for a Riparian Management Programme.

⁷ [FINAL Section 32 Evaluation Report - Variation 1 Part B - Northern Growth Development .pdf](#).

⁸ https://environment.govt.nz/assets/what-government-is-doing/Fast-track-approved/Mt-Welcome-Pukerua-Bay-Porirua/134.01-response-ANON-URZ4-5F9B-B_Redacted.pdf.

⁹ [Heading One](#)

¹⁰ [Boffa Miskell Limited 2022 Porirua Northern Growth Area Landscape Statement.pdf](#).

¹¹ https://storage.googleapis.com/pcc-wagtail-media/documents/Boffa_Miskell_Limited_2022_Urban_Design_Assessment_Northern_Growth_Area_Plan_Variation.pdf.

¹² https://storage.googleapis.com/pcc-wagtail-media/documents/Boffa_Miskell_Limited_2022_Ecology_Assessment_Northern_Growth_Area_Plan_Variation.pdf.

- Cultural Advice provided by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira as set out in appendix 2 of the AEE
- Archaeological assessment prepared by Heritage & Archaeology Services Ltd as set out in appendices of the AEE

Site surveys

- 2.5 An initial site visit for the purpose of preparing the masterplan was undertaken by the author in 2024.
- 2.6 Following the request for this assessment, the author carried out Zone of Theoretical View mapping (“**ZTV mapping**”) to analyse the potential viewing audience for the Site and assess which viewing points were necessary for this assessment. The ZTV mapping result is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.7 The author then revisited the Site on 13 June 2025 which involved a walkover of the Site with Dr Vaughan Keesing from BlueGreen Ecology to understand the ecological and landscape values, as well as a drive around the surrounding areas, and walkovers of specific public spaces to review vantage points towards the Site (in order to rule in or out any views based on the ZTV mapping and first-hand experience of the surrounding areas). The author then selected five viewpoints to assess because they are representative of the most effected visual catchment. These viewpoints are set out in **Appendix 2**.

Simulations

- 2.8 Visual simulations from the five selected viewpoints have been prepared to understand the potential effects of the Proposal. Each of the five sets includes a simulation of the current viewpoint, a simulation of the earthworks, and a simulation of the Site following implementation of the Proposal and mitigation measures at approximately 5-years post establishment.

Assessment of Effects Methodology

- 2.9 The Proposal is a subdivision and it therefore involves built form on the Site. This assessment is primarily of the built effects of the Proposal but it also includes assessment of the temporary effects of the earthworks, and the longer-term effects of the recommended mitigation measures (where relevant).
- 2.10 An assessment has been undertaken of the effects of the Proposal on the receiving environment and the people viewing the built development, as well as how the Proposal could change the amenity values and character of the Site with reference to the statutory context. The methodology for the assessment has been set out below.
- 2.11 Assessing the magnitude of landscape change involves judging the amount of change likely to occur to existing landscape features, or key attributes. This assessment considers the scale of the change within the affected geographical area, the duration of the change, and its reversibility. It also considers the loss, alteration, or enhancement of existing landscape elements such as vegetation or earthworks. The

magnitude of change resulting from the proposed development is combined with the receiving environment's sensitivity to determine the effect's overall significance.

2.11.1 The magnitude of change factors are: size, scale, extent and level of permanence.

2.11.2 The sensitivity to change factors are: effects to prescribed values, number of people affected, rarity.

2.12 To summarise the significance of the effects, professional judgement is applied with reference to the statutory context, as outlined in section 3 below. The 7-point evaluation scale from the NZILA Guidelines is set out below. It is used to represent the different levels of significance when assessing magnitude of change. Although a reference to Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA") terminology has been provided, caution in directly translating the NZILA scale to the RMA terminology is outlined by the NZILA Guidelines.¹³ As set out in the guidelines¹⁴:

"avoid an overly mechanical approach: "One is dealing with degrees of smallness. Where the line might be drawn between the three categories might not be easily determined." There are different interpretations within the profession as to where the boundaries of such categories precisely fall. The key is to be transparent and explain the reasons to justify a professional judgement."

NZILA	Very Low	Low	Low - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate -High	High	Very High
RMA	Less than Minor	Minor	More than Minor				

2.13 While the NZILA recommends using a 7 point scale to assess the magnitude of effects, from "very high" to "very low", it does not strictly define these ratings. For consistency, the author has used the effects rating table that Boffa Miskell used in their Landscape Statement for assessing both visual and landscape effects.¹⁵ It is set out below:

Very High	Total loss of key elements / features / characteristics i.e. amounts to a complete change of landscape character and in views.
High	Major modification or loss of most key elements / features / characteristics i.e. little of the pre-development landscape character remains and a major change in views. <i>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition: High: adjective- Great in amount, value, size, or intensity.</i>

¹³ https://nzila.co.nz/media/uploads/2022_09/Te_Tangi_a_te_Manu_Version_01_2022_.pdf, pages 150-151.

¹⁴ https://nzila.co.nz/media/uploads/2022_09/Te_Tangi_a_te_Manu_Version_01_2022_.pdf, page 151.

¹⁵ [Boffa Miskell Limited 2022 Porirua Northern Growth Area Landscape Statement.pdf](#), Table 3.

Moderate - High	<p>Modifications of several key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline</p> <p>i.e. the pre-development landscape character remains evident but materially changed and prominent in views.</p>
Moderate	<p>Partial loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline</p> <p>i.e. new elements may be prominent in views but not necessarily uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.</p> <p><i>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition: Moderate: adjective- average in amount, intensity, quality or degree</i></p>
Low - Moderate	<p>Minor loss of or modification to one or more key elements / features / characteristics</p> <p>i.e. new elements are not prominent within views or uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.</p>
Low	<p>Little material loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics</p> <p>i.e. modification or change is not uncharacteristic or prominent in views and absorbed within the receiving landscape.</p> <p><i>Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition: Low: adjective- 1. Below average in amount, extent, or intensity.</i></p>
Very Low	<p>Negligible loss of or modification to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline</p> <p>i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation and a negligible change in views.</p>

Measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate potential effects

- 2.14 Based on the assessment findings, the author has set out any additional measures to mitigate potential adverse effects.

3 STATUTORY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The purpose of reviewing the provisions mentioned below is to help frame the landscape assessment rather than to undertake a planning assessment of the Proposal against the provisions.

The Resource Management Act 1991 (“RMA”)

- 3.2 The RMA provisions relevant to the natural character and the landscape and visual effects of this assessment are:

- Section 6(a) which relates to the preservation and protection of the natural character of wetlands and rivers and their margins.
- Section 6(c) which relates to the protection of significant indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna.
- Section 6(d) which relates to the maintenance and enhancement of public access to rivers.
- Section 6(e) which relates to the relationship of Maori to their ancestral lands and water.
- Section 7(b) which relates to the efficient use and development of natural and physical resources.
- Section 7(c) which relates to the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values.
- Section 7(d) which relates to the intrinsic values of ecosystems.
- Section 7(f) which relates to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.

- 3.3 Section 6(b) relates to Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes. It is not relevant for this assessment because the landscape values at or surrounding the Site are not deemed to be “outstanding” by the PDP (or otherwise). The only exception is explained in paragraph 1.20 above, where off-site wastewater infrastructure is subject to ONFL 002. Given this is not related to the main part of the Proposal, and is only a very small area, the writer does not consider it relevant for this assessment.

Background to the zoning of the Site

- 3.4 The Site, and the surrounding area, has long been identified as a future urban growth area by the Council. It was formally zoned in the Future Urban Zone in the PDP, and identified as a medium-term residential area in the Porirua Growth Strategy 2048 (from 2019). The Growth Strategy anticipated the construction of 3,000 to 3,500 homes in the wider area (around, and including, the Site) between 2022 and 2040.

3.5 Variation 1 of the PDP lead to the Site (and surrounding areas) being rezoned so that more intense residential development can occur in Pukerua Bay. As part of the decision to rezone this area, which is termed the 'Northern Growth Development Area' in the PDP, the Council commissioned a number of expert reports. Most notable for this assessment are the three reports that Boffa Miskell prepared in 2022, being:

- Urban Design Assessment: Northern Growth Area Plan Variation
- Porirua Northern Growth Area: Landscape Statement
- Ecology Assessment: Northern Growth Area Plan Variation

3.6 It is worth noting here that Plimmerton Farm, which is located south of the Site, in Plimmerton, has also been identified by the Council as a residential growth area. The Site therefore sits (albeit interspersed with farmland in places) between Plimmerton Farm and an area known as the Muri Block (to the north of the Site), which is included in the Northern Growth Development Area and is also now zoned predominantly Medium Density Residential. While the landscape on and surrounding the Site is currently rural in nature, the planned future character of these areas is residential suburbs and rural lifestyle development.

3.7 As a result of the re-zoning process which became operative on 23 January 2024, the Site was rezoned to predominantly Medium Density Residential under the PDP, with a Neighbourhood Centre Zone and a large area to the east zoned Rural Lifestyle.

3.8 The planned future of the Site and other nearby blocks of land such as the Muri Block and Plimmerton Farm is an imperative consideration for this assessment. The NZILA Guidelines set out an excerpt from Kenneth Olwig's 2019 book titled 'The Meanings of Landscape: Essays on Place, Space, Environment and Justice'¹⁶. The excerpt, which is repeated below, helps to explain how landscape architects view landscapes and why it is necessary to consider the evolution of how people have viewed and valued the Site, and neighbouring areas, over time.

"Landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock", the historian Simon Schama argues in his book, Landscape and Memory (Schama, 1995: 61). I don't disagree, but landscape is more than a question of culture, imagination, and natural materials. It is also the substantive legal, political, and material practices through which politics shape urban and rural places within regions and countries. And the meanings of landscape are also a question of language, as expressed in word and image, as it evolves through history and from place to place."

¹⁶ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, page 77.

3.9 Reflecting on the excerpt above, landscapes evolve and change as a result of many different processes. the Proposal will clearly result in changes to the current landscape values of the Site, but in the context of the general nature of such change being anticipated/planned/intended, that change should not automatically be seen as negative or adverse.

3.10 The NZILA Guidelines also set out the following guidance on what can be considered as part of an existing environment¹⁷.

“6.32 Landscape effects are also interpreted against the outcomes sought in the relevant statutory provisions. Such provisions can comprise generic outcomes as stated in objectives and policies. Policies and criteria can also specifically require consideration of the planned future form of an area.”

3.11 The subsections below (regarding the Structure Plan and the Northern Growth Development Area) help to frame the general landscape value outcomes sought by PCC for the Site. As a result of the current site being significantly different to the zoning of the Site, it is imperative for this assessment to cover the background to why the Site has been re-zoned the way it has, including considerations along the way about how the landscape values could be expected to change (as set out in Boffa Miskell’s Porirua Northern Growth Area: Landscape Statement). For example, the PDP sets a minimum standard for permitted earthworks. It is hard to see how a medium density residential development on the Site could occur without earthworks going beyond the permitted threshold in the PDP. Therefore, as part of the landscape and visual effects assessment for the Proposal, consideration needs to be given to what outcomes were sought for the Site and what level of change was anticipated.

Structure Plan

3.12 As a precursor to the re-zoning of the Site (as set out in the preceding section), the Council prepared the Northern Growth Development Area Structure Plan (the “**Structure Plan**”), as set out in Figure 5 below.

¹⁷ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, pages 146 and 149.

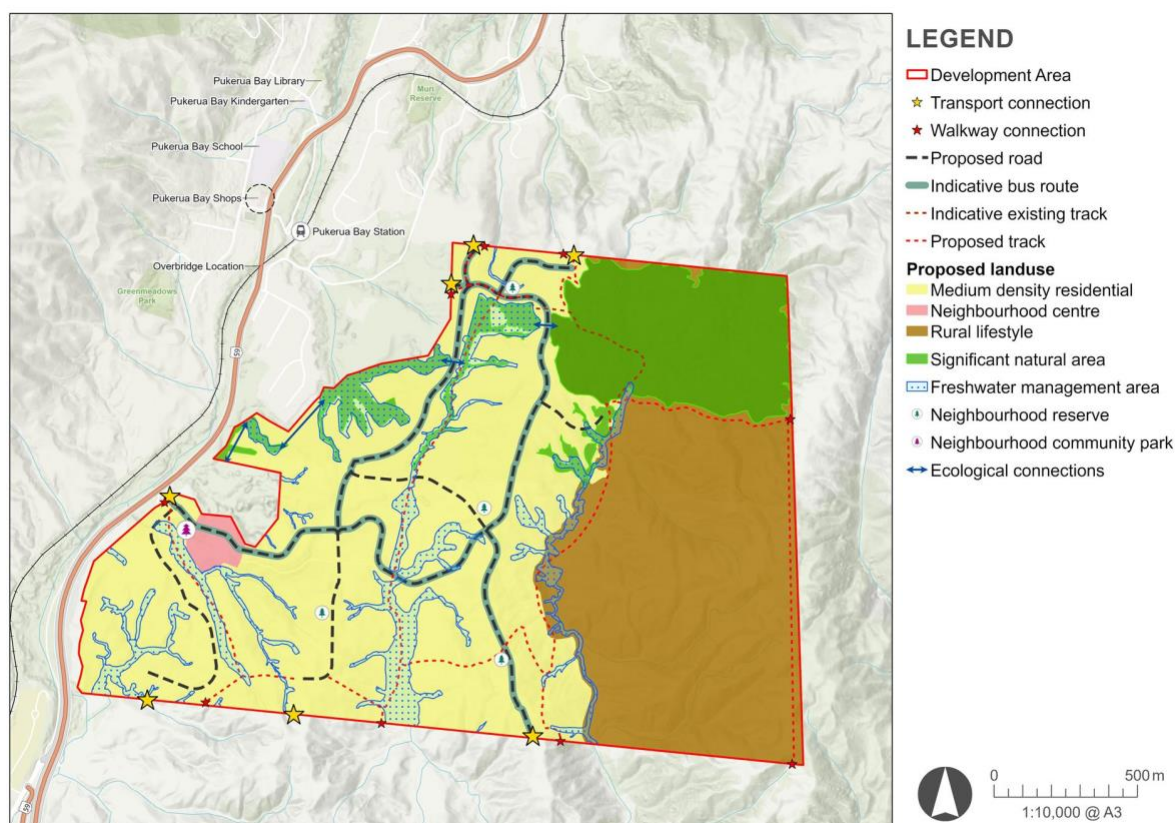


Figure 5. Porirua City Council District Plan 2025 Structure Plan for the Northern Growth Development Area..

3.13 The Structure Plan forms part of the PDP and sets out how a development could fit within the Site and the 'Muri Block' to the north of the Site, taking into account ecological, landscape and transport matters. Most notably for this assessment, the Structure Plan sets out features including:

- Proposed roads
 - The Northern Growth Development Area chapter of the PDP (**"DEV-NG Chapter"**) states that *"the Structure Plan provides indicative locations, road layouts and bus routes. These have been identified primarily taking account of the topography of the Development Area, the location of water bodies and Significant Natural areas and the potential for longer-term connectivity to adjacent areas."*¹⁸
 - The locations of the main roads set out in the Proposal are generally consistent with the locations of the main roads set out in the Structure Plan. All other streets in the Proposal connect to and from the main roads, and are otherwise what would generally be expected for roading layout in a medium density residential area.
- Medium density residential areas
 - The DEV-NG Chapter states *"the way the development area is subdivided will introduce long-term development patterns and will therefore determine the quality and character of the area."*

¹⁸ Porirua City Council District Plan 2025, DEV-NG Chapter, page 2.

- The Proposal is generally consistent with the MDR zoning in the Structure Plan. The residential areas in the Proposal are contained within the MDR zoning on the Structure Plan – with the exception of some development in the Lower Terrace where some of the freshwater management areas are being reclaimed for building sites and related infrastructure.
- Neighbourhood centre area
 - The location and size of the neighbourhood centre zone in the Proposal is generally consistent with the location and size set out in the Structure Plan.
- Freshwater management areas
 - The DEV-NG Chapter states *“the Freshwater Management Areas identify opportunities to maintain and enhance terrestrial and freshwater ecology and improve water quality ... provide for water sensitive design approaches to stormwater management including catchment scale detention devices, provide increased resilience to flood hazards, connect the community to freshwater and provide for passive recreational, and; create high quality amenity for the community.”*¹⁹
 - The freshwater management areas set out in the Structure Plan are not exactly replicated in the Proposal. The areas that are set to remain, as part of the Proposal, are either being used to enhance ecological areas, or for the implementation of rain gardens. The author refers the reader to Dr Vaughan Keesing’s ecological report (included in the appendices of the AEE) for further information about the above aspects of the Proposal. The author’s understanding from that report is that where the Structure Plan’s identified freshwater management areas have not carried through to the Proposal, there have been offsets proposed in other MDR zoned areas of the Site in order to enhance other/additional areas, so that overall the above objectives are achieved.
- Walking tracks and open space areas
 - In respect of walking tracks, the DEV-NG Chapter states *“the exact locations of these connections [indicative walking and cycling connections] will need to be determined at subdivision stage and created through the development of the site. These also provide open space connectivity through providing linkages between Significant Natural areas, recreation reserves and along waterways”*.²⁰ The walking tracks set out in the Proposal achieve the intended outcomes of connectivity across the Site.
 - In respect of recreation areas, the DEV-NG Chapter states the Structure Plan identifies²¹:
 - a network of neighbourhood parks, which enable residents to easily access a park or reserve;

¹⁹ Porirua City Council District Plan 2025, DEV-NG Chapter, page 2.

²⁰ Porirua City Council District Plan 2025, DEV-NG Chapter, page 2.

²¹ Porirua City Council District Plan 2025, DEV-NG Chapter, page 1.

- a neighbourhood community park, which is intended to be a large, easily accessible space which benefits both residents and the “wider Pukerua Bay urban area”; and
 - indicative neighbourhood reserve areas, which are intended to provide amenity and recreational opportunities for residents.
- The Proposal is consistent with this to the extent that the intended outcomes are achieved and the Proposal contains more than the minimum number of recreation areas required by the Structure Plan.

3.14 The Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement sets out the following:²²

“The layout of the roading network within the Structure Plan has been designed [to] locate the ro[a]ds, and therefore future development, on the less steep and more open higher landforms, while retaining the steeper sided gully areas which are ecologically sensitive for freshwater purposes.”

“The Plan Variation would facilitate modification of the form of the rolling landform into a series of plateau as building platforms and accessways as identified in the Structure Plan are formed. The proposed residential areas have been sited to occupy gentler slopes and flatter areas identified along spurs and the heads of localised gullies. These have been located to step down along contours creating a series of plateau associated with a rolling platform, with the intent for future development to use cut and fill and minimising the need for associated retaining.”

“When viewed from SH59, future development envisaged by the Plan Variation would integrate residential dwellings along a series of ‘plateau’ created by bands of residential development, seen below a backdrop of the rural hills beyond.”

District Plan

3.15 The AAE appendices sets out the parts of the District Plan that are relevant to the Proposal and to understand the character and values of the Site at present. The applicable parts have been summarised below.

Activity status

3.16 The activity statuses under the PDP range from discretionary through to controlled. The author refers the reader to appendices of the AEE for a detailed rules assessment, including which parts of the Proposal are permitted activities under the PDP. *Northern Growth Development Area*

3.17 The PDP objective for the planned built environment in the Northern Growth Development Area (DEV-NG-O2) is set out below:

“Subdivision, use and development in the Medium Density Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Centre Zone of the Northern Growth Development Area achieves:

²² [Boffa Miskell Limited 2022 Porirua Northern Growth Area Landscape Statement.pdf](#), para 5.1.2.

1. A well-functioning urban environment consistent with the Northern Growth Development Area Structure Plan;
2. A built environment that responds to the natural landform;
- ...
5. Predominantly medium density housing with a variety of housing types, sizes and tenures;
- ...
7. An urban form that is integrated with the transport network, and encourages public and active transport modes while minimising reliance on private vehicles; and
8. Development that maintains and protects and, where possible, enhances ecological values, and the health and wellbeing of receiving waterbodies including Te Awarua-O-Porirua Harbour and other downstream catchments."

3.18 In relation to connectivity, the DEV-NG chapter of the PDP notes the following:

"The Structure Plan provides indicative access locations, road layouts and bus routes. These have been identified primarily taking account of the topography of the Development Area, the location of water bodies and Significant Natural Areas, and the potential for longer-term connectivity to adjacent areas."

3.19 The PDP policies for subdivision and appropriate development in the Northern Growth Development Area (DEV-NG-P3) are set out below:

"DEV-NG-P2 Subdivision

Provide for subdivision that is in accordance with the Northern Growth Development Area Structure Plan, and where the design and layout of the subdivision:

1. *Integrates the topographical, natural and physical characteristics, constraints and opportunities of the Development;*
2. *Minimises landscape and visual effects of development both within the site and on views of the site from transport corridors, the existing Pukerua Bay urban area, and Whenua Tapu cemetery, through:*
 - a. *Minimising earthworks and the modification of landform where practicable;*
 - b. *Integrating the transport network with the existing landform to the extent practicable;*
 - c. *Providing landscaping within road corridors;*
 - d. *Creating open space linkages and networks; and*
 - e. *Retaining existing indigenous vegetation;*
3. *Provides adequate and integrated infrastructure to service the needs of the development;*
4. *Provides a transport network layout and design that:*
 - a. *Is safe for all transport users;*
 - b. *Recognises and provides for transport connections at the boundaries of the Development Area where opportunities exist, including an appropriate connection to State Highway 59;*
 - c. *Provides for roads shown as indicative bus routes as Collector Roads, and other roads as Access Roads;*
 - d. *Provides for active transport and open space connectivity, including by incorporating legal public access along indicative track routes identified on the Structure Plan, and providing for opportunities to create recreational and open space linkages;*

5. *Recognises and enhances ecological values of the Development Area, including by:*
 - a. *Creating buffer areas around the edges of Significant Natural Areas identified in SCHED7 - Significant Natural Areas; and*
 - b. *Creating ecological corridors in the locations identified on the Structure Plan which will, over time, become dominated by indigenous vegetation, with a sufficient width, scale, and appropriate mitigation of any severance caused by roads, to connect and enhance Significant Natural Areas;*
6. *Minimises adverse effects on waterbodies;*
7. *Minimises natural hazard risk to people's lives and properties;*
8. *Demonstrates that use and development within the Freshwater Management Areas identified on the Structure Plan:*
 - a. *Considers regional plan provisions and the regulations in the NES-F;*
 - b. *Is consistent with Water Sensitive Urban Design principles and Wellington Water's 'Water Sensitive Design for Stormwater: Treatment Device Design Guideline' (Version 1.1, 2019) for the design of any relevant stormwater treatment devices;*
 - c. *Recognises and provides opportunities to enhance freshwater ecology, public access to and along freshwater bodies, and resilience to flood risk;*
9. *Incorporates stormwater management measures for the treatment and disposal of stormwater at catchment and allotment scales, and achieve hydraulic neutrality;*
10. *Provides parks, reserves, pathways and open space areas including a neighbourhood community park and neighbourhood parks, and gully and hilltop reserves where opportunities exist; and*
11. *Minimises the potential for reverse sensitivity effects and other effects at the interface of different zones within the Development Area."*

"DEV-NG-P3 Appropriate development

Only allow subdivision, use and development that is not in accordance with the Northern Growth Development Area Structure Plan where it is demonstrated that it is appropriate for such subdivision, use or development to occur within the Development Area, having regard to whether:

1. *The purpose and effects of the subdivision, use or development are likely to constrain, limit or compromise the intended development and use of the Development Area as set out in the Structure Plan, including consideration of:*
 - a. *The compatibility of the type, location and density of the development with the planned urban form of the Northern Growth Development Area;*
 - b. *The integration of topographical, natural and physical characteristics, constraints and opportunities;*
 - c. *Risks from natural hazards to people, property and the environment;*
 - d. *Maintaining and enhancing ecological values within and adjacent to the Development Area;*
 - e. *The need for adequate, coordinated and integrated infrastructure to meet the planned urban needs of the area;*
 - f. *Safe and connected transport networks that allow ease of movement for all modes to, from and within the Development Area; and*
 - g. *Integrated and accessible open space networks and reserves;*
2. *The effects on the landscape and visual amenity from earthworks, the modification of landform, and the location and design of the transport network will be minimised;*
3. *It will compromise any cultural, spiritual and/or historical values, interests or associations of importance to Ngāti Toa Rangatira that are associated with the*

Northern Growth Development Area and if so, the outcomes of any consultation with Ngāti Toa Rangatira, in particular with respect to mitigation measures and/or the incorporation of mātauranga Māori principles into the design and development of the activity;

- 4. It would provide for or support the future needs of the Development Area;*
- 5. Its scale, design and layout is compatible with the planned urban built environment of Development Area as it transitions and once urbanised as set out in the Structure Plan;*
- 6. Any adverse visual effects can be appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated through screening, planting, building design, siting, and the retention of existing vegetation; and*
- 7. Staging is appropriate to ensure development occurs logically and achieves good urban form.”*

Medium Density Residential Zone

- 3.20 The Medium Density Residential Zone chapter of the PDP notes that the zone provides for “*a moderate concentration and bulk of buildings, a range of dwelling typologies, and other compatible activities*” and it is characterised by “*a planned built form of predominantly three-storey buildings, which is integrated into public and private open space...*” (see MRZ-O1).

Earthworks

- 3.21 Objective EW-01 states that earthworks must be carried out in a manner that:

- “1. Is consistent with the anticipated scale and form of development for the zone*
- 2. Minimises adverse effects on visual amenity values, including changes to natural landforms.”*

National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 (October 2024 version)

- 3.22 This NPS-IB sets out the following approach for the Council when implementing the NPS (clause 3.5):

- “(1) Local authorities must consider:*
- (a) that the protection, maintenance, and restoration of indigenous biodiversity contributes to the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of people and communities; and*
 - (b) that the protection, maintenance, and restoration of indigenous biodiversity does not preclude subdivision, use and development in appropriate places and forms; and*
 - (c) the exercise of kaitiakitanga by tangata whenua in protecting, maintaining, and restoring indigenous biodiversity within their rohe; and*
 - ...*
 - (f) the value of supporting people and communities in understanding, connecting to, and enjoying indigenous biodiversity.”*

National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 - May 2022 version

- 3.23 This policy statement focuses on increasing the amount of urban development in New Zealand, in

order to try and meet the need for housing. It is worth noting that it acknowledges “*New Zealand’s urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations*”. This is akin to the Site whereby the values (and amenities) associated with the Site have changed over time, and what was once farmland is now deemed appropriate for urban growth (to house current and future generations).

4 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

Site context

Location of the Site

- 4.1 The Site is approximately 36 kilometres north of Wellington City, 15 kilometres north of Porirua City, and 1.2 kilometres south of Pukerua Bay.
- 4.2 It is located directly to the east of State Highway 59 (formerly State Highway 1 – the main highway leading in and out of Wellington City and Porirua City). The State Highway follows almost the full extent of the western boundary of the Site with road reserve sitting between the Site and the highway. The Te Araroa Trail and the North Island Main Trunk Railway line runs along the opposite side of the highway, but views to the Site from these areas are largely (if not completely) obscured by the intervening vegetation on both sides of the State Highway.
- 4.3 The Pukerua Bay residential area is to the north/north-west of the Site. The Site will eventually be linked to the existing residential area via both the Muri Block (which is the remaining part of the Northern Growth Development Area) to the north of the Site, as well as a road linking directly onto State Highway 59. For the purposes of this assessment, the author understands that the residential housing development on the Muri Block has resource consent for an initial stage but still requires resource consents for the majority of the development. Given the area forms part of the Northern Growth Development Area, and is mainly zoned Medium Density Residential, medium density residential development is anticipated for the Muri Block Site. To reiterate, this zoning generally provides for “*a moderate concentration and bulk of buildings, a range of dwelling typologies, and other compatible activities*” and it is characterised by “*a planned built form of predominantly three-storey buildings, which is integrated into public and private open space...*” (see MRZ-O1).
- 4.4 The land directly to the east of the Site is zoned Rural Lifestyle. It is pastured, hilly land which is currently used for grazing and it is contiguous with a large extent of land zoned General Rural.

- 4.5 Most notably, the land directly to the south of the Site is a mix of the Future Urban Zone and Rural Lifestyle Zone. Further south is the Plimmerton Farm area, which is mentioned earlier in this assessment. The Site is therefore situated in the middle of an expansive future growth area from Pukerua Bay (in the north) to Plimmerton (in the south), which is bordered by the former main highway and some existing settlements on one side, and rural land on the other side.

Use of the Site

- 4.6 The PCC's Section 32 Evaluation Report for Variation 1 to the PDP notes the wider area of Pukerua Bay "... has a long history of human occupation" which originated with Maori pa, farming on Maori leasehold land, then gold extraction, before there was a major forest clearance to allow for further farm development.²³ The Site formed part of a farming station as early as 1925.
- 4.7 The Site is still being used for grazing of stock (predominantly deer). The Site is predominantly covered in pasture with some areas of vegetation (predominantly pines with a small area of indigenous vegetation and limited wetland species).

Stream catchments on the Site

- 4.8 The Site is located within the Taupō stream catchment and the Kakaho stream catchment, as shown in Figures 6 and 7 below. The Kakaho stream originates near Pukerua Bay and eventually discharges in to the Pāuatahanui Inlet, which has high ecological value and forms part of the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour. The Taupo stream runs in the same direction, being north-to-south from the Pukerua Bay area, but it discharges into the outer harbour.

²³ [FINAL Section 32 Evaluation Report - Variation 1 Part B - Northern Growth Development .pdf](#), para 1.4.1.1.

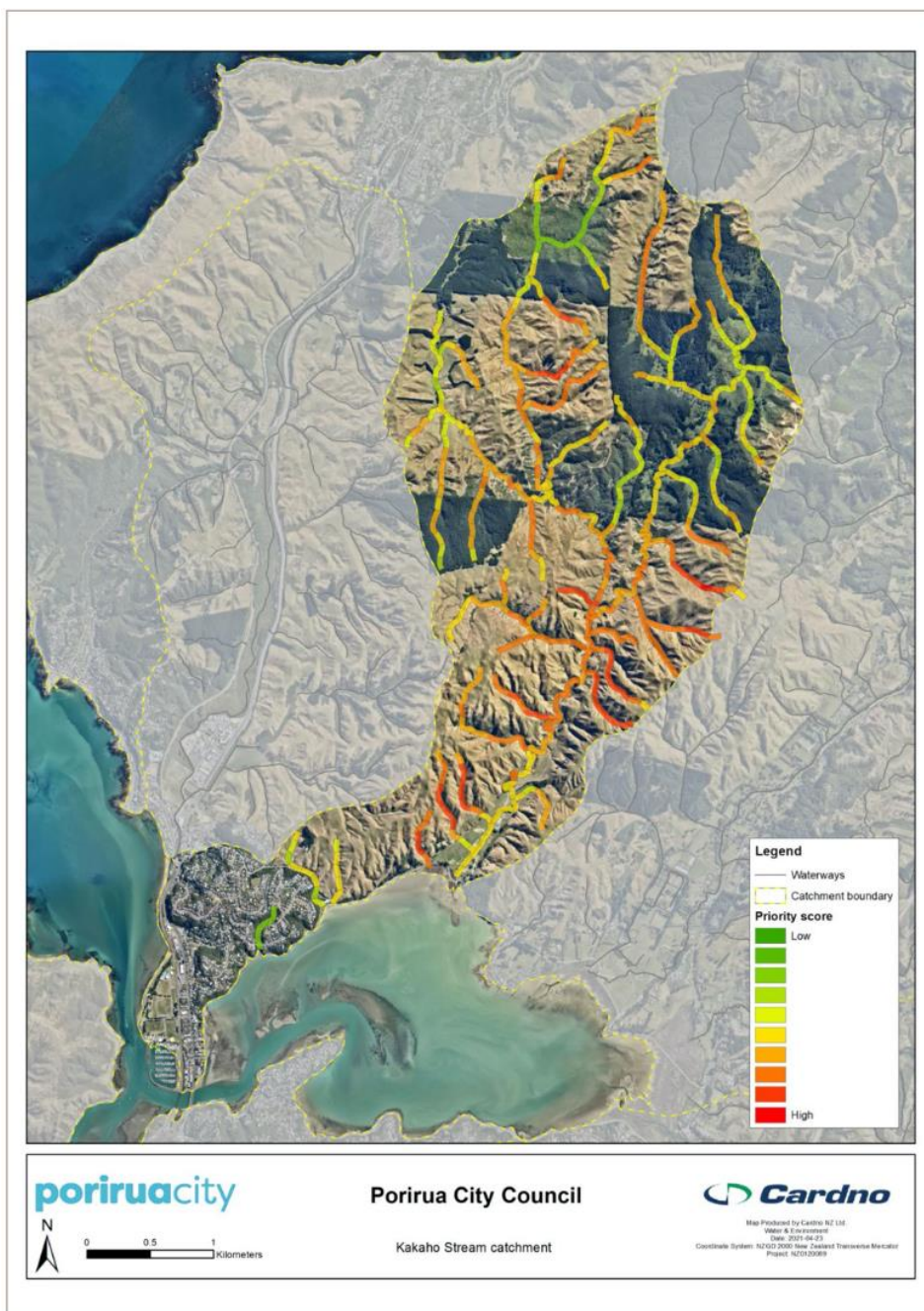


Figure 6. Map of Kakaho Stream catchment.

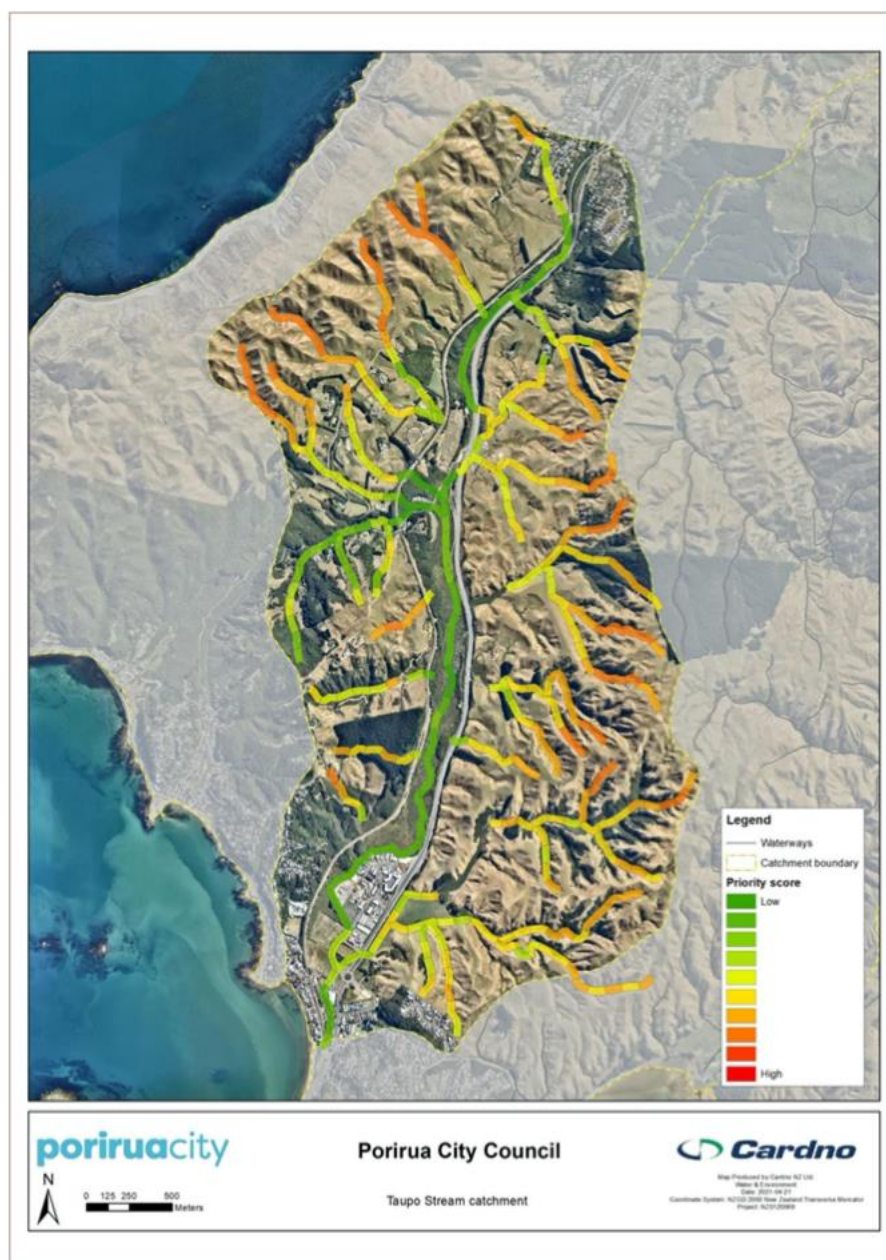


Figure 7. Map of Taupo Stream catchment.

- 4.9 PCC have created a riparian management strategy for each stream catchment²⁴ to ensure that “the influx of fine sediment and nitrogen originating from... [the Taupō and Kakaho]... catchments is reduced by improved riparian management.”²⁵ These two management strategies have indicated that the most at-risk areas of the stream catchments are those where the streams flow through steep hill country, where stock grazing occurs, and the management aims are to control erosion via planting of native species in the riparian zones and excluding stock from the streams via stock-proof fencing.

²⁴ Porirua City Council Riparian Management Strategy for Kakaho Stream catchment. Porirua City Council Riparian Management Strategy for Taupō Stream catchment. The riparian strategies were reports used to identify priority areas in the catchment for a riparian management programme.

²⁵ Porirua City Council Riparian Management Strategy for Kakaho Stream catchment, page 1. Porirua City Council Riparian Management Strategy for Taupō Stream catchment, page 1.

Other important matters

- 4.10 There are two areas to the north-west of the Site, and one to the west of the Site, which have been identified as SNAs in the PDP.²⁶ The development under the Proposal will occur around the edges of these areas. The PDP summarises the importance of Pukerua Bay South Bush (SNA029). as follows:²⁷

“A māhoe-kohekohe-tawa forest remnant, comprised of kohekohe, tawa, rewarewa, tītoki, and pukatea, with kahikatea (Dacrycarpus dacrydioides; of local interest), tōtara (Podocarpus tōtara; of local interest), and pukatea in the gullies. Is mostly protected by the QEII covenant (5-07-763). Includes indigenous vegetation on Acutely Threatened land environments.”

- 4.11 The PDP summarises the importance of Pukerua Bay South Bush North (SNA225) as follows:²⁸

“A mixture of ridge and gully seral and maturing indigenous vegetation communities. In the main ridges and steep slopes Kanuka (Nationally vulnerable), manuka, with hangehange, rangiora, horoeka, mingimingi, Olearia solandri and ground ferns. The gullies contain: mahoe and mamaku Coprosma propinqua, kawakawa, Coprosma rhamnoides, kaikomako, hangehnage rangiora ferns and evidence of the next canopy cover (Kohekohe seedlings). The area is also important as a connecting feature between SNA029 and SNA010.”

- 4.12 The author has relied on the PCC Evaluation Report²⁹ (page 10) and Blue Green Ecology’s Report³⁰ for information about the soil types, wetlands, and hydrology on the Site. When preparing the Strategy, and considering the likelihood of success for revegetation, the author relied on his own expertise and the expertise of Dr Vaughan Keesing from BlueGreen Ecology.

- 4.13 As set out earlier, There is approximately 1,400 m² of terrestrial Significant Natural Area (SNA) that will be affected by the Proposal, with no opportunity for on-site remediation. This area will instead be offset at a ratio of 3:1, resulting in a total offset requirement of 4,200 m² of new or enhanced terrestrial habitat.³¹

Visual amenity

- 4.14 As mentioned in the introduction and set out in Figure 3 above, the Site has three distinct areas being the Upper Terrace, the Lower Terrace and the Lucas Block. Each area has its own distinct visual amenity, as explained below:

²⁶ Porirua City Council District Plan 2025, SNA027, SNA029 and SNA225.

²⁷ Schedule 7.

²⁸ Schedule 7.

²⁹ Porirua City Council’s Section 32 Evaluation Report for Variation 1 of the Proposed District Plan – dated August 2022 and relating to Part B: Northern Growth Development Area, page 10.

³⁰ Ecological report prepared by Blue Green Ecology Limited as set out in the appendices of the AEE.

³¹ Ecological report prepared by Blue Green Ecology Limited as set out in the appendices of the AEE, Table 6.

- The Lower Terrace: This area of the Site is low-lying land, from circa RL 60 at its lowest point to RL 85 at its highest point, with a cluster of four houses and associated outbuildings (all of which will be removed as part of the Proposal). It presents as a rural/rural lifestyle area which undulates in areas and slopes upwards towards the east. There are pockets of pine trees and other vegetation on the Site but it is predominantly pastured and used for deer grazing. This area of the Site is generally screened from external views by the mature vegetation along the western boundary of the Site and the road reserve adjoining that boundary, as well as the QEII land/SNA-25 and 225 which adjoins the Site on the northern boundary. A number of the Taupo Stream catchments are present in the Lower Terrace.

- The Upper Terrace: This area of the Site has the 'crumpled blanket'/corrugated look of pastured rolling hills/spurs and gullies. It contains the largest amount of pine forest across the three areas described in this section, and it 'wraps' around the QEII land/SNA-25 at the northern end of the Site and adjoins the 'Muri Block' pine forest (to the north of the Site). A number of the Taupo Stream catchments are also present in the Upper Terrace. Due to its elevation, from circa RL 90 at its lowest point to RL 150 at its highest point, this section of the Site is visible externally and the mature pines and ridgelines form part of the skyline from certain viewing angles.

- The Lucas Block: It contains the highest sections of the Site, ranging from RL 105 at its lowest point to RL 165 at its highest point. The majority of this area is located to the east of the ridgelines in the Upper Terrace, and is therefore predominantly screened from lower, external views (refer ZTV mapping **Appendix 1**). There are two existing houses and associated outbuildings in this area, which will not form part of the Proposal and will continue to be held in private ownership. In terms of landform, it is a continuation of the 'crumpled blanket'/corrugated look of pastured rolling hills/spurs and gullies.

Landscape character and amenity

4.15 As mentioned earlier, the Site is zoned Medium Density Residential ("**MRZ**"), Neighbourhood Centre Zone ("**NCZ**") and Rural Lifestyle ("**RLZ**"), which is anticipatory of future development on the Site. This zoning is not reflective of the Site's current rural nature. The MRZ zoning anticipates/allows for "*a moderate concentration and bulk of buildings, a range of dwelling typologies, and other compatible activities*", and it is characterised by "*a planned built form of predominantly three-storey buildings, which is integrated into public and private open space...*".³²

³² Porirua City Council District Plan 2025, MRZ Chapter.

Viewing audience

- 4.16 The extent of the viewing audience for the Site was captured in the ZTV mapping (see **Appendix 1**). Mapping was undertaken on the theoretical visibility of both the earthworks and built form assumption from anticipated bulk and location. Based on the outcome of the ZTV mapping and the author's second visit to the Site (on 13 June 2025), it was determined that five viewpoints should be used for this assessment because they are representative of the most relevant and effected views to the Site. Those five viewpoints are described below and are shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Map showing the five viewpoints.

Viewpoint One: Whenua Tapu Cemetery (upper)

- This viewpoint is located to the south-west of the Site, across State Highway 59. This viewpoint was chosen because it is elevated above the highway, it is in close proximity to the Site, and it is a public area.
- Whenua Tapu is the largest cemetery in the Porirua area. The viewing audience would include various members of the public – both locals and visitors to the region. The cemetery is generally only open during daylight hours.
- The name Whenua Tapu translates to sacred land. There is a spiritual sense of place when you are in the cemetery looking out (in the direction of the Site) to a lack of urbanisation and a tranquil landscape. There is a sense of privacy and it is a contemplative experience which many people may value. During the time that the author was at the cemetery, the

noise from State Highway 59 was not noticeable, and neither was the sound of trains (as none passed the cemetery at the relevant time) but it is expected that the trains would be audible when passing the cemetery.

- From this viewpoint, the Site presents as a rural production area with the rolling terrain that characterises much of the rural area in Porirua.
- The exiting infrastructure on the Site is either not evident/is barely evident from this viewpoint but there are power poles and lines running across the cemetery grounds and they interrupt views of the Site.
- The general ridgeline of the Upper Terrace can be seen, in front of the Mount Welcome range with an extent of the Mt Welcome range being obscured by the pine trees on the Upper Terrace. Views of lower portions of the Site are obscured by the pine trees along State Highway 59 between the cemetery and the Site.
- I note this site was identified by Council as a location where visual effects could arise as a result of development on the Site, and it was also considered by Boffa Miskell in their Landscape Statement.

Viewpoint Two: Whenua Tapu Cemetery (lower)

- This viewpoint is, when compared to the other selected viewpoints, in closest proximity to the Site.
- The viewing audience will be the same as what has been described above for Viewpoint One. While this viewpoint is similar to Viewpoint One above, a greater extent of the Site is visible from this viewpoint, most notably the southern sections of the Lower and Upper Terraces of the Site.
- From this viewpoint, the Mount Welcome range is not visible and the Upper Terrace and existing pine block on the Site are the prominent ridge/skyline view.
- While State Highway 59 is not visible from this viewpoint, the presence of it is felt due to the close proximity. For anyone visiting the cemetery in a vehicle, they would have driven off or by the State Highway in order to access the cemetery so the sense of privacy and tranquillity is lessened (from Viewpoint One). The rail line is not seen from this viewpoint but again it is expected that, when a person is at this viewpoint, the trains would be audible when travelling past the cemetery.

Viewpoint Three: Taua Tapu Track

- This viewpoint is taken towards the highest point of the Track near Airlie Road (which is near Whenua Tapu cemetery). This is a short (1.5 kilometre), public track. The Council have noted the following: *“This rural track starting in Plimmerton provides extensive views of Mana Island and Porirua Harbour, and on a fine day, you can see out to Marlborough Sounds. This walk begins at the top of The Track and ends at Airlie Road, with signs marking its start and end. It is an excellent trail for hikers and horseback riders alike.”*
- From this viewpoint, the Site sits between the existing Pukerua Bay settlement (where an extent of housing is visible, nestled in between vegetation) and the rolling, pastured terrain that dominates this view of the area. State Highway 59 and the rail line are visible from this viewpoint and so is the rural infrastructure on the land to the south of the Site.
- The Site makes up a portion of this view and is seen more as a continuation of the rural landscape, rather than a distinctive/unique area on its own. In the author’s opinion, the greatest amenities from this viewpoint are:
 - the existing houses on the Site are largely screened by vegetation
 - no infrastructure extends beyond the skyline from the Site and the skyline appears natural (but the pines are somewhat unnatural given they have been planted in rows on the Site).
 - rolling hills combined with natural skyline view of the Mount Welcome range leading down to the Pukerua Bay settlement

Residents of Airlie Road and Coroglen Rise

- Theoretically, based on the ZTV mapping, each of the residences on Coroglen Rise and Airlie Road could have views towards the Site and therefore potentially be affected by the Proposal. The author drove down Coroglen Rise and Airlie Road as part of the assessment of the areas surrounding the Site.
- The author’s assessment is that most views of the Site from these residences would be screened by onsite vegetation and orientation of buildings on these properties. However, it is impossible to accurately assess the effects on these private properties individually without gaining on-site access. Based on the author’s assessment of these two areas, the author believes the following residences could be affected by visual change on the Site due to proximity, topographic position, orientation of the home or outdoor living and lack of screening vegetation:
 - 250 Airlie Road
 - 76 Coroglen Rise

- 102 Coroglen Rise

- The author believes the views from Viewpoint One and Viewpoint Three above are representative of the views that the above residents would experience of the Site.

Viewpoint Four: Greenmeadows Reserve, Pukerua Bay

- This viewpoint is from the public reserve area in Pukerua Bay which provides a playground, a dog exercise area, and a junior sports field. Its terraced terrain, existing boundary vegetation (on site), and distance from the Site, mean the Site is not visible from all areas of the reserve.
- This viewpoint is taken from the lower terrace of the reserve where there is a clearing in the trees. Most of the Site is obscured from view by the significant amount of pine forestry on the 'Muri Block' sitting between the Site and this viewpoint. The 'Muri Block' is predominantly zoned Medium Density Residential as well and as that area is developed over time the pines will be (at least partially) cleared to make way for residential development.
- The highest points of the Upper Terrace of the Site are visible, and the Upper Terrace and Mount Welcome range (in the background) create the skyline from this viewpoint.
- In the foreground, there is a rural paddock where infrastructure is visible. None of the existing infrastructure on the Site is visible and the Site *appears* to be in a somewhat 'natural' or vegetated and pastured state, free from development.
- This viewpoint has been assessed for two reasons: (1) it was considered relevant by Boffa Miskell in their Landscape statement and (2) it is representative of what Pukerua Bay residents who live at the same or a similar elevation may be exposed to on the Site.

Viewpoint Five: Paddock above Kotipu Place and Kapekape Place, Pukerua Bay

- This viewpoint is the highest location accessible by the author in the Pukerua Bay township. It is a 'worst-case scenario' for the residents in Pukerua Bay who are living at or near this elevation and have views towards the Site.
- This viewpoint is further north than Viewpoint Four and at a higher elevation. As a result, there are more extensive views of the Site and the Lucas Block comes in to view.
- Mount Welcome and the adjoining ridgelines create the natural and continuous skyline/ridgeline view from this viewpoint. The Site sits lower in elevation and forms part of the backdrop as well as a small portion of the skyline.

- The Site currently 'fits' into its surrounding from this viewpoint, being the mature bush area in between the Site and this viewpoint, and the rolling, pastured terrain that partially surrounds the Site. Again, part of the intervening land being the 'Muri Block' is zoned Medium Density Residential, so that land will likely be developed over time and (at least some of) the pine will be cleared to make way for housing and associated infrastructure. There is likely to be a continuation of the existing residential area of Pukerua Bay (visible in the foreground currently), through the 'Muri Block' area, and potentially right up to the northern boundary of the Site.
- It is worth noting that from this viewpoint the Plimmerton suburb comes into view. As mentioned earlier in this assessment, a large extent of land between the Site and Plimmerton has been identified by the Council as future residential growth area – being Plimmerton Farm and the land directly south of the Site – meaning the planned character for this area is significantly different to the current character. Resource consent has been granted for residential development on Plimmerton Farm.

4.17 The author considered potential visual impacts of the Proposal from a number of areas surrounding the Site. The table below lists the areas that were considered but have not formed part of the scope for further assessment, for the reasons set out below.

Area	Reasoning
Residents in southern Pukerua Bay around Muri Road and Gray Street	This was considered as part of the Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement, and the author subsequently undertook a site visit to survey the views from these areas. Currently the views of the Site are obscured by the pine trees on the Muri Block. The future of those trees is uncertain, especially given the Muri Block now forms part of the Northern Growth Development Area. If the trees were to be removed in the future, there could be some visibility of the Site from Muri Road and Gray Street, depending on what (if anything) the trees were replaced with. It is too speculative to assess much further than this now.
State Highway 59	The vegetation along the boundary of the Site and the highway reserve land would partially or completely block views of the Site. Viewpoint Two would be comparable to views of the Site

	when travelling north along State Highway 59 and the author therefore addressed the potential effects under that viewpoint.
North Island Main Trunk Line (incorporating the Kapiti Line)	The intervening trees would block most views of the Site. Small, transient and peripheral views may occur but the author does not consider these notable.
Te Araroa Trail	The intervening trees would block most views to the Site. Small, transient and peripheral views may occur but the author does not consider these notable.
The Lucas homestead (on the Site)	This is the only residence that will remain under the Proposal in private ownership. It is the author's understanding that the Lucas family are involved in the Proposal and therefore the author has made the assumption that they are aware of, and accepting of, the effects of the Proposal.

5 LANDSCAPE MATTERS

Set out below are the key components of the Proposal which are most relevant for the landscape and visual effects assessment.

5.1 Earthworks:

- A large extent of earthworks will occur as part of the Proposal and the scale is in excess of what is permitted under the PDP (in respect of cut depth, fill depth, and area covered).
- The topography of the Site is going to be altered by the earthworks required to create the roading infrastructure and building platforms. Most notably, the valley heads and ridgelines in the Upper Terrace are going to be filled in order or cut down to create flatter areas.
- The earthworks will not all occur at the same time and remediation work to stabilise or visually soften the earthworks will occur within a reasonable time frame after completion. There could be long periods of time between the stages of earthworks starting and the remedial work (in terms of hydroseeding and revegetating) where the bare earth is visible and starkly contrasts the predominantly green surroundings.
- The PDP promotes the minimisation of earthworks and modification of landform (where practicable), and minimisation of adverse effects on visual amenity values and also for remediation to occur in a timely manner.

5.2 Visual change: The Proposal involves visual change from a rural landscape to a residential landscape. While this general concept (rural to residential) is clearly anticipated for the Site by the PDP, consideration still needs to be given to whether the visual amenities associated with the Site are going to be adversely effected by the Proposal and if so, to what extent.

5.3 Landscape character: While the lot sizes are consistent with the PDP, consideration needs to be given to whether the Proposal (as a whole) is consistent with the planned character of a Medium Density Residential development in the Northern Growth Area. The scale and location of the Neighbourhood Centre Zone set out on the Structure Plan is consistent with the proposed neighbourhood centre area under the Proposal. Given that the Proposal is for the subdivision of that area only, and not any built form on that area (which would be subject to its own resource consenting process), the author does not place a strong emphasis on the effects of the Proposal in relation to that area.

5.4 Vegetation clearance: As discussed earlier exotic and native vegetation are affected to enable the construction of the development. The PDP restricts the removal of vegetation that is mapped and scheduled.

- 5.5 Stream catchments + Wetlands: The reclamation of wetland areas is proposed to be offset by the enhancement of remaining wetlands. Change in land coverage is proposed within the Site, which have the potential to adversely affect the quality of the stream catchments.
- 5.6 Tangata Whenua: The PDP requires consideration of Ngati Toa's values and management of effects of activities on those values. The Proposal notably has the ability to either negatively or positively affect the Kakaho and/or Taupo stream catchments.

6 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

6.1 The assessment sets out the effects of the Proposal under the following sub-headings:

- **Visual Effects:** which will consider the visual changes likely to be observed in specific views that may impact the visual experience or amenity perceived by individuals.
- **Landscape Effects:** which will consider how and to what degree the Proposal might impact the landscape's recognised character and values and the extent to which the finished site will reflect, and be sympathetic to, the surrounding landform.

Visual effects

6.2 To assess the visual effects, five representative viewpoints were identified (in paragraph 4.7 above), and five sets of simulations were created. Each set includes a simulation of the current viewpoint, a simulation of the earthworks, and a simulation of the Site following implementation of the Proposal and mitigation measures (estimated at 5-years post implementation of planting or hydroseeding and assuming residential development has occurred). The below is an assessment of those simulated views and what effects the Proposal would have on people experiencing these views more broadly. Refer to **Appendix 2** for the visual simulations.

Overview on visual effects

Site specific

6.3 This section sets out the parts of the visual effects assessment which are relevant for all of the five viewpoints. These points are set out here (at the beginning of the assessment) rather than being repeated under the section for each viewpoint below. These points 'set the scene' for the assessment and explain why the Site's sensitivity to change, and the magnitude of the Proposal, are considered to be at the lower ends of each spectrum.

6.4 The Earthworks chapter of the PDP notes that "*earthworks are often an essential prerequisite for development*", and the provisions in the chapter "*provide for earthworks at a scale that is appropriate for the anticipated development of the underlying zone*". Given the topography of the Site and the MRZ zoning, it is evident that a large extent of earthworks has been envisaged/ required in relation to residential development on the Site. Despite 250 m² being a permitted threshold (within a 12-month period) under the PDP, this relatively low limit triggers the consideration of matters of discretion. The key considerations, in my view, are whether the development:

- Minimises earthworks and modification of landform where practical;
- Is in scale and character with the planned character and compatible with the values of the broader environment; and
- Ensures any adverse visual effects are appropriately avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

6.5 At a broad scale, I consider the earthworks and resulting changes to the landscape and landforms to be in-scale, consistent, and practical when viewed in the context of the underlying zoning, the intended activity for the landscape, and the existing topography to accommodate development. Areas between the three development nodes have been avoided due to the extent of earthworks that would otherwise be required, resulting in “bands of development” envisaged by Boffa Miskell’s Landscape Statement. There is no specific threshold that determines when avoidance is necessary; rather, individual areas should be addressed where they potentially result in adverse effect effects. Remediation and mitigation measures are proposed in line with generally accepted practices — including hydroseeding and planting — to address the potential adverse effects of earthworks. Timing and staging of the earthworks would likely occur in smaller portions, rather than all at once, and the proposed recommendation addresses how these would be managed to lessen effects at any given time.

6.6 The layout of the Structure Plan, specifically the MRZ zoning and the proposed layout of roads on the Mount Welcome block, anticipates residential development on hilltops and therefore a certain extent of vegetation clearance and change in landform. The locations of the proposed roads and residential lots (and therefore the areas that will be subject to earthworks) are generally consistent with what is envisaged by the Structure Plan in respect of visual landscape effects. The following point made in the Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement is reiterated here because the Proposal now aligns with this foresight from Boffa Miskell:

“When viewed from SH59, future development envisaged by the Plan Variation would integrate residential dwellings along a series of ‘plateau’ created by bands of residential development, seen below a backdrop of the rural hills beyond.”

6.7 The Structure Plan and recent changes to the PDP (including re-zoning of the Site) anticipate the Site being “a moderate concentration and bulk of buildings”. The introduction of built form on the Site has been anticipated and planned for by Council. Despite notable changes being made to the Site – from a landscape character perspective where the Site is going from rural to dense residential – such changes are anticipated and in fact encouraged under the PDP’s various objectives and policies. Due to the lot sizes for the Proposal being more than what is permitted as a minimum under the PDP, the density of built form is not what warrants consideration in this assessment – it is instead the siting of the built form that requires assessment.

6.8 In addition, the National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020 outlines (in Objective 4) that:

“New Zealand’s urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations.”

6.9 It is worth noting three points here:

- (1) The Site has long been intended for greenfield development and as such, the Council have changed the zoning to enable that to occur now;
- (2) There is a small viewing catchment for the Site and for most of those who can see the Site, their views are either (a) only of portions of the Site or (b) transient or short-term views.
- (3) While the site has natural and amenity values, The Site has not been deemed a Significant Amenity Landscape or an Outstanding Natural Landscape in the PDP;

General

6.10 In assessing the potential effects of a proposal on landscape character and amenity/visual effects, weight should be given to the planned or permitted character as set out in the relevant District Plan. The following excerpts from the NZILA Guidelines explain the approach that can be taken:

*"In many cases, the existing environment and its values are different from what is anticipated in the planning framework. In these cases, it may be appropriate to give more weight to the planned outcomes, especially when the planning direction is clear."*³³

*"The assessment should consider both the current and anticipated future character of the landscape. Where change is clearly anticipated in planning documents (e.g., for intensification), this planned character may serve as a more appropriate benchmark."*³⁴

6.11 Consistent with the NZILA Guidelines, landscape and visual effects should be assessed against the existing environment, including any consented but unimplemented developments that are likely to be implemented. However, the permitted baseline—what is reasonably allowed as of right—may also inform the assessment, provided it is realistic and clearly differentiated from existing conditions. Referencing the permitted baseline and planned character together provides a practical and policy-aligned foundation for evaluating the magnitude and acceptability of effects. Where the proposal exceeds permitted thresholds, these benchmarks help guide whether resulting changes remain within the scope of what is anticipated for the area.

- The author's assessment ratings therefore give weight to the anticipated or enabled character, while still considering the change to the current, physical landscape.

Viewpoint One: Whenua Tapu Cemetery (upper)

Earthworks stage

³³ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, section 4.3.2.

³⁴ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, section 5.3.

- 6.12 The earthworks will result in a reduction/lowering of the Upper Terrace ridgeline in order to create flatter land for the intended future housing in that area. The simulations from this viewpoint (**Appendix 2**) show the extent of pine trees that are being removed in order for the earthworks to occur.
- 6.13 As a result of the Upper Terrace ridgeline being lowered from 5 to 10m, and the pine trees being removed, a greater extent of the Mount Welcome ridgelines will be visible from this viewpoint. Effectively, the Mount Welcome ridgeline will become the more dominant ridgeline and that is not being developed as part of the Proposal. The resulting ridge form will be altered but, in the author's opinion, will retain a natural profile for this view.
- 6.14 There will be a general flattening of the Lower Terrace as a result of the earthworks. The earthworks alone will introduce a sense of urbanisation to the Site from this viewpoint but the majority of the work will be screened by the foreground vegetation (on the Whenua Tapu site, the road corridors and the Site itself). Essentially, the landscape will result in *"a series of 'plateau'" with "a backdrop of the rural hills beyond."* as envisaged in the Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement.
- 6.15 Prior to the re-grassing/re-vegetating or construction (for road purposes) of earthworked areas, the areas subject to earthworks will be brown and will starkly contrast the otherwise green surroundings. As the development progresses, the starkness of earthworks stages across the Site will be less and less evident over time because further works will be occurring in the form of housing, individual lot planting and landscaping effectively concealing the change.
- 6.16 While the extent of change is large, particularly as a result of the lowering of the Upper Terrace ridgeline, the author considers it to be reasonable and practical in order to develop land in the way envisaged by the Structure Plan. As mentioned above, the lowering of the Upper Terrace leads to more exposure of the Mount Welcome ridgeline which the author considers the defining backdrop to this view and general area.
- 6.17 From this viewpoint earthworks associated with the NCZ land will not be seen.
- 6.18 I consider there to be an overall reduction in natural character as a result of the flattening of the ridge. However, in the context of the wider landscape and what could reasonably be expected to enable development under the underlying zoning, this effect is moderated. Given the temporary exposure of earthworks and the transient nature of this viewpoint, I assess the magnitude of visual effect to be **Low**.

Building stage (5-years post implementation of the Strategy and LEP)

- 6.19 From this viewpoint, the built environment creates visual impact – due to the permanent presence of people and development. The development will appear as dense clusters of homes (approximately 15 homes on the Upper Terrace and 39 homes on the Lower Terrace are visible) and associated roads, softened by street and valley planting. At night a notable increase in lighting will be emitted from

streetlights, cars and homes. As mentioned earlier, the cemetery is experienced as a more natural and contemplative environment, characterised by a sense of privacy and solitude, largely free from dense urban surroundings. While actual privacy will not be affected by built form on the Site, due to the separation distance and orientation of dwellings, there will be a reduction in perceived privacy. This stems from the increased presence of people and the visibility of a greater number of houses on the Site when viewed from the cemetery.

- 6.20 Similarly to the points made above, while the ridgeline of the Upper Terrace will be modified, and houses present upon this ridgeline, the Mount Welcome ridgeline in the background remains dominant and ‘softens’ the extent of visual change. A greater extent of the Mount Welcome ridgeline comes into view and this means that the houses along the Upper Terrace do not create a silhouette in the sky, and instead they are viewed against the backdrop of Mount Welcome, which again was a described/anticipated outcome in the Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement.
- 6.21 There will be a discernible change in the amount of light emitted from the Site at night from this viewpoint however the cemetery is closed at night so this effect is negligible. Greater effects could occur for the identified residents on Coroglen Rise due to their occupation of homes at night. The author does not consider these effects to be adverse when considering the planned character for the Site and whilst this is cumulative to similar conditions in Pukerua Bay or the SH59 at night, lighting is a feature of this landscape currently.
- 6.22 Most notably, the ‘rolling’ topography is still discernible even with the introduction of dense built form, and there are extensive areas of vegetation being proposed (refer to the Strategy and LEP) which will appear interspersed between the houses and the broader Lower and Upper Terraces. This will improve/offset the clustering of homes and help to ‘soften’ the visual change as a result of development. An extent of existing pine trees will remain, and will both provide screening for many parts of the Upper Terrace and retain some of the existing character associated with the Site.
- 6.23 The PDP and Structure Plan enable MRZ and NCZ on the areas being developed. The author sees the Proposal as being consistent with this planned character. Noting from this view development which could occur in the NCZ is not seen from this viewpoint.
- 6.24 Overall, the author considers the effects to comprise a reduction in natural character, an increased presence of urban form, and a reduction in perceived privacy associated with development following earthworks. While these changes will be notable to those experiencing the views, their experience is transient and are generally consistent with effects which would likely result from the underlying zoning and the landscape rationale behind the zone change. Accordingly, the overall magnitude of effect is assessed as **Low**. For the identified residents on Coroglen Rise the visual effects could be elevated to **Low-Moderate** dependant on their exact exposure due to the increased time of exposure to the nature of this

effect. Please see the recommendations sections in relation to the management/lessening of these effects.

Viewpoint Two: Whenua Tapu Cemetery (lower)

Earthworks stage

- 6.25 The following visual changes for Viewpoint One are also going to occur for Viewpoint Two:
- 6.24.1 There will be a general flattening of the Lower Terrace as a result of the earthworks. The earthworks alone will introduce urbanisation to the Site from this viewpoint but the majority of the work will be screened by the foreground vegetation (on the Whenua Tapu site, the road corridors and the Site itself).
- 6.24.2 The earthworks will result in a reduction/lowering of the Upper Terrace ridgeline in order to create flatter land for the intended future housing in that area.
- 6.24.3 Prior to the re-grassing/re-vegetating of earthworked areas, the areas subject to earthworks will be brown and will starkly contrast the otherwise green surroundings. As the development progresses, the starkness of earthworks stage across the Site will be less evident because further works will be occurring in the form of housing, individual lot planting and landscaping.
- 6.26 Prior to the introduction of housing on the Site, while the ridgeline on the Upper Terrace is lowered and the pines are removed, the Upper Terrace hill scape on the Site will still, to a large extent, appear to be a natural landform. The author has placed more emphasis on the ridgeline change from this view compared to Viewpoint One because the Mount Welcome range is not visible as a backdrop and therefore this ridge creates a silhouette between the land and the sky.
- 6.27 The earthworks related to the NCZ would not be seen from this viewpoint.
- 6.28 I consider the visual effects to be similar to View 1 and at a magnitude of **Low-Moderate**.

Building stage (5-years post implementation of the Strategy and LEP)

- 6.29 Similar to Viewpoint One above, there will be a noticeable change in the amount of light emitted from the Site at night from this viewpoint. The cemetery is closed at night so this effect is negligible from that perspective. It is anticipated that the residents above the cemetery (on Airlie Road but more so Coroglen Rise) will notice the increase in lighting at night. This will decrease the tranquil night time viewing across the Site but, as mentioned in the overview section, dense urban development (and therefore a significant increase in lighting and activity) on the Site has been planned for under the PDP.
- 6.30 The main visual change from the Proposal comes from built form on the modified ridge of the Upper Terrace. As shown in the simulations (in **Appendix 2**) this built form creates a character of development

on the silhouette of the sky. Due to the Site only occupying a portion of the ridge and wider landscape from this viewpoint, the author does not consider the new silhouette to be significant. The development here and the resulting effects, in the author's opinion, replaces the earthworks effects explained above with the urban character change instead.

- 6.31 Again, most notably, the 'rolling' topography is still discernible even with the introduction of built form.
- 6.32 Development related to the NCZ would not be seen from this viewpoint.
- 6.33 I consider the nature of effects to be an overall reduction in natural character, increased by the potential for some housing to breach the visual continuity of the distant ridgeline. In the broader context, this visual effect is not significant but remains notable, and is therefore assessed as having a magnitude of **Low–Moderate**. Refer to the recommendations section for measures to manage and reduce these visual effects.

Viewpoint Three: Taua Tapu Track

Earthworks stage

- 6.34 A greater extent of earthworks is visible from this viewpoint given its elevation in relation to the two previous viewpoints. The 'crumpled blanket' look is lost in the Lower Terrace and is replaced with more of a 'rolling' look which is synonymous with the topography in the foreground/to the south of the Lower Terrace.
- 6.35 When viewing the simulations (in **Appendix 2**) the reduction/flattening of the Upper Terrace ridgeline is evident from this viewpoint. Due to that ridgeline only forming a part of this view, and it not being part of the skyline, the landform still appears 'natural' and is effectively subsumed by the surrounding terrain to the north-east, east and south of the Site. Notably, the Mount Welcome ridgeline is still the dominant ridgeline and the backdrop to the Site, and that ridgeline will not be developed as part of the Proposal.
- 6.36 The author considers it unlikely that works on both the Lower Terrace and Upper Terrace would occur concurrently, or at least to the full extent depicted in the visual simulations (refer recommendations). The proposed regrassing and planting are expected to be implemented progressively and would effectively mitigate the initially bare or stark land cover within a reasonable and practical timeframe, becoming increasingly effective over the course of the development period.
- 6.37 Earthworks on the NCZ may be seen and would be read similar to all Lower Terrace earthworks.
- 6.38 While acknowledging the changes in character, the scale of the earthworks to provide for housing, the neighbourhood centre and roading is, in the author's opinion, proportionate to the scale of development intended by the PDP and the Structure Plan.

- 6.39 I consider the nature of the visual effects to be a reduction in the overall natural character of the existing landform at magnitude considered to be **Very Low - Low**.

Building stage (5-years post implementation of the Strategy and LEP)

- 6.40 While the built form on Site will introduce dense residential character to this viewpoint and exposure to the Neighbourhood Centre is possible, this has been anticipated/planned for by the Council. The areas of development and the particular elements (housing fences, roads, light poles, street trees, reserve, neighbourhood centre) are also generally consistent with areas identified in the Structure Plan and they are generally permitted by the PDP.
- 6.41 From this viewpoint, there is a larger degree (cumulative) of human modification evident as a result of the buildings in the foreground, State Highway 59, a building to the north of the cemetery, and Pukerua Bay being visible in the background. The built form in the Lower Terrace will not look completely out-of-context given these surroundings and will not significantly alter the 'openness' of the Site. The future planned development will all result in an accumulation of the residential character.
- 6.42 The houses on the Upper Terrace ridgeline will be visible but given the positioning of the ridgeline (as described in the earthworks section directly above), they do not adversely detract from the 'openness' of the Site, the skyline of Mount Welcome. The landscape will appear as envisaged during the planning process (see Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement), being *"integrate(d) residential dwellings along a series of 'plateau' created by bands of residential development, seen below a backdrop of the rural hills beyond."*
- 6.43 For the identified resident on Airlie Road (section 4.17) this viewpoint provides a greater than 'worst case scenario' due to its greater elevation than this residence position (greater exposure) but nonetheless it is still a useful view to consider effects on this residence. The point raised above are relevant to this residence. Additionally, the effects of increased lighting at night will be a discernible change for this residence. Consistent with the assessment above for the identified Coroglen Rise residences, the author does not consider these effects to be adverse when considering the planned character and permitted standards for the Site and whilst this is cumulative to similar conditions in Pukerua Bay or the SH59 at night, lighting is a feature of this landscape currently.
- 6.44 I consider the nature of effects to be an overall reduction in natural character and an increase in urbanisation, albeit consistent with the underlying zoning. On this basis, I assess the magnitude of visual effects to be **Very Low-Low** overall, and **Low** for the identified resident on Airlie Road.

Viewpoint Four: Greenmeadows Reserve, Pukerua Bay

Earthworks stage

- 6.45 The earthworks on the Upper Terrace will be visible from this viewpoint whereas the earthworks on the other two sections of the Site are obscured from view. The main visual change from this viewpoint is the flattening of the uppermost extents of the Upper Terrace – which will create a landform that appears less natural than a rolling hill/ knoll.
- 6.46 Similarly to the points made above, the Mount Welcome range in the background makes up for an extent of this flattening because it retains the rolling/hilly skyline for a certain extent of the view and still remains the dominant range/ landscape feature. The flattened area, while in the middle of this view, is arguably not the ‘focal’ point. The visual amenity that it provided (pre-earthworks) was that it was a continuation of the natural skyline and it assimilated with its surroundings.
- 6.47 The stark difference between bare earth and the green surroundings will be less obvious from this viewpoint because the majority of the Site is obscured by the intervening vegetation and where earthworks are seen these would be remediated via regressing or planting in a timely manner.
- 6.48 There is limited exposure to this view from the park itself, while some nearby residents may experience similar changes. The author does not expect this to be many if at all residents based on travelling the Pukerua Bay Streets.
- 6.49 The NCZ is not seen from this viewpoint.
- 6.50 The author considers the nature of the visual effects to a reduction in natural character due to landform modification at a magnitude considered to be **Very Low – Negligible**.

Building stage (5-years post implementation of the Strategy and LEP)

- 6.51 Due to the distance between this viewpoint and the Site, the scale of the built form on the Site is small and is somewhat subsumed into the wider landscape. This will be particularly so if the Proposal imposes design controls on buildings in the Upper Terrace (see the recommendations section below), and landscaping is undertaken on the northern sides of the visible theoretical houses. The flattening of the Upper Terrace enables the silhouette of the houses to remain low-lying while seemingly following a rolling landform (albeit less notable than the previous ‘crumpled blanket’ effect).
- 6.52 The lighting from the housing across the Site will be evident and will reduce the tranquillity of the current rural environment at night – especially given the silhouette of the houses on the skyline. While lighting would be new to this portion of the landscape, night lighting is not new to the residents with views this way as both views to residential and highway lighting can be seen. Furthermore, as it relates to the reserve, this will not be frequented by large numbers of people at night time.
- 6.53 In respect of cumulative effects, the extension of urbanisation from Pukerua Bay across the ‘Muri Block’ and then the Site will introduce a significant extent of change to the landscape in a relatively short period of time. Given this change (from rural to dense residential) is anticipated and, at a high level

permitted, by the PDP, the assessment is whether the layout of the Proposal creates adverse effects/change in excess of what was anticipated.

6.54 The NCZ is not seen from this viewpoint.

6.55 On that basis, the author considers the nature of the visual effects to be a reduction in natural character and increase in urban character, consistent with the underlying zoning and therefore considered to be of a magnitude of **Very Low – Negligible**.

Viewpoint Five: Paddock above Kotipu Place and Kapekape Place, Pukerua Bay

Earthworks stage

6.56 This view is taken from an elevated location above most residences in Pukerua Bay and is considered to represent a 'worst-case' scenario in terms of visual exposure.

6.57 From this viewpoint, the greatest extent of change across the Site is visible, with all three development areas clearly apparent. The earthworks associated with the NCZ is partially visible from this view point.

6.58 Without repeating earlier assessment, the author considers the scale of change to be consistent with the anticipated development outcomes of the Structure Plan, and necessary to enable its implementation in a practical and coordinated manner. Furthermore, the likely staging and associated remediation measures mean the scenario illustrated in the simulations is unlikely to occur in its entirety at a single point in time.

6.59 Despite the proposed changes, the overall dominance of the Mount Welcome ridgeline and the ridges above Plimmerton Farm—located within the SAL (Kakaho)—remains prominent along the skyline and continues to define the wider landscape setting.

6.60 The author considers the nature of the visual effects to be a reduction in natural character at a magnitude of **Low**.

Building stage (5-years post implementation of the Strategy and LEP)

6.61 Residential development across much of the site is visible from this location, although portions are screened by retained vegetation—particularly the rows of pine and the identified SNAs—as well as the site's topography. The likely development associated with the Neighbourhood Centre can be viewed from this location.

6.62 The development introduces a change in character from the existing rural land use; however, this change is anticipated under the current zoning. The built form remains visually separated into clusters or bands, interspersed with areas of open space, maintaining a degree of spatial articulation across the site.

- 6.63 The development does not interrupt the continuity of the broader landscape backdrop and skyline.
- 6.64 The development will contribute to a cumulative transition from a rural to a more urbanised landscape, a change that will be further reinforced by the anticipated future development of the adjacent Muri Block. As a result, the landscape in this particular location will take on a more urban character over time. However, this transition is expected and the wider values of the landscape backdrop, particularly those associated with the primary elevated ridgelines, remain intact.
- 6.65 The author considers the nature of the visual effects to be a reduction in natural character and increase in urban character, consistent with the underlying zoning and therefore considered to be of a magnitude of **Low**.

Visual effects in relation to statutory context

- 6.66 The Proposal aligns with the broader development concept for the Site that was determined by Council in the Structure Plan. The proposed roads, medium density residential areas, neighbourhood centre area, and freshwater management areas are all in the vicinity of where Council envisaged they would be.
- 6.67 The Boffa Miskell Landscape Statement, which helped to inform the final Structure Plan and the zoning of the Site (to enable residential development), assessed the developed nature of the Site as being located on the *“more open higher landforms”*. The landscape statement also notes that the change in zoning for the Site would *“facilitate modification of the form of the rolling landform into a series of plateau as building platforms and accessways as identified in the Structure Plan are formed”*. The Proposal has followed this format, and therefore responds to the natural landform while still allowing for greenfield development to occur.
- 6.68 I have reiterated an excerpt from the policy for subdivision in the Northern Growth Development Area (DEV-NG-P2) below:

“Provide for subdivision in accordance with the Northern Growth Development Area Structure Plan, and where the design and layout of the subdivision:

- 1. Integrates the topographical, natural and physical characteristics, constraints and opportunities of the Development Area;*
- 2. Minimises landscape and visual effects of development both within the site and on views of the site from transport corridors, the existing Pukerua Bay urban area, and Whenua Tapu cemetery, through:*
 - a. Minimising earthworks and the modification of landform where practicable;*
 - b. Integrating the transport network with the existing landform to the extent practicable;*
 - c. Providing landscaping within road corridors;*

d. *Creating open space linkages and networks; and*

e. *Retaining existing indigenous vegetation;*

...

10. *Provides parks, reserves, pathways and open space areas including a neighbourhood community park and neighbourhood parks, and gully and hilltop reserves where opportunities exist."*

6.69 I consider the proposal from the viewpoints assessed is generally consistent with the above. Earthworks on the Upper Terrace generate effects but overall the author considers these to be on a proportionate scale to the development and "*practicable*" within the context of the challenging underlying landscape. Furthermore, these effects create both positive and negative effects through increased modification and greater views to Mount Welcome.

6.70 On balance the author considers the overall the visual effects resulting from the project to be **Low**.

Landscape Effects

6.71 The landscape effects from the development are both positive and negative.

6.72 The Proposal will result in either a reduction or elimination of grazing activity across the Site. This is considered a positive outcome as this will support the regeneration of indigenous vegetation and groundcover, improve soil structure, and reduce erosion, thereby contributing to an overall enhancement of landscape condition and resilience.

6.73 The retirement of grazing land and increased vegetation cover overtime, in particular in the wetland margins will reduce sedimentation entering adjacent waterways. This is positive for many ecological and landscape considerations including but not limited to, habitat, resilience and 'mauri' and natural character particularly within the valleys. This will likely result in improved water clarity and healthier wetland and aquatic ecosystems, with downstream benefits, helping to give effect to regional and district strategies for riparian/catchment improvement.

6.74 As set out in the ecological report,³⁵ the Site currently has low biodiversity value and the biodiversity would increase as a result of the Proposal.

6.75 As set out in the Strategy, the Proposal will lead to enhanced public access to the waterways on the Site through a vast network of over 3km of trails which extend in or around a large amount of restored wetland areas.³⁶

³⁵ Ecological report prepared by Blue Green Ecology Limited as set out in the appendices of the AEE.

³⁶ Landscape and Urban Design Strategy prepared by Blac Limited as set out in the appendices of the AEE, pages 30 - 31.

- 6.76 Modifications to the underlying landform and landscape character are generally considered to result in negative effects, insofar as they reduce the natural character of the landform. However, these changes are considered proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development (which is consistent with the Structure Plan), practical given the landscape constraints, and designed to integrate sensitively with the broader context. Earthworks will be remediated with grass and extensive native planting (as outlined in the Strategy and LEP), thereby minimising both short-term and long-term visual effects.
- 6.77 While vegetation clearance is considered to have negative effects, the values of the vegetation varies and where higher value exists the offsets proposed by BlueGreen Ecology is consider a net positive for the landscape. The overall increase in native vegetation cover contributes to long-term restorative landscape effects. The proposed planting will enhance ecological connectivity, reinforce local character, and support the ongoing enhancement of the landscape's natural and aesthetic values. In the author's opinion, these measures will also contribute meaningfully to restoring the *mauri* of the landscape and recognising its intrinsic values.
- 6.78 The introduction of lighting is a potential adverse effect, particularly in relation to rural character and night-time visual amenity. However, the extent of lighting is aligned with MRZ zoning, it is purpose-driven, and it has been planned to minimise spill and glare. As such, any adverse landscape or visual effects are considered to be sufficiently managed.
- 6.79 Noise, whilst not strictly a landscape effect, can impact the overall amenity of the landscape. Construction-related noise is a potential adverse effect. However, it is expected to be temporary in nature and appropriately managed within acceptable limits. As such, it is not anticipated to result in significant adverse effects on the landscape or surrounding amenity values, particularly given the separation distance from nearby dwellings. Noise associated with future residential occupation is similarly not considered significant, as it aligns with the anticipated planned character of the area and the typical noise levels associated with residential use. In comparison, noise from the existing highway and railway is generally closer to residential properties and more prominent in the current environment.
- 6.80 The increase in local reserves (for both for active and passive uses) and extensive recreational pathways within reserve land (as setout in the Strategy) are considered positive outcomes in terms of landscape amenity. The extensive recreational pathways within reserve land is positive outcome enable by the development of the land.
- 6.81 When considering the values of Ngāti Toa I appreciate there is both positive and negative impacts from the proposal on principles set forth in paragraph 1.17. From a landscape perspective, the author considers many of the values referenced are supported or enhanced by the proposed development, including the use of naturalised stormwater treatment through landforms and planted areas,

opportunities for water efficiency and harvesting, the opportunity enabled to recognise and strengthening of the site cultural features, extensive active and passive re-vegetation with indigenous species to improve ecological function, and, where feasible, the protection and restoration of wetlands and stream corridors to support natural processes and overall landscape performance, recognising impacts on wetlands and streams will occur.

- 6.82 On balance, the author considers the effects to represent a shift from rural to urban character that is generally consistent with the planned future character. While this results in an initial reduction in natural character, positive outcomes such as increased native planting, riparian protection, and ecological enhancement will improve landscape amenity and natural character over time. Overall, this is considered a positive outcome, and the resulting magnitude of landscape effects is assessed as **Low** and outweighed by the long-term benefits.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To address observations from Viewpoint two (where the houses form part of the skyline, as opposed to Mount Welcome) and to a lesser extent, Viewpoint one and four where the houses form part of the skyline, as opposed to Mount Welcome and the visual effect rating was at a level worth considering further mitigation.
- 7.2 The author recommends that a condition of consent to lessen these visual effects, with lots 415, 416, 417, 418, 480, 481, 482, 483, 479 being subject to a consent notice registered against the new records of title requiring:
- Buildings and structures shall not exceed a reflectance value of 30% within Groups A, B or C within BS5252 standard colour palette for the exterior finish of the building or structure; and
 - Any building or structure must not exceed a maximum height of 8m.
 - Provide landscaping measures (i.e mounding and planting or planting alone) to soften and scale the west facing built elevations.

8 CONCLUSION

The proposed development will result in a shift from a rural to an urban residential character, consistent with the site's zoning and the Structure Plan. The most notable adverse effects arise from the scale of earthworks and modification of the existing landform, particularly on the Upper Terrace, as well as potential visual impacts from public viewpoints such as Whenua Tapu Cemetery, Taua Tapu Track and the identified residents of Coroglen Rise and Airlee Road. However, these effects are considered to be Low to Low-Moderate overall due to the limited visibility from key locations, alignment with the Structure Plan, and mitigation through revegetation and design controls.

Positive landscape effects include the cessation of grazing, which will support soil recovery and indigenous vegetation regeneration; significant native planting, particularly in riparian areas; improved fish passage; enhanced ecological connectivity; and the provision of new public reserves and pathways. While lighting and construction noise are potential adverse landscape effects, they are considered minor and manageable. On balance, the adverse effects are low and are outweighed by long-term positive contributions to the landscape, amenity, and ecological function of the area.

Overall, the author assesses the landscape and visual effects to be **Low** and, in many cases, positive.

9 APPENDICES

