



FAST TRACK APPROVALS Act 2024(FTAA 2024) TECHNICAL ADVICE

Carter Group Ōhoka Substantive Application

File No	FTAA-2606-1253
Date	8.10.26
Memo To	Kate Barry-Piceno, Ōhoka Residential Subdivision Expert Panel Chair
From	Sue McManaway, Boffa Miskell (Registered Landscape Architect / Principal)
Subject	Landscape

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I have been asked by Waimakariri District Council (WDC or Council) to undertake a peer review of the Landscape Assessment for the Ōhoka Development Fast-track Application.

The purpose of the peer review is an appraisal of the Landscape Assessment undertaken by DCM Urban rather than a parallel assessment.

I disagree with DCM's characterisation of the proposal as an extension of Ōhoka and the extent to which that characterisation is relied upon to moderate the assessed effects. Given the proposal's scale, urban intensity and range of activities, in my opinion it is more accurately understood as a substantial new urban settlement adjoining the existing small village and likely to become the dominant component of the enlarged settlement. In this context, the assessment does not adequately demonstrate how the receiving rural landscape can accommodate this scale of change, or how the particular effects of the commercial centre, retirement village and polo/event facility have informed the overall landscape effects conclusions.

While I agree that planting and landscape treatment can assist in reducing visual contrast between development and its surrounding environment, I consider that the mitigation approach is focussed more strongly on vegetative screening than demonstrating how the development may be integrated with the receiving landscape.

Further information is also required to confirm the nature and level of natural character, visual and construction effects and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation. In particular, the assessment does not adequately address effects on individual adjoining residents, or construction and interim effects and the timing at

which planting will become effective. While the Draft Landscape Management Plan provides useful links between subdivision staging and landscape implementation, the planting is generally triggered after construction begins and important matters concerning design, timing, responsibility, long-term maintenance and enforceability remain uncertain.

Overall, I consider that the proposal would permanently replace most of the Site's open rural character, substantially enlarge the settlement footprint, and materially change the scale, identity and rural setting of Ōhoka.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Memo

I have been asked by Waimakariri District Council (WDC or Council) to provide landscape advice on the substantive Fast-track application for the proposed development at Ōhoka. DCM Urban Design Limited has assessed the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed Ōhoka Residential Subdivision at 531 and 535 Mill Road. The proposal provides for approximately 856 residential lots ranging in size, a village centre, retirement village, polo ground and associated roads and infrastructure.

The purpose of this memorandum is to peer review the applicant's assessment of landscape, visual and natural character effects. The review considers whether the assessment:

- applies an appropriate and transparent methodology;
- accurately describes and evaluates the receiving landscape and its values;
- adequately identifies the nature, scale, duration and geographical extent of change;
- assesses landscape, visual and natural character effects in a balanced and reasoned manner;
- reaches findings that are supported by the available information;
- identifies appropriate mitigation; and
- provides sufficient certainty that the landscape outcomes relied upon will be delivered and maintained.

The review is an appraisal of the applicant's assessment rather than a separate or parallel landscape assessment. Where I disagree with the applicant's findings, I identify the reasons for that disagreement, any information gaps or assumptions affecting my opinion, and the additional information, design response or conditions that I consider necessary.

This memorandum has been structured to respond, as far as relevant to landscape expertise, to the FTAA Panel's Minute 1. The landscape matters most directly relevant to Appendix 4 of the Panel Minute are:

- Item 1, in regard to the implications of the proposal's scale and intensity for landscape character and Ōhoka's rural setting.
- item 5, insofar as the identification, retention, removal or modification of waterways, springs and wetlands affects natural character;
- item 9, concerning staging, certainty, enforceability, mitigation delivery and the allocation of long-term responsibilities and liabilities; and

- item 10, concerning the proposal of practicable amendments to the conditions that may address identified issues.

1.2 Review process

The original DCM material submitted with the application combined landscape and urban design considerations. As an initial step in preparing this memorandum, I reviewed the following documents, focusing on matters relevant to landscape.

- Fast Track Approval Application, prepared by Novo Group, dated June 2026;
- Appendix 23 – Landscape and Urban Design Assessment Rev D, prepared by DCM, dated 5 June 2026;
- Appendix 23 – Urban Design and Landscape Masterplan Rev H, prepared by DCM, dated 8 June 2026;
- Appendix 26 – Scheme Plans, prepared by Inovo, dated 11 June 2026.
- Appendix 33 – National Planning Instruments Compliance Assessment, prepared by Novo Group;
- Appendix 34 – Operative Waimakariri District Plan Compliance Assessment, prepared by Novo Group.
- Appendix 35 – Partially Operative Waimakariri District Plan Compliance Assessment, prepared by Novo Group.
- Appendix 42 – Statutory Documents Provisions Assessment, prepared by Novo; and
- Appendix 43 – Proposed District Council Consent Conditions, prepared by Novo.

That initial review identified a number of matters requiring clarification or further information including consideration of natural character effects, cumulative effects, the visual effects of night lighting, construction effects and timing, the timing and effectiveness of mitigation planting including a Landscape Management Plan, and a stronger justification for the low-moderate landscape effects rating provided.¹

DCM Urban subsequently provided a separate, updated landscape and visual effects assessment (8 September 2026), an updated masterplan and a new Landscape Management Plan. I have reviewed that material and prepared my peer review accordingly.

The following updated and supplementary material has been considered in finalising this memorandum:

- Appendix 23(a) (Updated): Urban Design Assessment, prepared by DCM Urban Design Limited, dated 10 September 2026;
- Appendix 23(b) (Updated): Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by DCM Urban Design Limited, dated 8 September 2026 (referred to in this memo as the DCM Assessment or the Assessment);
- Appendix 23(c) (Supplementary): Draft Landscape Management Plan, prepared by DCM Urban Design Limited, dated 10 September 2026;
- Appendix 23 (Updated): Urban Design and Landscape Masterplan, prepared by DCM Urban Design Limited, dated 10 September 2026;
- Appendix 26 (Updated): Scheme Plans, prepared by Inovo, dated 10 September 2026; and
- Minute 1: Invite to Comment, issued by the Fast-track decision-making

¹ No draft peer review or RFI was issued at this stage however these matters were raised at a Teams meeting on 12 August 2026 with DCM Urban, organised by WDC, to discuss urban design and landscape.

Panel, dated 14 September 2026.

The updated material addresses some of the gaps and further information requested. Among the changes, DCM now acknowledges a high magnitude of change at the Site scale, the loss of rural openness, Moderate adverse effects on landscape character and values, higher visual effects for some adjoining residents, and temporary, lighting and cumulative effects.

The updated masterplan and Draft Landscape Management Plan also provide materially more information concerning landscape treatments, planting palettes, buffer widths, target heights, staging, maintenance and monitoring.

Where the updated information addresses an issue identified in my initial review, that is acknowledged in this memorandum. Where an issue is addressed only in part and / or I disagree, I identify the remaining concern.

The Key Issues section below (**section 4**) therefore focuses on the matters that remain material after taking the updated and supplementary information into account.

In reviewing the methodology and reasoning applied by DCM, I have also had regard to:

- *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2022)*, prepared by Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects

Site visit

I undertook a site visit to Ōhoka township, the surrounding road network and the wider receiving environment on 9 September 2026. I viewed the Site from publicly accessible locations including the 7 representative photograph viewpoint locations utilised by DCM Urban to consider visual effects. I did not access the Site or any private property.

Scope and limitations

My assessment is based on the information supplied with the application and the updated and supplementary material identified above. Important uncertainties remain where development components are illustrative or indicative, where details are deferred to a later approval process, or where no overall construction programme or defined development envelope has been provided.

In particular, the absence of confirmed construction durations, finished levels and detailed built-form parameters for some components limits the precision with which certain construction, visual and residual effects can be assessed. I identify those limitations where they are relevant to my conclusions.

2. QUALIFICATIONS

I (Sue McManaway) am a registered landscape architect and have practiced for over 20 years. I hold the qualification of Bachelor of Landscape Architecture with Honours (2001) from Lincoln University as well as a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Education (1993) from the University of Otago. I am currently employed as a Principal Landscape Planner in Boffa Miskell Limited's (BML) Christchurch office.

My experience covers both area-based assessments such as the identification of outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONF/Ls) and project-based assessments including both the assessment of landscape and visual effects for development projects for applicants and acting as a peer reviewer for councils. Project experience has included many types and scales, including urban development proposals from subdivisions in rural landscapes to large-scale buildings in existing urban environments as well as proposals in ONF/Ls.

I have not had any involvement in any previous resource consent applications or appeals in relation to this Site.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. This technical review has been prepared in accordance with that Code. In particular, unless I state otherwise, the opinions I express are within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

4. KEY ISSUES AND AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

4.1 Characterisation of the proposal as an extension of Ōhoka

This issue has relevance to Appendix 4, Item 1 of Minute 1, in regard to the implications of the proposal's scale and intensity for landscape character and Ōhoka's rural setting.

I disagree with DCM's characterisation of the proposal as an extension of Ōhoka. The proposal would physically adjoin the existing village however it would be substantially larger than the existing Settlement Zone² as shown in DCM Urban's Ōhoka Settlement Growth and Urban Form Map³. While development is proposed to be staged, when considered as a whole, the urban character of the proposal would be experienced as disproportionate to the existing rural settlement scale and pattern of this landscape.

DCM relies on the proposed development pattern and lot distribution and the conclusion that the proposal would be experienced as a planted or consolidated extension as reasons for moderating landscape, visual and cumulative effects⁴.

Mitigation Measure 1 (MM1)⁵ states that higher-density development will be concentrated near existing Ōhoka, the village centre and main open spaces, with larger lots toward the outer parts of the Site. DCM considers that this pattern will

² Approximately 9.6 ha

³ See map A4 Ōhoka Settlement Growth and Urban Form, p8, in the Urban Design and Landscape Masterplan, 10 September 2026, prepared by DCM Urban Design Ltd

⁴ For example, refer to pp 29, 30,32, and 34 of the DCM Assessment

⁵ See section 4.1, p10 of the DCM Assessment

assist the transition between the existing settlement, the proposed development and the surrounding rural and rural-lifestyle environment.

I accept that the masterplan provides some variation in lot size with the 2,000 m²-plus lots reducing building density and providing greater capacity for open space vegetation at the southern end of the Site and that the commercial hub is positioned towards the existing Ōhoka village.

However, the standard proposed residential pattern, and the new commercial core extends across most of the Site and, at approximately 77 ha⁶ is some 8 times larger than the area of the existing Settlement Zone. The larger lots provide only a limited density transition and do not demonstrate that the proposed urban development responds to the existing character of Ōhoka.

In landscape character terms, I consider the proposal is more accurately understood as a new and substantial urban settlement adjoining and connecting with the existing small village of Ōhoka. Rather than an urban extension, it is likely to become the dominant component of the settlement.

4.2 Scale and nature of landscape change

This issue has relevance to Appendix 4, Item 1 of Minute 1, in regard to the implications of the proposal's scale and intensity for landscape character and Ōhoka's rural setting.

The proposal would permanently transform the Site from an open rural landscape to an intensively developed urban environment. DCM now identifies a high magnitude of change at the Site scale, the loss of rural openness and spaciousness, the southward movement of the settlement edge and Moderate (more than minor in RMA terminology) adverse effects on landscape character and values.

However, the assessment does not clearly evaluate the receiving landscape's ability to accommodate this particular type and scale of development. While the assessment makes comparisons with anticipated rural lifestyle outcomes allowed under the Rural Lifestyle Zone, the ability of the Site to accommodate 4-hectare rural lifestyle development is not equivalent to accommodating the density and scale of urban development proposed which includes a polo / event ground, commercial activity and a retirement village. These elements may introduce larger or more dense built forms and different activities from the surrounding residential development.

While the DCM Urban Landscape Assessment identifies the different urban and open space components of the proposal, it does not transparently evaluate how the distinct built form, infrastructure, parking, lighting and activity associated with them contribute to the magnitude and character of landscape change or to the overall Moderate adverse effects rating.

Rather, the assessment places reliance on a vegetative screening approach,

⁶ Excluding the polo ground (8.9 ha) and green space (24 ha)

particularly along the Site boundaries, to address the development's relationship with its landscape setting and assist in its integration⁷. However, while planting can reduce visibility and assist in softening or filtering views, the treatment proposed may also create a long, relatively continuous vegetated barrier that visually encloses the development and separates it rather than responding to the landscape in which it is located. I refer to this further in **section 4.4** below.

4.3 Natural character effects

This issue has relevance to Appendix 4, Item 5 of Minute 1, insofar as the identification, retention and modification of waterways, springs, wetlands and their margins give rise to natural character effects.

The updated DCM assessment now partially addresses natural character. It identifies the relevant District Plan provisions, describes the existing waterways and their modified pastoral setting, acknowledges the change to planted corridors within an urban open-space network, and identifies visible paths, bridges, culverts and crossings. It concludes that retention, setbacks and riparian planting will significantly enhance natural character.⁸

However, the conclusion is not supported by a complete natural character assessment. DCM acknowledges that paths, bridges, culverts and crossings will be visible and the surrounding setting will change but does not explain or appear to take into consideration effects such as the removal of wetlands and any excavation within or beside waterways including the channel realignment or reconstruction which are changes shown on E1 Modification of Natural Features in the DCM Urban Masterplan document⁹.

A more complete assessment would translate the ecological and hydrological expert evidence into a natural character assessment that evaluates effects of both physical modification to the waterways and urbanisation of the setting, as well as considering the benefits of the proposed riparian planting, and provide a supported conclusion on the resulting level of natural character effect.

Riparian restoration may improve the condition of the waterways, while re-alignment, roads, paths, lighting, structures and adjoining urban activity may reduce some aspects of naturalness. Those effects require a balanced assessment.

4.4 Landscape mitigation, planting establishment and staging, ownership and enforceability

This issue has relevance to Appendix 4, Item 9 of Minute 1, in regard to sufficient mitigation, certainty and enforceability.

The boundary treatments proposed as landscape mitigation rely heavily on continuous uniform native planting to screen or substantially filter views of the development and visually contain the proposed urban area. While this screening

⁷ Refer to page 34 of the DCM Assessment

⁸ Refer to p16 of the DCM Assessment

⁹ See E1 Modification of Natural Features, p56 of the DCM Masterplan

approach may reduce the visibility and contrast of buildings over time, it does not necessarily respond to the receiving landscape or assist with integrating the development and its urban edge with the surrounding rural landscape.

The surrounding road edges are highly vegetated in places, but that vegetation varies between properties, includes both exotic and indigenous species and is typically interrupted by driveways, open paddocks and views between trees. A continuous 4 to 5 m-high planted buffer could instead create a uniform, enclosed and deliberately managed urban boundary rather than one that is integrated with the established landscape pattern.

A more context-responsive treatment could incorporate selected suitable exotic species and deliberate variation in planting density, height, setback and composition, while retaining sufficient indigenous planting and screening where required. This would reduce the risk of creating a uniform “green wall” and better integrate the development edge with the established rural landscape pattern.

The Draft Landscape Management Plan is a useful addition but remains a live draft and defers detailed plans, quantities, specifications and final approval. In my view, critical minimum outcomes such as buffer locations and widths, and planting densities and grades should be included.

There is also an inconsistency between the 24-month establishment period set out in the Draft Landscape Management Plan and the 36-month period stated in the masterplan. A minimum 36-month contractor establishment period is more appropriate for strategic mitigation, with extension where performance standards have not been achieved.

The Draft Landscape Management Plan also provides a clearer relationship between subdivision staging and landscape implementation than was evident from the original application material. It links street, reserve, waterway, stormwater and habitat planting to the corresponding subdivision works, and links Treatments A to D to the 11 subdivision stages through four broader boundary-planting stages.

However, there are some areas where I consider outcomes are still uncertain.

- Planting is generally triggered after subdivision or construction works commence and is therefore not necessarily in place before earthworks create adverse landscape and visual effects.
- The reference to planting being undertaken ‘no later than 18 months thereafter’ is also ambiguous in terms of allowance for staging, and the programme does not identify the duration, sequencing or possible overlap of subdivision stages.
- The Draft Landscape Management Plan states only that the relevant planting stage will “commence” and does not clearly specify whether the whole corresponding boundary treatment must be completed, or only the portion adjoining the active subdivision stage.
- The proposed transfer of considerable lengths of strategic boundary planting to individual lot owners creates uncertainty regarding outcomes with a long-term risk of inconsistent maintenance, removal and

cumulative decline.

- Planting within the Commercial Area is less certain because it is tied to construction of individual commercial buildings and responsibility is assigned to future commercial lot owners / occupants.
- The Draft Landscape Management Plan does not provide specific information regarding the timing of implementation or responsibility for planting within the retirement village or polo/event facility. These components are not identified separately in the indicative landscape programme or responsibility tables, and it is unclear whether their planting is intended to be treated as reserve, private-lot or other planting.

In my view, the timing provisions do not necessarily provide advance mitigation and planting may take some time to achieve the outcomes indicated in the residual, or post-mitigation landscape and visual effects assessments.

Planting is generally triggered after subdivision works commence and may occur in the first available planting season, with wording that appears to allow an outer period of up to 18 months. The documents do not identify when the 4 to 5 metre target heights will be achieved or whether residual ratings represent Year 5, Year 10, Year 15 or maturity.

4.5 Visual effects

Figure 1 below identifies the location of specific properties I refer to in this section.



Figure 1: Location of specific properties referred to in this memorandum

The updated DCM Assessment provides a considerably more detailed viewpoint analysis and clearer consideration of pre-mitigation and residual effects. It also addresses effects of night-time lighting.

The Assessment is still not clear in regard to the development parameters or the year represented by each residual rating. The masterplan renders assist in

understanding the intended design character, but they are illustrative rather than viewpoint-based visual simulations. They generally depict mature planting at a substantial scale and do not reliably demonstrate opening-year conditions, staged construction or views from the most affected external viewing audience or 'receptors'.

I also consider that each residential property adjacent or in close proximity to the Site should have been assessed individually or included within a clearly justified 'receptor' group where the properties have genuinely comparable locations, outlooks and relationships with the proposal.

I agree with DCM Urban Assessment that residents adjoining the Site at the northeast corner (particularly 401 Whites Road and 507 Mill Road) are likely to experience the greatest visual effects however I consider there is potential for residual effects to be greater than the Moderate effects stated.

DCM assumes that the proposed commercial area will be perceived as an extension of the existing commercial centre because it is located near the Mill Road and Whites Road intersection. However, this will not be the experience of those residents situated between the existing commercial corner and the proposed commercial hub.

Landscape Treatment C would provide a planting strip approximately 2 metres wide and at least 4 metres high once established. This may screen or filter lower-level commercial activity, but a 2-metre-wide strip limited to a single row of planting is narrow for strategic mitigation between established residential properties and a commercial centre. An eventual height of 4 metres will not necessarily screen roofs, upper building elements, signage or lighting.

The height, form, footprint, setbacks, parking, service areas, signage and lighting are not sufficiently defined, and planting within the commercial area appears indicative and partly dependent on future lot owners or occupiers. Unless the critical planting and built-form outcomes are secured by conditions and approved plans, effects are difficult to determine.

I also consider the visual effects on 290 Bradleys Road require more specific assessment because of the property's proximity to the proposed polo/event facility and its access. The polo ground would retain a substantial open grassed area however it would be a managed recreation and event facility with associated activity and infrastructure.

I also note there does not appear to be a distinct assessment of visual effects from properties immediately adjoining the southern Site boundary or of properties at 509 and 511 Mill Road.

4.6 Construction effects

DCM describes construction effects as temporary and assesses them as Low-Moderate adverse. I do not consider that rating is adequately supported. Construction across a large rural Site would introduce exposed soils, bulk earthworks, vegetation removal, machinery, stockpiles, and prolonged building activity before the completed landscape framework is coherent or planting has

established. During intensive phases, these activities may comprise a greater visual contrast of unquantified duration compared with the completed development, and therefore the temporary nature and degree of those effects is not clear.

4.7 Design parameters

It remains challenging to fully understand the landscape effects without clearer parameters for building designs including finished ground and floor levels. The plans and renders remain indicative and do not necessarily reflect the outcome assessed. In particular, information regarding the commercial area and retirement village remains a significant gap.

4.8 Cultural landscape dimensions

The DCM Landscape Assessment acknowledges that the Partially Operative Waimakariri District Plan identifies the Ōhoka Stream Tributary through the Ngā Wai Overlay, which recognises its cultural significance to Ngāi Tūāhuriri. However, the Assessment explicitly states that commentary on cultural layers is not within its scope.

Given that cultural dimensions contribute to landscape character and values, the Assessment should explain whether any engagement is being undertaken, and if so, how cultural landscape dimensions have been or will be addressed.

5 KEY AREAS OF AGREEMENT

5.1 Characterisation of the existing environment

I broadly agree that the Site is a modified but predominantly open rural landscape characterised by pastoral land, flat Canterbury Plains topography, rural activities, shelterbelts and mature trees, scattered dwellings and farm buildings, waterways, drains, springs and wetlands, low levels of built development and a generally spacious rural setting.

I also agree that rural-residential and lifestyle development has modified parts of the surrounding landscape, particularly toward Mandeville. The Site nevertheless makes an important contribution to the remaining open rural setting, scale and legibility of Ōhoka.

5.2 High magnitude and permanence of change

I agree with DCM's updated finding that the proposal would result in a high magnitude of change at the Site scale. Most of the Site would change permanently from open rural land to an urban environment with a commercial centre, increased buildings, roads, lighting and activity.

5.3 Benefits of the green-blue landscape framework

I agree that structuring the masterplan around retained and enhanced waterways, riparian corridors, stormwater areas, reserves and paths is one of the proposal's

strongest features. There is potential for the proposed riparian planting and public access to enhance landscape and natural character attributes however further natural character assessment is required to fully understand effects on the waterways and wetlands.

6 CONDITIONS OF CONSENT

Should the Panel consider that the Proposal is regionally significant, the following conditions and requests for further information are considered appropriate from a landscape perspective.

Staging

The conditions should retain the links between subdivision stages and planting identified in the Draft Landscape Management Plan but strengthen the implementation triggers. Strategic boundary planting should be completed in the first available planting season before, or at the outset of, substantive earthworks within the relevant stage and before building construction wherever practicable and remove the ambiguous reference to planting “no later than 18 months thereafter”.

The grouped boundary-planting stages should be clarified. Commencement of one subdivision stage within a planting group should either trigger completion of the whole associated boundary treatment or the conditions should identify precisely which planting package must be completed. Further comment on boundary planting is made below.

Relevant waterway, stormwater, reserve and street planting should be completed before certification for the corresponding stage.

Whites Road and Bradleys Road boundary treatment

Boundary planting treatment on approved plans should respond to the varied vegetation character of the surrounding rural landscape and incorporate variation in species, height, density and arrangement, including opportunities for setbacks (i.e. associated with the SMAs that adjoin Whites Road) and filtered views provided by low density spacings of taller trees and exotic species, rather than forming a uniformly continuous screen.

Adjoining residential properties

Prior to the grant of consent, detailed landscape plans should be prepared that respond specifically to each immediately adjoining residential property, or to clearly justified receptor groups with comparable relationships to the proposal. The plans should address the particular development component adjoining each property, the location of dwellings and outdoor living areas, existing vegetation, proposed built form, construction activity, lighting and the time required for mitigation planting to become effective.

The width of Landscape Treatment C should be increased from the current proposal of a 2-metre-wide planting strip to allow for a layered planting buffer and should be agreed with neighbouring properties where possible.

Maintenance and monitoring

Proposed planting should be subject to a minimum 36-month establishment and maintenance period commencing from the certified practical completion of each landscape package.

Maintenance obligations should continue beyond 36 months where measurable performance standards have not been achieved. If any plant or tree becomes diseased or dies it should be replaced to achieve an equivalent level of screening or amenity in the next available planting season.

Ownership and long-term liability

Prior to the grant of consent, information related to the ownership and long-term maintenance responsibility should be clearly identified for every area of proposed mitigation planting including the retirement village and polo ground.

Strategic planting to be handed over from the consent holder should be secured through covenants or another enduring mechanism.

Built form design parameters

Prior to the grant of consent, parameters and design guidance should be established to achieve the high amenity design outcomes described, including for the commercial area, retirement village and polo centre facilities.

7 CONCLUSIONS

DCM Urban Design Limited has assessed the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed Ōhoka Residential Subdivision at 531 and 535 Mill Road. The proposal provides for approximately 856 residential lots ranging in size, a village centre, retirement village, polo ground and associated roads and infrastructure.

I agree that the green-blue network around retained and enhanced waterways is a strong feature and there is potential for the proposed riparian planting and public access to enhance landscape and natural character attributes.

I also agree with DCM's acknowledgement of a high magnitude of Site-scale change and loss of rural openness.

I do not agree that the proposal is adequately characterised in landscape terms as a proportionate extension of existing Ōhoka and the potential for 4 ha rural-lifestyle development at the Site does not demonstrate that the receiving landscape has the capacity to accommodate the particular scale and nature of urbanisation proposed. The proposed development would introduce a much larger area of urban land use and activity and is more accurately understood as a new and likely dominant settlement component adjoining the existing small village. This would materially transform Ōhoka's scale and relationship with its rural setting. On the available information, I consider adverse landscape effects may be more in the Moderate-High range.

Natural character effects on the waterways and margins and construction effects and duration remain insufficiently resolved. Specific visual effects on adjacent

properties and component-specific built-form parameters also remain incomplete and strategic mitigation depends on timing, establishment and long-term management arrangements that require clearer conditions. On the available information, I consider there is potential for visual effects on some adjacent properties to be up to High during intensive construction periods and more in the Moderate-High range following mitigation, under the current proposal.

The proposed conditions do not yet provide certainty and stage-linked mitigation. In particular, they allow broad sequencing after Stage 1, defer landscape detail until landscaping is about to commence, rely on general accordance with indicative material, and do not adequately secure natural-character outcomes, advance planting, long-term ownership or component-specific built form.