GLASSON HUXTABLE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

# 1088 Wilsons Lead Road

# Subdivision, Lots 1-21

**Landscape and Visual Assessment of Effects**

By

Glasson Huxtable Landscape Architects Ltd

**21 August 2025**

| Document Quality Assurance | |
|---|---|
| Title | 1088 Wilsons Lead Road<br>Landscape and Visual Assessment of Effects |
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Glasson Huxtable Landscape Architects have been engaged by Tauranga Bay Holdings Ltd ('the applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Assessment ('assessment') based on the site at 1088 Wilsons Lead Road, Cape Foulwind (legal description Sec 41 SO13711). The applicant seeks to subdivide the existing farm into 21 residential lots ('the Project').

As part of this assessment, the existing landscape character and amenity value of the location has been evaluated. The landscape and visual effects of the subdivision have then been assessed against this, as well as the relevant statutory provisions. Design principles have been incorporated by way of mitigation to assist where values may potentially be affected.

This Landscape and Visual Assessment forms one of a few specialist assessments, which together will determine the effects arising from the Project. It responds to a Section 92 Request (s92) received by the applicant as part of the Resource Consent process under Buller District Council (BDC).

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Assessment Process

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the concepts and principles outlined within *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa Landscape Assessment Guidelines.*[1] A summary of the assessment criteria and definitions are contained in **Appendix 1.**

A Graphic Supplement appends this assessment as **Appendix 2** and should be read alongside it. This illustrates the wider context, regional and district planning framework, and includes a range of panoramic images. A landscape mitigation plan and schedule of plant species are also included.

### 2.2 Desktop Study

As part of preparing to write this assessment, site information was compiled through a desktop study. This included understanding and collating information about the:

- Relevant planning information and statutory provisions.
- Existing site aerials, topography, vegetation, neighbouring properties, and land uses.
- Design details for the subdivision.

A review of existing site information included the:

- *Section 92 Request for Further Information,* prepared by Jess Hollis for BDC, 10 October 2024.
- *Resource Consent Application for Subdivision*, prepared by Eliot Sinclair, 14 February 2023.
- *Ecological Impact Assessment*, prepared by Richard Nichol, 11 May 2023.

### 2.3 Site Visits

An initial site visit was conducted on the 6th of June 2025 by Mark Huxtable of Glasson Huxtable, accompanied by Tom McGaveston. Site conditions on the day were clear with little wind. The site visit assisted with understanding the site and its wider context and taking photographs. This in turn, informed the assessment of effects and the subsequent recommendations for mitigation.

[1] *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022. For further information, refer to: https://nzila.co.nz/about/te-tangi-a-te-manu.

## 3.0 EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

This chapter of the assessment includes two parts:

- Identifying the relevant landscape context. It is important to understand the wider context of Cape Foulwind to ensure that any modification can be integrated without any undue effect.
- Describing and interpreting the character and the values of the Project area – physical, associative, and perceptual. Analysing these attributes is pertinent to understanding the potential effects of the Project on these values.

### 3.1 Wider Context – West Coast

The project site is located on the West Coast (Te Tai Poutini) of the South Island of New Zealand. The West Coast Region is a long, narrow strip of land extending over 600km along the coast, nestled between the Tasman Sea and the Southern Alps. Geological processes of tectonic activity, mountain building, glacial action and erosion have combined to form a rugged, dramatic, and diverse landscape. The region is known for its breathtaking scenery, which includes mountain ranges, towering peaks, glaciers, deep valleys, lakes, rivers, lush rainforests, and wild coastlines and beaches. These landscapes offer a rich setting for outdoor recreation and adventure tourism.

The West Coast has a long history of Māori occupation. Following European exploration, a history of mining and industry developed, with the West Coast Gold Rush of the 1860s, coal mining peaking in the 1880s (but still ongoing today), and logging and timber operations. This human activity has resulted in the clearance of large areas of forest and has shaped and formed the wider landscape over time. Today, the area is supported by a mixture of industries including mining, forestry, agriculture, fishing, and tourism.

The three main centres on the West Coast are Westport, Hokitika and Greymouth. The Project site is located approximately 10km from Westport, the gateway to the northern West Coast, and near the small settlement of Cape Foulwind (refer to **Appendix 2: 1.0 Wider Context Plan and 2.0 Site Location Plan**). There are also many other smaller settlements on the West Coast, with human occupation largely confined to the more accessible, flatter coastal areas.

### 3.2 Intermediate Context – Cape Foulwind and Surrounds

Cape Foulwind is a prominent craggy limestone headland accessed via State Highway 67A, offering expansive views of the Tasman Sea. Historically, the area had a large cement works operation which processed locally sourced limestone, sand, and clay, as well as material from nearby coal mines.

Today, the area is renowned for its dramatic coastal cliffs, wildlife, expansive sandy beaches, rugged coastline, and panoramic views of the mountains and coastline. Further inland, beyond the extensive coastal dune system, lie broad, undulating coastal plains incised by rivers and with a backdrop of Mt Rochfort and the Paparoa Ranges.

The small coastal settlement of Cape Foulwind is situated approximately 1km north of the Project site. It comprises residential homes and baches (with recent development obvious and new subdivisions underway). There are also a few accommodation options that serve as a base for visitors exploring the area. Additional residential dwellings are scattered around the coast including Tauranga Bay, Nine Mile Beach, Larsen's Street, and further inland.

Popular recreational activities in the area include visiting the historic Cape Foulwind Lighthouse, the 3.4km long Cape Foulwind Walkway (which links Tauranga Bay to the lighthouse), and viewing the New Zealand Fur Seal Colony. While much of the wider landscape has been modified for pastoral grazing, there are remnants of vegetation in a recovering phase. Vegetation within the plains is predominantly exotic grasslands mixed with pockets of native shrubs, riparian vegetation and some roadside planting (refer to the **Ecological Impact Assessment** for further information).

### 3.3 Project Site

The Project site, measures approximately 10.5ha and is located southeast of Cape Foulwind. It is roughly 1km inland from the coast (at its nearest point), at an elevation of approximately 40m above sea level. It is situated at the intersection of Wilsons Lead Road and Tauranga Bay Road. The site's landform is gently undulating, with several gullies incised to depths of around 5m. The landform has been influenced by drainage patterns, which run in a north-to-north westerly direction.

The predominant landcover consists of modified pastoral grassland, indicative of the site's current use for sheep and beef grazing. Two distinct wetland areas have been identified on the property, as detailed in the **Ecological Impact Assessment** submitted with the application. Pockets of native planting, weeds and gorse run along the road reserve and site boundaries restricting some views into the site. Other areas along the road boundary have very little vegetation and allow more open views into the site.

### 3.4 Key Landscape Values

In summary, key landscape values of the area include:

- The ocean, craggy headlands, sandy beaches, sand dunes and cliffs of the rugged coastal environment, and the transition of this landscape to the elevated gently undulating plains further inland (where the Project site is located).
- The highly modified, productive rural working environment of the plains, which retains a distinctly rural character.
- A sense of relative naturalness and openness compared to more urban environments, due to the presence of pasture, native planting, and scattered location of buildings and structures.
- Long views across the plains, intersected by vegetation, with the backdrop of Mt Rochfort and the Paparoa Ranges.
- Scenic and recreational value of the area.
- Drainage processes, which have contributed to a gently undulating landscape.

### 3.5 Neighbouring Properties

Farmland is located directly to the south and east of the site. An existing residential dwelling is also located directly across Wilsons Lead Road. There are two nearby residential properties that may be influenced by the proposal. These are:

- 1088 Wilsons Lead Road
- Lot2 DP587613 Wilsons Lead Road (address unknown).

Immediately northwest of the Project site, is the site of the former National Portland Cement Company (146 Tauranga Bay Road), which closed in 2016. This land is zoned Cement Production Zone under the BDP. Dwellings located further afield are not considered to be affected by the Project due to their distance from the site and the presence of intervening vegetation, which restricts views in the site's direction.

## 4.0 PROPOSAL

### 4.1 Key Features of the Proposal

The proposal as outlined below highlights those aspects pertinent to understanding the potential landscape and visual effects of the Project.

Subdivision

The Project seeks to subdivide the approximately 10.5ha site into 21 residential allotments. Proposed lots range in size between 0.4ha and 0.925ha. Refer to **Appendix 2: 3.0 Proposed Overall Site Plan and 3.1 Proposed Subdivision Plans**. The Project will be staged over two phases: Stage 1: Lots 1-8 and Stage 2: Lots 9 to 21. Building platforms have been defined and range between 400m$^2$ to 1008m$^2$. Most allotments (15) will have a 990m$^2$ building platform.

Vehicle Accessibility

To access the new subdivision, the two existing entrances (marked by gates) are proposed to be upgraded. The northern most entrance will provide access to proposed Lot 5. The other entrance will provide access by a central formed road to the remaining titles. It is anticipated that each new lot will generate up to eight vehicle trips per household per day. This equates to 168 vehicle movements per day (8 associated with Lot 5 and 160 at the main entrance). No street lighting will be required for the vehicle crossing, ROW, or the private access legs.

Proposed Landscaping

To assist with mitigating any adverse effects of the Proposal, the applicant proposes the following landscape measures:

- A 3m wide strip of mixed native planting along the full length of the road boundaries (excluding accessways) and the southeastern site boundary.
- Enhancement of the two distinct wetlands and incised gullies.

## 5.0 PERMITTED BASELINE

The BDP permits the construction of two dwellings on the site, provided certain standards are met. These include a minimum setback of 10m from the road boundary, a maximum building height of 10m, a maximum gross floor area of 500m² per single building, and no modification of wetlands that are larger than 0.5ha.

## 6.0 STATUTORY PROVISIONS

This section of the assessment reviews and summarises the statutory provisions relevant to landscape matters. The purpose of reviewing the provisions is to help frame the assessment. It is not to undertake a full planning assessment of the Project against the provisions.

The identified statutory provisions include the:

- *Resource Management Act (RMA),* 1991.
- *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS),* 2010.
- *West Coast Regional Policy Statement (WCRPS),* 2020.
- *Buller District Plan (BDP),* operative 28 January 2000.
- *Te Tai o Poutini (TTPP),* proposed plan notified 14 July 2022.

### 6.1 Resource Management Act

This assessment responds to the RMA, which provides the statutory framework for managing the effects of activities on the environment and is a critical component to any development. Sections 6 and 7 of the RMA, and its elaboration in the lower order statutory documents, provide the framework for most Landscape and Visual Assessments, including this one. An evaluation against the applicable landscape objectives and policies is included in the following sections.

| RMA | Applicable Policies | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| **Section 6 – Matters of National Importance:** *"…managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources…"* | *a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.* | The preservation and protection of natural character has been addressed in **Section 7 of this assessment.** |
| | *b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes* (ONF/ONL's) *from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.* | The Project site is not located within any District Plan overlays relating to outstanding natural features (ONFs) or landscapes (ONLs). |
| **Section 7 – Other Matters** *"…managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources…"* | *c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values.* | The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values and the quality of the environment has been discussed **below** and addressed in **Sections 7 and 8.** |
| | *f) The maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.* | |

Amenity Values and the Quality of the Environment

Sections 7(c) and 7(f) of the RMA require decision makers to have regard to the maintenance and enhancement of '*amenity values'* and the *'quality of the environment.'* A definition for 'amenity' is found under Section 2 of the RMA and includes: *"…those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes."*

This mirrors the definition outlined within *Te Tangi a te Manu,* which is concerned about the relationship of people with the physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions of the landscape. Amenity values can be influenced by factors such as viewing position, the audience (residents, recreationalists, or tourists), audience sensitivity to change in the landscape, and the value people place on a location. The amenity values of relevance to this assessment relate to the rural character of the area and views experienced. These matters, along with impacts on the quality of the environment, are covered in **Sections 7 and 8.**

### 6.2 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

The NZCPS includes objectives and policies with respond to the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment. It recognises the competing tension between the need to maintain and enhance natural character, landscapes, open space, and recreational values in coastal areas, with the functional need for primary production activities to be located in appropriate places.

| **NZCPS Applicable Policies** | **Evaluation** |
|---|---|
| **Policy 1: Extent and Characteristics of the Coastal Environment** | |
| *(1) Recognise that the extent and characteristics of the coastal environment vary from region to region and locality to locality; and the issues that arise may have different effects in different localities.*<br><br>*(2) Recognise that the coastal environment includes:*<br>*1. The coastal marine area…*<br>*3. Areas where coastal processes, influences or qualities are significant, including coastal lakes, lagoons, tidal estuaries, saltmarshes, coastal wetlands, and the margins of these.*<br>*4. Areas at risk from coastal hazards.*<br>*5. Coastal vegetation and the habitat of indigenous coastal species including migratory birds.*<br>*6. Elements and features that contribute to the natural character, landscape, visual qualities or amenity values …* | The extent of the coastal environment as identified and mapped within the *Te Tai o Poutini Plan* has been used for the assessment of effects on natural character for this application.<br><br>Refer to **Section 7 of this assessment.** |

| **Policy 13: Preservation of Natural Character** | |
|---|---|
| *(1) To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and to protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*<br>*a) Avoid adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment with outstanding natural character, and*<br>*b) Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment, including by:*<br>*c) Assessing the natural character of the coastal environment of the region or district, by mapping or otherwise identifying at least areas of high natural character…*<br><br>*(2) Recognise that natural character is not the same as natural features and landscapes or amenity values and may include matters such as:…*<br>*a) Natural elements, processes and patterns.*<br>*b) Biophysical, ecological, geological and geomorphological aspects*<br>*c) Natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks.*<br>*d) The natural movement of water and sediment.*<br>*e) The natural darkness of the night sky.*<br>*f) Places or areas that are wild or scenic.*<br>*g) A range of natural character from pristine to modified, and*<br>*h) Experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and context or setting.* | For succinctness, paraphrasing has been used in the adjacent columns to limit the quoted text to only that which relates to this application.<br><br>The important questions raised by Policies 13, 14 and 15 are:<br><br>• Will the Project cause adverse effects on the natural character, natural features, or landscape of Cape Foulwind?<br>• If there are any adverse effects, will any of those be significant?<br>• Are there any adverse cumulative effects?<br><br>Effects on natural character are addressed in further detail in **Section 7** of this assessment. |
| **Policy 14: Restoration of Natural Character** | |
| *Promote restoration or rehabilitation of the natural character of the coastal environment, including by:*<br>*a) Identifying areas and opportunities for restoration or rehabilitation.*<br>*b) …*<br>*c) Where practicable, imposing or reviewing restoration or rehabilitation conditions on resource consents …* | |
| **Policy 15: Natural Features and Natural Landscapes** | |
| *To protect the natural features and natural landscapes (including seascapes) of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*<br>*a) Avoid adverse effects of activities on ONF/ONL's in the coastal environment.*<br>*b) Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on other natural features and natural landscapes in the coastal environment, including* by:<br>*c) Identifying and assessing the natural features and natural landscapes of the coastal environment … having regard to:*<br>*i. Natural science factors, including geological, topographical, ecological and dynamic components.*<br>*ii. The presence of water including in seas, lakes, rivers and streams.*<br>*iii. Legibility or expressiveness—how obviously the feature or landscape demonstrates its formative processes.*<br>*iv. Aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness.*<br>*v. Vegetation (native and exotic).*<br>*vi. Transient values, including presence of wildlife or other values…*<br>*vii. Whether the values are shared and recognised.*<br>*viii. Cultural and spiritual values for tangata whenua … including their expression as cultural landscapes and features.*<br>*ix. Historical and heritage associations, and*<br>*x. Wild or scenic values…* | |

### 6.3 West Coast Regional Policy Statement

The WCRPS provides a broad framework for managing the West Coast's natural and physical resources under the RMA. It includes the significant resource management issues that are important to the West Coast, and identifies regionally significant issues and objectives, policies, and methods. An assessment of the relevant sections of the RPS is as follows:

| WCRPS | Applicable Objectives and Policies | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| Section 7B Natural Features and Landscapes | *Objective 1. Protect the region's outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.* | The Project site is not within a District Plan mapped ONL or ONF. |
| Policy 4.4.14.3 | *To control the modification of significant natural wetlands to protect their natural character, landscape values, and their significance as areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats for indigenous fauna, and to sustain their life supporting capacity as indigenous ecosystems.* | Effects on natural character and the wetlands are addressed in **Section 7.** |

### 6.4 Buller District Plan

The BDP provides a framework of objectives, policies, and standards for managing the natural and physical resources across the district to achieve the purpose of the RMA. The Project site is in the Rural Zone (refer to **Appendix 2: 4.0 Operative Buller District Planning Zoning**). Objectives and policies relevant to landscape and visual assessment are as follows:

| BDP | Applicable Provisions | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| **Chapter 4: Landscape** | | |
| Objective 4.4.4.1 | *To ensure that the overall integrity and character of the rural environment and productivity of rural land resources is protected while enabling rural communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.* | The effects of the proposal on the landscape have been assessed in **Sections 7 and 8.** |
| Policy 4.4.14.7 | *To protect and enhance riparian margins adjacent to rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands and the coast for the purposes of: (i) Maintenance of the natural character of waterways, natural habitats and water quality including the mitigation of adverse effects of contaminant discharges and other natural and aesthetic and amenity values associated with the adjacent waterway…* | Effects on natural character are addressed in **Section 7.** |
| Objective 4.7.5.1 | *To maintain or enhance the natural character of the coastal environment by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of land use activities and subdivision requiring a coastal location.* | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Part 5 Character Area and Zone Rules** | | |
| 5.3.2 Rural Zone | Table 5.7 lists the following standards for permitted residential related activities in the Rural Zone:<br>-10m setback from roads<br>-1.5m side and rear yard setback<br>-Maximum building height of 10m<br>-Maximum of 2 dwellings per site.<br>-Maximum ground floor area of single building of 500m2.<br>-No modification within 25m of a wetland | The Project proposes to provide for 21 dwellings where only two are anticipated as a permitted activity.<br><br>**It is noted that as a discretionary activity no maximum number of dwellings is specified.** |
| **Part 7 District Wide Rules** | | |
| 7.3.3 Discretion -ary Activities | *7.3.3.3.1. Any subdivision for the purposes of creating one or more new allotments.*<br><br>*7.3.3.6. Discretionary activities will be generally assessed according to the criteria in **Part 9.*** | The creation of new allotments is a **discretionary activity.**<br><br>**Part 9 of the BDP lists assessment criteria** to be considered in relation to subdivision activities (in addition to any other relevant matters) and is included below. |
| **Part 9 Criteria for Assessment of Discretionary Activities** | | |
| 9.2.3. | *The likely effects, both adverse and beneficial, of the proposal including effects on:*<br>*… 9.2.3.2. Natural habitats and/or vegetation, landscape and natural features and the integrity, resilience and functioning of indigenous ecosystems.*<br>*9.2.3.3. The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins…*<br>*9.2.3.2. Natural habitats and/or vegetation, landscape and natural features and the integrity, resilience and functioning of indigenous ecosystems.*<br>*9.2.3.3. The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins...*<br>*9.2.3.12. …Where written consent is not obtained, the effects on adjacent landowners' amenity and activities will be considered…*<br>*9.2.3.14. The settlement pattern of the District including tendency to promote closer settlement …*<br>*9.2.3.18. The living environments of people in their houses including shading, or dominance from height of buildings close to residential boundaries.* | These matters have been broadly considered under **Sections 7 and 8** of this assessment**.** |

In summary, the BDP anticipates some residential development within the Rural Zone (up to two per site). Because this Project proposes the subdivision of the site into 21 residential allotments, this is considered a **discretionary** activity.

### 6.5 Proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan

The TTPP is the proposed combined District Plan for the Buller, Grey, and Westland Districts. Its purpose is to manage land use activities and subdivision across the region. Once adopted, it will replace the individual District Plans. TTPP rules relating to native vegetation clearance, historic heritage, and areas of significance to Māori have immediate legal effect. However, the remaining provisions of the plan relating to this Project currently carry little weighting.[2]

Within the TTPP, the Project site falls within the proposed General Rural Zone (GRUZ). This is described as a production-oriented working environment. The plan provides for one residential unit per 4ha in the GRUTZ (GRUZ – R3) as a permitted activity. Two High Natural Character Areas have been identified along the Cape Foulwind coast, these are located well away from the Project site.

[2] The *Te Tai o Poutini Plan* has been publicly notified, and hearings have been completed. The Independent Hearings Panel are currently deliberating. No decisions in relation to the Project site have been made at the time of writing this assessment.

## 7.0 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

### 7.1 Preface

Change in a landscape does not necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways. These changes are both natural and human induced. What is important in managing landscape change, is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate the effects of the change.

The degree to which landscape effects are generated by the Project depends on:

- The degree to which the Project contrasts, or is consistent, with the qualities of surrounding landscape.
- The predictable and likely known future of the locality.
- The quality of the resultant landscape, its aesthetic values and contribution to the wider landscape character of the area.

The landscape assessment that follows evaluates the effects of the subdivision on landscape character, values and amenity, when compared to the existing farming operation. It also assists in determining whether the proposed changes are appropriate.

The landscape character and values of the existing landscape are discussed in **Section 3** of this assessment, and include:

- The ocean, craggy headlands, sandy beaches, sand dunes and cliffs of the rugged coastal environment, and the transition to the elevated gently undulating plains further inland.
- The highly modified, productive working environment of the plains, which retains a distinctly rural character.
- A sense of relative naturalness and openness compared to more urban environments, due to the presence of pasture, native planting, and scattered location of buildings and structures.
- Long views across the plains, intersected by vegetation, with the backdrop of Mt Rochfort and the Paparoa Ranges in the distance.
- Drainage processes, which have contributed to a gently undulating landscape.
- Scenic and recreational value of the area.

### 7.2 Landform

The existing landform is similar to the immediately surrounding environment and is generally flat to gently undulating. The area has been influenced by drainage, which appears to run in a northerly to north westerly direction across the site and has formed several steeply incised gullies with depths of around 5m. The lower lying areas tend to be wet and boggy.

The main changes to the landform arising from the subdivision will be from:

- Disturbance of the land to upgrade the site entrances and create internal ROW and driveways.
- Earthworks to create building platforms and for the construction of future dwellings.
- Temporary stockpiling of excavated material, with possible redistribution or removal.
- Disturbance of the landform to construct ancillary structures, e.g. sheds, decks, and pathways.
- Rehabilitation of grass around building platforms and landscape planting.

The proposed building platforms are typically located on higher, flatter areas where less earthworks are required and there is better drainage. The applicant has advised that minimal earthworks will take place beyond building platforms and the formed internal road and driveways. As such, it is anticipated that the site will retain its naturally undulating topography, and its incised gullies. This means that as much as possible, legibility of the existing landscape will remain.

To minimise the amount of time raw earth is visible and reduce potential erosion issues, over-sowing with grass or hydroseeding around the building platforms and dwellings will occur as soon as possible once construction is complete. For the reasons outlined above, it is deemed that the changes to the landform will result in a **low (less than minor)** adverse effect. [3]

### 7.3 Landcover

The **Ecological Impact Assessment** found that the site is predominantly covered in exotic grassland pasture. In addition to this, two defined natural wetlands containing rushes were identified within gullies in the northwestern part of the site. However, these were not considered to trigger any significance criteria for wetlands as set out in the West Coast Regional Policy Statement. Additional vegetation, including native plantings, weeds and gorse are present around the site's periphery, primarily within the road reserve.

[3] The enhancement planting of the identified wetlands and gullies (discussed further under landcover) will also have a positive effect on the landform, as it will help to avoid erosion.

The proposed subdivision will result in some vegetation clearance, predominantly exotic grassland. No indigenous vegetation is expected to be removed, and it is noted that the **Ecological Impact Assessment** did not identify any significant habitat or vegetative species within the site. Furthermore, all proposed building platforms and formed surfaces are to be located away from the identified wetlands. It is noted that these wetlands may play a role in filtering surface run off and moderating flow after heavy rainfall events.

In line with the Ecologist's recommendations, the following mitigation measures are proposed:

- Enhancement planting around the wetland fringes using ecologically suitable species, such as, swamp coprosma, kahikatea, and harakeke.
- Requiring any amenity planting throughout the subdivision to use suitable species.
- Continued control of invasive species including gorse, blackberry, and ragwort.

In addition to the above, the applicant proposes to:

- Undertake enhancement planting within the three gully areas.
- Establish a 3m wide strip of native vegetation around the site's road boundaries and the southeastern site boundary.
- Set back buildings at least 10m back from the identified wetlands.

Once new vegetation is established (over approximately 5 years), the peripheral planting is expected to screen most of the development from surrounding areas, supporting visual integration of the subdivision into the rural landscape (refer to **Appendix 2: 9.0 Landscape Mitigation Plan and 10.0 Plant Species Palette**). Overall, the proposed weed control, use of ecologically appropriate plant species, wetland and gully enhancement planting, and boundary mitigation planting are considered to result in **positive** outcomes for biodiversity and the rural character of the landscape.

### 7.4 Landuse

The site has been used for farming activities for some time and is therefore highly modified with pastoral grass, sheep and cattle grazing, fencing and gates. As such, it can absorb some degree of change. It currently has a distinctive rural character, consistent with its surrounding environment. The proposal involves the introduction of 21 residential dwellings, along with associated amenity planting, two entrances, a formed private ROW and driveways. At the local scale, within the Project site, there will be a noticeable reduction in rural character. This is primarily due to the loss of continuous pasture and grazing, increased density of dwellings, new ancillary structures and hard

surfaces, likely addition of amenity planting around building peripheries, and the disruption of views across the site.

Adverse effects on the broader landscape, beyond the site, will be temporarily elevated during the subdivision construction period and during the time it takes for the proposed boundary planting to establish and integrate the development into the landscape. However, these effects will reduce over the approximately five years that it takes for the vegetation to mature.

Eventually, the development will be reasonably well absorbed into the broader landscape for the following reasons:

- The subdivision and future dwellings will be screened and softened by the proposed planting along the site's boundaries (planting will be 3-4m+ high once mature).
- The outline of the dwellings will be softened by the backdrop of vegetation and trees in the wider landscape (as opposed to being viewed against the skyline).
- The proposed recessive colours will allow the dwellings to blend into their surrounds (Refer to **Section 9**)**.**
- The footprint and size of building platforms plus height of dwellings will be controlled to minimise the dominance of built elements in the landscape.

While the BDP provisions anticipate just two dwellings per site, it is considered that with the proposed mitigation measures, this site has the capacity to accommodate the additional 19 dwellings within the landscape. This is because, proposed residential development is neither rare nor unusual within the locality. This is evidenced by the recently constructed dwellings (both baches and permanent homes) emerging throughout the area. Several new subdivisions are being developed nearby, including Omau Heights and Buller Bay Heights on Cape Foulwind Road, as well as others along Limestone and Bulls Roads.

The proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan (TTPP) indicates that a significant area of land is earmarked for rezoning to Rural Residential Settlement Zone and Rural Lifestyle Zone, encompassing the former cement works site located immediately northwest of the Project site. Given that the entire area to the northwest and further north of the proposed subdivision may be subject to future residential development, the Project site fits well within the existing and anticipated development envelope for the Cape Foulwind area and is aligned with the other proposed developments nearby.

It is considered that adverse effects on landscape character and values due to the change in landuse at the local (site) scale will be elevated, due to the evident reduction in rural character within the site. However, future residents will purchase dwellings with this in mind. Once the proposed parameter planting is established and assists with blending the subdivision into the landscape, any adverse effects resulting from the change in landuse are anticipated to be **low (less than minor)**.

### 7.5 Natural Character

'Natural character' is important because s6(a) of the RMA provides for, as a matter of national importance: *"the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development."*

Methodology for Assessing Natural Character

*Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa Landscape Assessment Guidelines* provide guidance on how to assess natural character. For proposal driven assessments like this one, the approach is to identify the relevant area, describe and analyse the characteristics and qualities of the site (and then interpret how together they form the overall natural character), assess the effects on natural character, and recommended measures to manage effects on natural character. The appropriateness in terms of what is to be preserved and protected, arises from the relevant statutory provisions. This process (as recommended by *Te Tangi a te Manu*) is worked through below:[4]

Defining 'Natural Character'

Section 6(a) of the RMA refers to the preservation and protection of natural character but does not provide a definition for what it is. The NZCPS makes suggestions on elements that contribute to it. This assessment defines natural character as:

- The naturalness or degree of modification of an area.[5]
- An area's distinct combination of natural characteristics and qualities.[6]

The former is a quantitative attribute—a condition.[7] The latter is a character specific to each area and adopts the interpretation that natural character is an area's distinctive combination of natural

[4] There are different views within the profession (and in other disciplines and organisations) on what natural character is and how it should be assessed. Refer to *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa Landscape Assessment Guidelines*, page 206.
[5] The extent to which the natural elements, patterns and processes occur.
[6] This is consistent with Objective 2 of the NZCPS which is (amongst other things) to recognise the characteristics and qualities that contribute to natural character; and with the matters listed in Policy 13(2), of which the range of natural character between pristine and modified.

characteristics and qualities, including degree of naturalness. It is this second definition that this assessment focuses on.

Identifying the Relevant Area

The term 'coastal environment' is not explicitly defined in the RMA. The NZCPS makes suggestions on what is included in Policy 1 (refer to **Section 6.2** of this report). For this assessment, the coastal environment is defined as the area shown on the TTPP planning maps as 'Coastal Environment' (refer to **Appendix 2: 5.0 Proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan**). Two wetlands have also been identified on the site (refer to the **Ecological Impact Assessment**).

Assessing Natural Characteristics and Qualities

An area's remnant natural character may be important even though it is highly modified. In addition, preserving and protecting natural character does not necessarily mean maintaining status quo or avoiding development. The purpose of assessing natural character is to inform its management. Restoration and rehabilitation of natural character can also occur.

Evaluating and Determining Effects on Natural Character

The key natural characteristics and qualities of the site and its immediate context include the physical and biotic natural elements and how they are perceived and experienced, including:

Physical:

- Undulating terrain with incised gullies influenced by drainage processes.
- Two distinct wetland areas.
- Predominance of grassland species, with some indigenous sedges, rushes and shrubs.
- Some invasive weed species.
- Presence of various bird species.

Perceived and Experienced:

- Ability to see 'pockets' of the ocean in the distance.
- Sound and movement of birds and/or the wind.
- Intermittent sound and movement of vehicles on nearby roads.
- Darkness of the night sky.

[7] Generally, the degree of natural character is highest where there is least modification.

- A feeling of relative naturalness and openness associated with the rural environment, in contrast to more built-up urban environments.
- Recognition of highly modified elements due to the presence of introduced and manmade features, such as, modified pasture, fences, gates, power poles, and roads.

The above elements come together to form the natural character of the site and its immediate surrounds. Due to the previous farming activity, it is evident that the site has been highly modified.

Effects of the Project on Natural Character

The proposed development will introduce 21 residential dwellings with associated domestic planting and accessways. While this will noticeably reduce the site's perceived naturalness at the local scale, the area is already highly modified, and no significant habitats or species are expected to be impacted. [8] Building platforms will be located away from identified wetlands and gully systems. [9]

In the broader landscape context, the coastal landform's legibility will remain intact. Once boundary planting is established, built elements will be largely screened, giving the site a more natural character. The proposal also includes opportunities to enhance natural character through wetland habitat restoration, gully planting enhancement and planting around the site's perimeter, all of which will have a positive outcome. For these reasons, adverse effects on natural character are assessed as **low (less than minor)**, with some positive effects arising from new planting as well.

### 7.6 Landscape Effects Summary

When compared to the existing farming operation, the landscape effects of the proposed subdivision are considered appropriate. The development can be successfully integrated into the existing landscape without compromising its current values and rural character. For the reasons outlined above, any adverse landscape effects are expected to be **low (less than minor).**

[8] The Ecologist considered that there are no significant habitat or species identified within the Project site (including the two natural wetland areas that were identified). Refer to *Ecological Impact Assessment*, Section 4.1.2.
[9] Refer to *Ecological Impact Assessment*, Section 5.5.1.

## 8.0 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

### 8.1 Preface

The effect on visual amenity relates to the visibility of the proposed subdivision from different viewpoints, and the effect that the change in land use from pastoral to large lot residential might have on the locality's amenity value. Much depends upon where the Project is visible from and how successful the methods are to mitigate any effects.

The degree to which visual effects are generated by the Project depends on:

- The proportion of the proposal that is visible, determined by the observer's position relative to the objects viewed.
- The distance and foreground context within which the proposal is viewed and the backdrop and context within which the proposal is viewed.
- The number of viewers, their location and situation (static or moving) in relation to the view.

The effect of the Project from selected viewpoints is discussed below. These views are illustrated within the **Appendix 2 Graphic Supplement.**

### 8.2 Public Views from the Wider Context

Wilsons Lead Road (Viewpoints 1 to 5)

At the intersection of Wilsons Lead Road and Tauranga Bay Road, the Project site is exposed, with open views into and across much of the site. Further south down Wilsons Lead Road, raised mounds near the road and intermittent pockets of vegetation regularly limit visibility across the site. Due to the undulating topography, the entire site is not visible from any single location.

Until the proposed road boundary vegetation establishes to effectively screen and soften the subdivision (in approximately five years), future buildings, domestic planting, the internal ROW, and driveways will be visible from parts of Wilsons Lead Road. However, these elements will be partially softened by the natural undulating landform, and the vegetated backdrop in the distance. Proposed restrictions on building heights (6m height limit), size (maximum building coverage of 300m$^2$ per lot) and colour will assist in integrating the dwellings into the landscape (refer to **Section 9 Recommendations**). Once established, the proposed boundary planting will screen most views of the future dwellings when viewed directly from Wilsons Lead Road. However, the internal driveways and glimpses of buildings will remain visible through the two subdivision entrances.

The change in the landscape character will be reduced by the transient nature of road users who will typically view the site at 60-80km/h (assumed 100km/h limit, although no speed signs were observed) and from an oblique angle. For these reasons outlined above, any adverse visual effects experienced by the users of Wilsons Lead Road are anticipated to be **low (less than minor)**, reducing as the landscaping establishes.

Tauranga Bay Road (Viewpoints 5 to 8)

Current views into the Project site from Tauranga Bay Road are partially screened or softened by a combination of native planting and gorse, which currently screens approximately 60% of the adjacent boundary along this route. This vegetation appears to be primarily located within the road reserve. However, a few intermittent sections along the site's road boundary are more open and allow for visibility into and across parts of the site. In addition, more distant views into the southernmost corner of the site are obtainable from the southern approach along Tauranga Bay Road.

Once the proposed boundary vegetation establishes (in approximately five years), it will provide effective visual screening of the proposed subdivision and associated dwellings from Tauranga Bay Road. In the interim, some new dwellings will be visible, although, this visibility will be moderated by the undulating landform, vegetated backdrop in the distance, and proposed controls on building height, size and colour.

Given the transient nature of road users, combined with the oblique viewing angles and speed of travel, the initial adverse effects experienced by the users of Tauranga Bay Road will be **low (less than minor).** Once the boundary planting matures to screen and soften the built form, residual adverse visual effects will be **very low (less than minor).**

### 8.3 Private Views from Neighbouring Properties

There are two neighbouring residential properties near the site (refer to the **Appendix 2: 2.0 for the location of each dwelling**). From a combination of desktop analysis, observations from roadside public viewpoints, and a site visit, the effect on these properties has been summarised by answering the following questions:

- What do these residences currently view?
- What are the changes as a result of the Project?

- Do these changes create any adverse effects on landscape values? If so, how could this be mitigated?

1088 Wilsons Lead Road (Viewpoint 2)

The single storey dwelling located at 1088 Wilsons Lead Road is located approximately 125m northeast of the Project site, accessed via a long driveway. Although the dwelling sits at a slightly elevated position, views toward the site from both the residence and its outdoor living areas are heavily screened by vegetation.

The proposed subdivision and associated buildings will be partially visible from the property's driveway. However, this visibility will diminish as the proposed boundary planting establishes over the next five years. Given the infrequent use of the driveway and the lack of views from the main dwelling, the initial adverse visual effects are expected to be **low (less than minor)** and will reduce further to **very low (less than minor)** once the mitigation planting provides effective screening.

Lot2 DP587613 Wilsons Lead Road (Viewpoint 1)

This property (address unknown) is located approximately 105m southeast of the Project site. It contains several scattered structures including sheds, water tanks, caravans and vehicles, which appear to be associated with farming operations and accommodation. From select vantage points on this property, partial views towards the Project site are possible beyond low grass bunds and intervening vegetation.

Until the proposed road boundary planting becomes established, partial views of the new subdivision and future dwellings will be visible from this property. However, the site's undulating topography, the presence of background vegetation along Tauranga Bay Road, and the restricted building heights, limited building footprints and recessive colour palettes will help the built form to integrate with the surrounding rural landscape.

Once the proposed boundary planting establishes (approximately 5 years), it will screen views of much of the subdivision from this property. Any glimpses of dwellings will be seen from a distance of approximately 160m (from the closest structures) and in the context of the broader rural landscape, which will moderate the visual effect on rural character. For these reasons, any adverse visual effects experienced at this property are anticipated to be **low (minor)** initially, gradually

reducing to **very low (less than minor)** once the proposed road boundary vegetation matures over the next 5 years.

146 Tauranga Bay Road (Former Portland Cement Company)

This site is characterised by former quarry works and associated ponds, accompanied by large blocks of native vegetation. There are recently developed dwellings at its northern end, located some distance from the Project site. The former cement works property is zoned as a Cement Production Zone under the BDP, and it is anticipated through proposed zoning that further residential development will eventually occupy this site.

Due to the presence of dense, established native planting along the property's Tauranga Bay Road boundary, it is unlikely that views of the Project site and the future subdivision will be obtainable from this location. The proposed boundary planting will also provide an extra visual buffer. For these reasons, any adverse effects experienced at this property are anticipated to be **very low (less than minor).**

### 8.4 Other Potential Visual Effects

Traffic Generation

With respect to traffic generation, it is anticipated that the proposed peak vehicle movements of 168 per day (8 associated with Lot 5 and 160 at the main entrance) will be greater than that anticipated for rural activities. As a comparison, the TTPP proposes to allow up to 100 vehicle movements per day for permitted rural zone activities. As such, there will be elevated traffic for those living nearby and using Wilsons Lead Road. As the upgraded subdivision entrances are not located directly opposite existing dwellings, associated adverse effects on amenity values and the quality of the environment will generally be **low (less than minor)**.

Lighting

No street lighting will be required for the vehicle crossing, ROW, or the private access legs. However, with subdivision comes the use of additional lighting associated with the increased number of dwellings on site. This will have a negligible effect on the darkness of the night sky.

### 8.5 Visual Effects Summary

The visual effects of the Project will primarily arise from the:

- Change in landuse, from pastoral grazing to a residential subdivision.

- The earthworks associated with the subdivision including the creation of building platforms.
- The upgrading of the existing subdivision entrances.
- The addition of new dwellings, ROW access, amenity planting, and any ancillary structures associated with each new residence.
- The proposed boundary vegetation.
- The increase in traffic accessing the subdivision and using the ROW and private access legs.

Users of local roads and residents currently experience a rural outlook across the Project site. The proposed subdivision and the 21 future dwellings associated with it, will be visible to varying degrees from two public roads and two private viewpoints. This will result in some reduction in the landscape's rural character and associated values.

Temporary adverse visual effects are expected for all receptors during the initial five-year period when boundary planting is establishing and beginning to effectively screen and soften views of the subdivision. During this time, the visual effects on landscape character and values are anticipated to range from **very low (less than minor)** to **low (minor)** adverse effects depending on the viewer's location. As the proposed boundary planting matures and provides screening, these effects will decrease, ranging from **very low (less than minor)** to **low (less than minor)** adverse effects.

## 9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following measures are proposed to mitigate any potential adverse landscape and visual effects and assist with integrating the Project into its rural surroundings.

Design

- Confining each dwelling and any ancillary structures to designated building platforms (building areas). Within the building platforms, each dwelling (including garages and ancillary buildings) will have a maximum building footprint imposed of 300m$^2$ per lot.
- Building locations will be carefully selected to minimise landscape and visual effects, ensuring that low-lying areas, including gullies and wetlands, remain free of structures.
- Locating building platforms at least 10m from the two wetlands identified in the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted with the application.
- Imposing a building height limit of 6m above ground level.
- Setting buildings back at least 10m from public road boundaries.

Colour and Materiality

- Using colours that are recessive and sympathetic to the rural character of the area, such as natural tones that like Mudstone, Rivergum, Ironsand and Permanent Green that blend in with the surrounding landscape.
- Choosing colours for the cladding, roofing, and trims of buildings which comply with the acceptable Light Reflectance Value (LRV) of less than 20%.
- Using non-glossy, textured or matt/powder finished materials for roofs, walls and other surfaces, avoiding shiny or reflective finishes.

Planting (Refer to **Appendix 2: 9.0 Landscape Mitigation Plan and 10.0 Plant Species Palette**)

- Planting 3m wide strips of native shrubs and trees along the site's boundaries. These shall be a height of at least 3-4m+ once established to soften and screen the subdivision and help integrate it into the surrounding landscape.
- Enhancing planting within the two wetlands identified within the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted with the application, as well as three incised gullies.
- Removing invasive species from the site including gorse, blackberry and ragwort.
- Retaining any native vegetation that is located within the identified planting areas.
- Ensuring plant species are eco-sourced from the Foulwind Ecological District and selected from the Appendix 2 Plant Species Palette.

- Ensuring plants within the 3m wide native plant strips are planted at the earliest opportunity and are a minimum of 0.5-1m tall at the time of planting, to accelerate their effectiveness in screening and softening the development.
- Over-sowing or hydroseeding disturbed areas with grass as quickly as possible following construction.

## 10.0 CONCLUSION

The applicant proposes to subdivide the farmland at 1088 Wilsons Lead Road, Cape Foulwind, into 21 residential lots. This assessment evaluates the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and outlines the recommended mitigation measures.

Overall, with the implementation of the proposed mitigation, it is concluded that:

- Adverse landscape effects will be **low (less than minor)**. There will also be positive effects associated with the proposed wetland and gully enhancement planting and native boundary planting.
- Temporary adverse visual effects on landscape character and values are anticipated to range from **very low (less than minor)** to **low (minor)**, depending on the viewer's location, until the proposed boundary vegetation becomes established. As this planting matures, providing increased screening and softening of the development, adverse visual effects are expected to reduce, ranging from **very low (less than minor)** to **low (less than minor)**.

Proposed residential development is neither rare nor unusual within the Cape Foulwind locality. This is evidenced by the recently constructed dwellings (both baches and permanent homes) emerging throughout the area. The proposed development at 1088 Wilsons Lead Road, Cape Foulwind is considered to be well aligned with this.

## APPENDIX 1 - LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### An Introduction to Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa Landscape Assessment Guidelines

This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the concepts and principles outlined within *Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa Landscape Assessment Guidelines*. These guidelines were published by Tuia Pito Ora, the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) in July 2022. For further information on the guidelines, please refer to https://nzila.co.nz/about/te-tangi-a-te-manu.

### Origins of Te Tangi a te Manu

These national guidelines are the result of more than four years' mahi, collaboration and consultation. They encapsulate the best collective wisdom of landscape architects working in landscape assessment under New Zealand's legislative framework. They also include insight from researching case law, reviewing findings of Landscape Assessment workshops,[10] and understanding best practice landscape guidelines from both New Zealand and overseas.[11] The guidelines are at the forefront of emerging practice internationally and will continue to evolve over time.

Whilst previous assessment approaches[12] have been built on the physical, associative, and perceptual realms of landscape, the guidelines underpinning this assessment go further. They promote a Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā partnership approach to landscape, binding together the layers of people and land across time and place. In doing so, the guidelines ensure that both tāngata whenua and tāngata tiriti values and perspectives are captured and equally shared and understood.

### Purpose of Te Tangi a te Manu

Ultimately these guidelines (and subsequently this assessment) seek to assist decision-makers[13] and others[14] to manage and improve landscape values within a statutory planning context. Consequently, they also provide a much stronger platform for Landscape Architects and allied professionals to assess and manage landscapes. As part of undertaking this assessment, the assessor has identified the landscape's character and values (and the attributes on which those values depend), assessed the effects of the Project on these values, and designed mitigation measures to maintain and improve values. Whilst undertaking this work, a structured approach has been used to

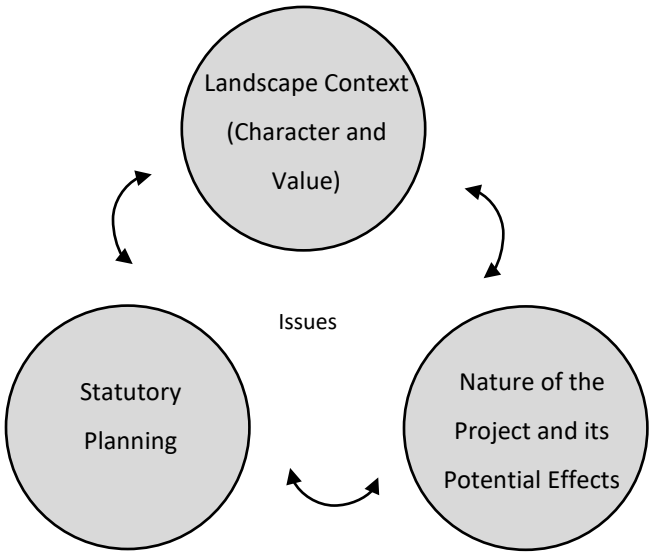
[10] Landscape Assessment Methodology workshops were held across New Zealand in November 2017 by the NZILA.
[11] This includes the *New Zealand Quality Planning Landscape Guidance Note*, as well as the well-known United Kingdom *Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)*, 3rd Edition, published in 2013.
[12] The guidelines replace *NZILA Best Practice Note 10.1: Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management*, 2010.
[13] 'Decision-makers' means the Environment Court, boards of inquiry, council commissioners, and some council officers with certain delegated authority.
[14] 'Others' means everyone else involved in statutory planning processes.

ensure that findings are clear and objective. Judgement is based on skills and experience, supported by explicit evidence and reasoned argument. This approach is consistent with the Environment Court's 'Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses.[15]

**Methodology underpinning Te Tangi a te Manu**

This assessment has adopted a principles-based approach that has allowed the methodology to be tailored to the Project. This approach emphasises transparency and reason, rather than adherence to prescriptive methods. Following a prescriptive method is not possible, because all landscape assessments vary (in type and scale) and require the need to interpret the different types of information and values (objective and subjective) inherent in landscapes.

This assessment focuses on the relevant issues for the decision maker. These issues arise from the drivers behind the assessment, the landscape context it is situated within, and the potential effects arising from the relevant statutory planning provisions. In addition, a concurrent iterative design process seeks to avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse effects which may arise as a result of a Project.




**Definition of the Term 'Landscape'**

This assessment defines the term 'landscape' as consistent with that contained within the guidelines: *"Landscape embodies the relationship between people and place. It is the character of an area, how the area is experienced and perceived, and the meanings associated with it."* [16]

[15] *Environment Court of New Zealand, Expert Witnesses, Code of Conduct, Environment Court Practice Note,* 2014, Section 7.2. Available from: http://environmentcourt.govt.nz/assets/Documents/ Publications/2014-ENVC-practicenotes.pdf

**Approach to Landscape and Visual Assessment**

While landscape effects and visual effects are closely related, they form separate parts of this assessment. Understanding landscape effects includes assessing the potential effects of a Project on landscape character and values. Whereas for visual effects it includes assessing how a Project might change the physical landscape and in turn affect the viewing audience.

Change in a landscape does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways. These changes are both natural and human induced. What is important in managing landscape change, is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate the effects of the change. The aim is to provide a high amenity environment through appropriate design outcomes.

Landscape Effects

Landscape effects are measured against the existing landscape context (character and value) and the landscape and visual outcomes as anticipated by the statutory planning framework. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape.

The degree to which landscape effects are generated by the Project depends on:

- The degree to which the Project contrasts, or is consistent, with the qualities of surrounding landscape.
- The predictable and likely known future of the locality.
- The quality of the resultant landscape, its aesthetic values and contribution to the wider landscape character of the area.

When determining the overall level of landscape effect, it is important to be clear about what factors have been considered when making professional judgements. The following table helps to guide this process:

[16] Refer to page 76 of *Te Tangi a te Manu*. This definition is also consistent with that which evolved from the NZILA Landscape Assessment Methodology workshops held in November 2017.

| Contributing Factors | | Higher | Lower |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape (sensitivity)** | *Ability to absorb change* | The landscape context has limited existing landscape detractors which make it highly vulnerable to the type of change resulting from the proposed development. | The landscape context has many detractors and can easily accommodate the Project without undue consequences to landscape character. |
| | *The value of the landscape* | The landscape includes important biophysical, sensory, and shared and recognised attributes. The landscape requires protection as a matter of national importance (ONF/L). | The landscape lacks any important biophysical, sensory, or shared and recognised attributes. The landscape is of low or local importance. |
| **Magnitude of Change** | *Size or scale* | Total loss or addition of key features or elements.<br><br>Major changes in the key characteristics of the landscape, including significant aesthetic or perceptual elements. | The majority of key features or elements are retained.<br><br>Key characteristics of the landscape remain intact with limited aesthetic or perceptual change apparent. |
| | *Geographical extent* | Wider landscape scale. | Site scale, immediate setting. |
| | *Duration and reversibility* | Permanent.<br>Long term (over 10 years). | Reversible.<br>Short Term (less than 10 years) |

Visual Effects

Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects. They are effects on landscape values as experienced in views. Visual effects relate to the changes that may occur to the view and visual amenity experienced by people because of changes to the landscape. Much depends on where the Project is visible from and how successful any mitigation is to mitigate any effects.

The degree to which visual effects are generated by a Project depends on:

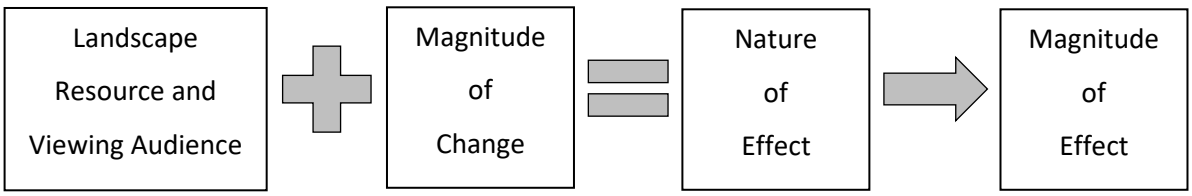
- The proportion of the Project that is visible, determined by the observer's position relative to the objects viewed.
- The distance and foreground context within which the Project is viewed and the backdrop and context within which the Project is viewed.
- The number of viewers, their location and situation (static or moving) in relation to the view.

When determining the overall level of visual effect, the nature of the viewing audience is considered together with the magnitude of change resulting from the Project. The following table helps to guide this process:

| Contributing Factors | | Higher | Lower | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The viewing audience (sensitivity)** | *Ability to absorb change* | Views from dwellings and recreation areas where attention is typically focussed on the landscape. | Views from places of employment and other places where the focus is typically incidental to its landscape context. Views from transport corridors. | Dwellings, places of work, transport corridors, public tracks |
| | *Value attached to views* | Viewpoint is recognised by the community such as an important view shaft, identification on tourist maps or in art and literature.<br><br>High visitor numbers. | Viewpoint is not typically recognised or valued by the community.<br><br>Infrequent visitor numbers. | Acknowledged viewshafts, Lookouts |
| **Magnitude of Change** | *Size or scale* | Loss or addition of key features in the view.<br><br>High degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (e.g., in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture).<br><br>Full view of the Project. | Most key features of views retained.<br><br>Low degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (e.g., in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture.<br><br>Glimpse/no view of the Project. | Higher contrast/lower contrast.<br>Open views, partial views, glimpse views (or filtered), no views (or obscured) |
| | *Geographical extent* | Front on views.<br><br>Near distance views.<br><br>Change visible across a wide area. | Oblique views.<br><br>Long distance views.<br><br>Small portion of change visible. | Front or oblique views.<br><br>Near distant, middle distant and long distant views. |
| | *Duration and reversibility* | Permanent.<br><br>Long term | Transient/temporary.<br><br>Short Term | Permanent (fixed), transitory (moving) |

**Landscape and Visual Assessment – Determining the Overall Level of Effects**

This assessment identifies the magnitude of landscape and visual effects that are likely to be generated by the Project. It assesses both the nature (adverse, neutral, beneficial) and magnitude of effect (low, moderate, high) and the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation.



Landscape and Visual Assessment - Nature of Effects

This assessment also considers the nature of effects in terms of whether this will be positive (beneficial), neutral (benign) or negative (adverse), in the context within which it occurs. Neutral effects can also occur where landscape or visual change is benign. Effects can also be short term or permanent and/or cumulative. [17,18]

Landscape and Visual Assessment - Magnitude of Effects

Each effect within the assessment has been assigned a rating (magnitude of effect) to distinguish effects from one another and to assist with determining the need for landscape mitigation. Within the assessment, the specific nature of the effect is described, its magnitude is rated, and then the evaluation is justified. The seven-point scale of effects from *Te Tangi a te Manu* is as follows: [19]

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Significant[20] |
| Less than Minor[21] | | Minor | More than Minor | | | |
| Very low | Low | Low – Moderate | Moderate | Moderate – High | High | Very High |

Widely used definitions across the landscape profession and included within *Te Tangi a te Manu* include (but are not limited to):

Low: *"A slight loss to the existing character, features or landscape quality."*

Moderate: *"Partial change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape and a small reduction in perceived amenity."* [22]

In addition:

'More than Minor' is characterised as "moderate effects or above" on the 7-point scale.

'Minor' is characterised as *"low"* and *"low to moderate"* effects.

'Less than Minor' means insignificant. It can be characterised as *"very low"* and *"low"* effects. [23]

[17] Refer to footnote 140. on page 135 of *Te Tangi a te Manu* which describes the meaning of 'effect' in more detail and includes short term or permanent effects.

[18] For more information on cumulative effects, refer to pages 153-154 of *Te Tangi a te Manu*.

[19] Refer to pages 140 and 151 of *Te Tangi a te Manu* which covers this in more detail.

[20] The term 'significant' is only to be used when evaluating Policy 13(1)(b) and Policy 15(b) of the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)*, where the test is 'to avoid significant adverse effects'.

[21] For more information on the terms 'minor,' 'less than minor,' and 'no more than minor', refer to pages 150-151 of *Te Tangi a te Manu.* An assessment of whether the effect generated by a Project are *"less than minor"* will generally involve a broader consideration of the effects of the activity, beyond landscape and visual effects. In addition, more than minor effects on individual elements or viewpoints, does not necessarily equate to more than minor landscape effects.

[22] Refer to page 141 and footnote 149 within *Te Tangi a te Manu*.

[23] Refer to page 150 and footnote 158 within *Te Tangi a te Manu*.

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