



LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

RESPONSE TO PEER REVIEW

17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019

WAIRAU ESTATE STRUCTURE PLAN AREA

**Wairau Road**  
Lot 29 DP 497629

**Oakura**

**bluemarble**  
A world of difference



**Peer Review Response:**

This report is in response to a peer undertaken by Emma McRae, Senior Landscape Architect (Boffa Miskell) of the following documents prepared by Bluemarble for the Wairau Estate Structure Plan Area.

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Bluemarble, September 2017, Revision A
- Appendix 5.2: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Addendum, Bluemarble, 24 February 2018
- Wairau Estate Oakura Structure Plan

The peer review memorandum is dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and was received by me on the 7<sup>th</sup> May.

Emma McRae's review under the heading *Conclusion and Recommendations* lists fifteen matters that she considers necessary to be addressed in order for the Landscape and Visual Assessment to be considered robust and defensible.

In the interests of efficiency, and in order for the council planner to clearly understand that the fifteen matters (listed below in italics) are specifically addressed, this report provides a response to each item as listed (as opposed to updating the LVIA). Therefore, this response should be read in conjunction with the LVIA dated September 2017, Revision A.

1. *Provision of a simple and clear assessment methodology in line with best practice and apply this within the assessment to enable a clearly defined and robust assessment of landscape and visual effects for the development to be provided.*

The assessment of landscape and visual effects is based on the following:

The purpose of the LVIA is to assist decision makers by providing an assessment that addresses the relevant Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) issues, specific to the project. The level of detail corresponds with the scale and significance of the effects the activity may have on the environment (following the principles set out in RMA s88).

The methodology for this assessment is guided by the relevant objectives and policies of the New Plymouth District Council, the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, "Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management" PracticeNote1 and the draft New Zealand Transport Agency Landscape and Visual Assessment Guidelines (LVA)2. Both represent accepted practice in the assessment of landscape and visual effects under the RMA.

The assessment of landscape and visual effects are separate, although linked. The existing landscape and its existing visual context or visual envelope all contributes to the existing 'baseline' for landscape and visual assessment studies. The assessment of the potential effect on the landscape is carried out as an effect on an environmental resource (i.e., landscape features or character). Visual effects are assessed as one of the interrelated effects on the surrounding viewing audience. The differences between these types of effects can be summarised as follows:

Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape.

Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

To determine the overall nature and significance of landscape and visual effects, an understanding of the sensitivity of the landscape or viewing audience has been combined with an assessment of the magnitude of change resulting from the proposal to determine the overall significance of effects. This assessment has been undertaken with reference to the Quality Planning Landscape Guidance Note and its signposts to examples of best practice which include the recently published UK guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment and the New Zealand Landscape Institute Guidelines for Landscape Assessment.

Descriptors for assessing landscape and visual effects are included within Appendix ii & iii, of the LVIA.

2. *A description of the author's involvement in the design in determining mitigation outcomes.*

Mitigation measures have been developed in liaison with the client and planning consultant and are intended to optimise landscape outcomes, in particular the use of design controls to limit effect for the Paddocks' community and to ensure the development is sensitive to its context. Following landscape architecture advice, the client has committed to using a variety of character types (expressed as four main character types - Residential A, C D, & E on the Structure Plan) as the principal mechanism to creating an holistic development that acknowledges its rural setting on rural land abutting an existing urban environment (Oakura township), and utilises the waterways as recreational and ecological spaces.

The design-led approach is described on page 11 of the project Planners Report

3. *Presenting the viewpoint photographs separately on A3 sheets, with annotations to illustrate key landscape features relating to the site and its surroundings.*

**Viewpoint Photographs** used in the LVIA have been enlarged and annotated. These are attached as **Appendix 1** and should be printed at A3.

4. *Supplying additional plans to illustrate the current zoning of the site and its relationship to Oakura settlement and the Kaitake Ranges ONL.*

A **Site Context** Plan has been created and is attached as **Appendix 2**, and should be printed at A3.

5. *The description of the proposal and assessment should refer to photographs to assist the reader understanding the proposal and likely effects.*

The description of the proposal focusses on the elements of the Structure Plan. Because the nature of change is so largely self evident (an open rural landscape becoming a residential area), it was considered that numerous site photographs would offer little by way of additional explanation or understanding of the

proposal. It is considered that the Viewpoint Location Plan and Structure Plan clearly show that the only existing parts of the site that will remain unmodified by landuse are the stream gullies, and to some extent the Residential E area. Further, the proposal is not complex in terms of understanding the potential extent of landscape change. Greenfield residential development is common and the conversion of farmland to residential development is commonplace, with the extent of change generally understood. Having said that, if council considers that a series of annotated photographs would assist the application then these can be prepared.

6. *Updating the description of the proposal to include details of the residential, business and open spaces character types, which are proposed for the site, explaining their key characteristics, how the mitigation measures apply to each area, and how this relates to local character.*

On page 18 of the LVIA each character type is briefly described: For clarity, additional details and characteristics of each type are described with recommended mitigation as follows:

**Residential A:** This character area occupies 8.67 hectares of the 66.3 hectare site, and is anticipated to have the same character as Residential A areas in the Operative District Plan (ODP). That is, typical allotments found in developed residential areas where connection to reticulated sewerage is available. Many house are setback from boundaries, well landscaped and one or two storeys in height. Given that the settlement pattern and density of Oakura is more spacious than ODP Res A areas (Oakura is predominately zoned as Residential C within the ODP, primarily because of lack of sewerage, until recently), the Structure Plan proposes the following mitigation measure to maintain some of Oakura's more spacious character, albeit sewerage in the town can now accommodate greater density. The residential A area within the Structure Plan is in the centre of the development forming a residential 'core'.

- a) In order to maintain spaciousness akin to Oakura's existing residential character, habitable buildings will be restricted to one per lot. This should ensure more openness and less visual clutter from multiple dwellings.
- b) The ODP allows dwellings to be 9m tall in Residential Environment Areas. Given the density of Oakura and the rural setting in which the Structure Plan area is proposed, as well as the proximity to the ONL, it is proposed that dwellings will have a maximum permitted height of 6m. This is intended to reduce the dominance of buildings, as well as to protect views from residents of the Paddocks.
- c) In order to reduce visual dominance of roofs, it is proposed that colour controls be placed on roofs for dwellings. This report recommends a maximum light reflectivity value (LRV) of 25% for all roofs. This measure is primarily targeted at reducing character and visual effects for residents within the Paddocks who overlook the site to the north. However, Paddock's residents are significantly higher than the proposal area and generally look 'above and beyond'. In addition, vegetation with the QEII areas within the Paddocks' site will screen views of the Structure Plan area in the longer term.
- d) In order to reduce the effects of glare, it is recommended that colour controls be placed on cladding for dwellings. A maximum light reflectivity value (LRV) of 40% for all exterior cladding materials is proposed. This mitigation measure will assist in reducing effects for Paddock's residents as well as from SH45

looking west into the site from beyond the bund, as well as from the existing residential area of Oakura, which is located immediately west of the Structure Plan area.

- e) The ODP has permissive fencing rules, with 1.8m high closed board fences a common urban element in the district's Residential areas. In order to maintain Oakura's more spacious character, and to generally enhance visual amenity, it is proposed that solid fencing taller than 1.2m be not permitted on any properties. In addition, no fencing will be located on any property between the street and front elevation of its associated dwellings, or commercial buildings. This will provide an open streetscape and reduce urban clutter.
- f) It is not uncommon for greenfield developments in areas with views to have restrictions on vegetation type. In the context of Oakura and the receiving environment, such restrictions would create an environment out of character with its context. Therefore, in order to reduce a dominance of built form over the wider receiving environment, it is proposed that be no restrictions on amenity planting (type or height) within lots. Amenity vegetation is encouraged and a design guide could be developed to assist landowners with appropriate landscape guidelines.
- g) The Structure Plan shows that within the Residential A area there is are several vegetated gullies with associated walkways and vegetation. These stretch into the heart of the Residential A area, thereby maintaining and enhancing natural biophysical patterns and processes, as well as providing a passive recreation resource. These areas break up the potential dominance of urban form and assist in integrating urban development into the landscape setting.

**Residential C:** This character area occupies 4.53 hectares of the 66.3 hectare site, and is anticipated to have similar character as Residential C areas in the Operative District Plan (ODP). That is, areas that are larger than Residential A and are currently found in areas such as Oakura, Lepperton, Onaero, Urenui, Okato, and Egmont Village. While character is a consideration, the primary reason these areas have larger lot sizes is because of the need to accommodate on-site sewage treatment. Within the Structure Plan, the proposed Residential C area wraps around the northern and western sides of the Residential A area, thereby forming a less dense 'rim' around the core. This lessening of density (moving west from town to country) is developed in order to provide a rational and legible transition from urban to rural. A primary driver for the design of the Structure Plan was to avoid a harsh urban rural divide (as currently occurs). To mitigate the effects of the Residential C areas, the migration measures are the same as for the Residential A area described above, except for an increased minimum lot size of 700m<sup>2</sup> (Residential C in the ODP has a Controlled minimum lot size of 700m<sup>2</sup>).

In addition to the mitigation measures common to the Residential A area, the western edge of the Residential C area consists of a vegetated buffer, generally in the order of ten metres wide. The northern part of this buffer includes a vegetated waterway. The buffer is intended to create a 'soft' transition to the wider Residential E area to the west, and to provide ecological and amenity connectivity with the QEII area to the North (within the Paddocks). This buffer forms the western frame of a continuous vegetated buffer that surrounds the site (excluding the Residential E area, which is rural in character).

**Residential D:** This character area occupies 5.85 hectares of the 66.3 hectare site, located along the northern part of the property and is split into two parts, separated by a vegetated gully. This area is anticipated to have the same character as Residential A areas in the Operative District Plan (ODP), but with 50% site coverage, a minimum lot size of 250m<sup>2</sup>, a front yard requirement of 1.5m, and maximum height of 5m. It is intended that this area is suited to older age group residents looking for a smaller home. Consideration was given to 'pepper potting' this type of development through the site to encourage an integrated community, but it was considered advantageous to aggregate these smaller homes together to create a sense of security and commonality. The reduced height limit also assists in reducing visibility from the highway over and above the bund, and to minimise visual impact of roofs from residents at a higher elevation.

To reduce visual impacts for highway users, a 600m long bund no less than 2.4m in height is proposed \ along the SH45 boundary to prevent views (and to ameliorate reverse sensitivity noise effects) into the site. This bund will be planted with native vegetation to provide a visual reference to the nearby National Park, but its main landscape purpose is to prevent close views of dwellings located close to the highway. Setback is the other potential method to achieve noise and visual attenuation, but in the case of the Structure Plan proposal, the bund affords urban density demand by the economics of the project.

Other mitigation measures for this Residential D area are the same as for Residential A and C described above. That is, one dwelling per lot, roof and cladding reflectivity controls, fencing controls, no controls on amenity vegetation.

**Rural E:** This character area occupies 25.53 hectares of the 66.3 hectare site, and is anticipated to have similar rules as the Rural Environment Area in the ODP, except that the minimum lot size is in the order of 1-2 hectares, and a maximum building height of 6m. The purpose of this area to act as a buffer zone (albeit also economic benefit) and avoid a harsh urban/rural interface, by way of creating a transitioning spaciousness from the broader rural landscape beyond the site, to the urban area at the Structure Plan's core. This character area is targeted at the equestrian community who have expressed the need for land such as this, whereby lot sizes are suited to equestrian enthusiasts with holistic consideration given to an integrated bridle trail. This area extends from the highway to the southern end of the site and thereby creates a spacious buffer along the western edge of the whole site and occupies 44% of the Structure Plan area.

**Business C:** This character area occupies a small area of 0.45 hectares tucked at the inland end of two ponds and associated vegetation. It is intended that the rules for this area be as per the ODP, and is intended to enable a cafe and/or other similar such commercial activities for the benefit of the surrounding community. Given the small area involved, the landscape and visual impacts are likely to be insignificant, however it is proposed that within the Business C character area should be a high quality landscape treatment along the main road frontage to integrate business activity with street amenity. Traffic should enter/exit Business C sites from a side road, and any off street carparking areas should be screened from adjoining residential views.

**Open Space B:** This is a small area of 0.24 hectares located within the Residential A area more or less in the middle of the site, and is intended as 'kick a ball space'. This provides a useful community green near the centre of the site and affords an appropriate level of recreation space for a development of this size. This area has been specifically located with two road frontages so that it does not become an enclosed 'unsafe' space. It is also located to link into the walkway gully system that links the site ultimately to the beach.

**Open Space C:** This area consists of the majority of the gullies that currently occur on the site. Most of these streams are currently vegetated, and additional planting will be undertaken. Walkways will also be included to provide additional pedestrian connectivity over and above street footpaths. These open space areas also provide ecological linkages to the QEII areas within the Paddocks. A key feature of this Structure Plan is the integration of the gullies with residential development. This is consistent with how Oakura has developed whereby Matekai Park and its walkway is a defining element within the township. The open space gully areas maintain and enhance the casual walking linkages to the sea that are an important part of local character.

In addition to recreational and ecological benefit, the open space C areas mitigate the potential effects of urban development and therefore planting of trees and shrubs should be established along all streams and gullies using predominantly native species representative of the local area.

A summary of the mitigation measures under Mitigation Types is described in Section 8 of the LVIA.

7. *Considering relevant Council plans and policies in relation to landscape, including relevant aspects of the Rural Subdivision and Development Design Guidelines and the Review of the New Plymouth District Landscape Assessment.*

The LVIA primarily considers the Operative District Plan. While not statutory planning documents, The Rural Subdivision and Development Design Guidelines have been considered during the Structure Plan design process. The rural design guide is targeted at generally small scale subdivision within the rural environment area, whereby this Structure Plan is essentially a zoning change. Having said that, the Structure Plan illustrates integration between urban site and natural landforms, particularly the existing gully system. Also, the Rural E area represents a largest single character type within the site with its transition/buffer function paramount.

The Review of the New Plymouth District Landscape Assessment does not appear to be on the council website and is not a statutory document. It has therefore not been considered as part of this assessment.

8. *The landscape effects section should consider both biophysical changes, because of change to the landscape fabric, as well as landscape character effects, change in land use, effects on the landscape setting of the ONL/ National Park and effects on the setting of the settlement of Oakura. Consideration of the nature of the landscape resource, the level of change and the resulting nature of effect of the plan change in relation to the above elements during construction and completion should be provided.*

In addition of the Landscape Effects described in the LVIA, consideration is given to the resulting nature of effect of the Structure Plan on biophysical features, (pattern and processes) and the effects on the landscape setting of the ONL and settlement of Oakura.

As a landscape resource, which includes its biophysical features, the site will change from rural to urban, for most of the site, and 44% will be 'equestrian rural' (Rural E). Drainage patterns and processes centred around the existing gully system will remain intact and legible, as will the overall sloping site from mountain to sea. The dominance of the Kaitake Ranges will also remain legible by way of proximity and scale, and the sense of place - Oakura on the flanks of the Kaitake Ranges, will remain intact. The resulting loss of rural land is small in both the local and regional context, and taking the FUD into consideration, the landscape change is largely anticipated.

The Operative District Plan states in its Policies and Objectives that subdivision should not adversely affect those elements that define rural character, while recognising the diverse nature of rural land and land uses. Policy 4.1 states that subdivision within the rural environment should not adversely affect the open space or visual elements of rural character, and Policy 4.2 states that activities should be designed, located and/or of such a density that the visual and open space characteristics of rural character is maintained. Specifically, the NPDP identifies elements that help to distinguish the differences between those areas that are urban, from those that are rural. These elements are listed below.

***Spaciousness:*** *Areas of open space used for grazing or growing crops. Although there are a variety of landscapes and uses in the rural area, it has an overall feeling of spaciousness.*

***Low Density:*** *Widely spaced built form with dwellings dispersed in the wider landscape and some limited lifestyle opportunities. Historical clusters of development either as small towns or isolated developments.*

***Vegetated:*** *Areas of vegetation (in a natural state or managed, indigenous and/or exotic) such as pasture, crops, forest and scrub, riparian margins, lakes and wetlands, stands of trees, shelter-belts or gardens.*

***Production Oriented:*** *Land uses of a predominantly 'production' orientated nature such as farming and related farm storage sheds, stock yards, farm animals and houses supporting the principal productive land use. These include intensive farming activities.*

***Working Environment:*** *A generally highly modified and managed landscape including the widespread use of machinery and chemicals to control and enhance plant and animal growth and production resulting in 'rural noises' and 'rural smells'.*



**Rural Based Industry:** *Associated with the land or its associated natural assets. Incl: sawmills, quarries, agricultural manufacture, transport yards, bulk stores, airports, pipelines, petroleum industry activities, and exploration.*

**Rural Infrastructure:** *Generally has a lack of urban infrastructure such as reticulated water and wastewater... a road transportation network of many narrow roads with low traffic volumes, un-kerbed, without footpaths and urban structures such as street lighting.*

However, the Operative District Plan also recognises that as with other environment areas, change is constant in the rural environment and states: *“Beyond the annual cycle of the seasons, regional, national and international forces act on the rural economy, and land uses frequently change as a result. Different crops, different management regimes, and different lifestyles bring change to the rural landscape and to the people who live there” (P26a).*

An important part of the nature of the landscape resource for this site is the portion of land (12 hectares) that has Future Urban Design (FUD) status. Therefore, it is assumed that in applying the FUD, council have considered the site as an important future urban resource, protected for such use by its FUD overlay rules, and that its potential landscape change to urban land use is anticipated. Notwithstanding this, when undertaking the Structure Plan design, it was apparent the FUD’s rural (western) edge appears to be arbitrary in its position and alignment. No natural features appear to drive its position and in fact it cuts across legible landforms such as gullies. The Structure Plan has been comprehensively designed to be cognisant of biophysical elements that include landforms and the processes that have created them. This includes a layout (particularly the roading pattern) that endeavours to work with the topography to avoid excessive or unnecessary earthworks.

The Structure Plan is not located within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL), however consideration is given the any potential perpetual effects. The Kaitake Range is a dominant backdrop to the site and local area, as shown on the **Site Context Plan** in **Appendix 2**. The lowest peak of the Kaitake Range is 1.2km south of the site and is 210m in height above SH45. The highest peak of the Kaitakes’ is situated 3kms further southeast of the lower peak and is 570m above SH 45, when viewed from the road boundary of the site. While dominant, views of the ONL vary from place to place, the most open views are from approximately 5 kms north of Oakura on SH45. The Structure Plan may reduce views from a small section of SH45 where a roadside bund will be located. This does not in my opinion constitute an adverse effect on the ONL. Permitted activity (such as a shelter belt) could easily create the same loss of view, and its importance in the context of other views of the ONL from throughout the area should not be exaggerated. Simply put, the ONL will continue to be the dominant landscape feature to the Oakura environs.

9. *Additional views should be provided to illustrate the site in relation to the setting of Oakura, from upper Wairau Road, from SH45 illustrating the approach to the site, and from the proposed roundabout location.*

The site in relation to its Oakura setting can be inferred from the **Site Context Plan** in **Appendix 2**, as well as the viewpoints shown in the Viewpoint Location Plan in the LVIA. Consideration was given to which views best represented potential landscape and visual effects. Views from further up Wairau were simply too far away from the main part of the site to offer any useful analysis. On-site judgement suggested that VP1 was the optimal place to assess the proposal from the upper reaches of Wairau Road. Similarly, the views from SH45 when approaching from the west. Although VP6 is not 'before' the site but within its western edge, it was considered that the view from this position offered the optimal position to assess the urban (and most significant) part of the proposal.

The roundabout is located at the intersection of Wairau Road and SH45 and is at least 20m east of the site. There is a house and vegetation of the 'inside' corner, and vegetation within the esplanade strip that forms the north eastern corner of the site. Therefore, from the roundabout there will be limited (if any) views of buildings, particularly given the bund and planting shown on the Structure Plan in the north eastern corner.

10. *Describe the nature of the existing view at each viewpoint, and the nature of the change that would be experienced at each viewpoint, and how mitigation measures would affect the view, with reference to the improved methodology to assist in understanding the nature of visual effects of the proposed plan change at construction and at completion.*

Please refer of the Viewpoint Location Plan Appendix A within the LVIA for location of viewpoints.

#### **VIEWPOINT 1**

##### **Existing view:**

Viewpoint 1 illustrates an elevated view from near the southern end of Wairau Road. Views are to the north west across the Paddocks' subdivision and the open pasture that forms Wairau Estate. Oakura township is in the distance to the right of the image, with clusters of vegetation and amongst a rural landscape to the left.

##### **Nature of change:**

The advent of the Wairau Estate will likely result in landscape and visual change from this viewpoint. Views of open pasture in the distance will change to be a number of dwellings – similar in appearance to the distant views of the houses (roofs) within the Oakura township to the right of the image (with less vegetation between at construction). These houses will be softened, with existing vegetation forming the horizon to the left of the image. It would be unlikely that built form would pierce the horizon line from this vantage point.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at construction):**

Existing and additional re-vegetation of the gullies will reduce construction effects, as the construction is unlikely to occur immediately, and/or at a scale that would create adverse construction effects. From upper Wairau Road, distance will largely mitigate effects. The Planners report includes staging plans that will also limit construction effects to specific parts of the site at any one time.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at completion):**

Limiting the height and colour of the dwellings (especially roofs) will result in a more uniform appearance of the future dwellings within the subject site. The built form of the buildings and roadway will be at a distance that the overall form of each dwelling will likely be less visible, but the overall palette of the subject site will be noticeable. Limiting the structures to visually recessive colours will help absorb it into the surrounding environment, as will maturing vegetation.

**VIEWPOINT 2**

**Existing view:**

Viewpoint 2 is from the intersection of Wairau Road and Ekuarangi Place. Views are to the west across a portion of grass and a planted valley which will all remain, as they are part of a reserve. Views then pass across the Paddocks' subdivision that has a number of constructed dwellings. In the distance is open pasture that forms Wairau Estate with a backdrop of mature vegetation on the northern side of SH45. Oakura township is in the distance to the right of the image. These houses will be softened with the existing vegetation forming the horizon to the left of the image. It is unlikely that built form would pierce the horizon line from this vantage point.

**Nature of change:**

The advent of the Wairau Estate will likely result in landscape and visual change from this viewpoint. Views of open pasture in the distance will change to include a number of dwellings, a change that will be progressively softened and screened with the maturing vegetation within the intervening gullies.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at construction):**

Existing and additional vegetating of the gullies will reduce construction effects from views within the Paddocks as the construction is unlikely to occur immediately, and/or at a scale that would create adverse construction effects. In addition, planting within the QEII areas on the Paddocks' site will continue to reduce the outlook over the site from some residents within the Paddocks. The Planners report includes staging plans that will also limit construction effects to specific parts of the site at any one time.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at completion):**

Limiting the height and colour of the dwellings (especially roofs) will result in a more uniform appearance of the future dwellings within the subject site. The built form of the buildings and roadway will be at a distance

that the overall form of each dwelling will be less visible, but the overall palette of the site will be noticeable. Limiting the structures to visually recessive colours will help absorb them into the surrounding environment, as will maturing vegetation. The low buildings heights (from 9m in the ODP to 6m in the proposed Res A and C areas), will also reduce visual impact and maintain a 'low' built environment.

### **VIEWPOINT 3**

#### **Existing view:**

Viewpoint 3 is from the end of Ekuarangi Place, looking north west, from inside the Paddocks subdivision. Views are possible between the new houses over the intervening valley with dense vegetation across to the open pasture that forms the Wairau Estate. Beyond the subject site is SH3 (screened from view) with tall vegetation beyond to the left of the image and Oakura township to the right.

#### **Nature of change:**

The advent of the Structure Plan will result in landscape and visual change from this viewpoint. Views of open pasture in the distance, to the left of the image, will change to include a number of dwellings – similar in appearance to the distant views of the houses (roofs) within the Oakura township to the right of the image. These houses will be softened with existing vegetation forming the horizon to the left of the image. It is unlikely that built form would pierce the horizon line from this vantage point.

#### **How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at construction):**

As with viewpoint 2, existing and additional vegetating of the gullies will reduce construction effects, as the construction is unlikely to occur immediately, and/or at a scale that would create adverse construction effects. In addition, vegetation within the QEII areas on the Paddocks' site will continue to reduce the outlook over the site from some residents within the Paddocks. The Planners report includes staging plans that will also limit construction effects to specific parts of the site at any one time.

#### **How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at completion):**

Limiting the height and colour of the dwellings (especially roofs) will result in a more uniform appearance of the future dwellings within the site. The built form of the buildings and roadway would be at a distance that the overall form of each dwelling will be less visible, but the overall palette of the subject site will be noticeable. Limiting the structures to visually recessive colours would help absorb it into the surrounding environment. The edge of the subject site will be visible from this vantage point, but ensuring boundary fencing is limited in height and colour will help soften the visual effects of the development. The Paddocks' properties are situated approx. 20m to 35m in vertical elevation above the SH45 ground level, and there is a QEII covenant area that separates these properties from the proposal. While many of these properties

currently have distant sea views out to the horizon it could be expected that as the QEII area matures, these distant views will diminish, and the Structure Plan area will be at last partially screened.

#### **VIEWPOINT 4**

##### **Existing view:**

Viewpoint 4 is from the end of Pahakahaka Drive, looking north west, from inside the Paddocks subdivision. Properties within the Paddocks make up the foreground of the image, with views beyond extending over a vegetated gully to the open pasture that forms the Structure Plan area.

##### **Nature of change:**

The advent of the Structure Plan will result in landscape and visual change from this viewpoint. Views of open pasture throughout the middle of this image will change to include a number of dwellings. In time, these houses will be softened by existing vegetation, but initial construction of the dwellings would be openly visible.

##### **How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at construction):**

This viewpoint is the lowest and closest to the site from the Paddocks. Intervening vegetation will continue to grow and mature within the Paddocks' site, so views from this area will become increasing semi-enclosed. The Planners report includes staging plans that will also limit construction effects to specific parts of the site at any one time.

##### **How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at completion):**

Limiting the height and colour of the dwellings will result in a more uniform appearance of the future dwellings within the subject site, and gully planting will break up urban form. Limiting the structures to visually recessive colours will help absorption of structures into the surrounding environment. The edge of the subject site will be visible from this vantage point and ensuring boundary fencing is limited in height and colour will help soften the visual effects of the development.

#### **VIEWPOINT 5**

##### **Existing view:**

Viewpoint 5 is from South Road (SH45), approximately 80m south west of the Wairau Road / SH45 intersection. The open pasture of Wairau Estate fills the foreground, with a backdrop of dense vegetation to the left of the image that follows the gully/stream alignment. The vegetation almost entirely screens the existing dwellings beyond. To the right of the image is SH45 extending into the distance with the Kaitake Ranges dominating the view along the horizon.

##### **Nature of change:**

The advent of the proposal will result in landscape and visual change from this viewpoint. Views of open pasture in the foreground will change to include a vegetated bund along the road boundary. Any views of dwellings is unlikely from this vantage point. Views of the ranges are also likely to be screened from this vantage point.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at construction):**

The construction of the bund adjacent to the roadway will screen all views into the subject site (and therefore construction activity) from this viewpoint.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at completion):**

At completion, with time, the bund and its associated planting will soften the extent of this man-made structure, and it will appear softer and more naturalistic. Views from the highway into the site will be screened from this viewpoint.

## **VIEWPOINT 6**

**Existing view:**

Viewpoint 6 is from South Road (SH45), near the western edge of the subject site. The curvature of the panorama shows SH45 extending out to both the right and left of the image. Views are to the east across the open pasture of Wairau Estate with pockets of vegetation on either side. The Paddocks subdivision is seen in the distance near the middle of the image with the Kaitake Ranges extending across the horizon from the middle to the right of the image.

**Nature of change:**

The advent of the proposal will result in landscape and visual change from this viewpoint. Views of open pasture in the foreground will change to be views of 1-2 hectare sized lots (Rural E area) with open pasture, one dwelling (including associated farm buildings/sheds) per lot. Beyond these lots will be views of the residential area which may visually stack upon one another due to looking up in elevation. Any views of the Kaitake ranges between the Rural E area buildings will remain.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at construction):**

Construction effects (on Residential areas) will appear as distant activity from this viewpoint and from the western approach to the site. Roadside and gully planting will also mitigate construction effects given the likely time-lag between planting and built development. The Planners report includes staging plans that will also limit construction effects to specific parts of the site.

**How mitigation measures would affect the visual effects (at completion):**

Boundary treatments will be highly visible from this vantage point. Limiting the height, materials and colours of these structures will ensure views over the fencing will be possible up to the Kaitake ranges across the Rural E lots. Dwellings within the residential area of the subdivision will be visible, but limiting their height and colour palette will help create a more uniform development. Revegetating the gullies that extend throughout the site will help soften the built form from this viewpoint and the SH45 approach.

11. *Considering landscape and visual effects of the proposed noise bund and roundabout as part of the assessment.*

The landscape and visual effects of the proposed noise bund and roundabout are as follows:

**Roundabout:**The proposed roundabout at the intersection of SH45 and Wairau Road is intended to calm traffic through the village, especially vehicles arriving from the south. The roundabout will also provide a strong visual cue for drivers entering and leaving the village as it will help to demarcate the southern urban extent of residential settlement. The landscape and visual effects are insignificant, assuming the roundabout is attractive. It is assumed that its design will be determined by NZTA, but the council could potentially have input to ensure an attractive outcome consistent with the existing Oakura landscape.

**Bund:** The bund is 600m long and mostly is in front of the FUD area, whereby the foreground views could potentially have been of residential development, although it is unknown what NZTA setback or screening measures may have been applied if the FUD alone was developed. The proposal includes the bund to avoid reverse sensitivity issues, primarily from traffic noise. The proposed bund will be 2-4 metres high with side batters sufficiently shallow to accommodate planting. This will provide a potentially attractive green entrance/exit to Oakura. The main potential landscape effect will be the introduction of a landform that could appear unnatural. Planting will assist in disguising its underlying shape, but it will nonetheless be a new landscape element. The main potential visual effect is that there will be a loss of spaciousness, and the road could appear as a corridor. The spacious area that currently exists at the western end of Oakura will in effect be pushed 600m west.

12. *Providing discussion on the Objectives and Policies of the Future Urban Development overlay and what this means in relation to the site and the proposed plan change.*

Issue 1A states that the Future Urban Growth Areas provide the council with the necessary direction and context for assessing any urban growth related private plan changes. Therefore, this private plan change proposal is at least partially appropriate in terms of council objectives. The District Plan states that identification of FUD areas should take into consideration the key principle of compact urban form. This assessment of landscape and visual impacts agrees with the council's assessment that at least part of this site

is therefore suitable for future urban development. The Structure Plan includes the FUD area but extends it create a better landscape outcome than the FUD implied by its obviously arbitrary position.

The Operative District Plan provides a description of the character of the Rural Environment Area and also the Residential Environment areas. The potential effects of the proposal plan change in relation to the character of the rural environment area are partially anticipated by its FUD status. The site was chosen as a FUD area due to the portion of Oakura that extends up Wairau Road, thereby meeting district plan objectives of compact urban form. The rural land around west of the Structure Plan Area will experience perceptual change in character, despite the FUD over part of the site. Having said that, the proposal represents a logical anticipated expansion of urban Oakura, particularly given the existing residential zoning along Wairau Road, south of SH45. Notwithstanding the Structures Plan's design, the site is appropriate for urban expansions by way of context. The Planner's report describes in detail the lack of greenfield development space in the Oakura environs.

With regard to Residential Environment areas, the Operative District Plan states the density of development and the amount of space occupied by buildings is particularly relevant to the residential areas within the district, noting that there is a demand for a variety of housing types such as detached and semi-detached dwellings, family, flats, apartments, housing for the elderly and rural/residential development. The residential environment areas are described in the plan as follows;

*The RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AREAS are located in urban areas and represent those areas where the majority of people choose to reside. They are characterised by a medium to high density built form, low to medium traffic movements, low levels of environmental nuisance (such as noise) and high levels of visual and aesthetic amenity. Small-scale businesses are often part of and contribute to the RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AREA fabric. Within the district there are three distinct RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT AREAS - RESIDENTIAL A, B and C.*

*The RESIDENTIAL A ENVIRONMENT AREA is representative of the typical ALLOTMENTS found in developed residential areas where connection to reticulated sewerage is available. Many homes are set back from boundaries, well landscaped and are one or two storeys in HEIGHT.*

The proposal is consistent with the objectives and descriptors for Residential Environment areas. Further, the proposal includes additional measures (such as design controls) that meet current council standards and objectives. The conceptual roading and walkway pattern has been undertaken to ensure that there is good connectivity both within the site and beyond. The various residential character types (Res A,C,D) as well as a small business zone, plus a special Rural E character area should meet council objectives for efficient use of residential land, with a variety of typologies.



With regard to Issue 23 ( The need to comprehensively plan for future urban development), the Planners Report discusses the proposal against the objectives and policies so is not repeated here, but in the creation of Structure Plan, regard has been given to Policy 23.1

*Policy 23.1*

*To control the design and layout of future urban areas through structure plans to allow for the comprehensive development of the area by ensuring:*

- a) The type, location and density of the development is suitable for the site;*
- b) Infrastructure is provided in a co-ordinated manner by considering location, type and staging;*
- c) The development considers topography and minimises changes to landform;*
- d) That the constraints are identified and managed to ensure resilient and safe communities.*
- e) Interfaces with surrounding land-uses are assessed and adverse effects are mitigated;*
- f) Open space, parks and esplanade reserves or strips are provided for;*
- g) Connectivity and accessible urban form is provided for; and*
- h) That special features are recognised and that those features of particular significance are protected.*

13. *Considering relevant statutory matters in relation to landscape, with reference to those objectives, policies and rules in the District Plan relating to the Kaitake Ranges Outstanding Natural Landscape.*

The key statutory and policy considerations in relation to Outstanding Natural Landscapes are contained in the following:

- Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA);
- Taranaki Regional Policy Statement 2010 (TRPS);
- Operative New Plymouth District Plan (ODP);

## Resource Management Act 1991

The overarching framework of the RMA is set out in Part 2, including the purpose of the Act set out in section 5. Matters of national importance are set out in section 6. Those particularly relevant to landscape matters for the trail project include:

*Section 6(a): the preservation of the natural character of wetlands and rivers, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development;*

*Section 6(b): the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development;*

*Section 6(c): the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna; and*

*Section 6(e): the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.*

Key relevant 'other matters' from section 7 of the RMA include sections 7(a): kaitiakitanga; 7(aa): the ethic of stewardship; 7(c): the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values; and 7(f): the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.

## Taranaki Regional Policy Statement

The Taranaki Regional Policy Statement (TRPS) provides an overview of the resource management issues in the Taranaki region. Section 10 of the RPS ('Natural features and landscapes, historic heritage and amenity value') includes policies and methods in relation to landscape and visual amenity. The RPS states "outstanding natural features and landscapes include Mt Taranaki, the Pouakai and Kaitake Mountain Ranges". Also, 'outstanding' refers to "those natural features or landscapes of exceptional value or eminence or distinction on a national regional or district level'. The RPS does not map any outstanding natural landscapes.

A summary of the key landscape objectives and policies in the RPS is set out below.

**NFL Objective 1:** To protect the outstanding natural features and landscapes of the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and to appropriately manage other natural areas, features and landscapes of and landscapes of value to the region to the region.

**NFL Policy 2:** Recognition shall be given to the appropriate management of other natural areas, features or landscapes not covered by Policy 1 above, but still of value to the region for one or more of the following reasons:

- the maintenance of water quality and quantity;
- soil conservation;
- the avoidance or mitigation of natural hazards;
- natural character amenity and heritage values and scientific and educational significance;
- geological and geomorphological, botanical, wildlife and fishery values;
- biodiversity and the functioning of ecosystems;
- 'sinks' or 'pools' for greenhouse gases; and
- cultural features of significance to tangata whenua.

**NFL Policy 3:** The protection of outstanding and where appropriate, other natural features and landscapes of value shall be achieved by having regard to the following criteria in determining appropriate subdivision, use and development:

- a. *the protection of outstanding and where appropriate, other natural features and landscapes of value shall be achieved by having regard to the following criteria in determining appropriate subdivision, use and development:*
- b. *the degree and significance of actual or potential adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes or other important natural*
- c. *features and landscapes, including cumulative effects, and the efficacy of measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate such effects;*
- d. *the benefits to be derived from the use and development at the local, regional and national level;*
- e. *the extent to which the subdivision, use or development recognises or provides for the relationship of tangata whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga;*
- f. *the need for use or development to occur in the particular location;*

- g. *the sensitivity or vulnerability of a natural feature or landscape to change, and its capacity to accommodate change, without compromising the values of the feature or landscape;*
- h. *the degree of existing modification of the natural feature or landscape from its natural character; and*
- i. *the degree to which financial contributions associated with any subdivision, use and development can be used to offset actual or potential adverse effects arising from those activities.*

### **Operative New Plymouth District Plan**

The District Plan contains a range of objectives and policies in relation to landscape and amenity, as summarised below.

**Objective 1:** *To ensure activities do not adversely affect the environmental and amenity values of areas within the district or adversely affect existing activities.*

**Policy 1.1:** *Activities should be located in areas where their effects are compatible with the character of the area.*

**Objective 2:** *To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of light overspill and glare, noise, and the consumption of liquor on amenity values and health.*

**Objective 4:** *To ensure the subdivision, use and development of land maintains the elements of rural character.*

**Policy 4.6:** *Retain vegetation, particularly indigenous vegetation and require the planting of new vegetation to mitigate the effects of activities.*

**Objective 14:** *To preserve and enhance the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins.*

**Policy 14.2:** *The natural character of wetlands and rivers and lakes and their margins should not be adversely affected by inappropriate subdivision, use or development and should, where practicable, be restored and rehabilitated.*

**Objective 15:** *To protect and enhance outstanding landscapes and regionally significant landscapes within the district.*

**Policy 15.1:** *Subdivision, use and development should not result in adverse visual effects on, and should enhance, where practicable, the following regionally significant landscapes:*

- *Mount Taranaki/Egmont*
- *The Kaitake and Pouakai Mountain Ranges*

14. *Making reference to Resource Management Act Section 6 matters and to applicable areas of the Taranaki Regional Policy Statement.*

The key statutory and policy considerations that inform this landscape assessment are contained in the following:

- Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA);
- Taranaki Regional Policy Statement;

### **Resource Management Act 1991**

The overarching framework of the RMA is set out in Part 2, including the purpose of the Act set out in section 5. Matters of national importance are set out in section 6. Those that are particularly relevant to landscape matters for the project include:

Section 6(b): the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development;

Section 7 of the RMA sets out matters which the Council must have particular regard to in achieving the purpose of the RMA.

These include:

- (c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values, and
- (f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.

The RMA defines amenity values as “those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to the people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes”.

The following assessment of both landscape and visual effects inform the overarching assessment of the effects of the proposed Structure Plan on amenity values.

### **Taranaki Regional Policy Statement**

The Taranaki Regional Policy Statement (Taranaki RPS) provides an overview of the resource management issues in the Taranaki region. Section 10 of the Taranaki RPS ('Natural features and landscapes (NFL), historic heritage and amenity value') includes policies and methods in relation to landscape and visual amenity. The RPS does not identify or map any outstanding natural landscapes, but states that 'outstanding' refers to *"those natural features or landscapes of exceptional value or eminence or distinction on a national regional or district level"*.

A summary of the key relevant landscape objectives and policies in the Taranaki RPS relevant to the Project is set out below.

NFL Objective 1: To protect the outstanding natural features and landscapes of the Taranaki region from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, and to appropriately manage other natural areas, features and landscapes of and landscapes of value to the region to the region.

For this proposal there are no outstanding natural features and landscapes in the above context. Matters relating to perceptual effects of the ONL are covered earlier.

NFL Policy 2: Recognition shall be given to the appropriate management of other natural areas, features or landscapes not covered by Policy 1 above, but still of value to the region for one or more of the following reasons:

natural character amenity and heritage values and scientific and educational significance;

NFL Policy 3: The protection of outstanding and where appropriate, other natural features and landscapes of value shall be achieved by having regard to the following criteria in determining appropriate subdivision, use and development:

The protection of outstanding and where appropriate, other natural features and landscapes of value shall be achieved by having regard to the following criteria in determining appropriate subdivision, use and development:

- the degree and significance of actual or potential adverse effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes or other important natural
- features and landscapes, including cumulative effects, and the efficacy of measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate such effects;

- the benefits to be derived from the use and development at the local, regional and national level;
- the need for use or development to occur in the particular location;
- the sensitivity or vulnerability of a natural feature or landscape to change, and its capacity to accommodate change, without compromising the values of the feature or landscape;
- the degree of existing modification of the natural feature or landscape from its natural character;

Regard has been given to these matters in this landscape and visual impact assessment, noting that the proposal is not located within an Outstanding Natural Landscape. Issues of perception related to the ONL are covered in earlier discussion.

15. *Considering any other relevant statutory matters as outlined above.*

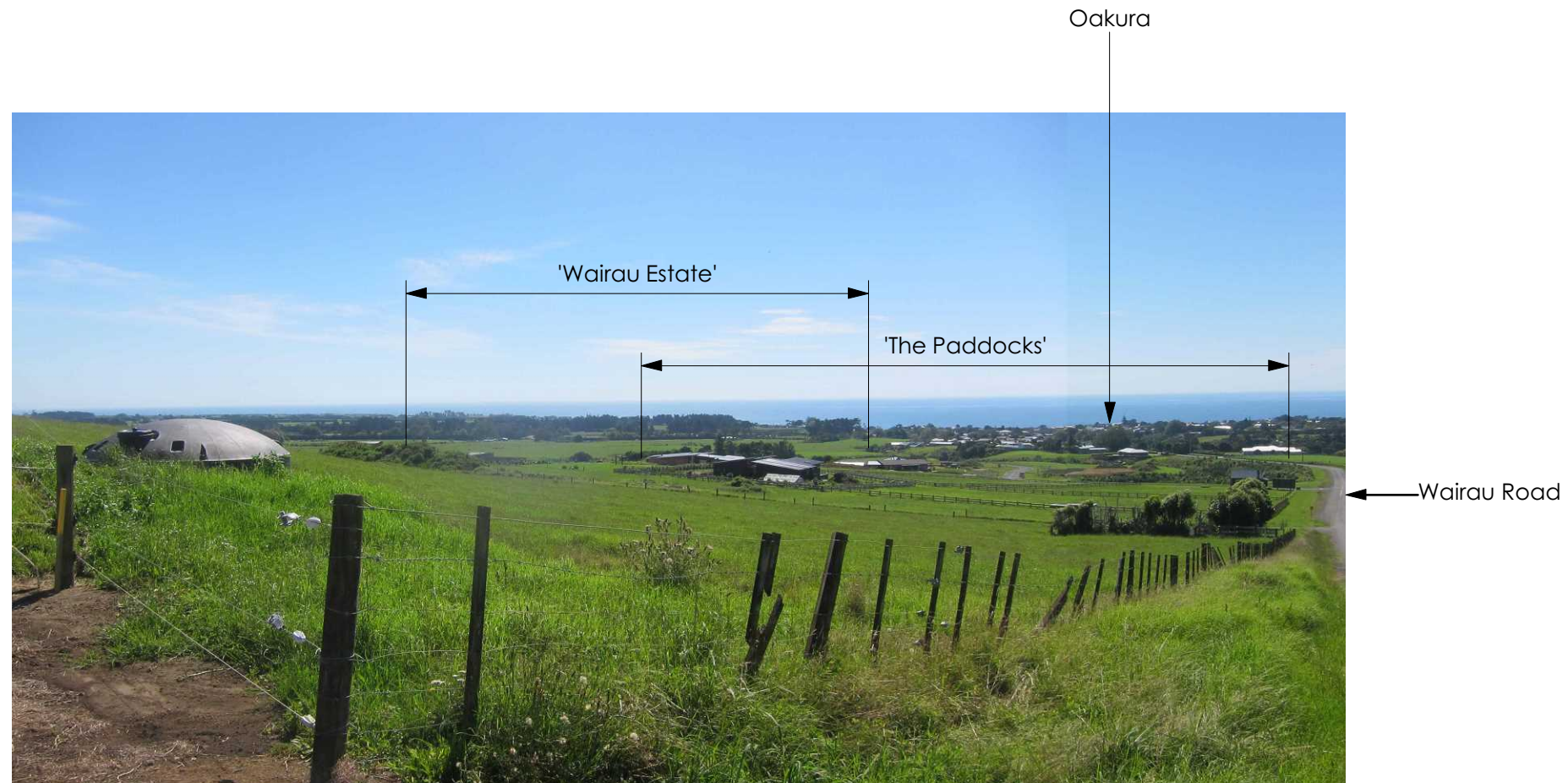
**Richard Bain**  
Landscape Architect



**Appendices:**

- 1. Viewpoint Photographs (A3)**
- 2. Site Context Plan (A3)**

# VP1



PROJECT: Wairau Estate  
Oakura

DRAWING TITLE: Viewpoint Photos  
VP1 Analysis

DRAWING NO: A1.1  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: N/A  
DATE: MAY 2019  
FILE NO.: ---

NOTES: -



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# VP2



Ekuarangī Place

Pahakahaka Drive

South Road (SH45) approx

'Wairau Estate'

Vegetated gully/reserve

Surrey Hill Road

Oakura

'The Paddocks'

PROJECT: Wairau Estate  
Oakura

DRAWING TITLE: Viewpoint Photos  
VP2 Analysis

DRAWING NO: A1.2  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: N/A  
DATE: MAY 2019  
FILE NO.: ---

NOTES: -



Do not scale off drawing. Contractor must verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work.

# VP3



PROJECT: Wairau Estate  
Oakura

DRAWING TITLE: Viewpoint Photos  
VP3 Analysis

DRAWING NO: A1.3  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: N/A  
DATE: MAY 2019  
FILE NO.: ---

NOTES: -



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# VP4



PROJECT: Wairau Estate  
Oakura

DRAWING TITLE: Viewpoint Photos  
VP4 Analysis

DRAWING NO: A1.4  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: N/A  
DATE: MAY 2019  
FILE NO.: ----

NOTES: -



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# VP5



PROJECT: Wairau Estate  
Oakura

DRAWING  
TITLE: Viewpoint Photos  
VP5 Analysis

DRAWING NO: A1.5  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: N/A  
DATE: MAY 2019  
FILE NO.: ---

NOTES: -



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# VP6

South Road (SH45)  
East

Kaitake Ranges

South Road (SH45)  
West



PROJECT: Wairau Estate  
Oakura

DRAWING TITLE: Viewpoint Photos  
VP6 Analysis

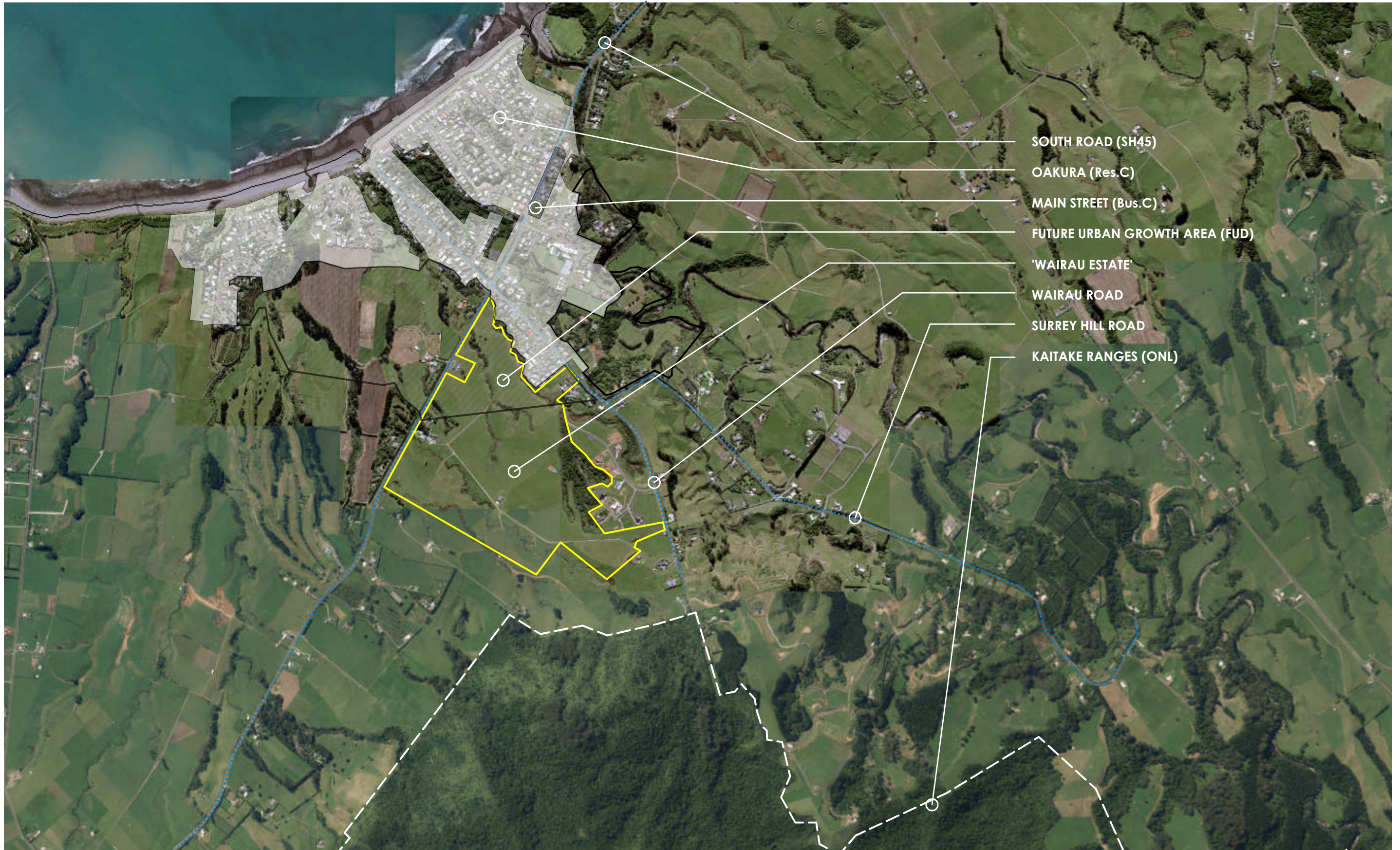
DRAWING NO: A1.6  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: N/A  
DATE: MAY 2019  
FILE NO.: ---

NOTES: -



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PROJECT: Wairau Estate  
Oakura

DRAWING TITLE: Site Context

DRAWING NO: C1.0  
REVISION: 00

SCALE: 1:16,000 @A3  
DATE: MAY 2019  
FILE NO.: ---

NOTES: -



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