

## **ATTACHMENT C – EVIDENCE: LANDSCAPE & VISUAL**

### **MR BRAD DOBSON (blac.)**

## **STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BRAD LEIGH DOBSON**

### **1 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

- 1.1 My full name is Brad Leigh Dobson. I am a Landscape Architect and have my own practice, BLAC Limited.
- 1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Architectural Studies and a Masters of Landscape Architecture (Distinction) degree from Victoria University of Wellington, and I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
- 1.3 I have been practicing as a Landscape Architect since 2013. I was employed by Boffa Miskell, in their Wellington office, from 2013 to 2020 and I established BLAC Limited in 2021.
- 1.4 My work mainly involves preparing landscape and visual effects assessments, preparing urban design assessments, and designing landscapes for developers and councils around New Zealand.
- 1.5 My most relevant, and most recent, experience includes landscape and visual effects assessments for resource consent applications for subdivisions or developments that are either in, or adjacent to, rural or rural lifestyle areas, or open space areas, in Pauatahanui, Wainuiomata, Upper Hutt, and Matamata.

### **2 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 I was engaged by the New Plymouth District Council (the "*Council*"), on 21 May 2025 to provide advice on the landscape and visual effects of the Applicant's proposal to change consent notice 12565106.1 (the "*Consent Notice*") so that the building platform on their property, at 263 Weld Road Lower (the "*Site*"), can be relocated from its existing position to the position where they have constructed a building (the "*Dwelling*") and are currently living (the "*Proposal*").

2.2 My involvement in the application and consenting process for the Proposal only commenced following the receipt of the submissions from the submitters, after limited notification of the Proposal. Therefore, I have not prepared a formal assessment report and my methodology and findings are detailed in this evidence only.

2.3 I have reviewed the following documentation and information before preparing my evidence:

- Resource consent application SUB22/48035.03, which was made by the Applicant and is for a change to consent notice 12565106.1 in relation to the building platform at the Site (*"the Application"*).
- The section 92(1) request for further information from the Council in response to the Application.
- Tanya Hansen's email responses, on behalf of the Applicant, to the section 92(1) request, and the annexed documentation.
- The five submissions in relation to the Application from Rebecca and Leanne Shaw, Nicholas and Abigail Hackling, Greg and Katy Sheffield, James Dinnis and Claire Frost, and Angela and Steven Blair.
- Resource consent decision SUB22/48035 in relation to the subdivision in 2022 that created the Site and the current building platform on the Site (the *"Subdivision"*).
- Blue Marble's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment from December 2021, relating to the Subdivision.
- Blue Marble's Landscape Memo from May 2023.
- Blue Marble's Landscape Memo from August 2024 Revision 1.
- Blue Marble's Landscape Memo – Addendum from May 2025.

2.4 I have set out in **Appendix 1** of my evidence, the following:

2.4.1 BTW Company's updated site plan showing the location of the current building platform and the proposed new location for the Building Platform dated 3 April 2025.

- 2.4.2 Blue Marble's table of effects ratings definitions
- 2.4.3 LT 582431 showing the location of Viewshaft areas AA and Y
- 2.4.4 Photos from Weld Road Lower and Lower Timaru Road towards the Site
- 2.4.5 Simulation for shading on 247B Weld Road Lower

2.5 My evidence is set out as follows:

- Landscape and visual assessment incorporating:
  - Methodology
  - Relevant statutory provisions
  - Explanation of the Site and receiving environment
  - Summary of the proposal
  - Landscape and visual effects assessment
- Assessment of matters raised in the Council's planners section 42A report in relation to the Subdivision
- Assessment of the Application
- Assessment of the four landscape and visual assessments provided by the Applicant (from Blue Marble)
- Assessment of the five submissions received

2.6 I have read the Environment Court Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and agree to comply with it. I confirm that the opinions expressed in this statement are within my area of expertise except where I state that I have relied on the evidence of other persons. I have not omitted to consider materials or facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I have expressed.

### **3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

3.1 My assessment focuses on the landscape and visual effects of the Proposal, using the original building platform on the Site as a baseline for comparison. I have also considered the existing, surrounding environment, which includes multiple dwellings, and the established pattern of rural lifestyle subdivision and development in the area.

3.2 As part of my assessment, I reviewed the relevant documentation listed in this evidence and the statutory context, and I also visited the Site, the two relevant public roads, and each of the properties involved in the submissions.

3.3 My key findings are as follows:

3.3.1 From Weld Road Lower, the Dwelling is now visible where it would not have been if it were constructed on the original building platform. The Dwelling is also visible from Lower Timaru Road but, from certain viewpoints, it is less visible from Lower Timaru Road than it would have been if it were built on the original building platform. The public effects are rated as **Very Low** due to the shed-like form of the Dwelling, brief viewing duration, and mitigation from existing and proposed vegetation, and the spaciousness and rural character remaining from the Weld Road Lower viewpoints.

3.3.2 From private viewpoints, the Proposal introduces greater visual prominence, perceptible residential activity, and cumulative changes that reduce the rural character anticipated under the Subdivision. These effects range from **Very Low to Low–Moderate**, particularly where multiple dwellings and lighting are visible from a single property.

3.3.3 The Proposal does contribute to a gradual but discernible transition toward a rural lifestyle character, especially when considered cumulatively with surrounding development. Landscape effects are assessed as **Low**. The Proposal does not involve significant landform modification, and the Dwelling's form is broadly consistent with rural vernacular architecture.

3.4 While the Proposal introduces a modest increase in landscape and visual effects, compared to a dwelling on the original building platform, these effects are generally well-contained and consistent with the evolving rural lifestyle character of the area. However, I note this evolving character is less aligned with the intent of the

Subdivision, which was to minimise built form exposure, and it is even less aligned with the intent of the New Plymouth District Council's Proposed District Plan to maintain rural character.

3.5 My non-statutory recommendations include:

3.5.1 The Applicant replacing the non-compliant Poplar shelterbelt (along the boundary with 247D Weld Road Lower) with native planting, closer to the Dwelling, to mitigate effects of the Dwelling while avoiding shading on the neighbouring property.

3.5.2 Enhancing mitigation near the Dwelling through strategic planting to manage privacy and reduce visibility over time for neighbouring properties.

3.5.3 Hydroseeding exposed earthworks associated with the driveway to reduce landscape contrast.

3.5.4 Removing identified planting out of viewshaft area Y (on Deposited Plan 582431) to protect the existing viewshaft.

3.6 Overall, the landscape effects are assessed as **Low**, and visual effects range from **Very Low** to **Low–Moderate**, depending on the viewpoint.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

### Guidelines

4.1 My evidence has been prepared in accordance with the Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines ("*the Guidelines*"). In accordance with the Guidelines, I will refer to ratings from the following rating scale throughout my evidence:

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

**Table 1.** *The landscape and visual effects rating scale from the Guidelines.*

4.2 For continuity and ease of reference for all parties, I have used the same effects rating definitions that Richard Bain (Blue Marble) used in his initial Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment back in 2021 for the Subdivision, and I have appended that table to my evidence. While the Guidelines set out the table above, there are no prescribed definitions of each rating level in New Zealand and practitioners choose how to define the rating levels. I believe that the definitions Mr Bain used in 2021 are similar to what I have seen used across our industry, and to what I typically use myself.

4.3 I also note that the table used in Mr Bain’s assessment from 2021 is helpful for explaining how we, as landscape architects, assess effects: Nature of effect + Magnitude – Mitigation = Actual effect.

4.4 My evidence is tailored to suit the nature of the Proposal and the Site.

#### **Desktop research**

4.5 In addition to the information and documentation listed in the evidence section above, I have also reviewed the following:

- New Plymouth District Council Operative District Plan (*“the Operative District Plan”*)
- New Plymouth District Council Proposed District Plan (*“the Proposed District Plan”*)
- New Plymouth District Council Rural Design Guide

#### **Site visits**

4.6 On Thursday 5 June 2025, I visited the following properties with Jacqui Manning (Consultant Planner for the Council) and spoke to the people listed at each respective property:

- The Site – Sophie Fourie
- 271 Weld Road Lower – Greg Sheffield
- 247C Weld Road Lower
- 247B Weld Road Lower
- 247D Weld Road Lower – James Dinnis
- 255 Weld Road Lower – Rebecca Shaw

4.7 On Tuesday 10 June 2025, I travelled along Weld Road Lower and Lower Timaru Road to experience further public views of the Site. I also visited the Site to review the species of vegetation that have been planted. I refer to the vegetation further throughout my evidence.

## 5 RELEVANT STATUTORY PROVISIONS

### New Plymouth District Council Operative District Plan

5.1 The Operative District Plan has a chapter relating to loss or reduction of rural amenity and character. It lists elements of rural character and the relevant elements for my assessment are as follows:

- Spaciousness: an overall feeling of spaciousness. The Operative District Plan notes *“... it is this feeling of ‘spaciousness’ that provides the basis for rural amenity.”*
- Low density: widely spaced built form, with dwellings dispersed in the wider landscape
- Vegetated: natural or managed areas of vegetation including pasture, shelter belts, and gardens
- Production orientated: Notably, the presence of sheds

5.2 The Operative District Plan lists the following potential issues for development in the rural space: reduction of the spatial environment, increase in the density of built form, shading from vegetation and/or buildings.



- 5.3 Policy 4.2 of the Operative District Plan relates to subdivisions, and the resulting development, in the rural context. The Council's concerns, and therefore subsequent policies and provisions, centre around ensuring that the open space of the rural area is retained, there is minimal built form, and neither a subdivision or the resulting development are highly visible in the landscape. It specifically notes: *"The varied nature of the rural landscape provides some opportunity to conceal the effects of small ALLOTMENTS, particularly in areas that have undulating and dissected landscapes."*
- 5.4 I note that Council, in the Operative District Plan, also considered the effects of residential development in the rural area and implemented rules relating to building heights, density of habitable buildings on a property, setbacks from boundaries and road, and shelter belts – as measures for protecting privacy and sunlight access, and retaining spaciousness and rural character.
- 5.5 In respect of vegetation, the Council notes in the Operative District Plan, *"Vegetation is an accepted part of the rural environment and can assist in the protection of RURAL CHARACTER by softening or screening built form or land use activities that would otherwise be out of character with the surrounding environment. Vegetation is a key element of RURAL CHARACTER so it is important that vegetation is retained and that new vegetation is planted that is in keeping with the RURAL CHARACTER."*

#### **New Plymouth District Council Proposed District Plan**

- 5.6 The overarching aims of the rural section in the PDP are similar to those in the ODP: development should not dominate a landscape, spaciousness/openness is a key character of the rural area, and rural character needs to be maintained.
- 5.7 Most notably, SUB-P14 in the PDP sets out the following:

*"Require subdivision design and layout in the Rural Zones to respond positively to, and be integrated with, the surrounding rural or rural lifestyle context, including by"*

1. *incorporating physical site characteristics, constraints and opportunities into subdivision design;*
  2. *minimising earthworks and land disturbance by designing building platforms that integrate into the natural landform;*
  3. *avoiding inappropriately located buildings and associated access points including prominent locations as viewed from public places.*
- ...

## **New Plymouth District Council Rural Design Guide**

5.8 The Rural Design Guide notes the following:

- *“It is important that buildings are positioned to maximise the wide and open spaces in the rural area. The location of a building can impact how it is viewed from afar and within a more localised environment.”*
- *“How a building looks can affect how it fits into the rural environment. A building’s size and scale are more influential elements on rural character than some of the other aspects of the building. Well-designed buildings can fit into the rural environment, while designs that are cluttered with a mix of materials are often incompatible with the rural environment.”*
- In terms of guidance for development scoping, the Guide poses the following question in relation to visual effects: *“How do I minimise the visual effect of a dominant house in an open landscape?”*

## **6 SITE AND RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT**

6.1 The Site was created in 2022, following a three-lot subdivision at 249 Weld Road Lower in accordance with NPDC SUB22/4805 (previously defined as *“the Subdivision”*). As part of the Subdivision, consent notice 12565106.1 was registered on the certificate of title for the Site (*“the Consent Notice”*). The Consent Notice contains a number of restrictions but the most relevant is the following because it creates the building platform on the Site:

*“A maximum of one habitable dwelling shall be permitted on Lot 2 LT 582431. This building shall be located within the Area marked “Z” on Lot 2 LT 582431.”*

- 6.2 I will refer to the area marked “Z” on Lot 2 LT 582431 as *“the Building Platform”* from now on.
- 6.3 The Site is located in Tataraimaka between Weld Road Lower and Timaru Road Lower, with both roads having views to the Site. The Site, and its surroundings, are zoned Rural Production under the Proposed District Plan. A lot of the rural character remains in the wider area, being spaciousness/openness, lack of urban infrastructure, presence of vegetation (including trees and pasture), presence of rural infrastructure (such as post and wire fences, gates and sheds) and animals. In the immediate vicinity of the Site, along Weld Road Lower, more intense rural-residential development has occurred resulting in smaller allotments and more than one habitable dwelling on some properties. I refer to Blue Marble’s Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment from 2021 which states this is *“an area traditionally dominated by dairy farms but has become increasingly popular for rural-residential living”* and *“within close proximity to the site [being 249 Weld Road Lower] there are nine properties smaller than 4.6 hectares. Four of these are less than 1.2 hectares in area.”*
- 6.4 Since purchasing the Site in 2022, the Applicants have planted various vegetation on the Site. The Applicants have also constructed two buildings – one which is a shed, and one which they are living in (the Dwelling). Neither building is within the Building Platform. The construction of the shed is a permitted activity so it is not included within the scope of my review.
- 6.5 I understand from the Application that the Dwelling, as constructed, complies with the remainder of the conditions in the Consent Notice.
- 6.6 The Dwelling has a simple gable structure with an extending veranda which has subsequently been closed in, giving it the appearance of shed-style or barn-style

architecture. This architecture, as the name suggests, merges the character of a shed and the character of a dwelling and I note this has become a popular style of architecture within the New Zealand rural environment.

- 6.7 The owners of 247D Weld Road Lower, James Dinnis and Claire Frost, have obtained consent from the Council to construct a second dwelling on their property. The details of that consent are set out in their submission so I will not repeat them here. I note that since their second dwelling has been consented to, it must be considered as part of the existing, receiving environment.

## **7 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW**

- 7.1 The Applicant is now applying to the Council for a variation of the Consent Notice which relocates the building platform on the Site, from the Building Platform to the area shown on BTW Company's updated site plan (appended). This variation would result in the Dwelling being located within the correct building platform, and therefore being compliant with the Consent Notice.

## **8 SUBDIVISION ASSESSMENT AND DECISION**

- 8.1 The section 42A Planner's Report accompanying the decision report for the Subdivision, states the following about the Site and the original positioning of the Building Platform:

- *"... due to the Proposed Building Platform being tucked into the embankment, it is very unlikely that any future dwelling on Lot 2 will be visible from Weld Road ... Regarding views from the wider area, it is considered that any loss of spaciousness beyond the neighbouring properties will be negligible."*
- It concludes, in relation to rural character and rural amenity, that the positioning of the Building Platform, combined with the Consent Notice rules, would mean the effects are no more than minor. The planner, Mr

Wood, concurs with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment from Blue Marble where it states that the building platform location is appropriate and *“ensure[s] that the dwelling will not be prominent in the area.”*

- In respect of cumulative effects, it concludes that the effects will be no more than minor due to the configuration of the subdivision (including the positioning of the Building Platform), and the fact there will be no visibility from Weld Road Lower. The cumulative effects were considered because the *“area contains a high number of rural residential sized allotments and a 5<sup>th</sup> lot is being created from the parent title.”*

## **9 APPLICATION FOR RESOURCE CONSENT FROM THE APPLICANTS**

- 9.1 The resource consent application, submitted by Tanya Hansen on behalf of the Applicants, is for a variation of the Consent Notice so that rule 15 is deleted and replaced with the following:

*“A maximum of one habitable dwelling shall be permitted on Lot 2 LT 582431. The building shall be located within the Area marked ‘A’ on Taylor Patrick Scheme Plan dated 27 April 2023. The habitable building shall not be erected outside of the Area marked ‘A’ on Taylor Patrick Scheme Plan dated 27 April 2023.”*

- 9.2 Presumably the reference to the Taylor Patrick Scheme Plan above will be replaced with a reference to BTW Company’s site plan dated 3 April 2025 and the covenant area stipulated on that plan.
- 9.3 Ms Hansen notes that the Dwelling is compliant with the relevant rules in the Proposed District Plan and her assessment of effects is focused on the potential effects of shifting the building platform. Her assessment of environment effects states that the *“site already contemplates a dwelling and all that arises with that – vehicles, sounds, and the general movements and habitats associated with residential activity in the rural area.”* She also notes that the original positioning of the Building Platform

(in Area Z) was a suggestion from the original developer (Tracey and Graeme Beaton), rather than Blue Marble, the Council, or any of the neighbouring property owners.

9.4 The application refers to Blue Marble's reports, and concludes that:

- The Dwelling, as a shed, is a permitted activity so an assessment of effects needs to relate to the conversion of that shed in to a dwelling
- The Applications are permitted (under the Proposed District Plan) to locate accessory buildings (such as sheds) around the Site, and are not prevented from doing so under the Consent Notice, which means that views of neighbouring land owners are *"not completely protected from development."*
- In terms of mitigation, most the of windows on the Dwelling are on the north-western side, and the Applicant has undertaken extensive landscaping which will screen the Dwelling from neighbouring properties over time.

## 10 BLUE MARBLE'S ASSESSMENTS

### Blue Marble's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

10.1 Blue Marble's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment from December 2021 ("LVIA") was prepared as part of the Subdivision process, which created the Site and the Building Platform. The purpose was to assess the landscape and visual effects of the proposed subdivision on the landscape character and visual amenity (specifically for the area that would become 263 Weld Road Lower/the Site because a new dwelling would be introduced on that lot).

10.2 In terms of landscape character at the time, the LVIA explains that:

- The wider area around the Site is *"an area traditionally dominated by dairy farms but has become increasingly popular for rural-residential living."*
- *"... along roads leading to the sea (e.g. Ahu Ahu, Weld, Timaru) smaller lot subdivision has become common."*

- *“Within close proximity to the site [being 249 Weld Road Lower] there are nine properties smaller than 4.6 hectares. Four of these are less than 1.2 hectares in area.”*
- *“... the character of this area is defined by these smaller allotments, so the proposal is consistent with this character and does not tip it to another character type.”*

10.3 In terms of reducing the effects caused by a dwelling on the Site, the LVIA notes the following (noting that Lot 2 is now the Site):

- *“Effects from the creation of Lot 2 are reduced by the identification of a Proposed Building Platform (Area Z on the Subdivision Scheme Plan). This tucks the dwelling towards the embankment and prevents the wider open space of Lot 2 being built on. The accessway represents a small change and in combination with the dwelling creates a very low effect on landscape character. The loss of spaciousness is very small and will not be perceived beyond the neighbouring properties. As a discretionary subdivision this degree of landscape change is [well] within the parameters that are anticipated.”*
- *“The dominance of buildings is avoided through a prescribed building location, and viewshaft protections for neighbours.”*
- In respect of design controls: *“Avoiding highly visible buildings will maintain rural character and reduce prominence.”*
- *“A future dwelling on Lot 2 will not be prominent as it is tucked into/below and existing embankment that will reduce the perceived scale of any building.”*

10.4 It also concludes that none of the private properties in close proximity to the Site will be affected by the subdivision (in respect of landscape and visual effects). The reasons for that conclusion are: none of the properties will have an open view to the potential dwelling on Lot 2/the Site, the distance between some of the properties and the Building Platform, and the intervening vegetation, topography of the area, and orientation of dwellings.

- 10.5 Effects on a public viewing audience from Weld Road Lower were assessed as negligible because the dwelling on Lot 2/the Site would not be visible.
- 10.6 In terms of cumulative effects from previous development in the area, the LVIA notes:  
*“There will be no sequential effects as the proposal is not visible from Weld Road and is indistinct from Timaru Road. Combined effects are also limited by the lack of visibility from public locations.”*
- 10.7 The LVIA lists a number of mitigation methods including building restrictions, fencing restrictions, and earthworks restrictions. It concludes that *“the subdivision will not alter the area’s rural character beyond a minor degree”* and that *“with mitigation, the site and wider area’s rural character values are maintained.”*

#### **Blue Marble’s Landscape Memo – May 2023**

- 10.8 This memo is supplementary to the LVIA and assesses the effects of a dwelling (which did not exist at the date of the memo) being located outside the Building Platform on the Site. As is shown in this memo (as Area A), the Applicant was proposing a new building platform (*“the Proposed Area”*). I understand that the Building and three-bay shed currently on Site were built on the Proposed Area.
- 10.9 This memo concludes the effect of moving the building platform on rural character is very low for the following reasons: a dwelling in the Proposed Area would not introduce an unfamiliar element into the landscape (given the location of neighbouring dwellings on 247A-C Weld Road Lower), the future building should comply with the consent notice conditions and therefore be visually recessive, and the relocation of a building area does not allow any additional dwellings to be built on the Site.
- 10.10 In respect of visual effects, the memo considers five of the neighbouring properties being 249 Weld Road Lower, 247 Weld Road Lower, 247A Weld Road Lower, Lower, 247C Weld Road Lower, and 271 Weld Road Lower. It concludes that:



- The effects on 249 Weld Road Lower and 271 Weld Road Lower would be greater for a dwelling than a shed (on the Proposed Area) due to the outdoor living areas on the Site, amenity vegetation, and other dwelling infrastructure likely being visible and potentially detracting from rural ambience.
- *“... with mitigation the new dwelling site will not create landscape effects beyond those created by permitted sheds. If permitted sheds are excluded from the assessment, effects can still be reduced to minor through consented design controls and proposed screen planting.”*

10.11 The memo notes that a Landscape Mitigation Plan was prepared, by Blue Marble, to screen neighbouring views of the Proposed Area and to reduce visibility of the eventual dwelling from public roads. During my Site visit on 5 June 2025, I observed that the Applicant had implemented the Landscape Mitigation Plan as well as additional planting (which I will discuss further in my assessment).

10.12 Finally, the memo notes that *“the consent conditions/design controls will mitigate potential adverse visual effects from public roads.”*

#### **Blue Marble’s Landscape Memo – August 2024 Revision 1**

10.13 This memo is supplementary to the LVIA but it instead assesses the effects of a dwelling (which is the Building) being located outside the Building Platform on the Site.

10.14 It is my understanding that at the time of preparing this memo, the Applicant was not living in the Dwelling as it is referred to as a non-habitable building in the memo.

10.15 This memo concludes the effect on rural character is very low for the following reasons: the conversion (shed to dwelling) would not introduce an unfamiliar element into the landscape, the Dwelling is visually recessive, and the conversion does not allow any additional dwellings to be built on the Site. In addition, it notes the following:

*“The District Plan provides for permitted activities that would also give rise to the same or similar effects, including planting and the construction of sheds. These commonly occur in the rural zone, so it is reasonable to conclude that the District Plan permits activities with reasonably comparable adverse effects in terms of a loss of a views by neighbouring properties. The conversion of the existing shed (constructed as a permitted activity) creates no significant additional effects.”*

10.16 In respect of visual effects, the memo considered activities that could occur if the Dwelling were to be used as a dwelling rather than a shed, including creation and use of outdoor amenity areas and lighting at night. It notes the following:

- Neighbours are unlikely to notice the lighting
- The outdoor amenity areas on the Site are likely to be positioned on the northern side of the Building and would therefore be *“invisible from most neighbouring properties”* and outdoor activity is generally intermittent
- Planting had occurred at the Site in the form of Lombardy Poplar trees along the western and eastern flanks of the Site, Griselinia along the driveway fence, and Lemonwood around the watertanks. The memo concludes that the planting, including proposed future planting of a new hedge east of the Dwelling, would maintain rural character and screen both buildings on the Site from the neighbouring properties.

10.17 Notably, this memo states that:

- the two sheds (one of which is the Building) *“have been constructed as a permitted activity and their position was not precluded in the consent conditions for NPDC SUB 22/4805.”*
- The scope is limited to assessing *“the potential effect of a dwelling on rural character and visual amenity over and above effects resulting from the permitted shed.”*

10.18 The memo also assesses the effects from seven of the neighbouring properties being 249 Weld Road Lower, 255 Weld Road Lower, 247 Weld Road Lower, 247A Weld Road Lower, 247B Weld Road Lower, 247C Weld Road Lower, and 271 Weld Road Lower. It concludes that the effects on each of the properties is very low (less than minor) for some or all of the following reasons:

- The Dwelling, whether it is a shed or a dwelling, has an identical visual effect in terms of building form and colour and will not introduce a new element into the landscape
- The Dwelling only forms a small portion of a wider view
- The distance between the Dwelling and the neighbouring properties
- Outdoor living areas on the Site are likely to be positioned on the northern side of the buildings on the Site, and therefore will either be not visible to neighbouring properties or the effects of the visibility will be very low
- Planting will screen the Dwelling over time

#### **Blue Marble's Landscape Memo – Addendum – May 2025**

10.19 This memo is an updated assessment of landscape and visual effects. It compares the difference in effects between a dwelling built on the Building Platform and the Dwelling being used as a dwelling. It assumes that if a dwelling is built on the Building Platform in the future, the Dwelling will remain in its current location as a non-habitable building (and therefore be viewed on the Site along with the three-bay shed and the new dwelling on the Building Platform).

10.20 In terms of clarifying visual effects, the memo notes:

- *“Visual effects are a measure of the consequence of visual change on landscape values, not a measure of visual change or visibility. In assessing the visual amenity from each property, I base the level of effect on the extent to which the potential loss of view affects the occupants’ ‘living condition’.”*
- *“In the context of the subject site and proposal, there are many properties and dwellings around the site (ten are identified in the notification decision), most of which see each other. The position, orientation, and nature of their views do not*

*suggest that they are particularly adverse to seeing other dwellings. Buildings form a significant presence in this location.”*

10.21 The memo assesses the effects from 10 of the neighbouring properties being 249 Weld Road Lower, 255 Weld Road Lower, 247 Weld Road Lower, 247A Weld Road Lower, 247B Weld Road Lower, 247C Weld Road Lower, 247D Weld Road Lower, 271 Weld Road Lower, 283 Weld Road Lower, and the vacant lot to the north of the Site (being Lot 2 DP 486355). It concludes that the effects on each of the properties of having the building platform moved to the Proposed Area, and therefore the Dwelling being used as a dwelling, is very low (less than minor) for some or all of the following reasons:

- The Dwelling, whether it is a shed or a dwelling, has an identical visual effect in terms of building form and colour and will not introduce a new element into the landscape
- The Dwelling only forms a small portion of a wider view
- The distance between the Dwelling and the neighbouring properties
- Outdoor living areas on the Site are likely to be positioned on the northern side of the buildings on the Site, and therefore will either be not visible to neighbouring properties or the effects of the visibility will be very low
- Planting will screen the Dwelling over time

## **11 SUBMITTER CONCERNS**

11.1 The paragraphs below set out my summary of the five submissions.

### **Submission from Greg and Katy Sheffield (271 Weld Road Lower)**

11.2 Privacy is one of the main concerns for the Sheffields. They approved the Building Platform, as part of the Subdivision, in order to maintain their privacy. Their submission states that they also purchased additional land based on their understanding of how they could maintain their privacy.

- 11.3 They state the Dwelling has directly impacted their privacy because it is visible from all main living areas, being their lounge, kitchen, children's bedrooms, front living areas, and master bedroom, as well as their outdoor living areas and garden.
- 11.4 They further note that a dwelling on the Building Platform, in comparison to the Dwelling in its current location, would be less visible and would lead to increased privacy due to it being in a more discrete location.

**Submission from Angela and Steven Blair (247C Weld Road Lower)**

- 11.5 The Blairs have stated they can see the Dwelling and the Applicant's trampoline from "*all but 3*" of the windows in their house, as well as from their outdoor living space. They have also stated they can hear and see the Applicants and their children when they (the Applicants and their children) are outside.
- 11.6 One of their main concerns is the overlooking from the Applicants' property, and that the Dwelling is close to their property and directly in front of them. They state the Applicants can see into their (the Blairs) deck and spa pool, backyard, living spaces and bedrooms.
- 11.7 Another main concern is the change in rural character, which they say has drastically changed. From a personal perspective, their submission states they face having a cluster of dwellings directly in front of them as a result of the Dwelling being used as a dwelling, and the consented (but not yet constructed) second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower. From a public perspective, they state that there is also a loss of rural character for people driving along Weld Road Lower because the Dwelling is visible from the road (and would not have been as visible if it was built on the Building Platform).

**Submission from Nicholas and Abigail Hackling (247B Weld Road Lower)**

11.8 The Hacklings' submission states that they developed their property (dwelling and outdoor living spaces), and consented to the Subdivision, on the basis that no dwelling could be built where the Dwelling is currently located.

11.9 The effects on the Hacklings of the Dwelling are listed as follows:

- the Dwelling overlooks onto their property, therefore negatively affecting their privacy;
- reduction in the amenity of their property i.e. enjoyment of their land and outdoor living areas;
- blocking of sunlight to their property/shading of their property from the Dwelling but also the Poplar trees that have been built to screen the Dwelling;
- additional noise and light emissions close to their property.

11.10 They state that *"... as a shed, the building is not occupied at night & doesn't create additional light or noise. As a dwelling there will be light & noise 24/7 & the proposed dwelling is closest to our sleeping and living spaces."*

11.11 They are also concerned about the change in rural aspect. If the Dwelling is used as a dwelling, there will be three houses within a 100-metre radius – being the Hacklings house, the consented (but not yet constructed) second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower, and the Dwelling.

11.12 Lastly, from a public perspective, they are also concerned about the loss of rural character (from a visual perspective) when driving along Weld Road Lower.

#### **Submission from James Dinnis and Claire Frost (247D Weld Road Lower)**

11.13 The submission from James Dinnis and Claire Frost states that the Dwelling is *"metres away"* from the location that has been consented for their second dwelling. They took into account the viewshaft for the Building Platform when planning the location and size of that dwelling.

11.14 The effects on Mr Dinnis and Ms Frost of the Dwelling being used as a dwelling are listed as follows:

- noise pollution
- light pollution
- loss of rural feel and space (noting that the Building is in their viewshaft when looking out from their front door)
- loss of privacy
- planting of trees on the boundary by the two properties which will negatively affect sunlight and Mr Dinnis and Ms Frost's effluent bed

**Submission from Rebecca and Leanne Shaw (255 Weld Road)**

11.15 In respect of the visibility of the Dwelling from Weld Road Lower, the Shaws' submission states the Building Platform was created as part of the Subdivision as a way to reduce effects on the rural character. They state that *"the rural character of the land has been altered beyond what was stated in the original subdivision."*

11.16 They note that the Dwelling (with multiple windows and a verandah) is distinct from the three-bay shed beside it.

11.17 They also state their privacy has reduced as a result of the Dwelling, in its current location, being used as a dwelling. The reasons for that are:

- They have a direct line of sight to the Dwelling from their master bedroom, sun room, kitchen, and outdoor spa/living area (which is currently being constructed).
- They state the Applicants can see their house from their outdoor area and from some of their verandah.
- They also mention that they look directly at the Applicant's driveway and shed, and they can see the Applicants inside the Dwelling and walking around the Building.
- The Applicants are often at the Dwelling and have vehicles coming to, and going from, the Dwelling several times a day.

**12 POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

12.1 There are three pertinent questions to consider:

1. What are the actual effects of the Proposal (considering the approach of Nature of effect + Magnitude – Mitigation = Actual effect)?
2. Does the Proposal create greater effects, from public and private viewpoints, than if the Dwelling (or a dwelling) was constructed on the Building Platform?
3. Is a Dwelling in the current location inappropriate given the original intent of the Subdivision (including the potential reduction of rural character)?

### **13 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS**

13.1 The focus of this assessment is on the effects of relocating the Building Platform to enable residential use outside of the originally approved area, and the associated landscape and visual effects of that change. The original building platform location is used as a reference point to assess the extent of any additional or new effects.

13.2 The following assessment considers visual effects and landscape effects separately. Visual effects have been assessed from two public areas, being Lower Timaru Road and Weld Road Lower, and from the private viewpoints of the five submitters. As set out in the methodology, I have applied the NZILA seven-point scale to rate the degree of visual and landscape effects. It is noted that the NZILA guidelines do not consider it appropriate for landscape assessments to adopt Resource Management Act 1991 terminology when rating effects because such judgments are more appropriately made by planners.

13.3 Due to the Dwelling currently being occupied by the Applicant, it is possible to assess the actual visual and landscape effects of the Proposal. Vegetation has been established around the Dwelling and the Site and while it is not yet fully established, I have considered the future growth of the vegetation when assessing mitigation measures.



- 13.4 For every scenario where I am considering a dwelling on the Building Platform, I have assumed that the dwelling would be compliant with the Consent Notice conditions and the Proposed District Plan.

### **Visual effects**

#### Weld Road Lower

- 13.5 Weld Road Lower and its surroundings are typically experienced from a moving vehicle travelling at high speeds (80–100 km/h). However, the area is also used recreationally by cyclists, runners, and walkers. Like many rural environments near urban centres, Weld Road Lower has experienced increasing pressure for rural lifestyle development. This is evident around the Site, where multiple consented allotments have contributed to fragmentation of the rural landscape. Despite this, such fragmentation is not readily apparent from Weld Road Lower due to the low-lying nature of buildings within each allotment. As a result, the rural character of the area from this viewpoint has largely been retained. I have appended a photo I took from Weld Road Lower on 10 June 2025, showing the Dwelling in its current surroundings.
- 13.6 A dwelling on the Building Platform would be well screened and not visible from Weld Road Lower, therefore clearly maintaining rural character and amenity. The establishment of sheds elsewhere on the Site is generally permitted under the Consent Notice and the Proposed District Plan and, since sheds are generally consistent with rural character, their presence would not result in adverse effects provided such sheds are compliant with the specific rules and standards of the Proposed District Plan and the Consent Notice. There was therefore always the potential for sheds to be located where the shed and Dwelling are currently located on the Site.
- 13.7 While the shed has introduced additional built form when viewing the Site from Weld Road Lower, it has not significantly altered the rural character of the landscape.

- 13.8 The Proposal introduces visual aspects not typically associated with rural utility buildings, such as residential vehicles, garden planting, outdoor living areas, and domestic lighting. As a result, the effects of the Dwelling/the Proposal are greater than the effects that would have arisen if a dwelling had been established on the more discreet Building Platform. These greater effects have been partially mitigated by the Dwelling's overall form, which retains the appearance of a large shed, as well as compliance with the Consent Notice conditions relating to building height and colour.
- 13.9 Further mitigating factors are: the visual catchment from Weld Road Lower is limited and the Dwelling is only visible for a brief period when travelling along the road, which reduces the extent and significance of visual exposure. While the current dwelling at 247D is visible in the same landscape, there are no notable cumulative effects, as surrounding development remains largely screened or low in prominence, and the pastured farmland (both in the foreground and background), and open views to the sea and sky still dominate the views.
- 13.10 In conclusion, the effects of the Proposal are modest and well mitigated. The Site cannot be viewed in isolation from Weld Road Lower and the wider landscape remains open, rural, and spacious, particularly because previous development surrounding the Site has been, and continues to be, concealed or partly concealed by positioning of buildings and vegetation. **I therefore assess the visual effects from Weld Road Lower as Very Low.**

#### Lower Timaru Road

- 13.11 My assessment of Lower Timaru Road is very similar to my assessment of Weld Road Lower for the following reasons:
- 13.11.1 There are limited views of the Site from the road.
  - 13.11.2 Views would typically be experienced from a moving vehicle travelling at high speeds (80–100 km/h), or from people walking, running or biking down the road.

- 13.11.3 When viewing the Site from the road, the spacious, open wider landscape is also visible, and dominates the view, albeit of the Kaitaki Ranges and Mount Taranaki from this angle (instead of the sea and farmland)
- 13.12 The fragmentation of rural land, for the purpose of rural-residential style living in Tataraimaka, does not seem as evident when travelling along Lower Timaru Road. The Site, however, cannot be viewed in isolation from Lower Timaru Road and the extent of fragmentation along Weld Road Lower is far more evident from here. I have appended a photo I took from Lower Timaru Road on 10 June 2025. From this viewpoint, the landscape does not appear rural but rather rural-residential or rural lifestyle. As a result, the Dwelling easily assimilates into its surroundings.
- 13.13 From Lower Timaru Road, both the Dwelling and the Building Platform are visible. Due to the viewing angle and intervening mature trees, the Dwelling is less visible from sections of Lower Timaru Road than it would be if it were positioned on the Building Platform.
- 13.14 **I assess the visual effects from Lower Timaru Road as Negligible.**

#### Private views

##### *271 Weld Road Lower – Sheffield property*

- 13.15 The Sheffields approved the Building Platform as part of the Subdivision and while that restricted the positioning of a dwelling on the Site, it did not restrict the positioning, or number, of any sheds on the Site. Mr Bain concludes that shifting the building platform, as per the Proposal, would result in less visual impact for the Sheffields than constructing a 400m<sup>2</sup> dwelling on the Building Platform (as allowed under the Consent Notice) because the two buildings currently on the Site could both theoretically be used as sheds, resulting in three buildings on the Site. He considers the effects on the Sheffields to be Very Low, noting the distance, orientation, and proportion of their view occupied by the Dwelling.

- 13.16 The Sheffields' primary concern relates to the increased visibility of the Dwelling from their main living spaces—including the lounge, kitchen, and deck—and the cumulative sense of increased residential activity in what has historically been a rural vista. It is important to consider the consented but not yet built second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower because this will be located within a similar view to the Dwelling.
- 13.17 I visited the Sheffield property and observed the visual context from key interior and exterior locations. From these locations, I assessed the likely effects of a dwelling located on the Building Platform, the effects of the Proposal, and the anticipated future effects of the consented second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower.
- 13.18 In my opinion, a dwelling on the Building Platform would have resulted in fewer effects than the Proposal. While a dwelling on the Building Platform would be closer to the Sheffield property, that location allowed for more effective on-site screening (on the Sheffield property) without adversely affecting sunlight access or the valued western views from their lounge and deck. Views of the Dwelling from the kitchen and master bedroom are more peripheral and not considered notable in this context.
- 13.19 It is clear that westward views from the lounge and deck are valued by the Sheffields, as evidenced by their input during the Subdivision process. Since then, the shed and Dwelling on the Site, and the consented second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower have introduced, or will introduce, change to the rural landscape. Although the second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower will introduce further residential activity, much of its effect is expected to be mitigated by planting specified in the Natural Capital landscape plan, which has been proactively implemented by the owners of 247D Weld Road Lower.
- 13.20 The Proposal introduces additional residential-type elements – such as vehicles, domestic night lighting, and domestic landscaping – which would not be visible/experienced to the same extent if the Dwelling was built on the Building Platform.

- 13.21 At the direction of Mr Bain, the applicant has established a row of *Populus × euramericana* 'Crow's Nest' ("Poplars") at the toe of the slope on the Site between the Sheffield property and the Site. They have also planted other exotic specimen trees within the paddocks of the Site, and a broadleaf hedge along the Dwelling's northeast boundary. While this planting may not have been intended solely as mitigation (its additional purpose being shelter from wind), in practice it provides mitigation for the Dwelling/Proposal. This variant of Poplars reaches between 15-20m tall. The elevation change between the planted grade and a person's eyeline on the deck or living area at the Sheffield property is approximately 16m. I note that it typically takes 10-15 years for this species of tree to reach 15m.
- 13.22 Over time, this planting is expected to provide partial screening of residential activity around the Dwelling however, given the time it will take to achieve that outcome, I have discounted that as a mitigation technique. While the location and height of the Poplar trees is permitted under the Proposed District Plan, they pose both positive and negative effects for the Sheffields. While they could provide screening of the Dwelling and shed on the Site, they also risk obstructing open, rural views and sunset access from the Sheffield property (if the Poplar trees are allowed to grow beyond 10m in height). If on-site planting (on the Site) is to be relied on for mitigation of the Proposal, it would be more appropriate to position the planting closer to the source of the visual effects—being around the Dwelling itself—rather than in a way that affects the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- 13.23 In conclusion, the Proposal results in increased visual effects compared to a dwelling located on the Building Platform. In my opinion, from the Sheffields viewpoint, the Dwelling presents less shed-like and more as a rural-inspired dwelling during daylight hours, it aligns with permitted activity thresholds in form and scale, and its occupation and associated lighting introduce effects that contribute to cumulative reduction of rural character (which is being replaced with a more rural/residential or rural lifestyle character). These effects are particularly relevant in the context of the consented second dwelling on 247D Weld Road Lower also being within their view. **I assess the**

**visual effects from the Sheffield property as Low-Moderate**, primarily due to the increasing cumulative presence of residential character and activity during both the day and night, in contrast with the retention of rural character anticipated at the time of the Subdivision.

- 13.24 I recommend that the Applicant reconsider the current boundary planting mitigation approach and instead implement more substantial planting closer to the Dwelling (without shading their own property), particularly in the area of the existing broadleaf hedge. This would allow mitigation, in respect of screening the Dwelling, to take effect sooner. This would maintain the intent of visual screening while avoiding undue loss of amenity for the Sheffields and, in my opinion, would reduce the effects to **Very Low-Low**. With some creativity, this alternative approach could create amenity for the Applicant also. I would suggest some isolated mounding and planting or a line of clear-stemmed, *pleached Hornbeam* trees (or similar).

*255 Weld Road Lower – Shaw property*

- 13.25 The Shaws' submission on the Proposal expresses their concerns about the increased visibility of the Dwelling and associated residential activities, compared with a dwelling located on the Building Platform (which would not be visible from their property).
- 13.26 Mr Bain, in his recent assessment from May 2025, states that a dwelling on the Building Platform would not be visible from the Shaw property, and therefore the Proposal will result in increased visual effects. He considers the effects of the Proposal to be Very Low, noting that the Dwelling lies well outside of viewshaft Y (on Deposited Plan 582431) — established as part of the Subdivision to protect valued views — and the Shaws would experience only distant, partial views of the Dwelling, and such views would form only a small part of a wider outlook.
- 13.27 It is worth noting that for the purpose of this assessment, I, Mr Bain, and the Shaws have all treated the existing shed on the Shaw property as removed, in accordance

with the Shaws' building consent plans for renovation. The shed currently provides some visual obstruction of the Dwelling and is going to be replaced with an outdoor living space.

13.28 I agree with Mr Bain that visual effects have increased as a result of establishing the Dwelling in its current location (as opposed to on the Building Platform). These increased effects are experienced from several key areas on the Shaw property, including the main living areas, master bedroom, and deck.

13.29 Two large trees occupy the foreground in many views of the Site from the Shaw property and provide partial screening of the Dwelling. These are located on the Shaw property and in front of the Shaw property at 249 Weld Road Lower (the Beaton property). Planting has been established on the northern downslope of the access road into the Site. The Relative Level between the driveway on the Site and the Shaw property varies but is approximately 6 metres (with the Shaw property being at the upper level) if a line is drawn between the Dwelling and the Shaw's dwelling. Although this planting is currently not visible from the Shaw property, it comprises the following:

- *Phormium tenax* (Harakeke/New Zealand Flax) which is capable of reaching 3m in height
- *Knightia excelsa* (Rewarewa) which is capable of reaching 20m in height
- *Pittosporum eugenioides* (Lemonwood) which is capable of reaching 12m in height
- *Corynocarpus laevigatus* (Karakā) which is capable of reaching 15m in height
- *Pittosporum crassifolium* (Karo) which is capable of reaching 6m in height
- *Pittosporum tenuifolium* (Kohuhu) which is capable of reaching 10m in height
- *Griselinia littoralis* (New Zealand Broadleaf) which is capable of reaching 6m in height

13.30 While this planting has not been specifically proposed or referred to by Mr Bain as formal mitigation, it is relevant to the assessment as it has the potential to provide meaningful screening over time. I have not prepared a plan showing the exact planting

location for each species so I cannot conclude whether the views of the Dwelling from the Shaw property will be partially or fully screened over time, however, I believe it is likely they will be partially screened. This planting, as a mitigation technique, however does not have a lot of weighting in my assessment, for the following reasons:

- The exact location of each species is unknown.
- It will take years for the vegetation to reach heights where it screens the Dwelling.
- There may be a time in the future where the vegetation is sufficiently screening the Dwelling but then starts screening the amenity views from the Shaw property as well (i.e. towards the surrounding farmland and the sea).

13.31 Land covenant 12565106.6 was created as part of the Subdivision as a way to protect views from the Shaw property (noting that the Shaws did not own that property at the time of the Subdivision). The land covenant states that the owner of the Site will not do the following on area Y on Deposited Plan 582431:

*“Permit any vegetation or erect or permit to be erected any building, structure or any other improvements on the burdened land at Areas AA and Y that exceeds a height of 2 metres above the level of the ground as at the date of registration of this instrument.”*

13.32 A similar viewshaft was set up on the Beaton property to further protect views from the Shaw property (being area AA on Deposited Plan 582431). I note both viewshaft areas were relative to the location of the Building Platform. The effects of the Proposal and the planting in area Y are that the Dwelling is now visible for the Shaws (at least until such time as the mitigation planting reaches certain heights), and the viewshaft is at risk of being affected by planting in that area.

13.33 The existing environment includes a number of existing buildings (habitable and non-habitable) on surrounding properties, the consented second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower, as well as one permitted shed on the Site and the Dwelling. Together, these developments contribute to a broader pattern of built form and activity that shifts the landscape character toward that of a rural lifestyle environment.



Consequently, the retention of a 'true' rural character is becoming less tenable. It is anticipated the consented second dwelling on 247D Weld Road Lower will be well screened through boundary vegetation, as required by conditions of consent for that dwelling and I note this planting has been pro-actively established. The cumulative effects of residential activity (including lighting, human presence, and associated modifications) would be lessened if the Dwelling been located on the Building Platform instead of in its current location.

13.34 In conclusion, the Proposal will result in increased visual effects when compared to a compliant dwelling on the Building Platform. However, when assessed against the existing environment, and taking into consideration that the Dwelling (and associated outdoor areas) are oriented away from the Shaw Property, and at a distance from the Shaw property, **the additional effects are assessed as Low.**

13.35 Current planting within Area Y should be removed and replaced with plants consistent with the abovementioned land covenant. Tree planting on the south side of the Dwelling and shed could further contribute to screening of the built form for the Shaws, in a more timely way.

#### *247B Weld Road Lower – Hackling property*

13.36 The Hacklings' submission expressed their concerns about the increased visibility of a dwelling and associated residential activities, in contrast to what would have been expected had the Dwelling been constructed on the Building Platform. Specifically, they raised concerns relating to visual intrusion from their outdoor living area, increased noise and light (affecting rural amenity), and shading from both the shed (and/or Dwelling), and anticipated future shading from boundary vegetation.

13.37 Mr Bain, in his recent assessment from May 2025, noted that a dwelling on the Building Platform would not have been visible from the Hackling property. He concluded that only the shed is currently visible and that the Dwelling is not

observable from their main living areas. He therefore rated the visual effects as Very Low.

- 13.38 I visited the Hackling residence and partly concur with Mr Bain's assessment. From the available vantage points during my visit (around the northern and eastern outdoor areas of the Hackling residence), only the shed was visible. I was unable to access the outlook from the upper floor of the Hacklings' home but I would anticipate that the top of the Dwelling, and activity on the Site, could become partially visible due to the increased elevation. Water tanks on the Site were also visible from the Hackling property but are not considered residential in nature, and recent planting around them is expected to provide effective future screening.
- 13.39 While the shed on the Site generates visual effects, these arise from a permitted activity and are therefore outside the scope of this assessment and effects rating.
- 13.40 I acknowledge that some shading may occur on the Hackling property from the shed, the Dwelling, and the recently planted poplars and other vegetation on the upper slope of the Site. It is understood that Mr Bain originally recommended a double row of mixed native evergreen planting, with interspersed native specimen trees, along the bank. However, in addition to that, the Applicant has planted a line of *Populus x euramericana* 'Crow's Nest' Poplars, presumably as a windbreak measure.
- 13.41 To assess shading effects from the Dwelling, I have carried out a basic simulation, which is appended, to see whether it is theoretically possible for the Dwelling to cause shading on the Hackling property. I advise caution when viewing the simulation because it has been created by software, it only takes into account certain real life factors, and it is **not** to be relied on as proof of shading that could occur on the Hackling property. In order to **prove** whether shading could occur from the Dwelling or not, an on-site analysis would need to be undertaken. I consider, based on the simulation, that it is theoretically possible for the Dwelling to create additional shade (i.e. over and above shading from the vegetation on the Site at its current height, the shed, and the hill on the Site) for approximately 30-40 minutes per day in June and July, starting

at approximately 8am. The simulation shows the theoretical shading being only over the covered outdoor connected to the house on the Hackling property. Notably, if the current planting on the Site continues to grow in height, there is a point in time where the planting will block the shading from the Dwelling and that shading will be superseded by shading from the vegetation on the Site. See my recommendation below about this vegetation. Similarly, if the Dwelling were to be converted to a shed/used as a shed, the shading from that building would be permitted under the Proposed District Plan because the location of the shed would be permitted.

13.42 I understand from on-site discussions with the Applicant that the Poplar trees were planted as a windbreak. During my visit to the Site, the prevailing wind conditions supported this reasoning. However, due to the Hacklings' location within a valley setting, it is likely they will experience increasing shading over time. Shading from the poplars will increase over time due to their mature height (15–20 m). The Poplar trees, as a shelterbelt, are a permitted activity under RPROZ-R2/S3 Shelterbelts, as the Hackling dwelling is set back more than 16 metres from the Applicant's boundary and there is a strip of land (forming part of 247D Weld Road Lower) that runs between the two properties.

13.43 In my view, Mr Bain's original recommendation – of a double row of mixed native evergreen vegetation with occasional specimen trees – remains a more appropriate response. It offers effective visual mitigation while also providing wind protection, without creating excessive shading impacts on the Hackling property.

13.44 The Proposal will not result in any additional visual effects, over and above what would result from a dwelling on the Building Platform because neither dwelling location is visible from the Hackling property, or is barely visible. **The additional visual effects are assessed as Very Low.**

13.45 It remains unclear whether the consented second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower will be visible from the Hackling property.

13.46 From a perceptual standpoint, there may be a sense or awareness of residential activity due to the Dwelling's presence. While this is not a visual effect, I will address it in this part of my assessment. The Proposal would centre residential activity (on the Site) in a different location to where it would have been had the Dwelling being constructed on the Building Platform. Based on my professional judgement of these properties and experience with rural environments, I do not consider that light spill from the Dwelling (if it can be seen on the Hackling property at night) would be significant given that the outdoor areas of the Dwelling are oriented away from the Hackling property. In terms of noise, I did not experience any noise coming from the Site during my visit but I acknowledge that due to the proximity of the Hackling property to the Dwelling, there is the potential for residential noise to travel between properties. The other factor to consider, is the loss of rural amenity for the Hacklings in respect of loss of privacy due to the proximity of the Dwelling (and associated residential use). See my comment on an effects rating below in the landscape effects section.

*247C Weld Road Lower – the Blair property*

13.47 The Blairs' submission states the Dwelling is visually exposed from "all but 3" of their windows and outdoor living spaces, and there is a resulting loss of rural character. They noted that perceived overlooking (from the Applicant's property) has affected their sense of privacy. Additionally, the Blairs consider the Applicant's Poplar planting to be mitigation planting which, in their view, would not have been required had the Applicant established the Dwelling on the Building Platform.

13.48 Mr Bain, in his assessment from May 2025, considers that the northern orientation and form of the Dwelling result in an appearance that is comparable to a rural shed—an effect which, if it were not a dwelling, would be permitted. He further observes that if one structure on the Site remained a shed and the other a dwelling, the cumulative presence of both would still contribute to built form on the landscape. In his view, a dwelling on the Building Platform would have introduced similar effects in terms of cumulative development and overall rural character.

- 13.49 I note that the Poplar planting was not recommended by Mr Bain as mitigation planting, nor was it significantly relied on in his assessment. His conclusion—that the Dwelling effects are comparable to those of a permitted shed—does not appear to depend on screening vegetation. Nonetheless, the Poplars do provide visual screening benefits and, as stated previously, the Applicant has indicated to me verbally they were planted primarily for shelterbelt purposes.
- 13.50 I undertook a visual assessment from the Blairs’ deck, which is located on the northern side of their dwelling and oriented toward the Timaru Stream. From this location, views include the main dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower and the site for the consented second dwelling at that property, as well as the Dwelling and shed on the Site, and the Hackling property. I was unable to assess views from inside the Blair residence.
- 13.51 The Blairs’ assertion regarding the cumulative visibility of built development within their northerly view is, in my opinion, accurate. Subdivision in this area has resulted in a level of built development that exceeds what is typically expected within a traditional rural environment. Most allotments now contain both a dwelling and a shed, 247B Weld Road Lower contains two dwellings, and 247D Weld Road Lower includes consent for a second dwelling. These cumulative effects are experienced during both day and night. I note that the positioning of the Dwelling and the shed on the Site create a silhouette on the hilltop and interrupt the ‘naturalness’ of the topography.
- 13.52 While consent conditions on the Site restricted residential development to the Building Platform, they did not protect the Blairs’ visual exposure to rural buildings, such as sheds, established as permitted activities. I agree with Mr Bain’s assessment that, during the day, the dwelling on the Site is largely indistinguishable from a shed in terms of its scale, form, and appearance. However, some additional effects may arise from the associated residential activity. At night, the presence of lighting at the Dwelling — distinct from what would typically be associated with a shed — would

contribute to an increased sense of habitation. This lighting, when considered alongside the lighting from 247B Weld Road Lower and the anticipated light spill from the future second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower, would contribute to a more illuminated night-time environment, shifting the area's character towards that of a rural lifestyle setting.

13.53 In addition to the Poplar trees on the Site, vegetation has been implemented in accordance with Blue Marble's Landscape Mitigation Plan, and there is also naturally-occurring vegetation on the bank of the Site (facing the Blair property). Over time, I anticipate that the above vegetation will grow to heights that screen both the shed and the Dwelling.

13.54 **I therefore assess the visual effects from the Blair property as Low**, primarily due to the increasing cumulative presence of residential activity, during both day and night, in contrast with the more traditional rural character anticipated by the Subdivision.

13.55 To a lesser extent, the recommendation above for the Hackling property could also be considered as a positive effect for the Blairs, to rely on the native planting and keep the skyline more open.

#### *247D Weld Road Lower – Main residence*

13.56 Mr Dinnis and Ms Frost noted in their submission that the Dwelling is visible from their front door. Mr Bain's assessments do not specifically address potential effects on this main residence.

13.57 During a site visit and discussion with Mr Dinnis, it was clarified that his concerns primarily relate to the visual effects on their consented second dwelling site, rather than their main dwelling.

13.58 Given this clarification, and considering that the submitters have introduced a similar pattern of development on their own property (within their view from their main

dwelling), I consider that while there may be some minor cumulative effects arising from increased residential activity within the shared view, these would be **Negligible** in the context of the existing rural lifestyle character. No further assessment of the main residence is therefore considered necessary.

*247D Weld Road Lower – Consented second dwelling*

13.59 In their submission, Mr Dinnis and Ms Frost noted the Dwelling is located only 65 metres from their consented second dwelling. Their concerns relate to a perceived loss of rural character and openness, increased noise and lighting effects, loss of privacy, potential shading from planting, and the potential effects from roots on effluent disposal field.

13.60 Mr Bain, in his assessment, concludes that the effects of the Dwelling—when compared to a dwelling located on the Building Platform — would be Very Low in either case. He notes that screening provided by mixed native vegetation (required as part of the 247D consent) and Poplar planting by the Applicant (2 metres in from the shared boundary) will, over time, result in no direct views from the consented second dwelling to the Dwelling once the vegetation matures.

13.61 The Applicant’s Poplar planting does not comply with the RPROZ-R2/S3 Shelterbelt standard, which limits shelterbelts within 16 metres of a dwelling. Given the proximity of the consented second dwelling, the Poplars have been planted too close to the boundary to comply. Therefore, this planting should not be relied upon as visual mitigation in this context. See my recommendations below.

13.62 The species planted on this property, in accordance with the Natural Capital planning plan (See the Dinnis and Frost submission) are appropriate for visual mitigation and rural character reinforcement, and I note that Natural Capital recommended that the vegetation be maintained at heights of 3-4m. Importantly, this vegetation — while intended to mitigate the effects of their own second dwelling —will also function to

screen views toward the Dwelling over time. This inadvertently contributes to reducing visual connectivity between the two dwellings.

13.63 The site for the second consented dwelling would currently receive significant amounts of light spill from the Dwelling. However, it is anticipated that the vegetation on the Dinnis and Frost property will grow to a height where the light spill effects are sufficiently mitigated. I have also made a recommendation below about planting on the Site.

13.64 The Proposal will bring residential activity significantly closer to the consented second dwelling at 247D. Although visual effects can be mitigated through planting, non-visual effects such as noise, and perceived loss of privacy become more relevant at this distance, particularly because the dwellings are at a similar level. At approximately 65 metres, residential activity (e.g. outdoor living, vehicles, lighting) becomes perceptible and may affect an occupants' sense of privacy, even if not resulting in a visual intrusion.

13.65 In conclusion, while the visual effects of the Dwelling can be reduced over time through existing planting, the proximity of residential activity enabled by the Proposal will introduce non-visual effects (e.g. noise, privacy loss) that were not anticipated in the Subdivision. The visual effects are assessed as **Low** and the non-visual effects are discussed further in the landscape effects section below.

13.66 It is recommended that the Applicant review and replace the Poplar shelterbelt with a 5m (minimum) width native planting buffer similar in height and characteristics to the planting that Mr Dinnis and Ms Frost have implemented along the boundary between the two properties. This would avoid additional shading effects and seemingly increase the distance between the two activities, creating a greater sense of separation, buffer and privacy. This planting would also benefit the Sheffield property in terms of further screening of residential activities within their view.



## **Landscape effects**

- 13.67 This section assesses the landscape effects arising from the Proposal. Landscape effects are distinguished from visual effects in that they relate to the modification of the physical landscape, its character, and the values associated with it, rather than how it is seen from specific viewpoints.
- 13.68 Here I am specifically considering physical changes to the landform, vegetation, and built elements, the effect on the existing landscape character and amenity, and the implications of cumulative change in the wider landscape.
- 13.69 The existing environment includes the Subdivision, the construction of permitted sheds, established vegetation, and the consented second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower. These changes contribute to a baseline that reflects an ongoing transition from traditional rural land use to a rural lifestyle character.
- 13.70 The Site is located within that above-described environment. While the Operative District Plan and Proposed District Plan both identify this area as rural, development pressure and consenting activity have introduced a pattern of change more aligned with rural lifestyle living.
- 13.71 The landscape is now characterised by open paddocks, residential shelterbelts, distant views including the sea, the Kaitaki Ranges and Mount Taranaki, and a patchwork of allotments containing a mix of sheds, dwellings, and developing boundary and internal lot planting and fencing.
- 13.72 Placement of a Dwelling on the Building Platform is more aligned with the intent of the Proposed District Plan (for a property in the Rural Production Zone) than the Proposal, specifically because it allows a greater extent of the Site to remain open/spacious and used for rural purposes for the majority of the viewpoints described above.

- 13.73 The key landscape effect therefore arises from the shift in character from pastoral rural to a more settled, rural lifestyle landscape. The introduction of the Dwelling, associated residential activity (vehicles, lighting, amenity planting etc.), and cumulative development on surrounding lots (e.g. 247B and 247D) reinforce this trend.
- 13.74 The Proposal, and siting of the Dwelling in its current position, have not required any notable earthworks or alteration to the Site's landform. There has been a large cut made on the upslope of the driveway on the Site (below 255 Weld Road Lower), which I have assumed to be consented by the Council. The Applicant should consider hydroseeding the bank to reduce the visual contrast until the roadside vegetation grows to screen this area.
- 13.75 Planting has been established on the Site in the form of a shelterbelt of *Populus × euramericana* 'Crow's Nest' (Lombardy Poplars), exotic specimen trees, and broadleaf hedging. While not formally proposed as mitigation planting, these contribute to the evolving character of the Site and will, over time, reinforce visual containment of the Dwelling. In addition, vegetation has been planted on the Site on the downslope along the access road. This vegetation introduces long-term structure to the landscape and will eventually provide visual softening, although some elements (e.g. poplars) may also give rise to shading concerns on neighbouring properties.
- 13.76 The current location of the Dwelling introduces additional landscape legibility (i.e. a clearer human presence in the landscape), which marginally reduces the rural open-space quality experienced in earlier configurations. While the Dwelling visually appears as a shed from several viewpoints (due to form, colour, and orientation), its function as a dwelling, particularly at night, contributes to a pattern of change in land use and landscape character. In respect of potential loss of rural amenity, the effects would be the most pronounced for the Hackling property and the Dinnis and Frost property. I have commented on the loss of amenity for each property in the visual effects section above but I would assess the landscape effects rating for these properties as **Low**.

13.77 Overall the landscape effects are assessed as **Low**, recognising that the Dwelling maintains appropriate rural form and materials, no significant landform modification has occurred, planting contributes positively to structure and containment over time, and while residential activity and night-time effects will contribute to cumulative change in land use character these are not deemed to be more than minor.

## 14 CONCLUSION

14.1 The relocation of the building platform from its current position to the current Dwelling location will result in a modest increase in landscape and visual effects. While the Building Platform was relied on to limit visual exposure and maintain rural character in the area, and the current location introduces a more visible built form and associated residential activity, this is consistent with the surrounding incremental shift towards a rural lifestyle character area.

14.2 From public viewpoints, Lower Timaru Road and Weld Road Lower, the Dwelling is briefly visible, whereas it would have been screened when driving along Weld Road Lower if it was constructed on the Building Platform instead. The Dwelling presents a shed-like form, and visual effects are assessed as **Negligible to Very Low** due to distance, limited exposure duration, and mitigation through colour, form, and planting.

14.3 From private viewpoints, the current Dwelling position results in greater visual prominence, increased perception of residential character, and potential effects on privacy and night-time amenity. These are most pronounced effects for the neighbouring properties where cumulative development (including that of the consented second dwelling at 247D Weld Road Lower) has altered the open, rural qualities of the landscape.

14.4 In terms of landscape effects, while no significant modification to landform has occurred, the presence of a more prominent dwelling and associated activity

contributes to a gradual erosion of the traditional rural character. The landscape is now functionally transitioning toward a rural lifestyle environment, particularly when considered cumulatively with other nearby development.

- 14.5 Overall, the visual effects range from **Very Low to Low–Moderate** depending on the viewpoint, and the landscape effects are assessed as **Low**.

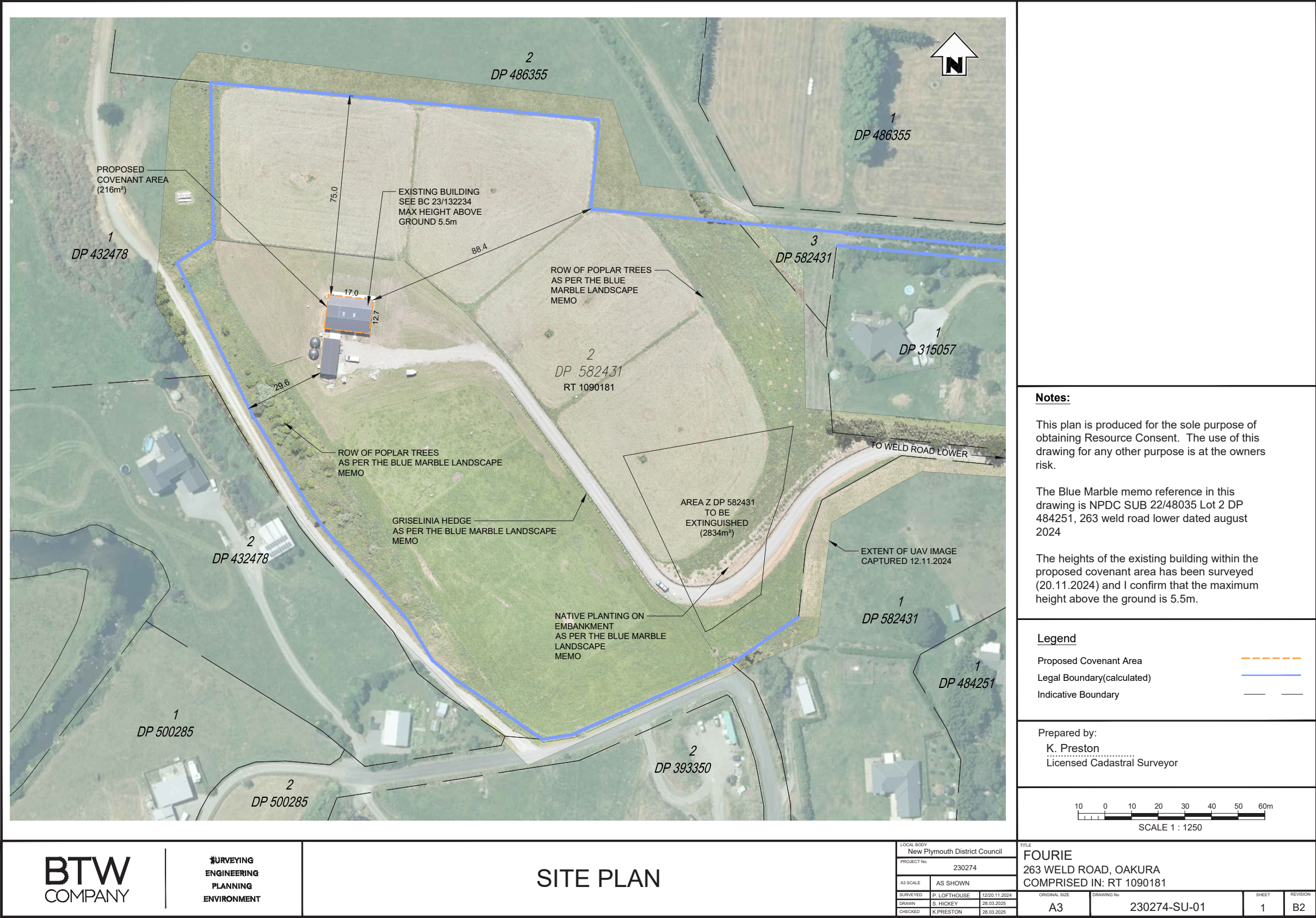
*Brad Dobson*

**Brad Leigh Dobson**

**19 June 2025**

APPENDIX 1





BTW SCHEME PLAN



Rating	Indicative Examples
Negligible	The proposal will have no discernible change or have a neutral effect on the existing landscape character or viewer.
Very Low	The proposal may have slightly discernible or the distance of the viewer from the proposal is such that it is difficult to discern the proposal and consequently has little overall effect.
Low (Minor*)	The proposal may be discernible within the landscape but will not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the landscape or affect the viewer. The proposal will have a small effect or change.
Moderate	The proposal will form a visible and recognisable new element within the landscape and would be discernible and have a noticeable effect on the overall quality of the landscape and/or affect to the viewer.
High	The proposal will form a significant and new element within the landscape and will affect the overall landscape character and/or affect to the viewer. Existing views are materially changed.
Very High	The proposal will result in a visible and immediately apparent element within the landscape and will result in a permanent change to the overall landscape character and/or affect to the viewer. Primary views are restricted.
Extreme	The proposal will result in the loss of key attributes thereby creating a significant change in landscape character and the proposal becomes the overwhelmingly dominant feature and may obscure primary views.
Effects can be adverse or beneficial	
<p><b>*Determination of Minor</b></p> <p>A consent can be publicly notified if is the decision maker considers that the activity will have or is likely to have adverse effects that are more than minor. Where public notification is not required, limited notification must be given to those who are affected in a minor or more than minor way (but not less than minor). In relation to this assessment 'Low' would generally equate to '<b>minor</b>'.</p>	

BLUE MARBLES TABLE OF EFFECTS RATINGS







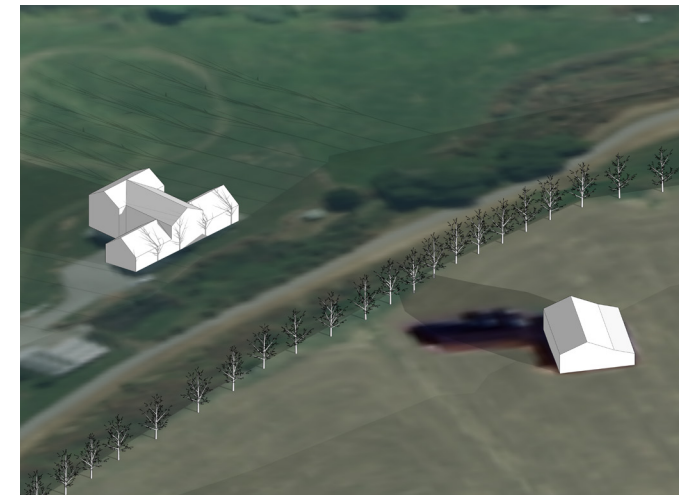
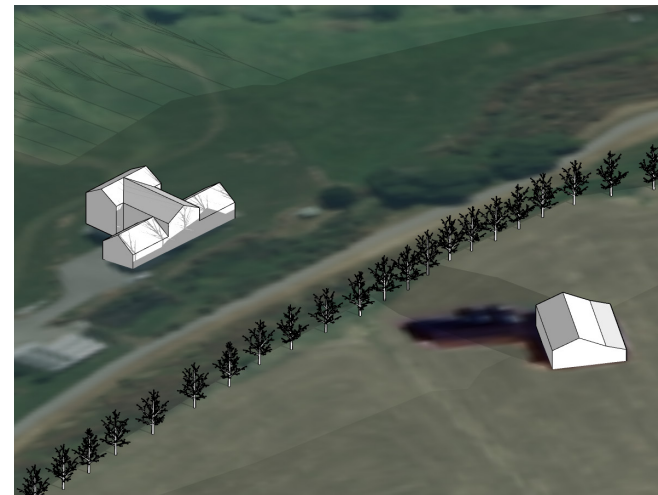
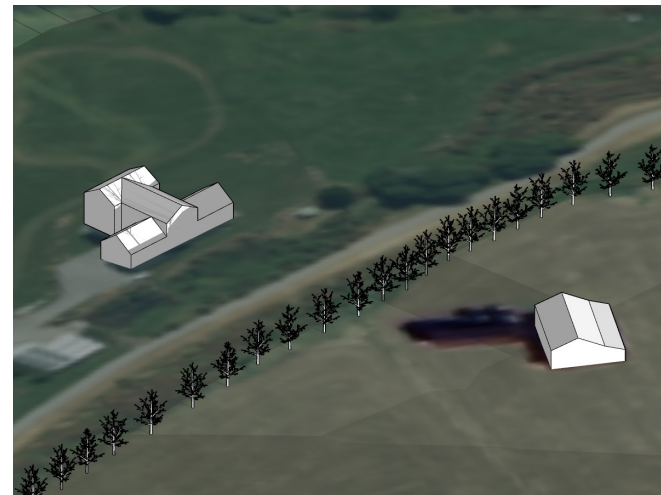
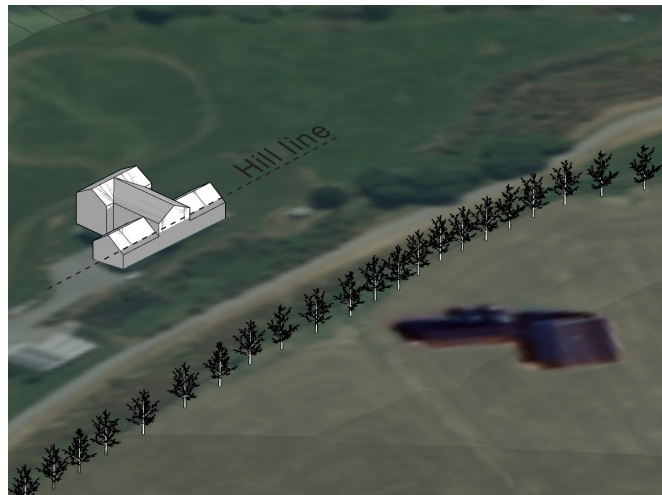
**SITE PHOTO: VIEW FROM LOWER WELD ROAD**





**SITE PHOTO: VIEW FROM LOWER TIMARU ROAD**

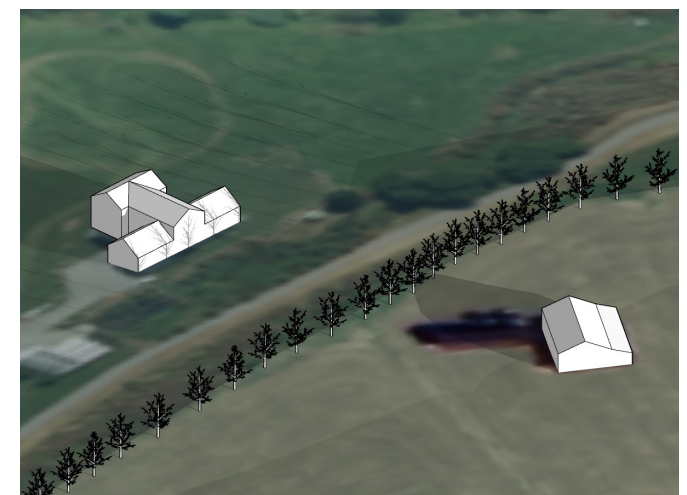
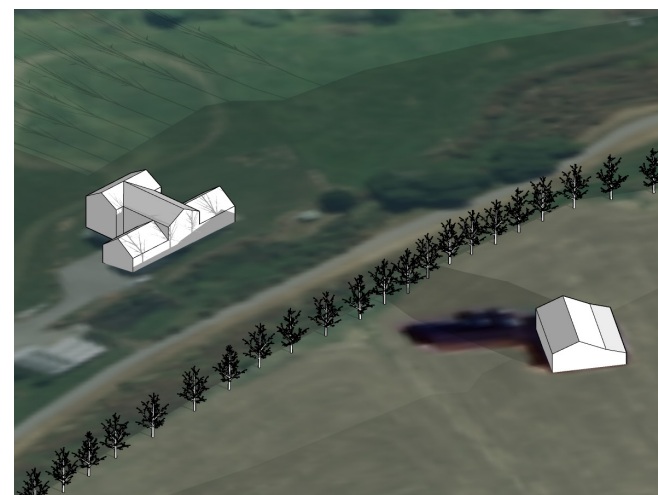
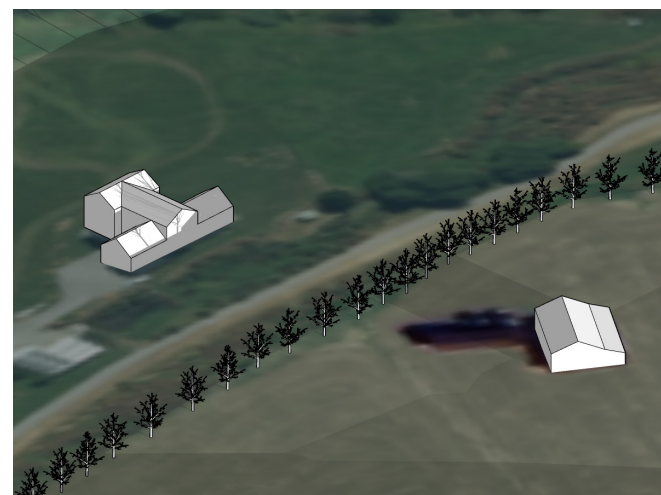




JUNE 15 - 8:14am (with dwelling)

JUNE 15 - 8:30am (with dwelling)

JUNE 15 - 8:45am (with dwelling)



JULY 15 - 8:14am (without dwelling)

JULY 15 - 8:14am (with dwelling)

JULY 15 - 8:30am (with dwelling)

JULY 15 - 8:45am (with dwelling)

## SHADING ANALYSIS

**BLAC.**

BLAC landscape architecture + collaborations.

A landscape architecture studio collaborating with registered architects,  
engineers, planners, ecologists + design sources.

Ngamotu /  
Taranaki

Miramar/  
Te Whanganui-a-Tara

