

# PEER REVIEW

*of Appendix G – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as submitted with the application for Subdivision Consent at 1303 South Road, Oākura being Lot 3 DP 447811 by Juffermans Surveyors Ltd on behalf of L & H Greensill, Dated 19 February 2021 (Received 26 February 2021).*

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**TO\_** Luke Balchin

**DATE\_** 22 March 2021

**SUBJECT\_** 3 LOT RURAL SUBDIVISION at 1303 South Road, Oākura being Lot 3 DP 447811

**PNCC REF:** SUB21/47711

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Dear Luke

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Natural Capital have been engaged by New Plymouth District Council to Peer Review the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted as part of the subdivision application outlined above. The report has been reviewed to determine whether the information provided adequately enables a clear understanding of the landscape, including both rural, natural character, and general amenity values; and whether this understanding informs a complete assessment of likely and potential visual and landscape effects as a result of the proposal on the receiving environment and identified receptors.
- 1.2. The Peer Review follows the following process:
  - Consent Application Familiarisation
  - Site Visit
  - Review as to the adequacy of the following areas of assessment:
    - o Methodology
    - o Relevant Planning Provisions
    - o Landscape Description
    - o View Catchment and Viewing Audience
    - o Landscape Effects Assessment
    - o Visual Effects Assessment
    - o Mitigation Strategy
    - o Summary of Queries / Recommendations
- 1.3. Under each heading, a brief review of my agreement or otherwise is provided.

## 2. SITE VISIT

- 2.1. We visited the site on Friday 20th November between 1:30pm and 3:45pm. The visit included appreciation of the journey to the site, past the site, and returning toward it in both directions along SH45/South Road. The property was accessed and the applicant provided us with a brief overview of the proposal, health and safety aspects of the property, and provided permission for us to view and photograph the site and its tributaries.

### 3. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

*Whether the methodology used represents best practice in assessing the actual or potential landscape effects of the activity.*

- 3.1. The LVIA adopts an approach to assessment that is consistent with the NZILA Best Practice Note (NZILA, 2010). It provides a brief description of the proposal, assessment methodology applied, and a section on its Statutory Context. Landscape Context is subsequently addressed, followed by discussions on Landscape Effects, Visual Effects, Cumulative/Sequential Effects and a resultant Mitigation strategy.

### 4. DESCRIPTION OF LANDSCAPE CONTEXT & RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

*That the description of the existing environment, landscape and visual amenity values are adequately covered.*

- 4.1 I agree with the description of the landscape context, and the location of the proposal within it and that it is not located in a prominent location from a public view perspective.

### 5. VIEWING CATCHMENT & VIEWING AUDIENCE

*That all key viewpoints are covered, and the actual or potential landscape and visual effects of the activity have been adequately considered.*

- 5.1. I largely agree with the view catchment and viewing audience assessed and note the explanation provided around choosing not to assess those residences in close proximity who are, in reality, not connected to, or affected by the subdivision – ie: those on the other side of SH45 oriented north.
- 5.2. However, with regards to public views, there would potentially be views toward the site if vegetation around the existing dwelling on Lot 1 and the shelterbelt along the southern edge of the ROW were removed. Presently there is a restricted view of the paddocks proposed for subdivision which is also limited in duration (depending on transport mode). See attached annotated plan with queries.

### 6. LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

*That all key actual or potential landscape effects of the activity have been adequately considered.*

- 6.1. **Landscape Change:** The creation and future sale/development of Lots 3 & 4 will change the character of the area concerned from one that is currently used for grazing to one that is likely to be solely residential given its size/shape. This is evidenced by the management of the three similarly sized titles directly north of proposed Lot 3 & 4.
- 6.2. **Landscape Sensitivity:** In general, I consider the landscape on the foothills of the Kaitake Range to be relatively sensitive to change given its elevated position with respect to the State Highway and its proximity to the ONL. I agree with the assessment's conclusion that the landscape behind 1305A and B, in general, has a lower sensitivity to change in terms of the public's appreciation of rural character due to the current pattern and scale of development in the area.

## 7. VISUAL EFFECTS

*Has the report described how the proposed development will change existing natural character values and visual quality and amenity values s7(c) & (f) of the RMA1991)?*

- 7.1. I agree the proposed subdivision is in keeping with the pattern of development around it - and the proposal will have little material effect on the overarching sense of the public's enjoyment of rural character and amenity if dwellings are kept to a low profile, single storey, and appropriate landscape mitigation is provided. (Viz a viz the query above regarding the future of the shelter belt and existing vegetation in Lot 1). I see value in protecting the area of open space between the existing dwelling on Lot 1 and the road given the extension to the 'enclave, or cluster' of dwellings proposed.
- 7.2. Provided sufficient information/mitigation measures are provided in response to queries around current landscaping levels of Lot 1, effects then relate to activities already present and established in the vicinity.
- 7.3. I agree landscaping would be required to reduce the impact on, or dominance and privacy effects created by the proposed subdivision to receptors at 1305A – see mitigation discussion.

## 8. MITIGATION

*Has an appropriate strategy been identified or adopted in order to avoid, remedy or mitigate any unacceptable adverse effects on landscape values, natural character, and visual amenity?*

- 8.1 Generally, I support the mitigation strategy proposed to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse visual character and amenity values but raise the following matters:
- Is the existing vegetation on Lot 1 to be retained or 'protected' as part of the mitigation package?
  - Should Rural Rur 12A be exercised, additional dwellings on Lot 1 should be restricted from the roadside paddock.
  - No colour controls for claddings are recommended for the dwellings or outbuildings on Lots 2 & 3. These would assist with ensuring the dwellings bed into the environment as much as possible (with a backdrop of planting and the Kaitake Range).
  - No setback or separation distance is proposed between 1305A/B and dwelling sites. These could provide surety of openness and spaciousness between established activities and the proposed dwellings.
  - A height limit of 5m should be adequate for a single storey dwelling – as these will be set on higher ground than 1305A/B.
  - The LVIA recommends the following two landscape mitigation measures:
    - h) To minimise visual effects for 1305B, the driveway and boundary of Lot 3 should be planted with evergreen specimen trees at a maximum of 7m spacings.*
    - i) To maintain rural character, planting of native species should be planted along the eastern and southern boundary of Lot 3 and the eastern boundary of Lot 2. This planting should comprise mixed native planting a minimum of 3m wide.*
  - Re: (h) Why is there a 'maximum' centres given to planting around the boundary of Lot 3? And does this relate to all the boundaries, or just the driveway?

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The proximity and elevation of two additional dwellings behind 1305A will change the character of the area and their immediate relationship with, and appreciation of, rural amenity.

- Additional measures to allay concerns around potential adverse effects created by proximity, height, the potential disconnection with the Kaitake Range, vehicle movements etc is considered relevant. 1305A contains two dwellings, the smaller western 'granny flat' having windows to the east. This is a fully consented development despite its proximity to the boundary. The main dwelling is generally oriented east-west with a double internal garage located to its east. An outdoor seating area is located to the south of the dwelling together with a pergola, as well as the open lawn areas, and basketball hoop along the eastern boundary.
- The driveway placed to the rear of the lots may assist with removing conflicts with noise, light, etc to receptors at 1305A/B. This may also assist with reducing the area of non-permeable surface required within the paddock environment – although outside my area of expertise the letter provided by the owner of 1305A suggests there are unresolved overland flow issues presently.
- I consider there is the potential to locate dwellings to the rear of the proposed lots, with rear driveway access (potentially), together with an agreed vegetation strategy between the lots and the receptor. These measures together with existing mitigation, and the others queried, would potentially enable effects to be mitigated to a low effect.
- In my opinion, vegetation needs to be substantial enough to provide privacy to the receptor, while retaining visual connections with the Kaitake's and a sense of spaciousness and openness between future dwellings and the receptor – such features would also provide a sense of spaciousness, distance and 'views' northward for future owners.
- An annotated plan showing planting areas needs to be provided with the location of species, type, heights at installation/maturity etc so all parties are clear of what is proposed.

Your sincerely



Erin Griffith  
Principal | MUrbDes

**natural  
capital.**