

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS COMMISSIONERS FOR THE WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UNDER** the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of hearing submissions and further submissions on the  
Proposed Waikato District Plan

Hearing 25 – Residential Zone Extents

**PARTIES REPRESENTED** **POKENO WEST LIMITED (97)**

**CSL TRUST AND TOP END PROPERTIES (89)**

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**STATEMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EVIDENCE OF  
ROBERT JAMES PRYOR FOR POKENO WEST LIMITED, CSL TRUST AND TOP END  
PROPERTIES**

**17 February 2021**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 My full name is Robert James Pryor. I am a registered landscape architect and a Director of LA4 Landscape Architects. I have the qualifications and experience set out in my curriculum vitae which is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Otago University (1980) and a post-graduate Diploma of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University (1984). I am a registered member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (**NZILA**).
- 1.3 I have over 30 years' experience undertaking landscape assessments for clients in both the public and private sectors on a wide variety of major projects within a range of landscape settings. I specialise in the preparation of landscape and visual effects assessments and have undertaken numerous assessments as outlined in my curriculum vitae.
- 1.4 This evidence is in support of the submission by Pokeno West Limited, CSL Trust and Top End Properties for the proposed urbanisation of the 255 hectare area of land at 53 & 53A Munro Road and 87, 119, 133, 145A, 145C, 179, 203 and 205 Helenslee Road, Pokeno (the **Site**).
- 1.5 I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in preparing this statement of evidence and confirm that I will do so in presenting my evidence to the hearing commissioners. Unless I state otherwise, this evidence is within my sphere of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

## **2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 My evidence will outline why I consider that the proposed Pokeno West development is appropriate and would fulfil the need for residential intensification and provide an opportunity for an innovative and environmentally sustainable urban development.
- 2.2 My evidence will cover:
- a) Summary of evidence (Section 3);
  - b) Brief overview of the landscape and visual amenity aspects of the proposal (Section 4);
  - c) The landscape context (Section 5)

- d) Summary of the landscape and natural character effects of the proposal (Section 6);
- e) Summary of the visual amenity effects of the proposal (Section 7);
- f) Conclusions (Section 8).

### **3. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

- 3.1 The proposed urbanisation of the Site would significantly change its current open rural landscape character. The development would however be consistent with the majority of the Site being zoned Residential with urban expansion envisaged in the PWDP.
- 3.2 Although the subject Site is largely in open pasture, its 'rural' character is lessened to a degree by the existing land uses, relatively degraded pasture, and adjacent proximity to the Pokeno urban residential area. While the Site includes some productive land, it is a modified degraded site with relatively low landscape values, other than the SNA's. In light of these considerations the Site is well suited to the type of urban development proposed.
- 3.3 The proposed urbanisation of the land would inevitably result in the transformation of the Site from a fringe rural area to a mixed density urban residential area. This would have implications on the surrounding rural land to the west and south, with the urban development impacting on the rural qualities of these areas. Nevertheless, this is a landscape in transition and is an area designated for urban expansion in the foreseeable future.
- 3.4 Because of the size and nature of the development and the anticipated eventual urbanisation of the area, rather than trying to screen the development or create significant buffers to the adjacent rural areas, the approach has been to accept the change and attempt to develop the Site in accordance with accepted urban design principles to create a quality residential development with a high level of amenity, albeit an urban amenity.
- 3.5 The change from the existing semi-rural character of this landscape to one dominated by the built form of a residential area would also introduce a range of beneficial effects, including:
  - a) Enhancement of the stream corridors including physical and ecological connections to the Tanetiwhiora Stream; and
  - b) Extensive framework of planting including riparian stream planting and specimen trees in streets, and open space areas which would improve the character and amenity as well as enhance habitat values and break up the contiguous urban expanse increasingly with time and contribute to the wider surrounding area.

- 3.6 While the proposed development would result in a significant visual change from the Site's current open semi-rural state to one with urban characteristics, particularly for some of the immediate neighbours, such visual change is generally anticipated and is in accordance with the key planning initiatives for the area.
- 3.7 Despite the relatively low landscape values, the development would initially generate landscape and visual effects of some significance. These however are inevitable with urban development in a predominantly rural area at the start of a process of urbanisation. In addition, the visual effects of the development of the site apparent from the early stages would decrease over time as proposed landscape initiatives become established.
- 3.8 In conclusion, the proposed Pokeno West development would fulfil the need for residential intensification and provide an opportunity for an innovative and environmentally sustainable urban development. The proposal is largely consistent with regional growth strategies for the area and would result in a high-quality urban development with a range of positive landscape and environmental outcomes.

#### **4. THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The sites at 53 & 53A Munro Road and 87, 119, 133, 145A, 145C are currently zoned Rural in the Operative Waikato District Plan (**OWDP**) but have been identified as Residential in the Proposed Waikato District Plan (**PWDP**). The sites at 179, 203 and 205 Helenslee Road are zoned Rural under the OWDP and PWDP (the **Site**). The maps illustrating the proposed zoning are included in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 The redevelopment of the Site has been designed based on the early consultation with Waikato District Council. In total, the residential redevelopment of the Site would provide for approximately 1860 single house, medium density and country living lots, as illustrated in the Birch Surveyors Concept Plan included in **Appendix 3**.
- 4.3 The illustrative Concept Plan is set around a network of green spaces and links. The southern extent of the site lies within an area susceptible to surface water flooding and therefore remains free of development. This area would create an open space landscaped area when entering the development from the south and could accommodate a recreational area. The northern green network based around the Significant Natural Areas (**SNA**) provides a good physical and visual buffer between the Country Living lots and single house lots in the northern part of the Site.
- 4.4 The indicative Concept Plan has been designed in accordance with established urban design principles and would ensure a high level of visual amenity, comprehensively planted with street trees, rain gardens and riparian plantings along the future stream networks to

enhance its overall amenity and assist in its integration with the surrounding semi-rural and urban area over time.

- 4.5 A number of reserves are proposed and connected through a green-network based on the northern SNA and enhanced stream network and stormwater management areas which would enhance the visual amenity, landscape and natural character values of the Site. A green link runs along the western edge of the Site which creates a buffer from the rural properties to the west and would mitigate any negative impacts of the quarry along Ridge Road. It also creates a set back from the edge of the Site, creating a softer transition between the built form and open countryside beyond.

## **5. THE LANDSCAPE CONTEXT**

- 5.1 The Site comprises approximately 255 hectares of land immediately to the west of the existing Pokeno residential area. It is bounded by Helenslee Road and Munro Road to the east, Huia Road to the south and Ridge Road to the west for the northern portion of the Site. Rural land adjoins the Site to the north and west, with the Ridge Road Quarry abutting a portion of the western boundary.

### **Landform and Catchment**

- 5.2 The topography of the Site varies significantly with steep hill country in the upper parts of the catchment to the north and west and low lying flat areas within the valley floors lower in the catchment to the south east. The Site lies on the eastern side of the broad ridge extending along Ridge Road to the west. Ground levels within the Site range from approximately RL 170m at the highest point of the catchment in the northwest to RL 25m in the east.
- 5.3 The Site is part of the Tanitewhiora Stream catchment and includes the headwaters of the catchment and a number of stream tributaries which converge at Munro Road. Stormwater runoff from the ridge forms an overland flow path from the west to the east. The flow paths across the Site define the surrounding terrain and form the headwaters of tributaries of the Tanitewhiora Stream. The Site discharges to a low point on Munro Road via the stream under the existing road bridge

### **Land use**

- 5.4 The Site is accessed off Munro and Helenslee Roads via existing metalled accessway drives accessing the dwellings and stockyards. Farm tracks and races extend across the Site. The majority of the land at 53 Munro Road is in grazed pasture with a cluster of farm dwellings and sheds close to the main access drive off Munro Road. Maize cropping has recently occurred within this property.

- 5.5 The properties at 87, 119, 133, 145A and 145C Helenslee Road are smaller rural lifestyle blocks with dwellings, farm sheds and grazed paddocks with cattle. A recently constructed power substation is located immediately to the north of the main access drive to 53 Munro Road. The sites at 179, 203 and 205 Helenslee Road are primarily grazed with some large areas of indigenous bush, farm dwellings and ancillary farm sheds and garages.

### **Streams, watercourses and wetlands**

- 5.6 The Pokeno (Tanetiwhiora) Stream flows along the eastern side of the Site entering at 145A Helenslee Road and exiting at the Munro Road bridge. Side tributaries of this stream flow down from the more elevated land to the west, forming a series of east facing gullies with low ridges between. SNA are located along the northern and southernmost stream tributaries.
- 5.7 A permanent stream enters into the Site from the adjoining property to the southwest linking into the Tanetiwhiora Stream to the south of the farm dwellings. Several permanent streams extend down the west-east running gullies in the southern part of the Site. Several permanent streams and tributaries are located in the northern part of the Site. A number of intermittent streams also flow throughout the Site from the western boundary.
- 5.8 Small areas of wetland are common throughout the Site and there are numerous areas of marshy pasture that are seasonally wet and support rushes, pasture grasses and moisture tolerant species. Open wetlands are also present in some of the broad gullies. These areas of marshy pasture are all grazed and their ecological values are generally very low. Several artificial farm ponds are located within the Site.

### **Vegetation**

- 5.9 The majority of the Site is grazed pastoral land comprising conventional pasture with some areas of reed land in wetter areas and areas of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), woolly nightshade (*Solanum mauritianum*), and barberry (*Berberis glaucocarpa*) in the upper gullies on the northern and western sides. Individual large trees, stands of plantation pine and shelterbelts are dotted around the Site.
- 5.10 The southernmost stream tributary contains an SNA. This is characterised by a large area of indigenous vegetation comprising mature specimens of kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*), rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), totara (*Podocarpus totara*), tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*) tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) and titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*). Native plants are present in the understorey including karamu (*Coprosma robusta*), putaputaweta (*Carpodetus serratus*), mahoe (*Melicactus ramiflorus*), mapou (*Myrsine australis*), tree fern (*Cyathea medullaris*) and cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*).

- 5.11 The edges of the SNA are surrounded with gorse and the vegetation along the stream is mainly exotic with grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) with areas of gorse. Barberry, Himalayan honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*), poplar (*Populus alba*) and pampas (*Cortaderia selloana*) are also established. The upper gully to the west of the SNA is dominated by scrubby vegetation consisting of gorse, woolly nightshade, privet, hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and barberry. Several groups of pine trees are located around the head of the gully.
- 5.12 A SNA also extends centrally into the northern part of the Site, characterised by a large area of broadleaved podocarp forest in the steep south-facing gully system associated with the permanent watercourse. The regenerating forest contains tawa (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) with tall kanuka, rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), rewarewa (*Knightia excelsa*), taraire (*Beilschmiedia tarairi*), kahikatea, hinau (*Elaeocarpus dentatus*), pukatea (*Laurelia novaezelandiae*) and puriri (*Vitex lucens*). Tall mamaku (*Cyathea medullaris*), nikau (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) and a range of forest shrubs, vines and epiphytes form the understorey.
- 5.13 A substantial area of mature kahikatea swamp forest occurs in the southern part of the SNA at the confluence of several side tributaries. The canopy is predominantly kahikatea with scattered large totara, mahoe, kawakawa (*Piper excelsum*), mapou (*Myrsine australis*), pigeonwood (*Hedycarya arborea*) and thin-leaved coprosma (*Coprosma areolata*) are all found in the understorey. Taraire seedlings are found in the forest edges with nikau, mamaku and silver tree fern (*Cyathea dealbata*) under the tree canopy. There is a significant presence of privet here with numerous seedlings to be found in the ground layer and understorey. These areas are connected via a corridor of native and exotic riparian vegetation. Stands of forest dominated by totara (*Podocarpus totara*) are scattered throughout the Site.
- 5.14 Several stands of plantation pine (*Pinus radiata*) are located adjacent to the watercourse in the southeastern and northern parts of the Site. Tall exotic tree species including pine (*Pinus radiata*), macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), poplars (*Populus spp.*) eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus spp.*) and willows (*Salix spp.*) are present throughout the Site. Groupings of amenity exotic and native tree species are planted around some of the farm dwellings.
- 5.15 A stand of trees adjacent to the stream contains some large totara and kahikatea with several titoki present. A stand of mature macrocarpa (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) is located centrally within the Site. Individual mature native trees are scattered throughout, predominantly totara and kahikatea.

- 5.16 Shelterbelts and hedgerows are scattered throughout the Site defining some of the properties. Typical species include poplar (*Populus spp.*), willow (*Salix spp.*), Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*) and pine.

### **The wider landscape context**

- 5.17 Rural and rural lifestyle properties adjoin the Site to the south and west accessed off Huia Road, Pokeno Road and Ridge Road. To the south of Pokeno Road, beyond the railway line is the Pokeno residential area on the north facing slopes accessed off Hitchen Road. Residential properties extend along the eastern side of Helenslee Road opposite the Site. The Ridge Road quarry abuts the site to the west and rural lifestyle properties extend along the northern boundary. Beyond these properties is SH1 (the southern motorway) and the SH2 overpass.
- 5.18 From a wider landscape perspective, the existing urban area of Pokeno is located in the low-lying lands and surrounded by the dominant pastoral ridgelines that provide a natural backdrop to the village. These ridgelines are visible from many locations locally and from a distance. The ridgelines associated with Ridge Road and Bluff Road and the descending slopes from these ridgelines have significance to Pokeno as they provide enclosure and a rural backdrop to the existing settlement.
- 5.19 Pokeno is undergoing rapid transformation and development as part of the earlier Structure Plan process with urbanisation of the previously rural land. The wider surrounding area is dominated by these prevailing characteristics with established residential development to the east of the Site and extensive earthworks activities in the surrounding area forming roads and building platforms for further urban expansion.
- 5.20 The Gateway Business Park further to the south east of the Site has a dominant influence on the wider area with the extensive Yashili International and Synlait infant formula manufacturing plants, NZ Pure Water bottling factory, furniture importer, campervan rental and the extensive Hynds Pipes storage facility, yards and pipe manufacturing facility. The NIMT railway line extends to the south of the Site, and Pokeno Road that links through to Tuakau. Several quarries are located in Ridge Road to the west including Holcim and Ridge Road quarries. Holcim Aggregates and Allied Concrete also have depots on Ridge Road as well as a large precast concrete manufacturing facility.
- 5.21 The wider surrounding rural landform to the south is generally characterised by expansive areas of undulating to gently rolling lowland pasture, with areas of more localised fragmentation by shelterbelts, bush remnants, forestry stands and stream corridors. The land to the west is more of a working landscape, intensively farmed with small to larger

landholdings, horticultural activities, along with relatively well-established rural living and lifestyle block development.

## **6. LANDSCAPE AND NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS**

### **Natural character effects methodology**

6.1 Natural character relates to the degree of 'naturalness' of a landscape. It is primarily determined by the nature and extent of modification to a landscape and can be expressed in relation to natural processes, patterns, and elements in the landscape.

6.2 Assessments of natural character therefore broadly assess:

- a) Natural processes – the underlying formative processes that have shaped and given expression to the landscape (geological, volcanic, ecological, fluvial etc.);
- b) Natural elements – features within the landscape that are products of natural processes (landform, vegetation, waterbodies etc.);
- c) Natural patterns – the natural expression or distribution of un-manufactured elements and features within the landscape; and
- d) Development / land use – the presence or absence of development such as structures and buildings and the level of modification as a result of land use and management.

6.3 The highest levels of natural character are where there is the least modification. Natural character effects relate to the degree to which a proposal alters the biophysical and / or perceived naturalness of a landscape. Natural character is essentially concerned with the degree of 'naturalness' associated with the natural elements, processes and patterns within the landscape.

### **Natural Character Effects Analysis**

6.4 While the SNA's retain moderate levels of natural character, the Site itself is not high in natural character values and has been highly modified through past pastoral activities. The area has undergone extensive agricultural activities and is modified by vegetation clearance, artificial farm drains, ponds, farm buildings and dwellings. The Site is a component of the wider modified rural and urban environment with the majority of the Site located within an area zoned for future urban intensification within the PWDP.

6.5 The SNA's are to be retained and protected with the northern SNA providing a significant green corridor. A number of reserves are proposed and connected through a green-network based on the enhanced stream network and stormwater management areas which

would enhance the natural character values of the Site. Overall, the adverse effects of the proposal on the natural character values of the Site and surrounding area would be low.

### **Landscape Effects**

- 6.6 Landscape effects take into consideration the physical effects on the land resource. Assessments of landscape effects therefore investigate the likely nature and scale of change to landscape elements and characteristics. Landscape effects are primarily dependent on the landscape sensitivity of a site and its surrounds to accommodate change and development. Landscape sensitivity is influenced by landscape quality and vulnerability, or the extent to which landscape character, elements/features and values are at risk to change.
- 6.7 'Landscape characterisation' is the term used to encapsulate the process of identifying and describing landscape character areas. Each character area has a distinguishing combination of biophysical and cultural factors that make it distinctive. Characterisation provides a basis for the understanding of landscape diversity and change.
- 6.8 Landscape character is derived from a combination of landscape components that make up the landscape of the site that distinguishes one area from another including<sup>1</sup>:
- a) The elements that make up the landscape including:
    - physical influences – geology, soils, landform, drainage and waterbodies;
    - land cover, including different types of vegetation and patterns and types of tree cover; and
    - the influence of human activity, including land use and management, the character of settlements and buildings, and pattern and type of enclosure.
  - b) The aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape including its scale, complexity, openness, tranquillity or wilderness; and
  - c) The overall character of the landscape in the area including any distinctive landscape character types or areas that can be identified, and the particular combinations of elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects that make each distinctive, usually by identification as key characteristics of the landscape.
- 6.9 Landscape character results from a combination of physical elements together with aesthetic and perceptual aspects that combine to make an area distinct. The Pokeno landscape is undergoing rapid change and development with the adjoining urbanisation of

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<sup>1</sup> *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, LI and IEMA, 2013*

the land transforming the previously semi-rural landscape to one of highly modified characteristics through the current earthworks, ground shaping and roading construction for intensive urban residential development.

- 6.10 The attributes that contribute to the semi-rural character of the area would become progressively less pervasive as the surrounding area develops with the urbanisation of the area. Development enabled by the Pokeno West proposal would inevitably transform the local semi-rural character to that of intensive and mixed urban which would also have an influence on the surrounding area. It is important to note however that this type of development is not unanticipated and the PWDP identifies the majority of the Site as an area to accommodate future urban growth requirements in this part of the town.
- 6.11 It is also important to note that although the Site and local area currently exhibit semi-rural characteristics, neither display a high degree of 'ruralness' due to a combination of the size of landholdings, the patterns of rural-residential and countryside living settlement, existing infrastructure, and the proximity to the urbanised area of Pokeno. Consequently, distinctly urban influences are highly evident in the area, which further reduce the sensitivity of the Site and surrounding environment to change as anticipated by the proposal.

#### ***Landscape Effects Analysis***

- 6.12 Based on the preceding description and analysis of the Site and surrounds it is clear that there are relatively low landscape values and sensitivity associated with the Site. The Site is a relatively degraded, modified working rural environment lacking any significant landscape features (other than the SNA's), has moderate natural character values (primarily focussed on the SNA's), and generally relatively low visual amenity. Therefore, the only negative outcomes in landscape terms would be the loss of the remaining rural character, which is anticipated by the relevant PWDP planning strategies for the majority of the Site.
- 6.13 The key methods of mitigating for this loss are to retain and enhance where possible existing landscape features and create a quality urban development. Although the proposal would result in the loss of rural character there are number of positive landscape outcomes associated with the development.
- 6.14 The indicative Concept Plan has been designed in accordance with established urban design principles and would ensure a high level of visual amenity, comprehensively planted with street trees, rain gardens and riparian plantings along the future stream networks to enhance its overall amenity and assist in its integration with the surrounding semi-rural and urban area over time.

6.15 These are addressed in more detail in the Urban Design evidence prepared by Ian Munro. The Pokeno West development would result in a change in landscape character, but would ensure a suitable level of amenity, albeit an urban, rather than a rural character is achieved.

## **7. VISUAL AMENITY EFFECTS**

7.1 The assessment of visual effects analyses the perceptual (visual) response that any of the identified changes to the landscape may evoke, including effects relating to views and visual amenity. Visual sensitivity is influenced by a number of factors including the visibility of a proposal, the nature and extent of the viewing audience, the visual qualities of the proposal, and the ability to integrate any changes within the landscape setting, where applicable.

7.2 The nature and extent of visual effects are determined by a systematic analysis of the visual intrusion and qualitative change that a proposal may bring, specifically in relation to aesthetic considerations and visual character and amenity.

7.3 The methodology used in this assessment is designed to assess whether or not future development enabled by the Pokeno West proposal would have more than minor adverse visual effects on the nature and quality of the surrounding environment.

7.4 The process of analysing such effects involves:

- a) Identification of the physical area or catchment from which development enabled by the proposal would be visible;
- b) Identification of the different viewing audiences that would be affected by future development; and
- c) Evaluation of the visual amenity effects taking into account the preceding analysis.

### **Visual Catchment and Viewing Audience**

7.5 The visual catchment is the area from which noticeable visual effects of future development enabled by the proposal within the site are likely to be evident to any significant degree. Helenslee Road, Munro Road and Huia Roads extending along the southern and eastern periphery of the Site result in a number of open views into the Site, however existing vegetation patterns and landform variations currently provide a level of screening from many of the wider surrounding areas. The ridge along which Helenslee and Huia Roads run also provides a level of screening from a number of locations to the south, due to the intervening landform.

7.6 The relative openness of the site, albeit compartmentalised in a number of locations by existing shelterbelts, amenity and boundary planting, means that it has a relatively high

level of exposure, although the existing vegetation patterns within the site and surrounding area combine to limit the extent of visibility beyond the immediate area.

- 7.7 Consequently, Helenslee Road, Munro Road, Huia Road and properties accessed off these roads, define the main visual catchment. The four adjoining properties with dwellings to the south, accessed off Huia Road, would be exposed to open views towards parts of the Site, due to their close proximity. Views would be gained from the adjoining properties to the north.
- 7.8 Elevated views would also be gained from some of the rural lifestyle properties to the west accessed off Ridge Road and some of the more distant landholdings on the northern side of the southern motorway (SH1) accessed off Razorback Road. Distant views would be gained from elevated parts of the Pokeno residential area to the southwest accessed off Hitchen Road, albeit lower parts of the Site would be screened by the Huia-Munro Road ridgeline.
- 7.9 The viewing audience would therefore encompass the following groups:
- a) Road users on the surrounding roads including Helenslee, Munro and Huia Roads and parts of Ridge Road
  - b) Residents and visitors to the adjoining properties to the south accessed off Huia Road (56, 92, 98, 101, 115, 124, 136, 142, 160 Huia Road)
  - c) Residents and visitors to the residential properties on the eastern side of Helenslee Road and Munro Road, opposite the Site
  - d) Residents within the adjoining rural lifestyle properties to the north accessed off Helenslee Road (145B, 149A, 149B Helenslee Road) and Great South Road
  - e) Residents, pedestrians and motorists within elevated parts of the Pokeno residential area to the southeast, accessed off Hitchen Road
  - f) Residents within some of the rural lifestyle properties to the west accessed off Ridge Road
  - g) Workers and visitors to the construction yard to the north
  - h) Distant viewers within the rural lifestyle properties on the elevated slopes on the northern side of SH1 accessed off Razorback Road
  - i) Distant viewers within the wider surrounding area.
- 7.10 Overall, the anticipated level of audience exposure would be large due to the location of the Site adjacent to the surrounding roads.

### ***Visual Amenity Effects Analysis***

- 7.11 The proposed future development of the Site enabled by the Pokeno West proposal raises a number of visual issues, including the potential effects on visual amenity to the following key areas:
- a) Adjoining properties
  - b) Surrounding road network
  - c) Wider surrounding area
- 7.12 In assessing the significance of effects, the assessment also considers the nature of effects in terms of whether this would be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which it occurs. Neutral effects can also result where the visual change is considered to be benign in the context of where it occurs.
- 7.13 The assessment has been undertaken in terms of the following criteria:
- a) **Quality of the view** – the relative quality and sensitivity of views into the Site, including landscape character and visual amenity values.
  - b) **Viewpoint | perceptual factors** – the type and size of population exposed to views into the Site, the viewing distance to the Site, and other factors which indicate its sensitivity in terms of both viewing audience and the inherent exposure of the view towards the Site due to its physical character.
  - c) **Rural | urban amenity** – the impact of future development on the wider surrounding rural and urban amenity.
  - d) **Rural | urban form** – the degree to which future development would fit into the existing rural and urban context of the surrounding environs.
  - e) **Visual intrusion | contrast** – the intrusion into or obstruction of views to landscape features in the locality and beyond and the impact upon key landscape elements and patterns.
  - f) **Mitigation potential** – the extent to which any potential adverse effects of the development could be mitigated through integration into its surrounds by specific measures.
- 7.14 A map showing the Site and location of the viewpoints is attached as **Appendix 4** – Site and Viewpoint Location Map. Photographs of the existing view towards the Site are attached as **Appendix 5** – Viewpoint Photographs. The viewpoints are as follows:

**Viewpoint 1:** Helenslee Road (South)

**Viewpoint 2:** Huia Road

**Viewpoint 3:** Helenslee Road (North)

**Viewpoint 4:** Razorback Road

**Viewpoint 5:** Hitchen Road

**Viewpoint 6:** Wingfield Road

**Viewpoint 7:** Ridge Road

- 7.15 I have completed a detailed assessment and analysis of potential visual effects from each viewpoint, both from the physical viewpoint locations and using the images contained in **Appendix 2** using a Visual Effects Matrix, which ensures that each view and changes within each view are evaluated thoroughly and consistently. The key factors contained in that matrix are given in **Appendix 6 – Visual Effects Matrix**. It covers aspects such as the sensitivity of the view to change, the size of the viewing audience that would be affected, the legibility of the proposal, how well the proposal integrates with its surroundings and whether or not the proposal intrudes into any existing views.
- 7.16 The following seven-point scale has been used to rate effects, based on the guidelines contained within the NZILA 'Best Practice Guide – Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 2010' and Auckland Council's 'Information Requirements for Landscape and Visual Effects Assessments 2017':
- (a) Negligible
  - (b) Very Low
  - (c) Low
  - (d) Moderate
  - (e) High
  - (f) Very High
  - (g) Extreme.
- 7.17 A description of effects ratings is outlined within **Appendix 7 – Visual Effects Ratings**.
- 7.18 The following summaries describe the implications that the proposed development has for each of the key areas. In so doing, they touch on key findings in the matrix analysis and

the implications that these might have for areas and audiences in close proximity to any given viewpoint.

### **Adjoining Properties**

- 7.19 The adjoining properties to the Site would be most affected by future urban development enabled by the proposal. This would include the rural lifestyle properties to the south of the Site accessed off Huia Road and the properties to the north accessed off Helenslee Road, Great South Road and Ridge Road. Views towards parts of the Site however would be moderated, filtered or screened in entirety by the existing vegetation patterns within the Site and surrounding properties, intervening landform and proposed landscape initiatives. **Viewpoints 1-3** are indicative of the potential views from the adjoining properties.
- 7.20 For the immediately adjoining properties to the south in Huia Road, the existing outlook would change noticeably from a relatively open rural pastoral scene into a comprehensive urban view. Although this would constitute a distinctive change to the existing rural character and a loss of the existing spaciousness, it is not the type of change which is totally unexpected within the planning context of the area, and the quality nature of the future urban development would ensure that a suitable level of amenity is achieved.
- 7.21 Once the Site is developed, the existing views would be replaced with a mixture of urban development including Country Living, single house, medium density housing and terraced housing with extensively planted streetscapes, open spaces and the green network extending through the Site.
- 7.22 Development enabled by the proposal would not be entirely out of context and gradual in nature due to the residential zoning of the site and surrounding area to the east and south beyond Pokeno Road and the railway line. The extensive green network along the stream gullies and watercourses in conjunction with the open space areas, reserves, neighbourhood parks and street tree plantings would maintain a sense of spaciousness and assist in visually integrating the future development into the surrounding landscape.
- 7.23 From these close locations, the full effects of the change brought about by the proposal would be gradual as the land is retired from productive use, modified and staged built development extends across the landform. It is anticipated that the full progression from rural to urban would take a number of years, similar to the existing urbanisation occurring within the Pokeno township. This would reduce the impact of the change to some degree, due to the incremental nature of the changes and a general conditioning of the audience over time as urban development progresses. Development would also be viewed as a natural progression from the Pokeno urbanisation in the surrounding environs. The Country Living area would provide a good transition to the rural land to the west.

- 7.24 The green network extending throughout the SNA's and up the stream corridors and gullies would assist in breaking up the expansiveness the urban development into more discrete units and filter views so that although the view would have changed from a rural to an urban one, the full extent of the development would not be apparent. .However, the proposal would entirely change the landscape character and visual amenity currently experienced for the surrounding properties. Despite this, the adverse visual effects for the adjoining rural-residential properties would be moderate to high.

### **Surrounding Road Network**

- 7.25 For road users on the surrounding road network, in particular those who live locally in rural situations, the development of the Site is likely to result in visual effects of some significance, particularly for Huia Road users accessing their properties. For general road users, the effects are likely to be of much less significance as the development would be seen as part of the pattern of land use change occurring locally within the surrounding Pokeno environs. **Viewpoints 1-3** and **5** are indicative of the potential views from the surrounding roads.
- 7.26 Although a large audience, the road users are unlikely to be particularly sensitive to future development, as they would have fleeting views of only portions of the Site whilst moving through a landscape, which already exhibits relatively diverse characteristics in close proximity to Pokeno township. The sensitivity and the effects of the proposal would also be reduced further by the fact that the development would be gradual and staged over a number of years.
- 7.27 The extensive green network, street tree plantings and planting associated with the residential properties would assist in integrating the built development into the landscape and provide a vegetated framework of appropriate form and scale.
- 7.28 Overall, the adverse visual effects from the surrounding road network would be low to moderate.

### **Wider Surrounding Area**

- 7.29 Distant views would be gained from elevated parts of the Pokeno residential area to the southeast accessed off Hitchen Road, albeit lower parts of the Site would be screened by the Huia-Munro Road ridgeline. Views would be gained towards parts of the Site from landholdings within the wider area including some of the rural lifestyle properties to the west accessed off Ridge Road and from landholdings to the north and northeast on the northern and eastern side of SH1. **Viewpoints 4, 5, 6** and **7** are indicative of the potential views from the wider surrounding area.

- 7.30 From locations within the wider area, views of development enabled by the proposal would be highly variable due to distance, orientation of the view, diversity of elements within the view and screening elements (buildings, landform, shelterbelts, prevailing vegetation patterns). While a prominent level of built form would be introduced into the landscape, it would be viewed in the context of the surrounding residential activities within Pokeno.
- 7.31 While development enabled by the proposal would be highly visible from parts of the wider surrounding area, I consider that the adverse visual effects would be acceptable within the context of the planned future urban environment.

### **Construction Effects**

- 7.32 Due to the nature and scale of the development, and the level of disturbance it would bring to the existing landscape, the visual effects would generally be high during and immediately following construction. The most noticeable changes and resultant effects on visual amenity would arise from the extensive earthworks associated with roading and associated infrastructure. These visual effects would however be viewed in the context of existing residential development occurring locally.
- 7.33 These visual effects would reduce on completion with the establishment of the green network, open space and street tree plantings assisting in integrating the residential development into the surrounding landscape.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 For the reasons set out above, I consider that the landscape character, visual and amenity effects of the proposed development would be entirely acceptable within the context of the existing and planned future urban environment. The landscape character and visual amenity and quality of the environment surrounding the Site would not be adversely affected by the proposal.

Dated this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2021

**Robert J Pryor**



## Appendix 1: Curriculum Vitae



**ROB PRYOR** Director

### Qualifications

Bachelor of Science Degree (Psychology) – Otago University (1982)  
Diploma of Landscape Architecture – Lincoln University (1984)  
Registered Member, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects  
Member, Resource Management Law Association  
Member, Urban Design Forum

### Background

1996 – Present: Director, LA4 Landscape Architects, Auckland  
1993 – 1996: Landscape Architect, LA4 Landscape Architects, Auckland  
1989 – 1993: Director, Bannatyne Pryor Associates, Wellington  
1984 – 1989: Landscape Architect, Wellington City Council, Wellington

### Skills and Experience

Rob has over thirty years' experience as a practicing landscape architect, including five years as Landscape Architect for Wellington City Council and four years as director of the Wellington consultancy Bannatyne Pryor Associates. He has been involved in a wide variety of local authority, public and private sector work. He has been involved in a wide variety of local authority, public and private sector work and has had a longstanding involvement in landscape assessments, visual and landscape effects assessments, reserve management planning and precinct planning and urban design projects.

Rob specialises in landscape and visual effects assessments and has been involved in a number of large infrastructure projects, roading developments, marine farms and large scale commercial development including the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant, Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant, Waikato River Water Source, Regional Prisons – site selection, marine farms, subdivisions and telecommunications facilities. This work has also included providing advice on landscape treatment and mitigation measures to reduce any adverse visual and landscape effects of development.

Rob has been involved in a number of Plan Change and NoR applications and peer reviews of landscape impact assessments and is very familiar with the Resource Consent and appeals process having prepared numerous applications for Auckland City, Queenstown Lakes District, North Shore, Waitakere, Far North District, Whangarei, Marlborough and Taupo District Councils.

He has prepared evidence for and appeared before numerous Council, Environment Court and Board of Inquiry hearings in relation to landscape, visual and amenity effects on the environment.

## Fields of Special Competence

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment  
Landscape Planning and Design  
Urban Design  
Open Space and Recreation Planning  
Contract Documentation  
Contract Administration  
Project Management  
Expert Witness

## Relevant Experience – Landscape and Visual Effects Assessments:

### Large Scale Commercial Developments

- Beachside Mission Bay
- Milford Retail and Residential Development
- George Street Apartments
- Milford Town Centre Private Plan Change
- Progressive Enterprises
  - *Palmerston North*
  - *Hastings*
  - *Havelock*
  - *Regent*
  - *Onetangi*
  - *Warkworth*
  - *Peachgrove*
  - *Whitianga*
  - *Papakowhai*
  - *Hobsonville*
  - *Rotorua*
- Beachlands Village Business Centre
- Hobsonville Village Centre
- Highbury Shopping Centre Private Plan Change
- St Lukes Private Plan Change
- North Shore Hospital Private Plan Change
- Massey North Town Centre
- Matakana Estate
- Bunnings Queenstown
- Craddock Farms

### Institutional Developments

- AUT City Campus
- University of Auckland Tamaki Campus
- Middlemore Hospital
- Middlemore Woman's Health
- North Shore Hospital Elective Surgical Centre
- Auckland Memorial Park
- Springhill Men's Corrections Facility
- South Auckland Women's Corrections Facility
- Summerset at St Johns
- Molly Ryan Retirement Village
- Arvida Aria Bay Retirement Village

- Aria Park Retirement Village
- Bethesda Retirement Village
- Copper Crest Retirement Village
- Wiri Men's Prison
- O-I Glass
- Orica Mining Services

### **Coastal Developments**

- Murrays Bay Stormwater Outfall
- Murrays Bay Sailing Club
- Hatfields Coastal Precinct
- Marine Farms – Marlborough, Southland, Coromandel, Otago and Wellington
- Coastal Subdivisions
- Tinopai Peninsula – Kaipara Harbour
- Waiheke Island
- Owhanake Bay
- Matauwhi Wharf
- Karekare Surf Club
- Half Moon Bay Ferry Terminal

### **Public Infrastructure**

- Watercare Northern Interceptor
- Wiri Oil Services – oil terminal expansion
- Orica Mining Services
- Vector Broadband Fibre Network Rollout
- Waikato River Water Source
- Vortec Wind Turbine
- Mangere Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Project Rosedale – North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Telecommunication Networks – Vodafone, Telecom and BCL
- Hunua No. 4 Watermain
- Ravensdown Fertiliser Te Puke
- Metservice Northland Radar
- Southdown Cogeneration Plant
- Kordia Trans-Tasman Cable
- Unison Networks Rotorua

### **Private Plan Changes**

- Mangawhai Private Plan Change 78
- Warkworth-Clayden Plan Change 40
- Gibbston Valley Resort Zone
- Rotokauri
- Auranga B2
- Southern Cross Hospital
- Pokeno Village
- Havelock Village
- Pokeno West
- Westfield St Lukes
- Mangawhai Central
- Pakinui Rural
- Conmara Clevedon
- Ormiston Road Business

## **Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan – Evidence**

- Topic 020 – Volcanic Viewshafts
- Topic 016 and 017 – Rural Urban Boundary North/West and RUB South
- Topic 050 – City Centre
- Topic 078 – Building Height
- Topic 081 Rezoning and Precincts (Geographical Areas)

## **Special Housing Areas – Auckland Unitary Plan**

- Auranga A and B
- Kingseat Village
- McRobbie Road
- Great South Road
- Barrack Road
- Bremner Road
- Red Hills
- Oruarangi
- Northridge Estates – Flatbush
- Beachlands Multi-Housing
- Sale Street Apartments
- Pokeno

## **Quarries and Cleanfills**

- Te Arai Quarry
- Paerata Cleanfill
- Wood Valley Managed Fill
- Drury Quarry Expansion
- Huntly Quarry Expansions
- Emerald Downs Gravel Extraction Plant
- Brookby Road Cleanfill
- Petersons Road Cleanfill
- Twilight Road
- Brookby Cleanfill
- Petersons Road

## **Corporates**

- Progressive Enterprises Developments
- Z Energy Developments
- Restaurant Brands

## **Recreational**

- Wairakei Golf and Sanctuary
- Whakapapa and Turoa Ski Areas
- Cable Bay Winery
- Waiheke Golf Club Course Development
- Northern Rock Climbing

## **Rural Subdivisions**

- Awaroa River Road
- Taraunui Road
- Tudehope Road
- Albany Heights
- Hibiscus Coast Highway
- Royden Drive Rautangata
- Waikopua Whitford
- Monument Road Clevedon
- Oaia Road Muriwai
- Point View Drive

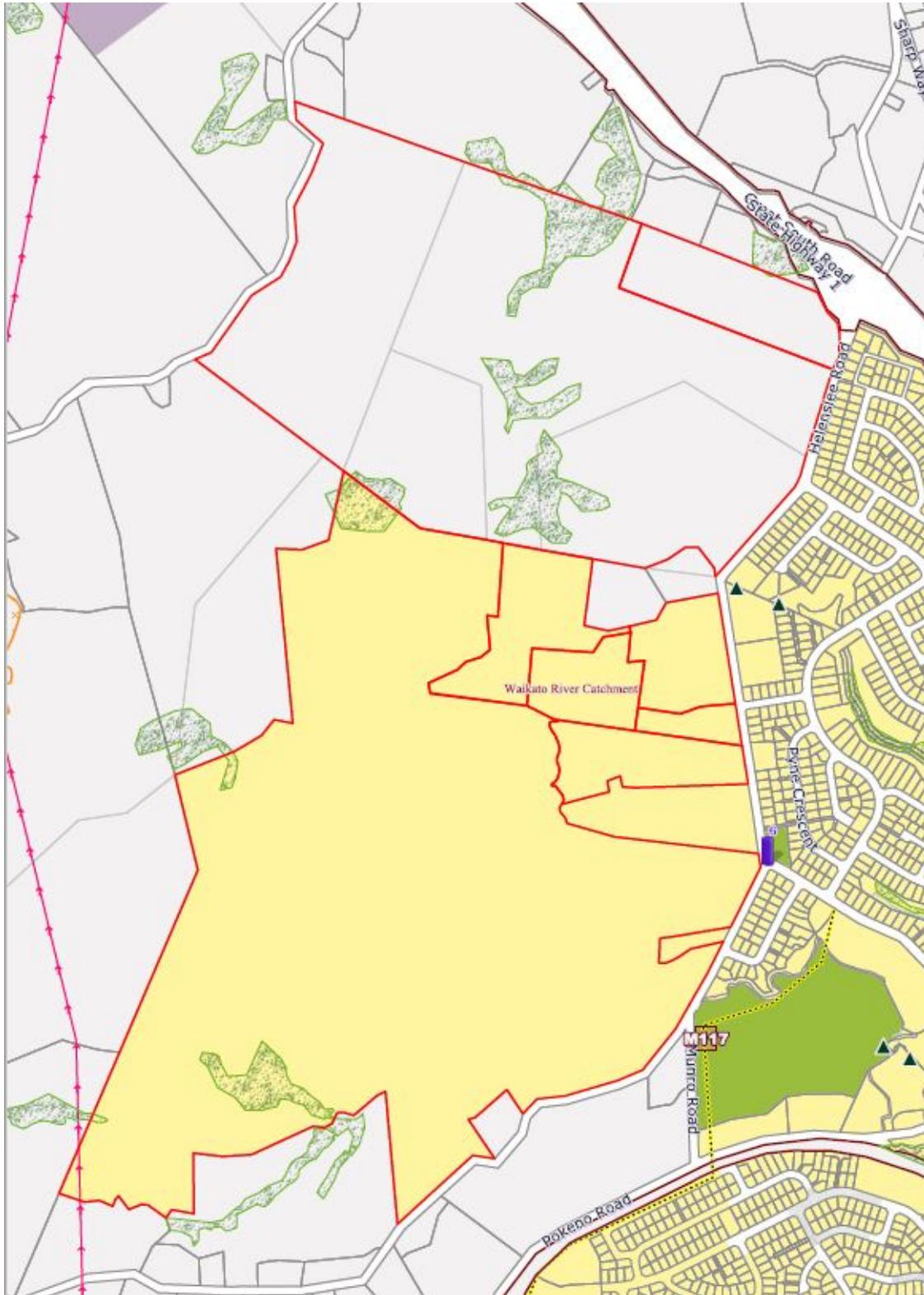
## **Motorways, Roding and Transport Networks**

- AMETI Phase 1 and 1A
- AMETI Phase 2
- City Rail Link – Urban Design Delivery Work Plan
- Puhoi to Wellsford RoN's Motorway RoNS
- Dominion Road Transport Designation
- Waikato Expressway (Hamilton Section)
- Southern Links Hamilton
- Glen Innes to Tamaki Drive Cycleway
- Beach Road Cycleway
- Quay Street Cycleway
- New Lynn to Waterview Cycleway
- Waterview Connection Shared Path
- SH26 Ruakura Interchange
- Newmarket Railway Level Crossing
- Wairere Drive Interchange
- Tamahere East-West Link
- Te Atatu Road Widening
- Bombay Motorway Service Centre
- Central Rail Link Overpass
- Auckland Domain Rail Designation

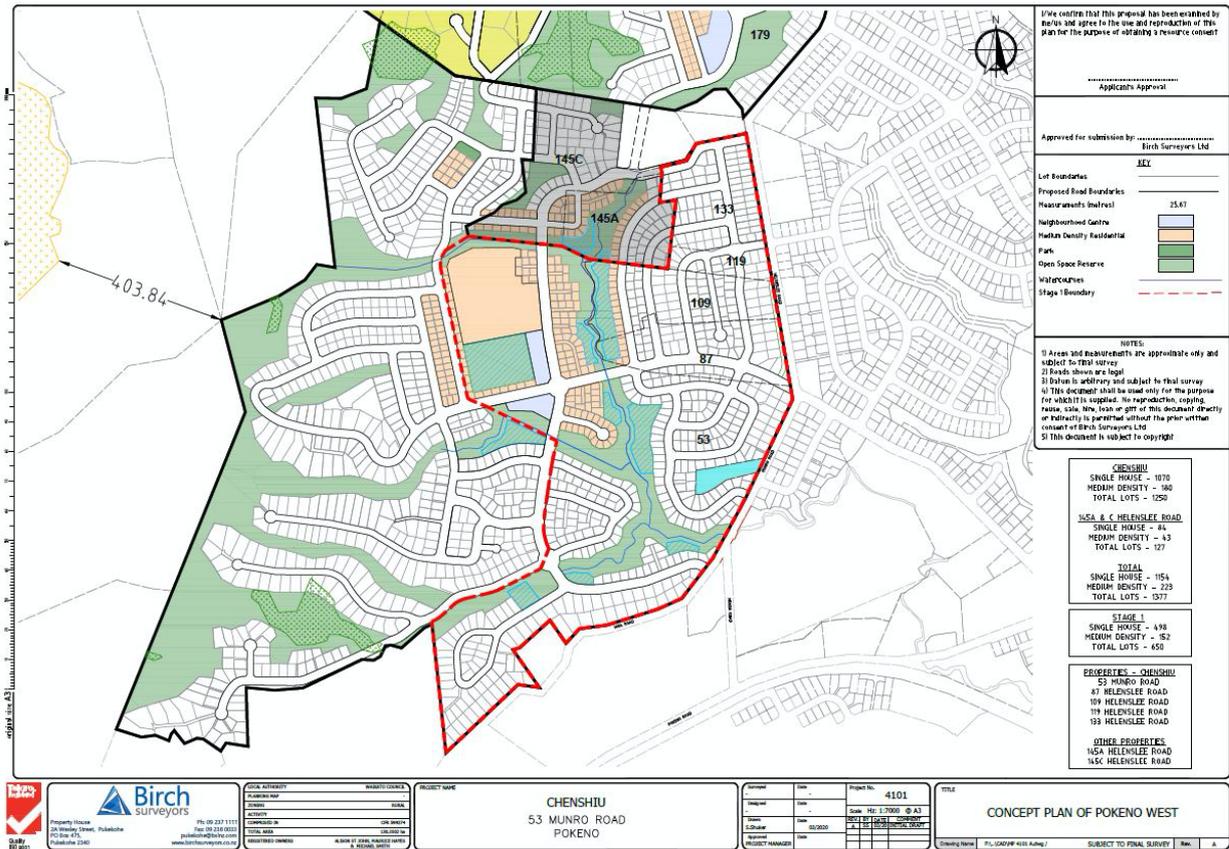
## **Apartments**

- Edition Parnell
- Great South Road
- Parkside Residences
- Lakewood Court
- Marua Residences
- Great North Road
- Mairangi Bay
- Beach Road
- Remuera Road
- Mission Bay
- Walmsley Road
- George Street
- Union Green
- The Point
- Milford Residential
- Sale Street

## Appendix 2: Proposed Zoning Map



# Appendix 3: Pokeno West Concept Plan



I/We confirm that this proposal has been examined by  
 Birch and agree to the use and reproduction of this  
 plan for the purpose of obtaining a resource consent

Approved for submission by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birch Surveyors Ltd

Legend

Lot Boundaries	-----
Proposed Road Boundaries	-----
Measurements (metres)	15.67
Neighbourhood Centre	[Light Blue Box]
Medium Density Residential	[Orange Box]
Park	[Green Box]
Open Space Reserve	[Light Green Box]
Watercourses	[Blue Line]
Stage I Boundary	[Red Dashed Line]

NOTES:  
 1) Areas and measurements are approximate only and  
 subject to final survey  
 2) Roads shown are legal  
 3) Datum is arbitrary and subject to final survey  
 4) This document shall be used only for the purpose  
 for which it is supplied. No reproduction, copying,  
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 or indirectly is permitted without the prior written  
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 5) This document is subject to copyright

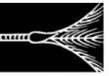
<b>CHENSHU</b>
SINGLE HOUSE - 1070
MEDIUM DENSITY - 160
TOTAL LOTS - 1230
<b>145A &amp; C HELENLEE ROAD</b>
SINGLE HOUSE - 84
MEDIUM DENSITY - 43
TOTAL LOTS - 127
<b>TOTAL</b>
SINGLE HOUSE - 1154
MEDIUM DENSITY - 223
TOTAL LOTS - 1377
<b>STAGE I</b>
SINGLE HOUSE - 498
MEDIUM DENSITY - 52
TOTAL LOTS - 550
<b>PROPERTIES - CHENSHU</b>
53 MUNRO ROAD
87 HELENLEE ROAD
119 HELENLEE ROAD
133 HELENLEE ROAD
145C HELENLEE ROAD
<b>OTHER PROPERTIES</b>
145A HELENLEE ROAD

<p><b>Birch</b> surveyors</p> <p>Property Office 24 Shirley Street, Pukekohe PO Box 475 Pukekohe 3340</p> <p>Ph: 09 233 1111 Fax: 09 248 0332 puk@birch.co.nz www.birchsurveyors.co.nz</p>	<p>LOCAL AUTHORITY: Pukekohe Dist</p> <p>PROJECT NO: 4101</p> <p>DATE: 10/08/2020</p> <p>SCALE: 1:5000 @ A3</p> <p>PROJECT MANAGER: [Name]</p>	<p>PROJECT NAME: CHENSHU 53 MUNRO ROAD POKENO</p>	<p>TITLE: CONCEPT PLAN OF POKENO WEST</p> <p>Drawing Name: PL_000VP_4101_A.mxd SUBJECT TO FINAL SURVEY Rev: 0</p>
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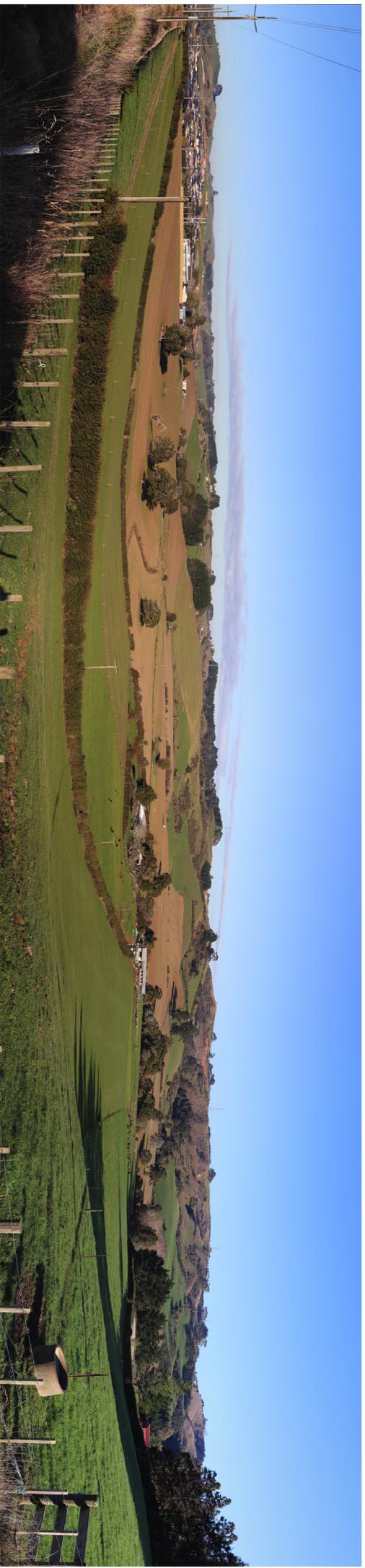
## Appendix 4: Site and Viewpoint Location Map



LA4 POKENO WEST - The Site + Viewpoint Location Map



## Appendix 5: Viewpoint Photographs

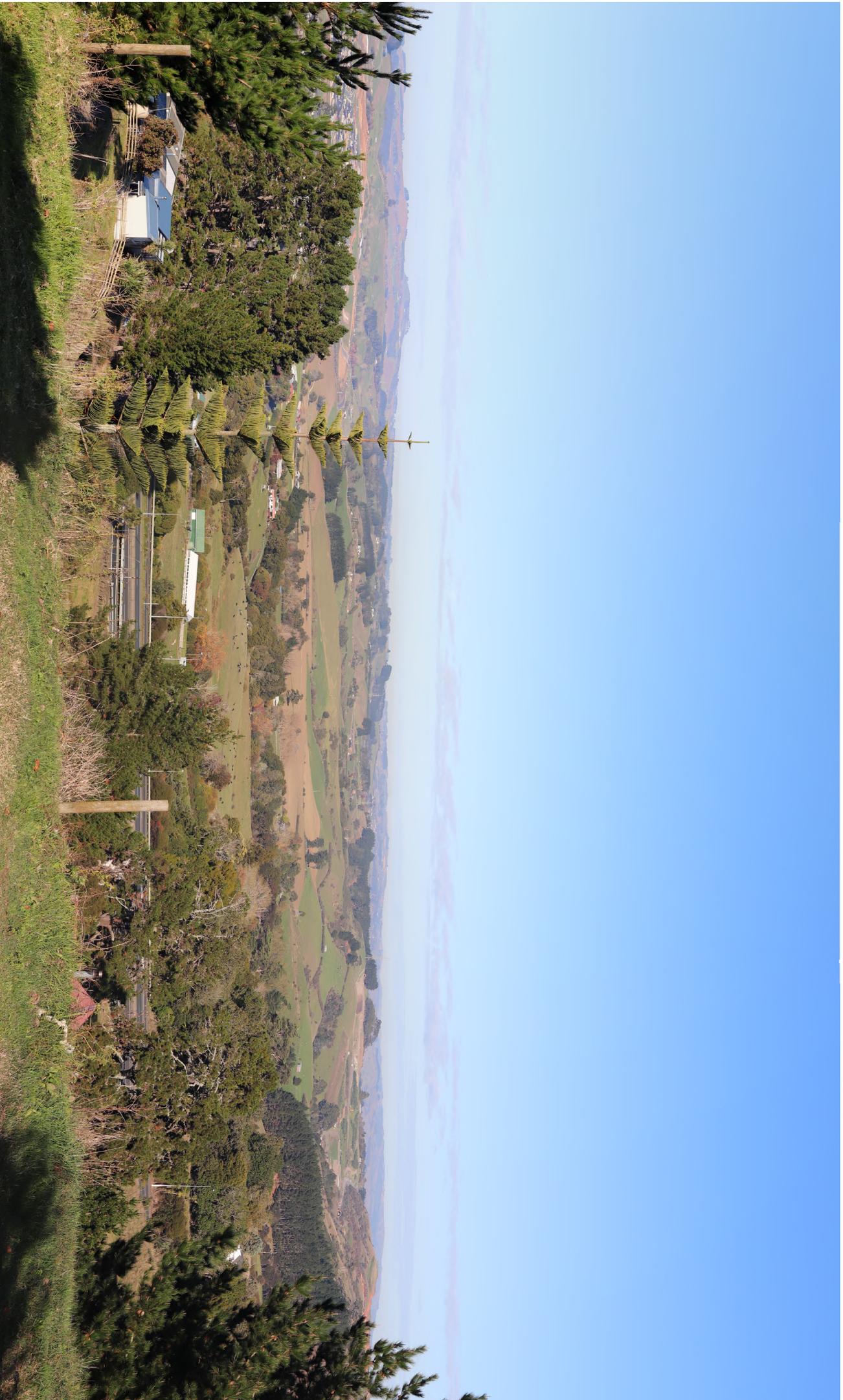


LA4  POKENO WEST - Viewpoint 1: Helenslee Road (South)

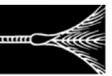




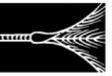
LA4 POKENO WEST - Viewpoint 3: Helenslee Road (North)



LA4 POKENO WEST - Viewpoint 4: Razorback Road

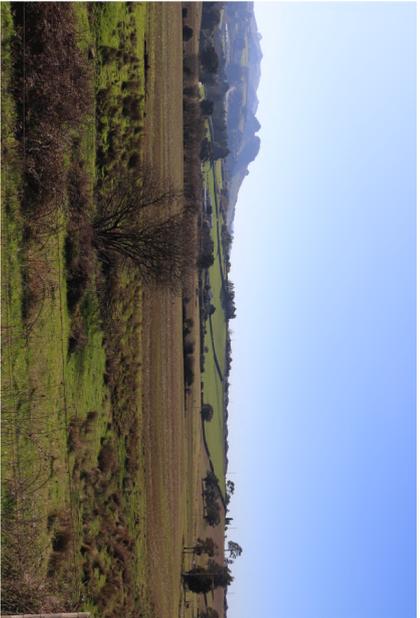
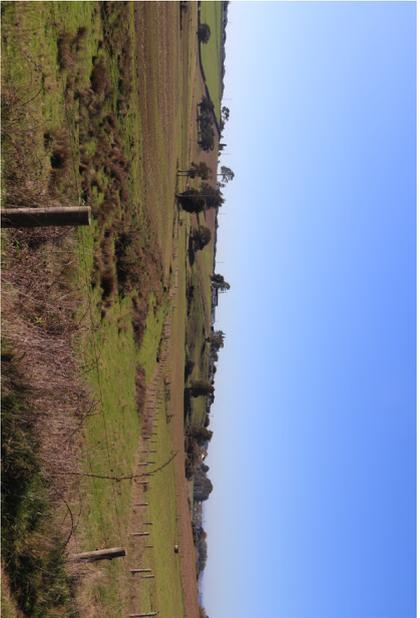


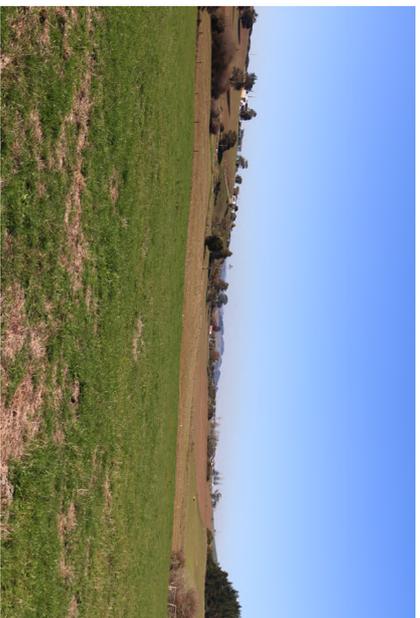
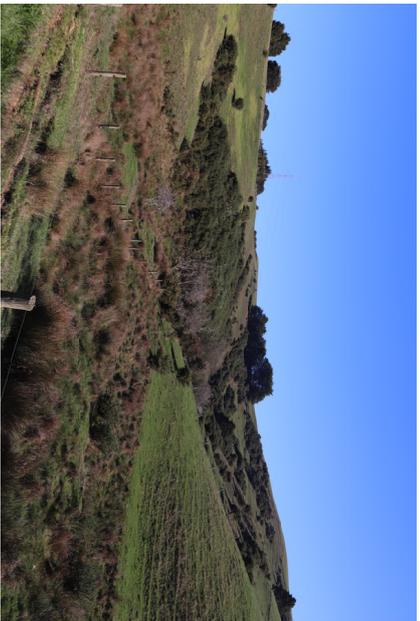
LA4 POKENO WEST - Viewpoint 5: Hitchen Road

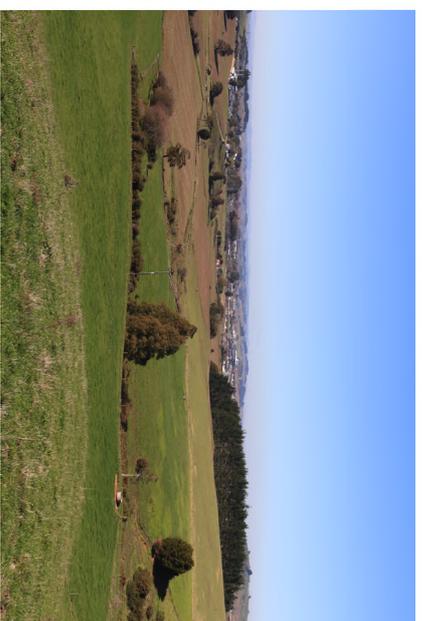
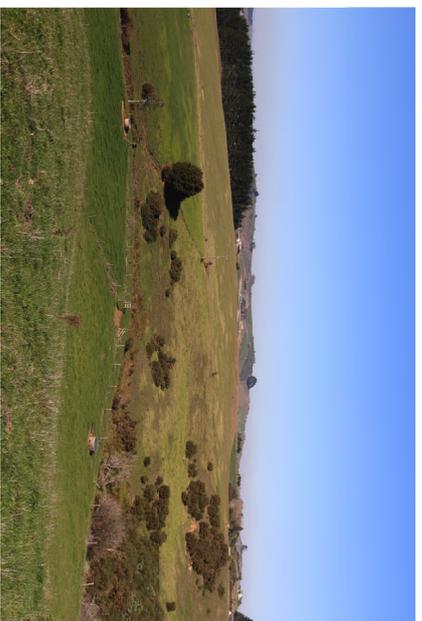
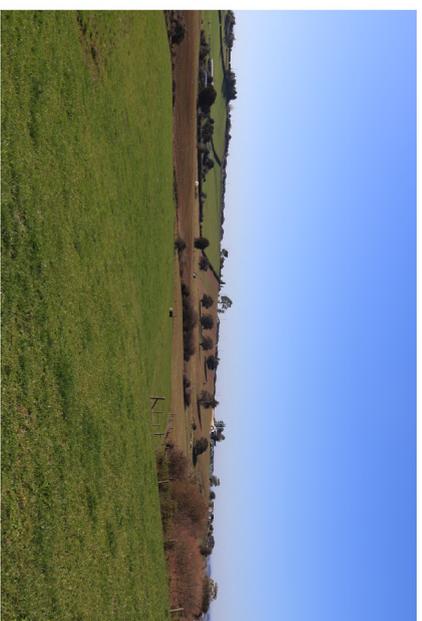


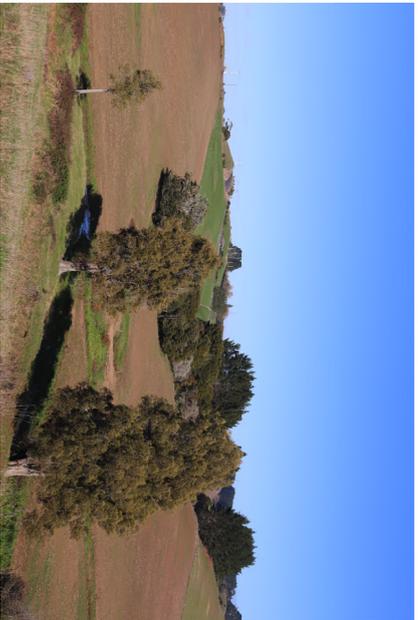
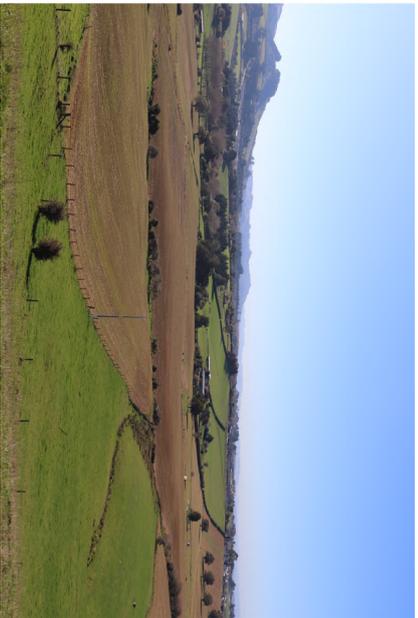
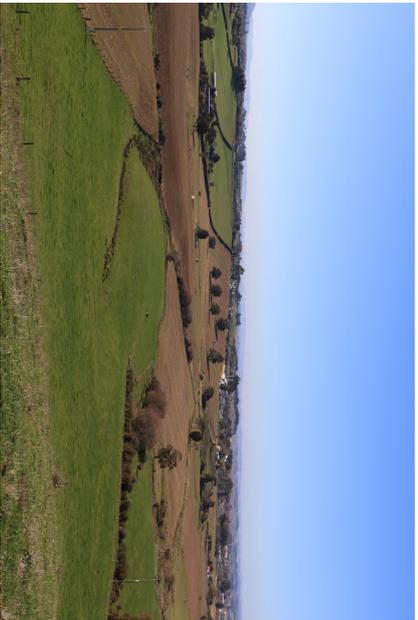
LA4 POKENO WEST - Viewpoint 6: Wingfield Road

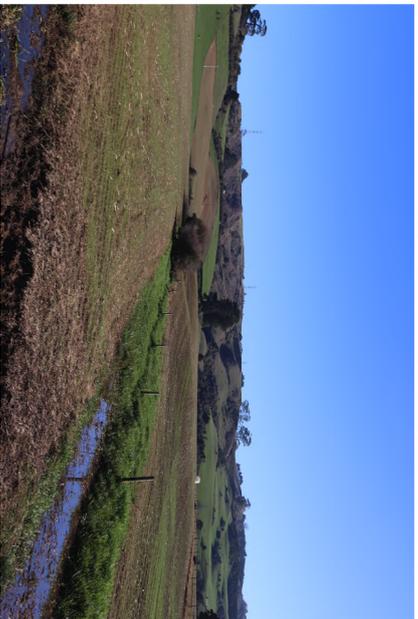
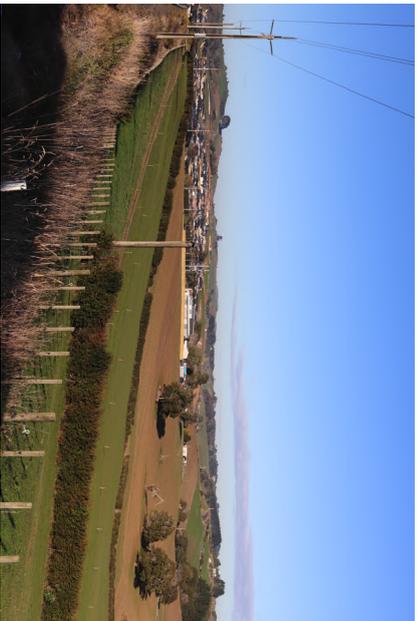


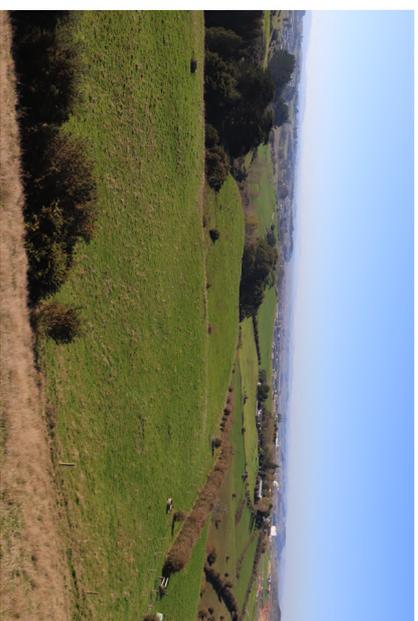
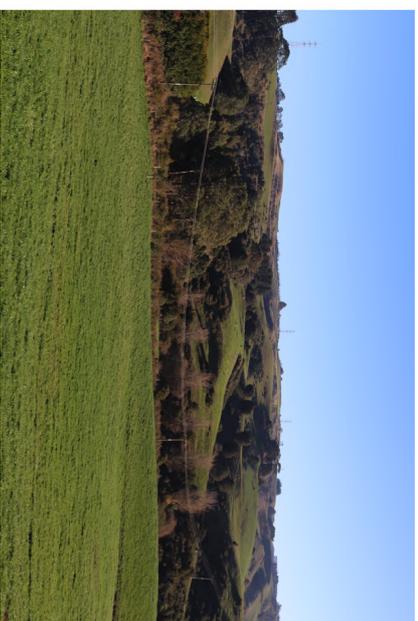












## Appendix 6: Visual Effects Matrix

Use of a matrix offers one way in which the various facets of visual change – qualitative change, visual contrast etc. – can be pulled together and evaluated in a way which gives due weight to each. This matrix was designed to measure the scale of no or low visual effects through to high visual effects.

The assessment matrix is broken into two stages. The first involves looking at the existing situation and assessing the visual quality and sensitivity of the present view to change. This is followed by an evaluation of the changes associated with the proposal. Key issues or variables are addressed within each stage and ratings for these are eventually combined to provide a composite visual effects rating. Set out below is the basic structure, showing what these key variables are and how they are arranged:

### A. Sensitivity of the view and site to change

- A1. Analysis of the view's **Visual Quality** is carried out on the basis that higher quality views are more sensitive to potential disruption and degradation than poorer quality views.
- A2. Analysis of the view's **Visual Absorption Capability** is an evaluation of the degree to which a view is predisposed, or otherwise, to change by virtue of its land uses and/or screening elements and will either accommodate change or make it stand out from its setting.
- A3. Analysis of **Perceptual Factors**. In this section the type and size of population represented by the viewpoint, the viewing distance to the Site and other factors which indicate its sensitivity (in terms of both viewing audience and the inherent exposure of the viewpoint to the Site because of its physical character) are assessed.

### B. Intrusion and qualitative change

- B1. Analysis of **Intrusion / Contrast**: the degree to which a proposal's location and specific structural content and appearance make it either blend into its surroundings or be made to stand out from them in terms of form, linearity, mass, colour and physical factors. This includes whether or not the proposal would intrude into existing views.
- B2. Analysis of the proposal's **Aesthetic Characteristics**: exploring the degree to which it would relate aesthetically and in terms of general character to its surroundings.

Ratings are combined for each viewpoint via a system of averaging and multiplying of ratings to progressively indicate each viewpoint's **sensitivity**, followed by levels of **intrusion and qualitative change**, and culminate in an **overall visual effects rating**.

## Appendix 7: Visual Effects Ratings

The following seven-point scale has been used to rate effects, based on the guidelines contained within the NZILA 'Best Practice Guide – Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 2010' and Auckland Council's 'Information Requirements for Landscape and Visual Effects Assessments 2017':

### **Negligible | Very Low | Low | Moderate | High | Very High | Extreme**

#### Negligible Effect

The proposed development is barely discernible or there are no changes to the existing character, features or landscape quality.

#### Very Low Effect

The proposed development is barely discernible with little change to the existing character, features or landscape quality.

#### Low Effect

A slight loss to the existing character, features or landscape quality.

#### Moderate Effect

Partial change to the existing character or distinctive features of a landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity.

#### High Effect

Noticeable change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape or reduction in the perceived amenity or the addition of new but uncharacteristic features and elements.

#### Very High Effect

Major change to the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape or a significant reduction in the perceived amenity of the outlook. The proposal causes adverse effects that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

#### Extreme Effect

Total loss of the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape resulting in a complete change to the landscape or outlook. The proposal significantly affects and entirely changes the character of the surrounding area. The proposal causes extreme adverse effects that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

In assessing the significance of effects, the assessment also considers the nature of effects in terms of whether this would be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which it occurs. Neutral effects can also result where the visual change is considered to be benign in the context of where it occurs.