



Project:	Eastern Hills Reservoir
Client:	Wellington Water Ltd
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Landscape and Visual Assessment – Supplementary Information

1. Background / Purpose

This Viewpoint-specific Visual Assessment (VA) has been prepared for Wellington Water in response to a Section 169 (2) and 92 (1) request by Hutt City Council (HCC). In 2023 WSP prepared the *Eastern Hills Reservoir Landscape and Visual Assessment*¹ (LVA) which contained four viewpoints from which the likely visual effects of the proposed reservoir were assessed, on the fixed, occupational and transient viewing audience. HCC has requested the preparation of an additional viewpoint to help understand the visual effects of the proposed Eastern Hills Reservoir (the Project) from views north of the site.

This visual assessment follows the 2023 LVA format, which is being used by HCC to understand the potential effects of the Project on the landscape values, landscape character and visual amenity of the surrounding landscape. The outcome of the 2023 LVA revealed that across four viewpoints, the visual effect ratings ranged from between Very Low Adverse to Low-Moderate Adverse after mitigation and remediation (5 to 10 years post establishment).

The VA that follows focuses on the nature of visual effects relative to the existing environment and the experience of a viewer from Balgownie Grove (Viewpoint 5). The assessment identifies the magnitude of effect before and after mitigation and remediation.

2. Viewpoint 5: View from Balgownie Grove looking southwest towards the Proposed Site

Two visual simulations have been produced to assess the existing visual qualities north of the site and the likely visual effects of the proposed reservoir on the fixed, occupational and transient viewing audience (refer to the images below and **Appendix B** Supporting Maps and Photo Essay). Photographs were taken using a 50 mm focal length lens camera to demonstrate the relative visibility of the Project and its relationship with the surrounding landscape and built forms.

Figure 1 shows Viewpoint 5 which is the subject of this assessment alongside Viewpoints 1 to 4 which were evaluated as part of the 2023 LVA.

¹ WSP (2023), Eastern Hills Reservoir Landscape and Visual Assessment, prepared for Wellington Water.



Viewpoint Plan

Project Name: Eastern Hills Reservoir | Landscape and Visual Assessment
 Date: 5 July 2024 Scale: 1:5,000 @ A3 Status: Issued to Wellington Water Version: 5
 Drawn By: Lawrence Elliott Reviewed By: Andrew King Approved By: John Leatherbarrow Sheet Number: LA005

Key
 Photo/ Viewpoint Location
 Project Site
 Proposed Reservoir



Figure 1: Viewpoint Reference Plan with Viewpoint 5 (from Balgownie Grove) identified (see *Appendix B* for A3 plan).

Viewpoint 5 Description

Figure 2 shows the existing condition of Viewpoint 5 taken from the road between 2 and 11 Balgownie Grove looking southwest towards the Project. Viewpoint 5 illustrates the visibility that residents (fixed viewers) currently have from these properties. Transient viewers will consist of people travelling along Balgownie Grove either by vehicle, bike, scooter or foot. Views will also be available for pedestrians at the foot of the hill travelling along a walkway beside Waiwhetū Stream.

The foreground of the image comprises the end of the Balgownie Grove cul-de-sac, including the footpath. A vacant grassed area between residential properties either side of this gap can be observed in the mid-ground and streamside vegetation can be seen at the foot of the hill behind. A single storey residence stands to the left of the image (5 Balgownie Grove) and a one and two storey standalone house to the right (6 Balgownie Grove). Residential fencing borders the vacant lot (5A Balgownie Grove) which provides access to the streamside walkway and the residence either side. Above the streamside vegetation, regenerating native bush covers the hillside and tree ferns stand out as a distinctive natural element.



Figure 2: View towards the Project illustrating the existing view from Balgownie Grove.

Visibility of Development

A close view of the Project will be available from Viewpoint 5 (Figure 3). A 14 m wide corridor of vegetation will be removed along the proposed pipeline corridor to allow for both the pipeline and a working area that will accommodate construction vehicles and material laydown or stockpiling.² Vegetation removal will follow the ridgeline from the reservoir platform towards Waiwhetū Stream and Balgownie Grove. With vegetation cleared, the proposed concrete reservoir will also be visible from Viewpoint 5. Crane-lifting equipment, temporary structures and other construction vehicles will be visible temporarily at the end of Balgownie Grove while the vacant lot is used as a staging area to lift equipment across the stream.

Mitigation measures have been identified in the Eastern Hills LVA³ and include revegetation of the clearance area with eco-sourced native vegetation (Figure 3). Taller trees such as manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) will be located at the outer edges of the pipeline corridor and lower shrubs in the central 5 m area above the pipe trench, due to maintenance requirements along the pipeline. While during the initial phases of plant growth, this newly planted area will be obvious, over time natural seed dispersal and successional growth will produce a mix of species which will blend with the surrounding vegetation.

² WSP (2024), Eastern Hills Reservoir Construction Methodology, p.10.

³ WSP (2023), Eastern Hills Landscape and Visual Assessment prepared for Wellington Water, pp.30-31.



Figure 3: Simulated view towards the reservoir project from Balgownie Grove after construction with no mitigation.



Figure 4: Simulated view towards the reservoir project from Balgownie Grove after mitigation and remediation (5 – 10 years).



Summary

Viewpoint 5 offers a clear vantage point from which the Project is clearly visible. While there will be minimal adjacent cut slopes, the large band of removed vegetation will be obvious. The concrete reservoir at the top of the hill will also be visible from this viewpoint. The amount of vegetation clearance required and introduction of a built structure (concrete reservoir) from Balgownie Grove are at variance with the existing predominantly natural landscape. However, well managed mitigation measures will reduce this effect substantially.

From VP5, the Project *without* mitigation has been assessed as having **High Adverse** visual effects. *With* mitigation measures, the Project has been assessed as having **Low Adverse** visual effects.

3. Summary of Visual Effects to Viewpoint 5

Regarding the visual effects for Viewpoint 5, Table 1 identifies the potential level of effect before mitigation and remediation and after mitigation and remediation (5-10 years post establishment). Ratings identified for Viewpoints 1 to 4 from the *Eastern Hills Reservoir Landscape and Visual Assessment, 2023* are provided for reference.

The visual effects of the Project without mitigation from Viewpoint 5 are High Adverse. This is primarily due to the removal of a wide band of vegetation on a wholly vegetated hillside and the visibility of a new built structure. With mitigation, this rating will drop to Low Adverse. Management and maintenance of mitigation planting will be critical to ensure that the revegetation planting has every opportunity to develop dense vegetation cover replicating the current situation, and to screen the Project.

Table 1: Rating of visual effects of the Project relative to specific viewpoints, including views from the original Landscape and Visual Assessment. ⁴ The new viewpoint (Viewpoint 5) is highlighted in blue.

Viewpoint	Location	Visual Effect Rating Before Mitigation & Remediation	Visual Effect Rating After Mitigation & Remediation (5-10 years post establishment)
1	View from outside 25 Summit Road looking southeast towards the Proposed Site.	Low Adverse	Very Low Adverse
2	View from the western end of Summit Road looking east towards the Proposed Site.	Low-Moderate Adverse	Low Adverse

⁴ WSP (2023), Eastern Hills Landscape and Visual Assessment prepared for Wellington Water, p. 33.

Viewpoint	Location	Visual Effect Rating Before Mitigation & Remediation	Visual Effect Rating After Mitigation & Remediation (5-10 years post establishment)
3	View from Purser Grove Playground looking east towards the Proposed Site.	Moderate Adverse	Low Adverse
4	View from the centre of Naenae Park looking west towards the Proposed Site.	Moderate – High Adverse	Low - Moderate Adverse
5	View from Balgownie Grove looking south west towards the Proposed Site.	High Adverse	Low Adverse

4. Conclusion

This Viewpoint-specific Visual Assessment has considered the potential visual effects of the proposed reservoir and associated activity from Balgownie Grove looking south west towards the proposed site (Viewpoint 5).

During construction and before mitigation, the potential visual effects have been assessed as **High Adverse** due to removal of a wide band of vegetation and visibility of the new reservoir. With mitigation and remediation the rating will change to **Low Adverse**, due to revegetation of the clearance area with eco-sourced native vegetation.