Boffa Miskell

Addendum – Resource Recovery Park LVEA

Attention:	Angela Goodwin
Company:	Potentialis
Date:	31 March 2023
From:	Bec Ramsay, Landscape Architect, Boffa Miskell
Message Ref:	Te Rangihaeata, Resource Recovery Park – Addendum to LVEA
Project No:	BM210903

A landscape and visual assessment report (LVEA) was prepared to support an application for a Resource Recovery Park resource consent in December 2022. Since issuing the report, the project team have reviewed the building detail, landscape treatment and the potential for planting to screen the proposed development. Landscape plans have been amended to include an improved alignment for the Hutt River Trail and to provide vehicle access to the river corridor for GWRC to undertake river management activities. Visual effects have been reassessed and the LVEA is amended as follows.

Views from the Hutt River Trail

The LVEA assessed visual effects with no mitigation as ranging from none to moderate adverse. With mitigation screen planting effects were reduced to none to low-moderate adverse. New landscape treatment includes taller tree species adjacent to the walkway and along the top of the new embankment with the river trail walkway moved closer to the site in some areas. Building heights in relation to the viewer have also been reviewed.

Drawing 603 in the new landscape plan package dated 29/3/23 illustrates the ability of proposed planting to screen the proposed buildings entirely as seen from the adjacent trail after 5 years of planting establishment. In the interim period, partial views of the dark green coloured buildings will be visible intermittently through and above the proposed vegetation. Refer to visual simulations 5-8.

The proposed planting provides two layers of screen planting – one close to the viewer and adjacent to the trail and one close to the proposed buildings. This layering will maximise the long-term screening provided by the planting in both close views and from the opposite side of the river as illustrated in the new cross sections.

Visual effects will be **low – moderate adverse** in the closest views from parts of the trail on the northern side of the river and once planting has established will reduce to **low adverse** and **none** where total screening is achieved.

Views from Mary Huse Grove

The LVEA initially assessed visual effects from the road corridor of Mary Huse Grove as follows:

5.5.17 A viewer driving or walking along the road would not be highly sensitive to the addition of further buildings in the landscape as they will be viewing the Site in the context of existing residential development. The visual effects from Mary Huse Grove will be low-moderate adverse once planting has established that helps break up the scale of the visible buildings.

Visual simulations 10 and 11 represent the closest views to the proposed development from the road and illustrate the potential for the proposed planting to partially screen and integrate the buildings into the landscape. The visual effects from the road corridor will be **low adverse** reduced to **very low** adverse in the long term once planting have established.

Views from Mary Huse Grove – private property

Viewers occupying private property are generally considered more sensitive to change in views associated with new development than people moving through public places. However, the site context is such that there are a range of different activities and buildings in the surrounding landscape and partial views to additional buildings would not be out of context or uncharacteristic as they might otherwise be in a rural context where there is a sense of open space and large-scale rural landscapes.

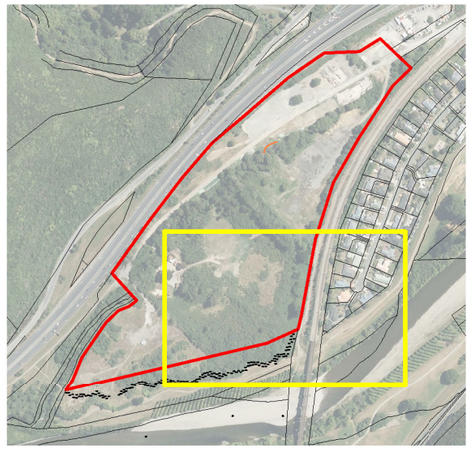
As described in the LVEA and shown in the new landscape plans and cross sections, the railway embankment separates the site from residential property boundaries on Mary Huse Grove. There are no private properties immediately adjacent to the site boundary.

Private property that is opposite the site beyond the embankment includes numbers 27, 29, 31 and 32 Mary Huse Grove. The visual effect of the proposed development from 32 Mary Huse Grove is considered **low adverse** and will be reduced to **none** once planting as proposed is at 5 years of growth and the buildings are screened from view.

Proposed landscape treatment has been carefully designed (refer Drawing 600 and 601) to include tall species planted at 2-3m height at the top of the site batter slope and across a small bund to provide faster immediate screening. Retention of some existing vegetation with removal as new planting matures will also screen views to the site. As illustrated in the landscape sections (refer Drawing 601), there is no view to the site or proposed buildings from the back yards of number 27, 29 and 31 due to the proximity to and height of the railway embankment. There will be **no visual effect** from these properties.

From number 34 north, private property is situated north of the north-eastern most corner of the development site. Backyard and railway embankment vegetation and increasingly oblique views limit visibility to the development site from number 34 and properties further north along the street on the western side of Mary Huse Grove. Visual effects from these properties will be **very low adverse** reduced to **none** as planting matures.

Proposed landscape treatment along both the northern and eastern site boundaries will integrate development into the setting as illustrated by the visual simulations 10-14 and visual effects from other houses along Mary Huse Grove will be mitigated by the proposed landscape planting, increasing distance to the site and the development being seen with a foreground of existing residential development and railway corridor infrastructure. Visual effects will be negligible from these houses.



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A	24.03.2023	Draft For Information	APr
B	29.03.2023	Draft For Information	BGi

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Te Rangihaeata Business Park

View Mitigation Sheet 01

Design	BGi	Scale	Date
Drawn	SSr	1:500 @ A1	29.03.2023
Check	BGi	1:1000 @ A3	

DRAWING NO. BM210903_600

REVISION B

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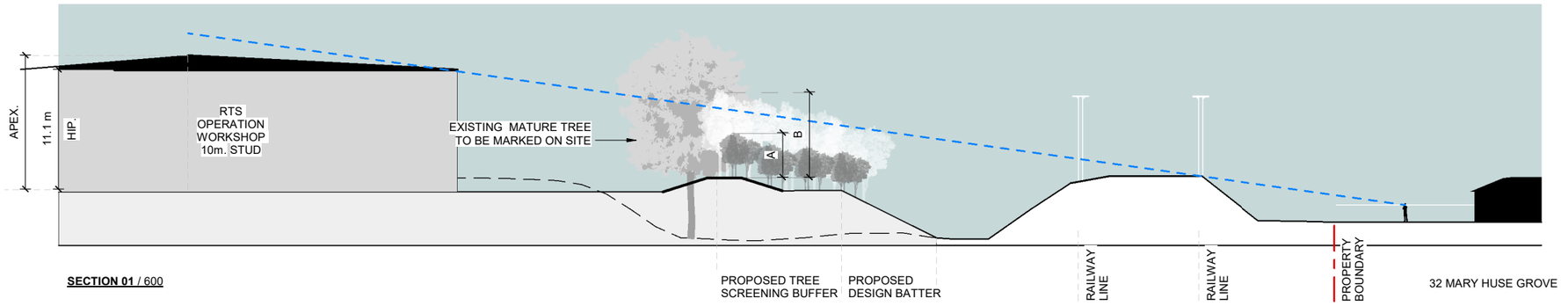

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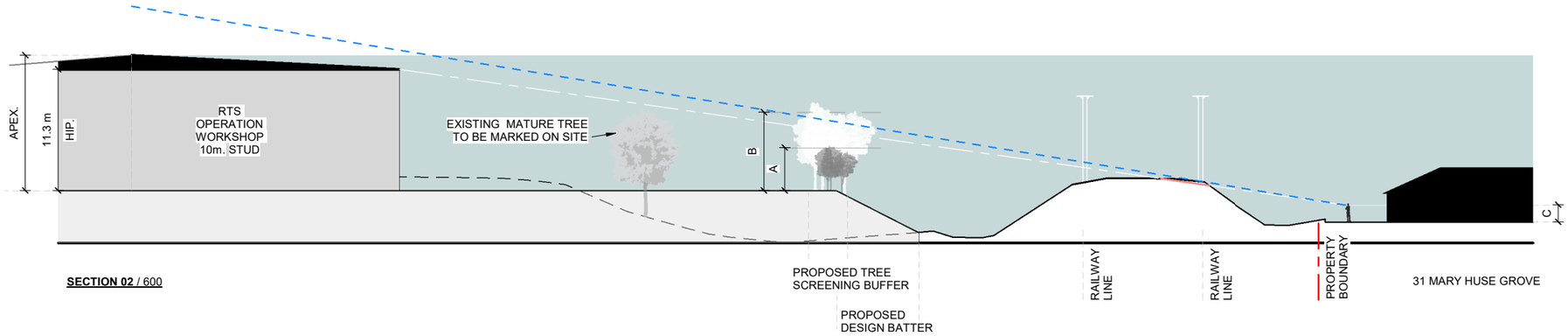

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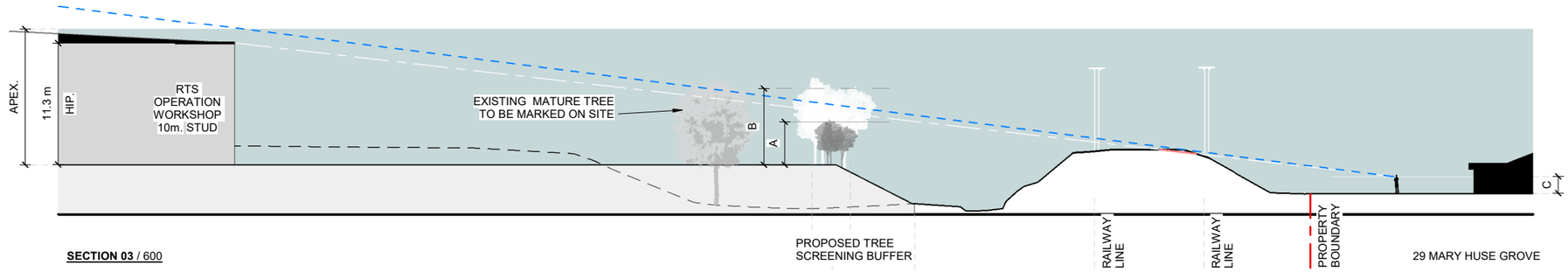
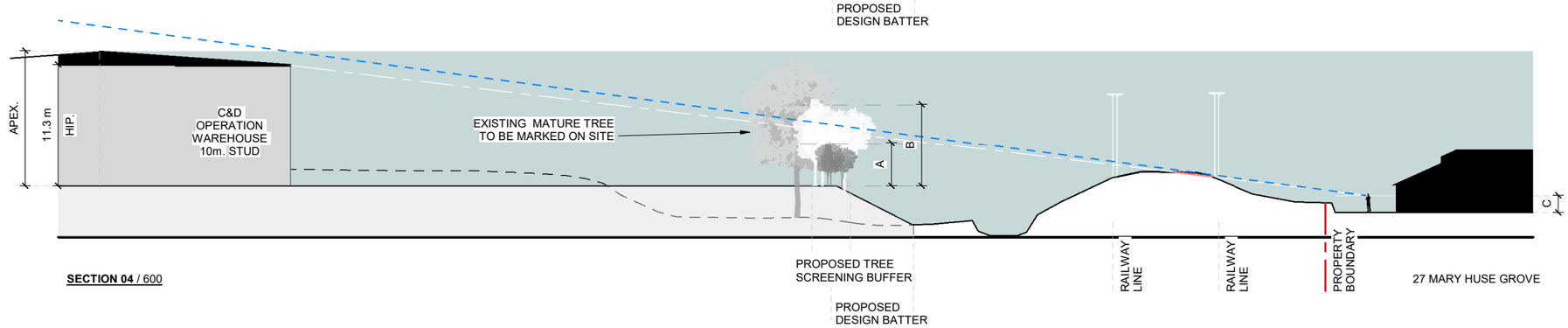


SECTION 03 / 600



SECTION 04 / 600

KEY:

SIGHT LINE FROM WITHIN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY BOUNDARY

SIGHT LINE TO THE **EDGE OF THE BUILDING**

HEIGHT KEY:

A - INSTALL HEIGHT
B - HEIGHT IN 5 YEAR
C - VEIWING HEIGHT

NOTE:

- SELECTED MATURE EXISTING TO BE LEFT IN PLACE UNTILL PROPOSED TREES ARE ESTABLISHED
- SELECTED MATURE TREES TO BE MARKED ON SITE BY L.A. & E.T.C

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Te Rangihaeata Business Park

View Mitigation Sheet 02

Design	BGi	Scale	Date
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Check	BGi	1 : 400 @ A3	

DRAWING NO. BM210903_601

REVISION B

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Te Rangihaeata Business Park

View Mitigation Sheet 03

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Check	BGi	1:1000 @ A3	

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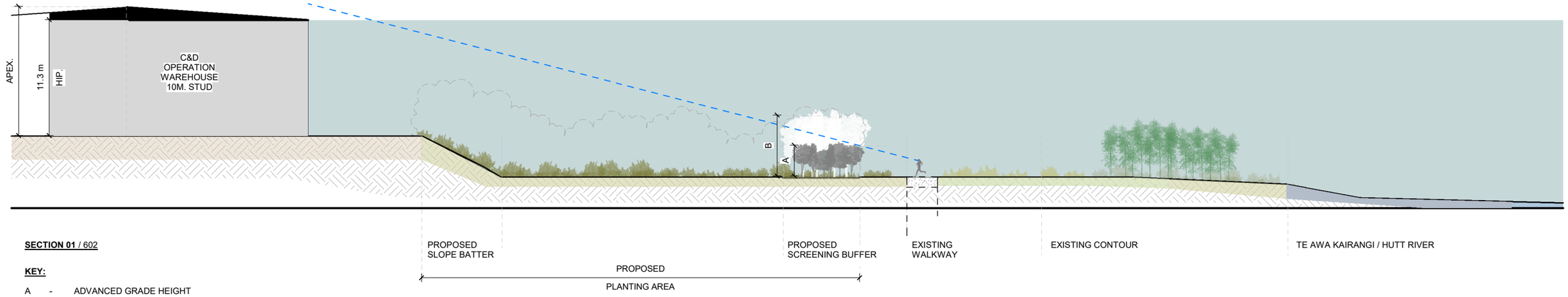
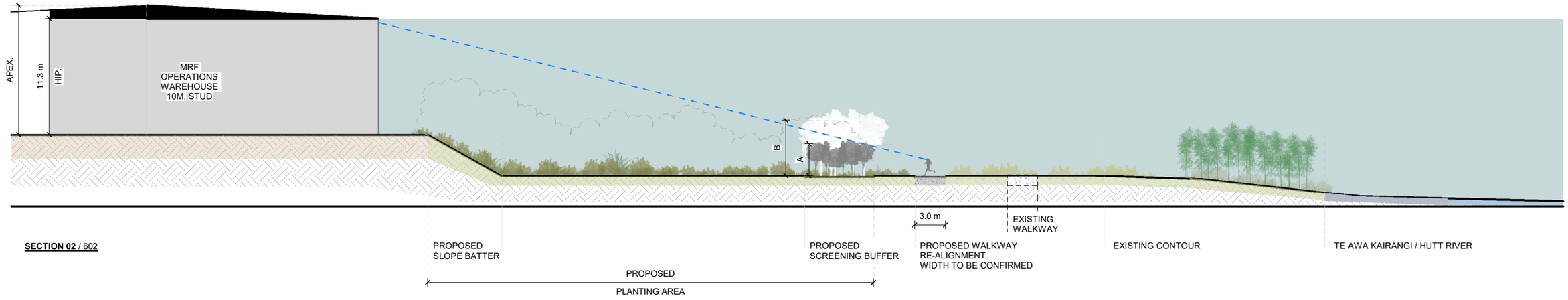


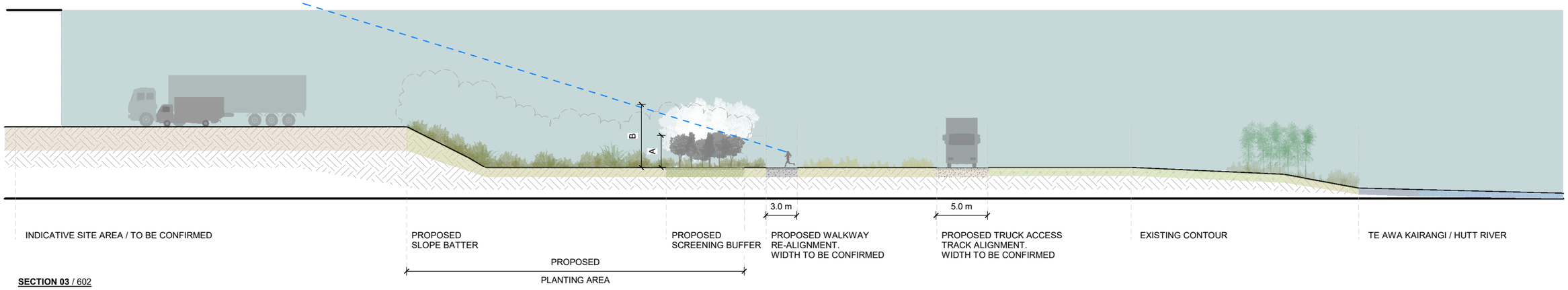
SECTION 01 / 602

KEY:

A - ADVANCED GRADE HEIGHT
B - HEIGHT IN 5 YEAR
SIGHT LINE FOR AN AVERAGE HEIGHT PERSON



SECTION 02 / 602



SECTION 03 / 602

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Te Rangihaeata Business Park

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Design	BGi	Scale	
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Resource Recovery Park Proposal

Assessment of Landscape Effects
Prepared for Building Solutions

19 December 2022

Document Quality Assurance

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Executive Summary

1.1.1 Boffa Miskell Limited (BML) has been engaged by Building Solutions to undertake an Assessment of Landscape Effects report for a development proposal at 30 Benmore Crescent, Manor Park in Hutt City.

1.1.2 The proposal is for a resource recovery park operations yard occupying 5.785 hectares in the south-western part of a 13.2-hectare property (refer Appendix 2, Figure 1).

1.1.3 The wider site is a discrete area of rural zoned land, roughly triangular in shape, bounded by Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River to the south, SH2 to the west and north, and the rail line and part of the Manor Park residential area to the east. The site is not part of a wider rural landscape.

1.1.4 The site is not currently occupied and has a mixed land cover of gravel clearings and vegetation. Dry Creek runs through the site with an associated band of vegetation along the creek corridor. The site has been heavily modified by earthworks and land use over time and it is unlikely the Creek follows a natural flow path.

1.1.5 Vegetation across the site includes exotic and native species and a mix of trees and low vegetation cover. The vegetation and changes in ground level across the site limit views to and across the site.

1.1.6 To the north and west of the site beyond the SH2 corridor is the Belmont Hills special amenity landscape and the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River corridor is also a special amenity landscape. The site itself occupies an area of the valley floor landscape between the two but is not part of either.

1.1.7 The natural character of Dry Creek as it passes the proposed development area is currently **low-moderate** and will not change as a result of the proposed development, with a 10m setback between the development area and the creek.

1.1.8 The proposed development (including landscape planting) will result in **low adverse** effects at a wider landscape scale, with **low-moderate adverse** effects on the local landscape character due to mature vegetation removal and the introduction of large-scale building development. The site comprises a small component of the wider valley landscape.

1.1.9 Visual effects from private and public viewpoints are mixed. From nearby public roads the viewers are likely less sensitive to any landscape change and views are relatively fleeting as people pass the site. Establishing planting, recessive, natural building colours and limiting signage on buildings will help reduce potential prominence of new buildings in the views and the buildings will be seen in the context of a mix of land use and development in the surrounding area.

1.1.10 Viewers on the Hutt River Trail will be more sensitive to visible built development on the site as they will be moving more slowly and are travelling through a park like setting. While the site will only be intermittently visible for approximately 500m of the trail on either side of the river, the effects will range from **none** to **moderate adverse** the closer a viewer is to the site**.**

1.1.11 Proposed planting along the site boundary and on the Hutt River corridor would be in keeping with the aspiration of the community and the GWRC and Hutt City Council River Environment Strategy to establish more native vegetation planting in the area while reducing visual effects as seen from either side of the Hutt River Trail.

1.1.12 From private property to the east of the site views of the proposed development are from an elevated, distant location where planting will help integrate the development into the landscape rather than provide screening. The site will form a small component of a wider view of the valley floor and Belmont Hills with a range of land use and development in pockets visible on either side of Te Awa Kairangi/ Hutt River corridor. The development will result in a **low adverse** visual effect for these viewers.

1.1.13 From private properties at the end of Mary Huse Grove, the proposed development is closer but viewed beyond the railway embankment that rises steeply at the back of the residential properties. Planting is proposed along the development site boundaries resulting in **low-moderate** adverse visual effects after 5 years of planting establishment.

CONTENTS

Appendices

- Proposed landscape plan (north and south)
- Site cross-sections
- Visual illustration location points map
- Visual illustrations from selected viewpoints

Appendix 3: HCDP Zone Map

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the report

1.1.1 Boffa Miskell Limited (BML) have been engaged by Building Solutions to undertake an Assessment of Landscape Effects for a proposal to develop 5.785 hectares (the development Site) of a 13.2-hectare property for a resource recovery park operations yard.

1.1.2 The development Site and wider property is zoned General Rural Activity Area and is situated at 30 Benmore Crescent, Manor Park in Hutt City, refer **Appendix 2 Map 1**.

1.1.3 The following Assessment of Landscape Effects evaluates the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development on the immediate and surrounding environment character.

1.2 Other Relevant Technical Reports

1.2.1 Site layout design was an iterative process as a range of technical reports were prepared to understand site opportunities and constraints. Geotechnical and flood impact assessments were undertaken to understand the flood risk to the site and the implications of the Wellington Faultline on site use and development.

1.3 Assessment Process

1.3.1 This assessment follows the concepts and principles outlined in Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines[1]. A full methodology is outlined in **Appendix 1** of this report. The effects ratings are based upon a seven-point scale, which ranges from very low to very high. A graphic supplement has been included in **Appendix 2**, which includes a Site Context Plan, a Site Development Plan, Proposed Landscape Planting Plan, a Viewpoint Location Map and photographs/ illustrations of the proposed development from selected viewpoint locations.

1.3.2 An initial site visit was carried out in March 2022. This was to the Site and area immediately surrounding to understand existing site conditions, character, and visibility of the Site. Additional site visits in April and September 2022 were to consider views to the site from further afield and assess visibility of the proposed

[1] 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', Tuia Pito Ora/NZILA, 2022

development in the context of ongoing site work and site layout plan development for the resource recovery park proposal.

1.3.3 The Hutt Landscape Study Landscape Character Description (2012) and Hutt City Landscape Evaluation Draft Technical Assessment (2016) were used to inform this report. The documents were used to prepare the GWRC Regional Policy Statement (2013), the GWRC Proposed Natural Resources Plan (2019) and the Hutt City District Plan, providing landscape and natural character assessment and identification of Special Amenity Landscapes as required by the Resource Management Act (1991).

1.3.4 A review of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Environmental Strategy[2] and Management Plan and Operations Manual[3] also informed this assessment, providing further context and strategic direction on the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River values, management and use.

1.3.5 **Appendix 2** includes a series of visual illustrations. These are intended to indicatively represent the proposed building locations and heights and assist in understanding the potential visibility of built development and effect on the landscape. A selection of eight viewpoints were chosen from where development is potentially most visible.

2.0 Proposal Description

2.1 The proposed development is to establish a resource recovery park operations business within the property. In summary, the proposal includes:

- Six buildings ranging in size from a workshop building of 550m^2 floor area with an 8m stud through to a RTS Operations Workshop with a floor area of 3,750m^2 and 12.68m in height.
- Concrete hard stand and turning/manoeuvring areas for a range of vehicles including large trucks.
- Truck wash, a covered canopy and bin storage areas and two weighbridges.
- Landscape planting to the southern site boundary adjacent to Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi land and along the north-eastern boundary and rail corridor boundaries.
- Additional revegetation and screen planting is proposed within the adjacent GWRC land to the south and west of the property (refer **Appendix 2, Figure 3.1 and 3.2** for landscape plans).

[2] Boffa Miskell, 2018: Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Environmental Strategy: Action Plan, prepared for Greater Wellington Regional Council

[3] Boffa Miskell, 2022. Future of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Corridor: Environmental and Recreational Management Plan and Operations Manual. Report by Boffa Miskell Limited for Greater Wellington Regional Council.

- No development is proposed across the wider property in this resource consent application.

2.1.1 A separate resource consent application has been submitted to seek approval for bulk earthworks that will result in a flat site for the proposed resource recovery park development. This assessment has been carried out based on new ground levels anticipated under the earthworks consent.

For a detailed description of the proposed development please refer to the AEE prepared by Potentialis Planning.

3.0 Relevant Statutory / Non-statutory Provisions

3.1.1 The purpose of this section of the report is to outline the statutory matters that need to be considered that relate specifically to landscape, visual and natural character effects. The key statutory documents are:

- The Resource Management Act (1991)
- The GWRC Regional Policy Statement (RPS)
- The GWRC Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP)
- Hutt City Council District Plan (HCDP)

3.2 Resource Management Act

3.2.1 The RMA provisions relevant to natural character, landscape and visual effects addressed in this report are in respect of:

- Section 6(a) – the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins.
- Section 7(c) – the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values
- Section 7(f) – the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment

3.2.2 Section 6(a) is a “matter of national importance” under the RMA while Section 7 matters are identified as “other matters” which persons exercising functions and powers under the Act must “have particular regard to”.

3.3 GWRC Regional Policy Statement (RPS)

3.3.1 The RPS became operative in 2013 and provides the current framework for the sustainable management of the Region’s natural resources.

3.3.2 Within the RPS, Objective 17 is relevant to the Region’s outstanding natural features and landscapes. Under this objective, Policies 26 and 50 require the identification, protection and management of outstanding natural features and landscapes. Objective 18 refers to the Region’s special amenity landscapes with policies 27 and 28 referring to their identification and management.

3.3.3 No outstanding natural features and landscapes or special amenity landscapes have been identified within the site in accordance with the RPS, however the adjacent Hutt River and the hills to the west are both special amenity landscapes (refer to **Appendix 2, Figure 1**).

3.4 GWRC Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP)

3.4.1 Within the PNRP, the Hutt River is identified as a Category 2 Surface Waterbody. Areas of the Hutt River identified as significant are upstream of Kaitoke Weir and beyond the area of the river adjacent to the Site. Policy 24 of the Plan requires that significant adverse effects on areas of natural character outside the coastal marine area are avoided, remedied or mitigated. Policy 48 requires the adverse effects of activities on all other natural features and landscapes are avoided, remedied or mitigated. To date, GWRC or Hutt City Council have not carried out an assessment of natural character of the regions lakes and rivers and their margins. An assessment of effects on natural character is provided in section 5.2 below.

3.5 Hutt City Council District Plan (HCDP)

3.5.1 The Site is zoned General Rural under the Hutt City Council District Plan (HCDP). The Area Wide Issues section of the HCDP describes a wide range of anticipated use within the General Rural zone with a single objective at 1.10.7 *“to protect and enhance the rural character, landscape and amenity values of the rural activity area”*.

3.5.2 The HCDP describes the General Rural Activity Areas at 8B 1.1.1 as follows in relation to Open Space Character and Amenity Values:

Generally, the rural area is different from urban and rural residential areas because of the large land parcels and the low intensity of both the activities and buildings. To ensure the retention of the open space character and amenity values of the rural

area, the adverse effects of activities and subdivision must be appropriately managed.

3.5.3 Policy 8B 1.1.1 states:

(a) to allow for those activities which are appropriate in rural areas and which maintain and enhance the open character and amenity values of rural areas together with the intrinsic values of ecosystems.

(b) To ensure that sites are of a size that the open space character and amenity values of rural areas are maintained and enhanced.

(c) The preservation of the natural character of wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

3.5.4 Policy 8B 1.2.1 outlines Minimum Requirements for Sites and Buildings, in particular in relation to character and amenity and flood hazard management, noting: *The size and shape of sites, the number and size of buildings and the location of buildings on the sites are important elements in determining the character and amenity values of rural areas. It is necessary to have conditions relating to these elements to ensure the character and amenity values of rural areas are maintained and that buildings and structures are sited to avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of flood hazards.*

3.5.5 Policy relevant to landscape and visual effects assessment follows with Explanation and Reasons: *Minimum conditions which determine when and where buildings are located on a site contribute to the character, amenity values and adverse effects of flood hazards of rural areas. The first determinant of this is the minimum size and shape of sites. Once the subdivision pattern is established, the extent to which a site is built on, the relationship of buildings to boundaries, the height of buildings and the ability for daylight to enter the setback area are important on-site determinants of the overall character and amenity values of rural areas.*

3.5.6 The proposed development will enable operation of a resource recovery park business. The activity has been assessed as non-complying under the District Plan.

3.5.7 General Rural Activity Area allows for a broad range of activities and includes permitted activity standards for development. Relevant to landscape and visual effects assessment, is a permitted building height of 8 metres (from pre-bulk earthworks ground level) with permitted site coverage of 1000m2 and two dwellings permitted per site. Minimum permitted site area is 15ha.

3.5.8 There is also a Manor Park specific rule to manage flood risk that requires building on land over 28.0 msl which requires parts of the site to be raised through bulk earthworks (a separate consent application).

Other relevant HCDP matters

3.5.9 The HCDP does not contain rules that prevent the clearance of vegetation onsite. Therefore, under the current District Plan all vegetation onsite can be removed as a permitted activity (i.e. no resource consent required). This is an important part of the

context for the assessment of effects below. GWRC regional rules may restrict vegetation clearance within the bed of Dry Creek. However, this is outside the scope of the proposed consent application and no vegetation removal within the bed of the creek is proposed.

3.5.10 The location of the Wellington Faultline and Wellington Fault Special Study Area overlay will influence development onsite. The proposed development plan outlines the location of the Wellington Faultline which has been defined through a geotechnical assessment. No building development is proposed within this area.

3.6 Non- statutory material

3.6.1 The following are the key non-statutory documents that relate to understanding the landscape values, development and management of Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River which is adjacent to the site.

- Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Environmental Strategy: Action Plan, prepared for Greater Wellington Regional Council (2018);
- Future of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Corridor: Environmental and Recreational Management Plan and Operations Manual. Report by Boffa Miskell Limited for Greater Wellington Regional Council. (2022);
- Hutt Landscape Study, Landscape Character Description (2012); and
- Hutt City Landscape Evaluation Draft Technical Assessment (2016).

3.6.2 The landscape study and evaluation reports were prepared to inform the Hutt City Council District Plan review that is currently being prepared and to give effect to the GWRC RPS. The landscape reports assist in understanding landscape context and values as described below in Section 4 of this report.

3.6.3 The River Strategy and Management Plans outline management priorities, issues, opportunities, and implementation and provide context to considering the values associated with the river. The *Future of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Corridor* plan provides objectives and actions for river management that meet community aspirations of enhancing the natural environment and recreational activities of the Te Awa Kairangi/ Hutt River, its margins and the wider river corridor, whilst enabling flood protection objectives and operations to be achieved. It outlines the detail of how projects and actions identified in the Environmental Strategy will be achieved.

3.6.4 A River Corridor Plan Project is identified in the River Corridor Plan with a proposal to carry out native planting adjacent to the Site and downstream of the Pomare rail bridge. Planting in the River Corridor design guide includes potential to use poplars and willows but natives are identified as key in this area due to the potential to bridge

the narrow ‘gap’ connecting the native vegetation and habitat areas in the Belmont Hills to the north-west with the Stokes Valley hills to the south-east.

4.0 Existing Environment

4.1.1 This section describes the existing Site and its landscape context, including landscape values and available viewing audiences. This provides the baseline for the assessment of effects.

4.2 Landscape Context

4.2.1 The site is located approximately 7km north of central Lower Hutt, to the west of the established residential area of Manor Park, between State Highway 2 (SH2) and the Wairarapa railway line. **Appendix 2, Figure 1** shows the site and surrounding context described below.

4.2.2 The Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River runs along the southern boundary of the Site. There is approximately 50 metres between the Site boundary and the Hutt River Trail public walkway. Vegetation cover and rising topography between the trail and the site limits views into the Site. The vegetation along the trail is varied with open grass areas adjacent to the trail, weed species to the west and poplar planting (for flood management) along sections of the river edge. This is a typical pattern of river edge vegetation in this area with views of the wider landscape limited by vegetation cover, topography and the river stop banks.

4.2.3 To the north-west of the site, beyond the wider property boundary and SH2 corridor, the topography rises sharply up into the Belmont Hills. The Belmont Hills escarpment is part of the steep, heavily vegetated escarpment landscape that runs along the western side of SH2 from Wellington City out to the site and beyond. The SH2 alignment follows along the bottom of the escarpment, also following the Wellington Faultline, and forms a recognisable feature of the Wellington landscape.

4.2.4 The Site is located at the western edge of the river flats landscape where there is a mix of land use. The most prominent built features are the road and rail corridors, including SH2 and the interchange located approximately 100 metres to the north-east of the Site entrance. The interchange provides access to Manor Park and Haywards Hill. There is a rail station with pedestrian over pass over the motorway approximately 400 metres to the north-east of the property entrance and a rail bridge over the river to the east of the site.

4.2.5 There is residential development to the south of the Site beyond the river (Pomare) and north and east beyond the rail line (Manor Park). There is also residential development in the Stokes Valley hills, approximately 400 metres to the east beyond the rail line and river. Residential land use and other built development set amongst

or surrounded by the golf course, river corridor and vegetated steep hill sides, creates a landscape characterised by pockets of built development.

4.2.6 The Manor Park Golf Course (part of the Hutt River Special Amenity Landscape (SAL)) occupies a large area to the north-east of the site contributing to the open space and vegetated character of the river corridor, while the housing along Mary Huse Grove to the east of the Site is tightly confined between the rail corridor and the river stop bank. The Site is similarly contained between SH2, the rail corridor and the river.

4.2.7 Industrial and infrastructure related land uses are also evident in the landscape with Belmont Quarry, Allied Concrete and a paving company located along Hebden Crescent and the Haywards Sub Station on Haywards Hill Road. At the entrance to the site off Benmore Crescent there is a yard space with various buildings, storage and manoeuvring areas typical of light industrial land use.

4.2.8 The Belmont Hills to the west of SH2, the Stokes Valley hills, the river, SH2 and the rail corridor create a local landscape pattern that is complex with a visible mix of land use and character. The steep escarpment, hill sides and river corridor remain largely undeveloped, with available flat areas developed for residential use. This is reflected in the District Plan zones surrounding the site that include Extraction, General Recreation, General Residential and Business (refer to **Appendix 3**)**.** The Site is not part of a larger rural landscape.

4.2.9 In the wider context, the Site is located within the Hutt Valley Character Area[4] as identified in the Hutt Landscape Study which includes the Hutt Valley floor and the lower portion of the hill slopes to the east. The Hutt Landscape Study (2012) notes that "*Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River is the dominant element of this landscape character area, and in combination with the Wellington fault has been instrumental in the formation of the entire valley"*. The landscape surrounding the site is an area of the Hutt Valley where the valley floor narrows. The eastern hills of Stokes Valley extend down towards the river corridor and the escarpment landscape to the north-west rises steeply above State Highway 2 (SH2) and Hebden Crescent.

4.2.10 The *Hutt City Landscape Evaluation*[5] describes two Special Amenity Landscapes (SAL's) that form part of the surrounding landscape context of the Site. These are the Hutt River SAL along the southern boundary of the Site and Manor Park, and the Belmont Hills SAL on the escarpment on the other side of SH2 (refer **Appendix 2, Figure 1**).

4.2.11 The Belmont Hills SAL extends down to the valley floor parallel to the north-western Site boundary on the opposite side of the 50m wide Hebden Crescent and SH2 road corridor. The SAL has high[6] sensory, and shared and recognised values, and medium natural scenic values. The landscape includes Belmont Regional Park with a range of recreational, cultural heritage and ecological values. While modified by a history of pastoral farming and other land use, there are still large areas of visible

[4] Hutt Landscape Study, Landscape Character Description (2012)

[5] Hutt City Landscape Evaluation Draft Technical Assessment (2016)

[6] On a scale 7-point scale ranging from very high to very low as per Best Practice guidance reference above.

forest cover and functioning ecosystems along the steep escarpment slopes and gullies.

4.2.12 The Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River SAL borders the southern boundary of the Site and has been assessed as having very high shared and recognised values due to the significance of the recreational values in this area. Cultural and heritage associations are also significant. Sensory values are high and natural science values are medium. The river floodplain landscape is described as "*highly modified with a low level of naturalness, as evidenced by ongoing channel realignment, engineered stop banks, presence of roads and structures within the floodplain, and the introduction of large areas of exotic riparian vegetation."*

4.2.13 The Site is not located within either SAL and the Site is a comparatively small component of the wider landscape context.

4.3 Site Description

4.3.1 **Appendix 2, Figure 2** provides an aerial view of the site and immediate surrounds. The aerial view also shows boundary conditions, vegetation cover and the location of Dry Creek. Further vegetation clearance has occurred across the Site and wider 13.2-hectare property, in preparation for earthworks and a planting programme along Dry Creek.

4.3.2 The development site occupies a 5.8-hectare, wedge shaped, southwestern end of a 13.2 property in Manor Park. There are currently two options to access the Site, travelling through the wider property and over one of two bridges across Dry Creek (refer Image (a) below).

***Image (a)**: Sheds and hard stand areas within the site. View from within the site looking west across one of the Dry Creek crossings. The hills visible are the escarpment landscape beyond SH2.*

4.3.3 Dry Creek runs along the north-western boundary of the site with a proposed twenty-metre planted corridor (via a separate earthworks consent) and building setback the entire length of the stream as it passes through the wider property. Existing vegetation along Dry Creek varies, with more native species and dense vegetation cover along the southern part of the boundary where the creek runs through GWRC land. Beyond the Creek is a narrow flat area of land, with SH2 along the north-western boundary of the property (not part of the development Site).

4.3.4 Less than ten metres beyond the southwestern corner of the site is the Hutt River Trail with a pedestrian and cycle bridge crossing over Dry Creek. The trail turns a 90-degree bend with a section of timber paling fence between the site and the trail. The Hutt River Trail crosses Dry Creek and passes the higher topography of the Site to descend and continue along the river corridor up to the Pomare rail bridge.

4.3.5 The eastern Site boundary drops steeply down to a narrow track at the bottom of the adjacent railway line embankment. To the north-east of the development Site is another flat area of disused land that is part of the wider property.

4.3.6 There is a currently a bank that roughly divides the development Site into north-eastern and south-western parts (refer to Image (b) below). The north-eastern, more

elevated portion of the site has mixed vegetation cover with piles of topsoil and rough ground towards the east (refer to Images (b) and (c) below).

***Image (b)**: Photograph from beyond the southern site boundary looking north across the site. At right of photo in the middle ground the slope between the two parts of the site is visible. Trees along Dry Creek are also visible in the middle ground at the centre of the photo.*

***Image (c)**: The upper part of the Site has a mix of vegetation cover with gravel areas and piles of soil to the left of the viewer. A rail corridor gantry is visible beyond the Site boundary in the middle distance and right of the photo.*

***Image (d)**: View from within the site looking north illustrating mixed vegetation cover and ground conditions. The tall tree line is the location of the proposed north-eastern boundary of the resource recovery park site.*

4.3.7 There is currently an open culvert lined with mature trees that delineates the north-eastern site boundary and the eastern boundary runs along the rail corridor. Refer image (c) and (d) above.

4.3.8 The south-western portion of the site encompasses flatter ground with a mix of vegetation (refer to Image (e) below).

***Image (e)**: Large, flat south-western corner of the Site. The light pole at right of photo is not within the site but part of the adjacent GWRC land along Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Corridor. This part of the Site is not visible from the River Trail due to topography, vegetation and the timber paling fence along part of the trail edge.*

4.3.9 Across the site there are areas of concrete hardstanding, gravel yards, piles of building materials and piles of soil. There are several tall light poles, of a similar size and height to streetlights and associated with past site use. The poles are not contained within the Site and there is no obvious boundary line between the Greater Wellington Regional Council land to the south and the Site.

4.3.10 The Site, the wider property and the surrounding area are not typically rural in character. There are no areas of agricultural or horticultural use, no fencing, yards or sheds that might prompt a viewer to appreciate a rural character. The site is unused and unmanaged with remnants of light industrial use visible in the gravel and concrete ground surfaces and fencing. The absence of many buildings is notable, when viewed from a distance, with a mix of open ground, trees and vegetation the prominent features associated with the Site. The site is not adjacent to or

surrounded by rural land. The site and wider property are not part of a rural landscape and there is no rural land use associated with the site.

5.0 Assessment of Effects

5.1.1 Landscape and visual impacts result from natural or induced change in the components, character or quality of the landscape. The proposed development will result in formal establishment of industrial type use including a range of buildings and site activity with subsequent changes in character and amenity.

5.1.2 The landscape and visual effects generated as a result can be perceived as:

- Positive (beneficial), contributing to the visual character and quality of the environment;
- Negative (adverse), detracting from existing character and quality of environment; or
- Neutral (benign), with essentially no effect on existing character or quality of environment.

5.1.3 The degree to which landscape and visual effects are generated depend on several factors, these include:

- The degree to which the outcomes of the development contrasts, or is consistent, with the qualities of the surrounding landscape;
- The way in which the development area is observed and experienced, determined by the observer's position relative to the area and its extent;
- The distance and context within which the proposal is viewed / experienced;
- The area or extent of visual catchment
- The number of viewers, their location and situation - static, or moving;
- The predictable and likely known / expected future character of the locality; and
- The quality of the resultant landscape, its aesthetic values and contribution to the wider landscape character to the area.

5.1.4 Change in a landscape does not of itself, constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect.

5.1.5 The effects considered below are:

- *Natural Character effects*
- *Landscape / rural character effects*

- *Visual amenity effects from public and private locations*

5.2 Natural Character Effects

Assessment of existing natural character

5.2.1 In terms of natural character, the highest degree of naturalness occurs where there is the least amount of human induced modification. A change in land use and development as proposed will alter the natural character of the site. The significance of this effect is dictated by the size, location and sensitivity of the receiving environment.

5.2.2 Dry Creek runs along the north-western boundary of the site, flowing from the Belmont Hills to the west and meeting Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River to the southwest of the site. There are a range of conditions along the length of the creek margins as it runs through the wider property, however the vegetation is generally dominated by exotic weed species, such as blackberry with a high canopy of willows and eucalyptus. There are areas of regenerating native vegetation such as mahoe, kawakawa, karamu, tarata, puahou, harakeke and te kouka along the creek beyond the south-western site boundary.

5.2.3 There are two existing culverts within the bed of Dry Creek with bridges that currently provide access to the Site. The presence of these culverts and bridges contributes to the level of modification of the Creek. Earthworks that have occurred at various stages across the site and wider property have changed natural overland flow and the stream bank gradients and heights.

5.2.4 The Creek is well vegetated, but it is a modified environment with previous land use having negatively impacted natural character of the stream and stream corridor through native vegetation removal, weed species establishing and changes to natural overland flow. Overall, it has a **moderate-low** level of natural character.

5.2.5 At a broader scale, the site sits adjacent to the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi corridor. The river corridor is a widely recognised landscape feature of the Hutt Valley that, along with seismic activity, played a key part in the formation of the landscape and continues to express natural processes and contribute to the natural character of the Hutt Valley.

5.2.6 Due to human settlement in the valley landscape, the natural elements, patterns and processes associated with the river are modified and heavily managed. In the immediate vicinity of the Site the Hutt River expresses a moderate level of modification. This includes the presence of engineered stop banks, earthworks (constructed groynes and the like) along the riverbanks, and road and rail bridges.

5.2.7 The natural character is influenced by the presence of the Pomare rail bridge, recreation access tracks, significant areas of weed species and a large area of

exotic planting established to stabilise the river edge and protect the area from river erosion.

5.2.8 Although the condition of this reach of the river and surrounding landscape is affected by flood management structures, housing development and planting of exotic riparian vegetation, the river and its vegetated margins provide a wildlife corridor with moderate natural character. The flood pulses of the river system and the presence of wildlife are important factors which contribute to natural character.

5.2.9 The Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi corridor adjacent to the site expresses a **moderate-low** level of natural character.

Assessment of natural character effects

5.2.10 The Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi corridor is adjacent to the development Site. There is no proposed development activity outside the Site boundary. The Proposed Landscape Planting Plan (refer to **Appendix 2, Figures 3.1 and 3.2**) includes a proposal for planting at the Site boundaries and across an area of the GWRC corridor adjacent to the site. The proposed planting will enhance the biodiversity value of the river corridor along this portion of the river, aligning with future plans by GWRC and HCC to carry out a native planting programme along this section of the river south of the Pomare rail bridge[7].

5.2.11 Proposed development will be set back from Dry Creek by a minimum of ten metres from the water flow centre line. This provides space for some existing vegetation to be retained with a proposal to clear weed species and establish new native planting along a 20 metre Dry Creek corridor. The Creek revegetation is not part of this resource consent application but is proposed through separate subdivision and earthworks consents.

5.2.12 The proposal to establish Site access from the northeast will enable two existing culverts and bridges to be removed from Dry Creek. This will take away some of the elements of modification of the creek and enable water to flow more naturally. A separate consent application will be required for any work in the Creek, including the culvert removal and remediation and/or any stormwater outlets required to service the proposed Site development.

5.2.13 The proposed development will result in the removal of all vegetation from within the Site. This includes large trees that provide shade to the creek. The short-term effect on natural character of Dry Creek from Site vegetation clearance will be low adverse. In the long term the effect on natural character will likely be neutral with similar margin conditions to those that exist now, albeit a change from predominantly exotic and weed species to a predominance of native planting.

5.2.14 In the broader context of the Hutt River corridor, the proposed development will have a neutral effect on the natural character of the Hutt River. There will be a loss of vegetation across the Site and no discernible improvement to the water quality of the Hutt River. Consent for stormwater discharge to Dry Creek and any culvert removal

[7] Refer to the *Future of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Corridor: Environmental and Recreational Management Plan and Operations Manual. Report by Boffa Miskell Limited for Greater Wellington Regional Council. (2022)*

will be required and will be appropriately manage any effect on water quality and flow.

5.2.15 Vegetation removal and construction of buildings, fencing and lighting will alter the experiential values associated with the part of the River Trail between the Pomare Bridge and the Taita Rock area on the opposite side of the River to the Site. This is a distance of approximately 500m of the River and views to the site from the River Trail will remain filtered by the willows along the river banks and other vegetation along the river corridor adjacent to the site boundary. Also, the site is set back from the river channel and riparian edge and is part of an already heavily modified river environment, reducing the perception of change in the overall experience of using the River Trail.

5.2.16 Without planting to help screen development onsite from the Hutt River, there will be an adverse effect on the experiential component of the natural character of the Hutt River as a viewer passes the Site. Proposed buildings within the site (the largest 12.68m in height) will be visible from the River Trail through vegetation within the Hutt River corridor. **Appendix 2, Figure 4** provides viewpoints showing the worst-case visibility of the proposed buildings without proposed screen planting and with planting that has had 5 years to establish. The Visual Amenity Effects section of this report (refer 5.5 below) considers visual effects in detail.

5.2.17 The post development condition of Dry Creek and the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi environment will both continue to exhibit **moderate-low natural character**. The Table below provides a summary of natural character components and effects.

Natural Character Description	Current Condition	Post Development Condition	Level of Effect
Biophysical - Active Bed - Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi • There will be no change to the natural form and flow of this section of the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi	Moderate - Low	Moderate - Low	Neutral
Biophysical – Active Bed - Dry Creek There will be no change to the Creek.	Low	Low	Neutral
Biophysical – River Margins - Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi • There will be an increase in native planting along a short section of the Hutt River margins.	Moderate-Low	Moderate-Low	Neutral
Biophysical – River Margins - Dry Creek • The proposed development includes protection of a 20m corridor along the Creek.	Moderate-Low	Moderate - Low	Neutral
Experiential - Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi • The proposed development will change experiential values associated with the Hutt River at a local scale (approximately 500m as a viewer passes the site) in the	Moderate – Low	Low (local), Moderate - Low (wider)	Low adverse

Natural Character Description	Current Condition	Post Development Condition	Level of Effect
short term. Once vegetation has established that assists in screening the proposed buildings from the Hutt River Trail, this change will be less evident. At a broader scale the experiential value of the Hutt River will not change with a wide range of land use visible adjacent to the River Trail. From elevated distance views (the residential properties to the east in Stokes Valley) there will be new development in the broader landscape view however this comprises only a small component of the view and is not entirely out of place or unexpected in the mixed-use landscape.			
Experiential – Dry Creek • The proposed development will change the landuse adjacent to a section of approximately 450m of the creek. The creek will become less vegetated, and the adjacent area will become a built environment. There is very limited opportunity for people to access the creek on the Site boundary and it will continue to be perceived as a modified waterbody.	Moderate - Low	Moderate - Low	Neutral
OVERALL NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS			
Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi			**Neutral**
Dry Creek			**Neutral**

5.3 Landscape Effects

Assessment of existing landscape character

5.3.1 Landscape character is derived from the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and features of human settlement. It creates the unique sense of place defining different areas of the landscape.

5.3.2 The site is part of the Hutt Valley landscape as described in section 4.2 above. At a landscape scale, the development site is part of a comparatively small area of flat land, sandwiched between the Hutt River to the south and east (a Special Amenity Landscape) and the Belmont Hills to the north-west (also a Special Amenity Landscape). Refer to Appendix 2 for Site context plan.

5.3.3 Other than an absence of built development, the site and wider property does not exhibit any rural character and is not part of a wider area of recognisable rural

landscape pattern. There is no agricultural or horticultural land use at the site or on adjacent land.

5.3.4 The character of the property is most heavily influenced by the pattern of clearings and weed growth within a framework of taller trees along the length of Dry Creek, along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site and a stand that runs roughly east-west across the north-eastern edge of the Site.

5.3.5 There are areas of established vegetation across the property, however overall, the area is unused and unmanaged. There are large areas where weeds are establishing on previously cleared ground and other areas where compaction of the ground and gravel cover is limiting any vegetation growth.

Assessment of landscape effects

5.3.6 The proposed development will enable establishment of a resource recovery park operation. A bulk earthwork consent application to establish a flat development area across the Site is currently under consideration by Hutt City Council. The site development and landscape plans at **Appendix 2** assume approval of the earthworks with planting proposed to help integrate the development into the surrounding landscape and in particular the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River and Dry Creek corridor edges.

5.3.7 The Site comprises a relatively small portion of the river flats and is contained by the varied land use and built features at a local scale (within approximately 500 metres of the site). The small size of the Site and location in relation to the river and hills of the Hutt Valley means that a change in land use as proposed will not noticeably impact the character and quality of the wider landscape.

5.3.8 The proposed development will alter the character of the Site by enabling built development and use that would not ordinarily be anticipated in a rural zone. While the stream corridor will be protected adjacent to the Site (20m width along the stream), the majority of the existing vegetation onsite can be expected to be removed as part of the development. In the short term, this will result in built development being a more prominent feature in the landscape than it might otherwise be if it was seen settled amongst a framework of tall trees and vegetation at the site boundaries.

5.3.9 The proposed landscape plan (refer **Appendix 2, Figures 3.1 and 3.2**) has been developed to provide for new vegetation to be established at the site boundaries and within the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River corridor. This planting will, in time, help partially screen development and integrate the development into the site.

5.3.10 At a local scale (site and immediate surroundings), the proposed development will impact the character of the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi landscape context, changing the character of one side of the river landscape for approximately 500m of the river corridor. The prominence of vegetation, absence of buildings and feeling of being momentarily separated from the urban environment will change to an experience

that includes large scale buildings and activity visible (and likely audible) at the edge of the recreation area.

5.3.11 The landscape plan includes an area of planting within the river corridor. The planting includes a native revegetation species mix with taller species to help mitigate visual effects of the proposed development. Once established (at 5 years) the new planting will also contribute to a change in the character of the stretch of river trail adjacent to the site with a prominence of native vegetation along the trail edge with buildings visible beyond.

5.3.12 Both the addition of visible built development and new native vegetation will not be out of character in the immediate area and will be experienced along a short section of the trail by people moving through a varied landscape pattern of mixed use, built form and vegetation patterns.

Summary of Landscape Effects

5.3.13 The Site is part of a wider landscape that includes the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi and Belmont Hills Special Amenity Landscapes. However, the magnitude of change from the proposed development in relation to the scale of those landscapes will be low, with no direct effect on the identified SAL's. While the change to the site will be permanent, the site comprises a small component (5.785ha) of the wider landscape and impacts will be limited to the immediate setting (within approximately 500m) rather than impacting the wider landscape character and quality.

5.3.14 In summary, whilst the Site will undergo a substantial land use change through the proposed development, the Site does not form part of a wider rural landscape that exhibits a consistent rural landscape character across a large area. As a small area of land within a wider landscape with a broad mix of land use, the effect of the development on the wider landscape is considered low.

5.3.15 The proposed landscape planting plan will integrate proposed development into the landscape, establishing site boundary vegetation and a new edge condition along a short section of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Trail where large buildings will be visible beyond a dense band of native vegetation planting.

5.3.16 The proposed development (including landscape planting) will result in **low adverse effects** at a wider landscape scale, with **low-moderate effects** on the local landscape character due to mature vegetation removal and the introduction of large-scale building development.

5.4 Visual Catchment

5.4.1 The visual catchment and viewing audience of the proposal was determined through three site visits and desktop assessment of aerial photography and mapping.

5.4.2 In summary, the visual catchment is confined to limited views through vegetation to parts of the site from the Hutt River Trail (approximately 500m of the trail and on both sides of the River and south of the site around the pedestrian bridge 'Craigs

Crossing'), the Hutt River stop bank (adjacent to High Street), SH2 (for approximately 500m), Hebden Crescent, and the rail corridor (as it passes the site).

5.4.3 The site is visible from the Mary Huse Grove intersection with Manor Park Road, from the small play area and river connection path on Mary Huse Grove and from the pedestrian overpass at Manor Park rail station. More distant views down into and across the entire site are available from residential property and roads along the hilltops of Stokes Valley.

5.4.4 Section 4.2 of this report and the associated images in that section describe the site characteristics that influence the visual catchment with photographs from within the site. In summary, existing vegetation on site and in the surrounding landscape (i.e along Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River and SH2 corridors), the rail corridor and Hutt River embankments and the rising topography of the Stokes Valley Hills and SH2 escarpment are the key components that influence the extent of the visual catchment of the site.

5.4.5 Appendix 2 contains a selection of representative viewpoints (considered in detail below) with an indicative outline of proposed building development across the Site. These visual representations are intended to illustrate potential effects of the proposed development at points where there is visibility of the site. The visualisations assume new ground levels across the Site as per a separate resource consent application (with Hutt City Council but not approved at the time of writing).

5.5 Visual Amenity Effects

5.5.1 Visual amenity is one component of what contributes to the amenity values of a place. Amenity value is defined as:[8] *'those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes'.*

5.5.2 Visual amenity effects are influenced by a number of factors including the nature of the proposal, the landscape absorption capability and the character of the site and the surrounding area. Visual amenity effects are also dependent on distance between the viewer and the proposal, the complexity of the intervening landscape and the nature of the view.

Effects from public viewpoints

5.5.3 Due to the location of the Site at the edge of the valley floor, the site and surrounding topography, and development and vegetation patterns in the wider landscape, there are limited public vantage points from which views towards the site are obtained and where visual effects require consideration.

5.5.4 Public vantage points include parts of adjacent and nearby roads (SH2, Hebden Crescent and Mary Huse Grove) and the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi River Trail. From SH2 and Hebden Crescent, development within the Site will be visible from the

[8] Defined in s2 of the RMA 1991.

roads, but in oblique views for a short period of time and beyond the Dry Creek trees. From Mary Huse Grove, the local park and river connection walkway, built development within the Site will be visible in the middle distance beyond the rail line. Viewer sensitivity to change in the view from the roads is not considered high.

5.5.5 Viewer sensitivity to change is considered higher for the river trail as people will be moving more slowly past the site either on foot or by bike. While there is a mix of conditions along the length of the river trail, including visible built development and infrastructure, large, prominent buildings close to the trail have the potential to detract from the recreation experience provided by the river landscape setting.

5.5.6 Visual effects from public vantage points have been assessed as ranging from **low-moderate adverse** to **none** as described below.

Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi

5.5.7 The Site shares a boundary of approximately 390m in length with the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi margin. Between the water's edge and the Site boundary is a varied landscape, with mixed vegetation cover including willows along the river edge, open grass area either side of the Hutt River Trail and predominantly weed species along the bank between the Trail and the Site.

5.5.8 River trail users are exposed to a variety of conditions along the trail as described above and evident on site. The trail provides a recreation opportunity in a relatively natural environment setting. Users will be sensitive to any change that alters the landscape to the extent that it is dominated by built form. The scale of the river landscape means that even with residential areas and road, rail and river management infrastructure in the landscape, the trail experience feels like a linear park. There is a range of transient visual effects experienced as people move along the trail on either side of the river for a length of approximately 500m of trail.

5.5.9 Appendix 2 VS1 (Figure 2) shows a view to the site from the Hutt River Trail on the opposite side of Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River. Between Taita Rock and the Pomare Rail Bridge (approximately 500m of the Hutt River Trail) views are intermittently available to the site through the stands of river edge willow planting. VS1 (Figure 3 and 4) illustrate the proposed development without planting and with planting (at 5 years). Visual effects from this view are considered **low adverse** after 5 years of planting establishment due to the distance and screening effect of existing riverbank willows and proposed revegetation and screen planting. The hills and river landscape remain prominent components in the view.

5.5.10 Along the trail on the northern side of the river, the Site boundary is situated beyond an existing line of vegetation that runs parallel to the trail (refer to Appendix 2 VS2 (Figure 5). Proposed buildings will be set well back from the viewer, however rising ground levels and building bulk and height (12.68m) will mean the buildings will be a readily visible component of the view when travelling east along the trail.

5.5.11 Travelling in a westerly direction along the trail, the proposed development will be visible as the viewer passes under the Pomare rail bridge, where there is an open view across the site to the two largest buildings. Appendix 2 VS3 (Figure 8)

illustrates the view and the mitigation provided (after 5 years growth) by the proposed planting scheme.

5.5.12 While the buildings will appear large in these closer views to the site from the trail, there will be intervening vegetation to help screen views and space between the large buildings will allow intermittent views to the hills beyond. The existing condition of the area as the trail passes the site includes views of the rail bridge and overhead lines and old light poles. The fencing and vegetation give the area an unmanaged character where new, large buildings are less out of character than in the context of other areas of the trail such as the open and high amenity golf course landscape further east. Recreation trail users will pass the site with intermittent visibility of large buildings on one side and the unchanged river edge view on the other side. Visual effects range from none where intervening vegetation screens the site to **low-moderate adverse** in the closest views from parts of the trail on the northern side of the river.

5.5.13 The proposed development will not be visible beyond the vegetation along Dry Creek as viewed from the River Trail beyond the south west corner of the site. The view is illustrated in Appendix 2 VS7 (Figure 18). The existing paling fence across the creek (visible in the image) will screen views across the site and the trail then descends down to the Hutt River edge. Proposed planting at the corner of the site will provide additional screening should the fence be removed in the future by GWRC (refer to Appendix 2 Map 3 Landscape Plan).

5.5.14 Mitigation planting as proposed along the southern site boundary will provide some screening of the proposed development over time. Native planting will be in keeping with the mixed vegetation character along the river corridor and aligns with work proposed in the *Future of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River Corridor* Plan, to carry out additional planting native in this area (on the western side and to the south of Pomare Bridge).

Mary Huse Grove

5.5.15 Appendix 2 VS 4 (Figure 10) shows the view of the proposed development from the footpath and entrance to a public walkway connecting Mary Huse Grove to the Hutt River Trail. The view illustrates the visual effect with Figure 11 showing the mitigation planting at 5 years growth. A person will see this view in passing with the buildings in the middle distance and beyond the housing of Mary Huse Grove and the rail embankment and lines. The hills beyond remain prominent.

5.5.16 Appendix 2 VS 5 (Figure 13) is a view from the opposite end of Mary Huse Grove at the intersection with Manor Park Road. The view is more distant, but the buildings are similarly set in the context of a foreground of a street view and houses.

5.5.17 A viewer driving or walking along the road would not be highly sensitive to the addition of further buildings in the landscape as they will be viewing the Site in the context of existing residential development. The visual effects from Mary Huse Grove will be **low-moderate adverse** once planting has established that helps break up the scale of the visible buildings.

State Highway 2 and Hebden Crescent

5.5.18 Transitory views of the site are available from SH2 and Hebden Crescent as a viewer passes the site in a vehicle. Appendix 2 VS6 illustrates a view from Hebden Crescent.

5.5.19 There is a variety of land use either side along the length of SH2 as it passes through the Hutt Valley. Drivers pass areas of light industrial and business use, residential areas, the SH2 interchange areas and rail stops and areas where the river and escarpment provide a higher amenity landscape setting. The impression is one of mixed land use, particularly along the valley floor. Drivers and passengers in cars will not be looking towards the Site for an extended period, they will drive past the site in approximately 18 seconds at 100km/hr. The viewing audience can therefore be considered less sensitive to an obvious change in the view along their journey. It is considered that the visual amenity effects of the proposed development, in this short stretch of SH2, are **very low adverse.**

Visual effects from private vantage points

5.5.20 The following analysis is based on observations from the Site visit looking out to the wider landscape for houses visible from the site (refer to Image below) as well as from desk-top research. The location of the site and surrounding land use and topography mean views to the site from residential areas are limited. The main locations from where the Site may be visible is from residences situated in the hills of Stokes Valley and Mary Huse Grove. Representative views from publicly accessible locations were obtained to represent the views from private dwellings as access to private property has not been obtained for the purpose of this assessment.

View from the Site looking south-east to the hills of Stokes Valley. Very few houses are visible (on Aldersgate and Whitechapel Grove) where gaps in the trees on the hills below the housing areas allow views out.

5.5.21 Appendix 2 VS2 (Figure 20) illustrates a view of the proposed built development on the site as seen from the end of Aldersgate Grove. Detailed assessment from three residential areas where views to the site can be obtained is outlined below.

Address	**Distance from Site***	**Nature of View**	**Description and assessment of potential visual effects**
2-9 Aldersgate Grove	600-690m	Open	The Site is part of a wide (over 180 degrees), elevated view across the Hutt Valley available from these houses. The river landscape, the hills beyond and associated skyline make up most of the view. Built development and infrastructure is visible, including residential housing, the river stop banks and rail and road corridors. The Belmont Quarry and the Haywards Sub Station are also visible. The Site is a component of the view, visibly contained between the river, SH2 and the rail line. The proposal would change a part of the view but would not impact the visibility or prominence of the river, hills and skyline beyond. Initially viewers would notice a change in part of the view as development is established across the Site and vegetation is cleared. However, in time the development would appear as a discrete area of land use in a view that contains a variety of activity and land use set amongst the river and hills landscape. Given the distance between the houses and Site, the variety of existing land use in the view and the size of the Site relative to the expansive view, the visual effect would transition from **low adverse** as the Site undergoes development (construction effects) to **very low** once new site use and proposed vegetation is established**.**
29, 30 Whitechapel Grove	400m	Open	The assessment of visual effects from these residential properties is similar to above, with the same view available from these houses, albeit approximately 200m closer. The existing outlook from these properties will be altered but not in a way that is uncharacteristic of the receiving landscape. The visual effect is considered **low adverse**. As noted above, this could be reduced further still with the proposed planting across the Site.

188B Eastern Hutt Road	400m	Glimpsed to No view.	There is a small enclave of six houses near the Eastern Hutt Road and High Street round about. One of the houses is slightly elevated with glimpse views through the trees on their property towards the Site. The view is a more direct view across the valley to the Site rather than the elevated views described above. It is likely that the Site will form a component of the view, with the hills and skyline behind. The visual effect is considered **very low adverse** for the same reasons described above. In time, there is the potential for the effects to be reduced further still as vegetation within the homeowner's property and along the river corridor grows, further filtering views across the valley floor.
27, 31 & 32 Mary Huse Grove houses	40 – 50m	View beyond rail embankment from backyards	Visibility of the site from Mary Huse Grove footpaths suggests that the proposed development will be visible from the backyards and views from windows within dwellings at the end of Mary Huse Grove. The steep railway embankment and associated vegetation between the houses and the site will limit views with only the upper portion of the operations workshop building likely visible with the SH2 escarpment hills beyond. The visual effect from these properties is considered **moderate adverse** due to the higher sensitivity of the viewers (being within their private property) and proximity balanced with the reduction in prominence associated with the railway embankment and hill context beyond. Views to the site from these properties could be reduced further through planting at their boundaries. Proposed mitigation planting within the site will reduce visibility after 5years, resulting in a **low-moderate adverse** visual effect.

Summary of Visual Amenity Effects

5.5.22 The nature and location of the Site lends itself to a change in use that can be accommodated without significant change to the character and quality of the wider landscape, provided recommendations as outlined below are adopted. Localised visual effects and management of the Site interface with adjacent land use, including roads and high value public open space, can be mitigated with the provision of planting within and around the Site. The planting will fit well in the landscape, in time replicating established patterns of linear bands of tall trees associated with Dry Creek, the Site boundaries and changes in level across the Site. The bulk and scale

of the proposed buildings can be reduced as seen from key public vantage points as described above and visually integrated into the site and wider landscape.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1.1 The following mitigation measures are recommended to minimise adverse landscape and visual effects. If implemented the measures will assist with the development integrating into the surrounding landscape and provide opportunity to support natural values of Dry Creek and the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River.

1. The proposed landscape plan will be implemented prior to construction of development on site. The Landscape Plan will include the following:
    - Buffer/screening planting along the boundary of the Site with the Hutt River/Te Awa Kairangi River Trail. Planting should include a mix of species, predominantly native with tall trees that provide some screening of proposed buildings and site activity and enhance biodiversity and amenity values.
    - The tallest and fastest growing species will be located closest to the proposed buildings to maximise screening potential.
    - A planting and management plan for a 20 m wide riparian margin along Dry Creek. This will improve habitat and amenity values along the Creek.
    - The rail corridor boundary will be planted, with sufficient space for large tree species to establish to provide screening as viewed from Mary Huse Grove.
2. It is recommended that a condition of consent is included to control building colour to a dark green or dark grey (colourssteel *Karaka, Ironsand* or similar) to help reduce the prominence of the buildings as seen against boundary vegetation and the escarpment hills in views from the south, east and north east of the Site.
3. There should be no signs or advertising on the southern, western or eastern building facades along the Hutt River site boundary to ensure building prominence is minimised as far as possible.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1.1 While currently zoned General Rural, the Site does not display a typically rural character, is not part of a wider rural landscape and does not contribute in any significant way to the rural character of the Hutt Valley.

7.1.2 The proposed development will result in a change to the character of the Site. Development can be spatially and visually contained by existing and proposed vegetation and land use and the implementation of a mitigation landscape plan as described above.

7.1.3 The site forms a relatively small component part of the wider Hutt Valley landscape and development will not unduly detract from the amenity, character and values associated with the receiving landscape, provided planting within the site can be retained and/or established as described above.

7.1.4 The landscape and visual effects are summarised in the table below. This includes the effects without mitigation and the effects with mitigation.

VIEWER	**Nature & Level of Effect (no mitigation)**	**Mitigation proposed**	**Nature & Level of Effect (with mitigation)**
Hutt River Trail	Range from none to moderate adverse	Planting along the Hutt River Site boundary including within GWRC land	Range from none to low-moderate adverse
SH2 + Hebden Crescent	Very Low adverse	Retention of Dry Creek vegetation (not part of this consent application)	Very Low adverse
Mary Huse Grove	Low-moderate adverse	Planting along the site boundaries.	Low-moderate adverse
Private property	*Whitechapel Grove, Aldersgate Grove & Eastern Hutt Rd* Low adverse (short term)	Landscape planting	Very Low adverse (long term)
	Mary Huse Grove Moderate adverse (short term)	Landscape planting	Low-Moderate adverse (long term)

LANDSCAPE	Low (landscape scale)	Landscape planting	Low (landscape scale)
	Moderate (local scale)	Landscape planting	Low-Moderate (local scale)

APPENDIX 1:
Natural Character and Landscape Effects Assessment Method

26 August 2022

Introduction

The Natural Character and Landscape Effects Assessment (NCLEA) process provides a framework for assessing and identifying the nature and level of likely effects that may result from a proposed development. Such effects can occur in relation to changes to physical elements, changes in the existing character or condition of the landscape and the associated experiences of such change. In addition, the landscape assessment method includes an iterative design development processes, which seeks to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects (see **Figure 1**).

This outline of the landscape and visual effects assessment methodology has been undertaken with reference to the **Te Tangi A Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines** and its signposts to examples of best practice, which include the **Quality Planning Landscape Guidance Note**[9] and the **UK guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment**[10]**.**

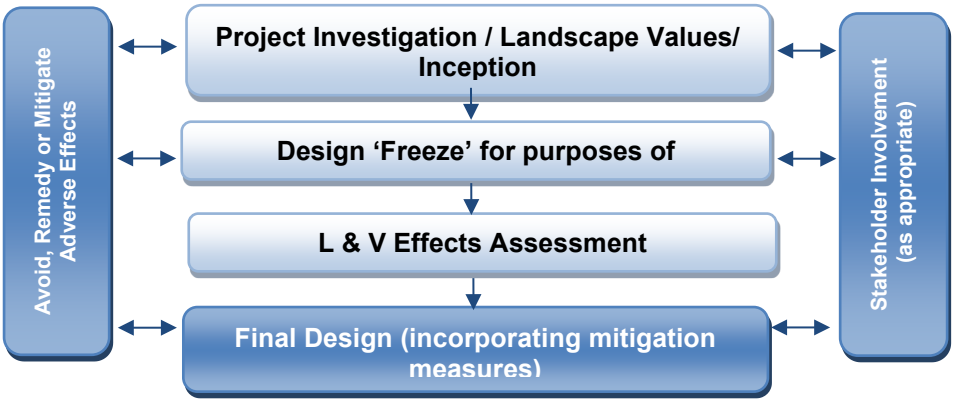


Figure 1: Design feedback loop

When undertaking any landscape assessment, it is important that a **structured and consistent approach** is used to ensure that **findings are clear and objective**. Judgement should be based on skills and experience and be supported by explicit evidence and reasoned argument.

While natural character, landscape and visual effects assessments are closely related, they form separate procedures. Natural character effects consider the characteristics and qualities and associated degree of modification relating specifically to waterbodies and their margins, including the coastal environment. The assessment of the potential effects on landscape considers effects on landscape character and values. The assessment of visual effects considers how changes to the physical landscape affect the viewing audience. The types of effects can be summarised as follows:

Natural Character effects: *Change in the characteristics or qualities including the level of naturalness*

Landscape effects: *Change in the physical landscape, which may affect its characteristics*

Visual effects: *Consequences of change on landscape values as experienced in views*

[9] http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/index.php/planning-tools/land/landscape
[10] Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)

The policy context, existing landscape resource and locations from which a development or change is visible, all inform the 'baseline' for landscape and visual effects assessments. To assess effects, the first step requires identification of the landscape's **character** and **values** including the **attributes** on which such values depend. This requires that the landscape is first **described**, including an understanding of relevant physical, sensory and associative landscape dimensions. This process, known as landscape characterisation, is the basic tool for understanding landscape character and may involve subdividing the landscape into character areas or types. The condition of the landscape (i.e. the state of an individual area of landscape or landscape feature) should also be described together with, a judgement made on the value or importance of the potentially affected landscape.

Natural Character Effects

In terms of the RMA, natural character specifically relates to the coastal environment as well as freshwater bodies and their margins. The RMA provides no definition of natural character. RMA, section 6(a) considers natural character as a matter of national importance:

> *…the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.*

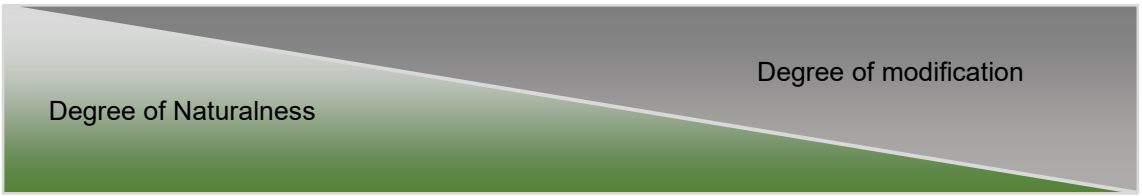
Natural character comprises the natural elements, patterns and processes of the coastal environment, waterbodies and their margins, and how they are perceived and experienced. This assessment interprets natural character as being the degree of naturalness consistent with the following definition:

> *Natural character is a term used to describe the naturalness of waterbodies and their margins. The degree or level of natural character depends on:*
>
> - *The extent to which natural elements, patterns and processes occur;*
> - *The nature and extent of modifications to the ecosystems and landscape/seascape;*
> - *The highest degree of natural character (greatest naturalness) occurs where there is least modification; and*
> - *The effect of different types of modification upon the natural character of an area varies with the context and may be perceived differently by different parts of the community.*

The process to assess natural character involves an understanding of the many systems and attributes that contribute to waterbodies and their margins, including biophysical and experiential factors. This can be supported through the input of technical disciplines such as marine, aquatic and terrestrial ecology, and landscape architecture.

Defining the level of natural character

The level of natural character is assessed in relation to a seven-point scale. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the degree of naturalness and degree of modification. A high level of natural character means the waterbody is less modified and vice versa.



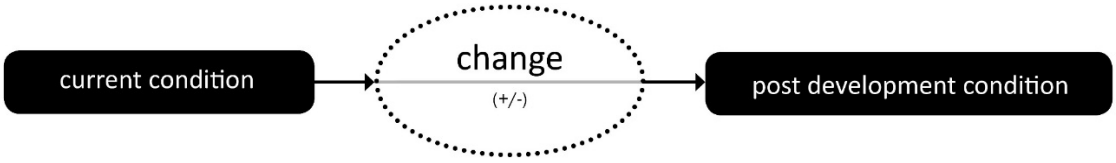
Very High	High	Moderate - High	Moderate	Moderate - Low	Low	Very Low

Scale of assessment

When defining levels of natural character, it is important to clearly identify the spatial scale considered. The scale at which natural character is assessed will typically depend on the study area or likely impacts and nature of a proposed development. Within a district or region-wide study, assessment scales may be divided into broader areas which consider an overall section of coastline or river with similar characteristics, and finer more detailed 'component' scales considering separate more local parts, such as specific bays, reaches or escarpments. The assessment of natural character effects has therefore considered the change to attributes which indicate levels of natural character at a defined scale.

Effects on Natural Character

An assessment of the effects on natural character of an activity involves consideration of the proposed changes to the current condition compared to the existing. This can be negative or positive.



The natural character effects assessment involves the following steps;

- assessing the existing level of natural character;
- assessing the level of natural character anticipated (post construction); and
- considering the significance of the change

Landscape Effects

Assessing landscape effects requires an understanding of the landscape resource and the magnitude of change which results from a proposed activity to determine the overall level of landscape effects.

Landscape Resource

Assessing the sensitivity of the landscape resource considers the key characteristics and qualities. This involves an understanding of both the ability of an area of landscape to absorb change and the value of the landscape.

Ability of an area to absorb change

This will vary upon the following factors:

- Physical elements such as topography / hydrology / soils / vegetation;
- Existing land use;
- The pattern and scale of the landscape;
- Visual enclosure / openness of views and distribution of the viewing audience;
- The zoning of the land and its associated anticipated level of development;
- The scope for mitigation, appropriate to the existing landscape.

The ability of an area of landscape to absorb change takes account of both the attributes of the receiving environment and the characteristics of the proposed development. It considers the ability of a specific type of change occurring without generating adverse effects and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

The value of the Landscape

Landscape value derives from the importance that people and communities, including tangata whenua, attach to particular landscapes and landscape attributes. This may include the classification of Outstanding Natural Feature or Landscape (ONFL) (RMA s.6(b)) based on important physical, sensory and associative landscape attributes, which have potential to be affected by a proposed development. A landscape can have value even if it is not recognised as being an ONFL.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of landscape change judges the amount of change that is likely to occur to areas of landscape, landscape features, or key landscape attributes. In undertaking this assessment, it is important that the size or scale of the change is considered within the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration of change, including whether the change is reversible. In some situations, the loss /change or enhancement to existing landscape elements such as vegetation or earthworks should also be quantified.

When assessing the level of landscape effects, it is important to be clear about what factors have been considered when making professional judgements. This can include consideration of any benefits which result from a proposed development. **Table 1** below helps to explain this process. The tabulating of effects is only intended to inform overall judgements.

Contributing Factors		Higher	Lower
Landscape (sensitivity)	**Ability to absorb change**	The landscape context has limited existing landscape detractors which make it highly vulnerable to the type of change resulting from the proposed development.	The landscape context has many detractors and can easily accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences to landscape character.
	The value of the landscape	The landscape includes important biophysical, sensory and shared and recognised attributes. The landscape requires protection as a matter of national importance (ONF/L).	The landscape lacks any important biophysical, sensory or shared and recognised attributes. The landscape is of low or local importance.
Magnitude of Change	**Size or scale**	Total loss or addition of key features or elements. Major changes in the key characteristics of the landscape, including significant aesthetic or perceptual elements.	The majority of key features or elements are retained. Key characteristics of the landscape remain intact with limited aesthetic or perceptual change apparent.
	Geographical extent	Wider landscape scale.	Site scale, immediate setting.
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 10 years).	Reversible. Short Term (0-5 years).

Table 1: Determining the level of landscape effects

Visual Effects

Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects. They are consequences of change on landscape values as experienced in views. To assess the visual effects of a proposed development in a landscape, a visual baseline must first be defined. The visual 'baseline' forms a technical exercise which identifies the area where the development may be visible, the potential viewing audience, and the key representative public viewpoints from which visual effects are assessed.

Field work is used to determine the actual extent of visibility of the site, including the selection of representative viewpoints from public areas. This stage is also used to identify the potential 'viewing audience' e.g. residential, visitors, recreation users, and other groups of viewers who can see the site. During fieldwork, photographs are taken to represent views from available viewing audiences.

The viewing audience comprises the individuals or groups of people occupying or using the properties, roads, footpaths and public open spaces that lie within the visual envelope or 'zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)' of the site and proposal.

The Sensitivity of the viewing audience

The sensitivity of the viewing audience is assessed in terms of assessing the likely response of the viewing audience to change and understanding the value attached to views.

Likely response of the viewing audience to change

Appraising the likely response of the viewing audience to change is determined by assessing the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations and the extent to which their interest or activity may be focussed on views of the surrounding landscape. This relies on a landscape architect's judgement in respect of visual amenity and the reaction of people who may be affected by a proposal. This should also recognise that people more susceptible to change generally include: residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views; visitors to heritage assets or other important visitor attractions; and communities where views contribute to the wider landscape setting.

Value attached to views

The value or importance attached to particular views may be determined with respect to its popularity or numbers of people affected or reference to planning instruments such as viewshafts or view corridors. Important viewpoints are also likely to appear in guide books or tourist maps and may include facilities provided for its enjoyment. There may also be references to this in literature or art, which also acknowledge a level of recognition and importance.

Magnitude of Visual Change

The assessment of visual effects also considers the potential magnitude of change which will result from views of a proposed development. This takes account of the size or scale of the effect, the geographical extent of views and the duration of visual change, which may distinguish between temporary (often associated with construction)

and permanent effects where relevant. Preparation of any simulations of visual change to assist this process should be guided by best practice as identified by the NZILA[11].

Visual Simulations
As part of the assessment process, visual simulations have been prepared in accordance with NZILA Best Practice Guide: Visual Simulations BPG 10.2[12]. This has entailed taking digital photographs from each of the identified viewpoints and recording their GPS locations. Preparation of visual simulations required the preparation of a 3D model of the proposed bridge supplied by Kiwirail. The GPS coordinates for each viewpoint were also added to the model and using the same focal length parameters as that of the camera, an image of the 3D wire frame of the proposed landform was then generated for each viewpoint. This was then registered over the actual photograph, using known reference points to bring the two together. The surface of the proposed landform was then rendered to approximate the likely appearance of the Site.

When determining the overall level of visual effect, the nature of the viewing audience is considered together with the magnitude of change resulting from the proposed development. **Table 4** has been prepared to help guide this process:

Contributing Factors		Higher	Lower	Examples
The Viewing Audience (sensitivity)	**Ability to absorb change**	Views from dwellings and recreation areas where attention is typically focussed on the landscape.	Views from places of employment and other places where the focus is typically incidental to its landscape context. Views from transport corridors.	Dwellings, places of work, transport corridors, public tracks
	Value attached to views	Viewpoint is recognised by the community such as an important view shaft, identification on tourist maps or in art and literature. High visitor numbers.	Viewpoint is not typically recognised or valued by the community. Infrequent visitor numbers.	Acknowledged viewshafts, Lookouts
Magnitude of Change	**Size or scale**	Loss or addition of key features in the view. High degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture). Full view of the proposed development.	Most key features of views retained. Low degree of contrast with existing landscape elements (i.e. in terms of form scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture. Glimpse / no view of the proposed development.	- Higher contrast/ Lower contrast. - Open views, Partial views, Glimpse views (or filtered); No views (or obscured)
	Geographical extent	Front on views. Near distance views; Change visible across a wide area.	Oblique views. Long distance views. Small portion of change visible.	- Front or Oblique views. - Near distant, Middle distant and Long distant views
	Duration and reversibility	Permanent. Long term (over 15 years).	Transient / temporary. Short Term (0-5 years).	- Permanent (fixed), Transitory (moving)

Table 2: Determining the level of visual effects

Nature of Effects

In combination with assessing the level of effects, the landscape and visual effects assessment also considers the nature of effects in terms of whether this will be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in the context within which it occurs. Neutral effects can also occur where landscape or visual change is benign.

It should also be noted that a change in a landscape does not, of itself, necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. Landscape is dynamic and is constantly changing over time in both subtle and more dramatic transformational ways; these changes are both natural and human induced. What is important in managing landscape change is that adverse effects are avoided or sufficiently mitigated to ameliorate the effects of the change in land use. The aim is to provide a high amenity environment through appropriate design outcomes.

This assessment of the nature effects can be further guided by **Table 2** set out below:

Nature of effect	Use and Definition
Adverse (negative):	The activity would be out of scale with the landscape or at odds with the local pattern and landform which results in a reduction in landscape and / or visual amenity values

[11] Best Practice Guide: Visual Simulations BPG 10.2, NZILA

[12] Best Practice Guide: Visual Simulations BPG 10.2, NZILA

Neutral (benign):	The activity would be consistent with (or blend in with) the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape maintaining existing landscape and / or visual amenity values
Beneficial (positive):	The activity would enhance the landscape and / or visual amenity through removal or restoration of existing degraded landscape activities and / or addition of positive elements or features

Table 1: Determining the Nature of Effects

Cumulative Effects

This can include effects of the same type of development (e.g. bridges) or the combined effect of all past, present and approved future development[13] of varying types, taking account of both the permitted baseline and receiving environment. Cumulative effects can also be positive, negative or benign.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

Cumulative landscape effects can include additional or combined changes in components of the landscape and changes in the overall landscape character. The extent within which cumulative landscape effects are assessed can cover the entire landscape character area within which the proposal is located, or alternatively, the zone of visual influence from which the proposal can be observed.

Cumulative Visual Effects

Cumulative visual effects can occur in combination (seen together in the same view), in succession (where the observer needs to turn their head) or sequentially (with a time lapse between instances where proposals are visible when moving through a landscape). Further visualisations may be required to indicate the change in view compared with the appearance of the project on its own.

Determining the nature and level of cumulative landscape and visual effects should adopt the same approach as the project assessment in describing both the nature of the viewing audience and magnitude of change leading to a final judgement. Mitigation may require broader consideration which may extend beyond the geographical extent of the project being assessed.

Determining the Overall Level of Effects

The landscape and visual effects assessment conclude with an overall assessment of the likely level of landscape and visual effects. This step also takes account of the nature of effects and the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation. The process can be illustrated in Figure 2:

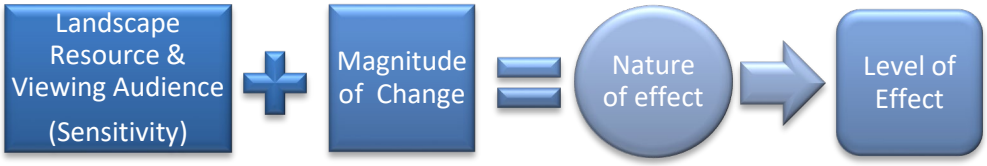


Figure 2: Assessment process

This step informs an overall judgement identifying what level of effects are likely to be generated as indicated in **Table 3** below. This table which can be used to guide the level of natural character, landscape and visual effects uses an adapted seven-point scale derived from Te Tangi A Te Manu.

Effect Rating	Use and Definition
Very High:	Total loss of key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. amounts to a complete change of landscape character and in views.
High:	Major modification or loss of most key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. little of the pre-development landscape character remains and a major change in views. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition* *High: adjective- Great in amount, value, size, or intensity.*
Moderate- High:	Modifications of several key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. the pre-development landscape character remains evident but materially changed and prominent in views.
Moderate:	Partial loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. new elements may be prominent in views but not necessarily uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.

[13] The life of the statutory planning document or unimplemented resource consents.

	Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition *Moderate: adjective- average in amount, intensity, quality or degree*
Low – Moderate:	Minor loss of or modification to one or more key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. new elements are not prominent within views or uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Low:	Little material loss of or modification to key elements / features / characteristics. i.e. modification or change is not uncharacteristic or prominent in views and absorbed within the receiving landscape. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary Definition* *Low: adjective- **1.** Below average in amount, extent, or intensity.*
Very Low:	Negligible loss of or modification to key elements/ features/ characteristics of the baseline, i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation and a negligible change in views.

Table 3: Determining the overall level of landscape and visual effects

Determination of "minor"

Decision makers determining whether a resource consent application should be notified must also assess whether the effect on a person is less than minor[14] or an adverse effect on the environment is no more than minor[15]. Likewise, when assessing a non-complying activity, consent can only be granted if the s104D 'gateway test' is satisfied. This test requires the decision maker to be assured that the adverse effects of the activity on the environment will be 'minor' or not be contrary to the objectives and policies of the relevant planning documents.

These assessments will generally involve a broader consideration of the effects of the activity, beyond the landscape and visual effects. Through this broader consideration, guidance may be sought on whether the likely effects on the landscape or effects on a person are considered in relation to 'minor'. It must also be stressed that more than minor effects on individual elements or viewpoints does not necessarily equate to more than minor landscape effects. In relation to this assessment, moderate-low level effects would generally equate to 'minor' (see **Table 4**). Where low effects occur, it may be necessary to assess whether this is minor.

The third row highlights the word 'significant'. The term 'significant adverse effects' applies to particular RMA situations, namely as a threshold for the requirement to consider alternative sites, routes, and methods for Notices of Requirement under RMA s171(1)(b), the requirements to consider alternatives in AEEs under s6(1)(a) of the 4th Schedule. It may also be relevant to tests under other statutory documents such as for considering effects on natural character of the coastal environment under the NZ Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) Policy 13 (1)(b) and 15(b).

very low	low	low-mod	moderate	mod-high	high	very high

less than minor	minor	more than minor	
			significant[16]

Table 4: Determining adverse effects for notification determination, non-complying activities and significance

[14] RMA, Section 95E

[15] RMA Section 95D

[16] To be used only about Policy 13(1)(b) and Policy 15(b) of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS), where the test is 'to avoid significant adverse effects'.