



W ▲ Y F I N D E R

Landscape Planning & Strategy

Landscape, Natural Character & Visual Effects Assessment.

Proposed Residential Subdivision, Mangakuri.

Prepared For:

Mangakuri Station Trust.

August 2023



Introduction

Mangakuri Station (“the Station”) is a 1304ha pastoral farm located at Mangakuri, Central Hawke’s Bay. The settlement of Mangakuri, which was historically part of the station, consists of around 25 dwellings and is the next beach south of Kairakau. It is accessed from Williams Road which branches off Mangakuri Road, and is about a 45 minute drive eastward of Waipawa.

The Station is held across several land parcels. It is proposed to subdivide one of these parcels, immediately to the south of Williams Road and above the existing Okura Road portion of the settlement, into 8 lifestyle residential lots, each of a minimum size of 4,000m². In addition, significant coastal native planting has been integrated into the proposal.

This report provides an assessment of the potential landscape, natural character and visual effects of the proposal. It concludes that such effects will be **low** to **very-low** and can be considered overall to be **less than minor**. The report also concludes that the proposal is consistent with the policies contained within the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (“NZCPS” 2010), and meets the overall objectives of the Operative District Plan in regard to landscape, natural character and visual effects.

Methodology

Wayfinder were engaged from the early stages to help with the design of the proposal. This included:

- ▶ undertaking a preliminary assessment of the site and locality;
- ▶ working with the wider project team (including Civil and Geotechnical Engineers) on the placement of the building platforms;
- ▶ engaging with mana whenua to understand cultural values of the site and avoid potential effects on the Māori cultural landscape;
- ▶ the creation of the different management zones for each Lot (as will be outlined below);
- ▶ the arrangement of fencing to determine the appropriate locations of coastal native planting and continued farm operations areas;
- ▶ the development of the Landscape Concept Plan; and
- ▶ the development of photographic representations of the proposal.

The author of this report has been across all of these aspects throughout the development of the proposal and has visited the site on at least four occasions.

Following Cyclone Gabrielle, Wayfinder reviewed the proposed landscape concept plans and made some minor amendments to accommodate recommendations from the Geotechnical Engineer.



During the development of the proposal, and in preparing this report, additional desktop research was undertaken which included reviewing Google Earth, Google Maps, Central Hawke’s Bay District GIS Maps, and various Regional and District Council plan policies.

Various graphical material is attached to this report, these being a photographic representation of the proposal and the Landscape Concept Plan.

Scale of Effects

The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects has recently published technical guidelines for landscape assessment (“Te Tangi a te Manu”¹) which has informed the preparation of this report. This includes the use of a 7-point assessment rating scale which was been adopted for the assessment.

The scale deliberately avoids the use of more traditional RMA terminology, such as minor or less than minor, and (as Te Tangi a te Manu sets out) caution is needed in directly translating the 7-point scale of each identified effects into an RMA terminology. Rather, the degree of individual effects are to be assessed first, and then – following that – an overall professional judgement can be made on the overall significance of effects in the context of relevant RMA or policy tests. Nevertheless, a broad scale translation of effects is provided for reference as follows:

This Assessment	Very-Low	Low	Low-Mod	Moderate	Mod-High	High	Very-High
RMA	Less than Minor		Minor		More than Minor		
						Significant	

The following provides an interpretation of how the seven-point scale can be interpreted in terms of a subdivision proposal, such as the proposal:

- ▶ A very-high landscape effect would result from a situation where a proposal would fundamentally changing the underlying character of a place or wider landscape – such as introducing built elements into a landscape that is largely natural, or the introduction of a new land-use activity that is at odds to the existing land-use or land-cover of an area. A very-high effect would also be applied if a proposal resulted in extensive, irreversible changes to landform. A very-low landscape effect would represent a situation where a proposal is generally in character or aligned with existing activities undertaken in the vicinity, and where the landscape is likely to be highly modified (for example has little native vegetation cover or is already heavily earthworked).

¹ Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’



- ▶ A very-high natural character effect would result from a situation, similarly to landscape effects, where a proposal would fundamentally undermine the actual or perceived naturalness of a place or wider landscape – such as introducing managed elements into a landscape that has limited modifications or built elements. A very-low natural character effect would result from a situation where a proposal is similar to, and connected with existing activities such that any natural aspects of the surrounding landscape remain unmodified.
- ▶ A very-high visual effect would represent a situation where a proposal would become the key, dominating element in the primary view from a particular viewpoint, likely in the foreground, making the appreciation of other aspects of the view difficult to achieve (that is, a viewer would find themselves always looking towards the development and having to consciously look away). A very-low rating would represent a situation where a proposal might be partially visible from a particular viewpoint, but it would be subservient to other aspects of the view and likely partially (or largely) obscured by foreground elements. In respect to residential developments, visual effects might also be considered in terms of any overlooking, privacy or shading impacts.

It's important to also recognise that visual effects need to be considered in terms of the whole view – during an assessment process it is easy to focus solely on the proposed site only, and not consider views in other directions which may be more interesting or captivating.

Landscape Context

As identified, the proposed site is located on Williams Road, Mangakuri. It is part of the much wider Mangakuri Station, which extends from the coast some way inland. Most of the Station is managed as pastoral farmland, but there are some areas of commercial pine forestry, including a small forest on the opposite side of Williams Road (Photograph 1).

Mangakuri is one of several similar eastern beaches that are located along the Central Hawke's Bay coastline. Although they all have a similar character – typically open sandy beaches flanked by prominent limestone headlands, each one has its own uniqueness. In the case of Mangakuri, this comes from the relatively small sized settlement – largely consisting of a generally lineal arrangement of coastal dwellings set behind a flat dune area towards the northern end of the beach (Photograph 2). The beach/coastal area is also well defined, not only by the headlands to the north and south, but also the relatively steeply rising topography behind the beach, separating the coast from the Mangakuri River which meets the coast at Kairakau Beach to the north.



Photograph 1: View eastward across the site, noting the production pine forest to the north (left).



Photograph 2: View from the beach to the site, across the southern part of Mangakuri settlement.

It is understood that the settlement of Mangakuri used to be part of the Station, but over many years the William's family established baches along the beach which have now entered into various private ownerships. The dwellings are serviced by Williams Road, which climbs over a ridgeline from Mangakuri Road – this latter gravel road following the Mangakuri River valley inland to Waipari, some 9km to the south. After running diagonally down from the ridgeline, Williams Road splits into two, servicing half the settlement to the north and half to the south (with this branch named Okura Road). One elevated dwelling is also located off Williams Road above the settlement (this can be seen in the centre of Photograph 2).

The built form has a distinctly coastal, bach-like character, although it is evident that some of the dwellings are permanent homes and as such have larger footprints. Front fences tend to be low and houses are typically single storey, but on slightly elevated landform to achieve views over the dunes. Curtilage areas tend to be easy care, mixed coastal natives with areas of lawn, although there are some more manicured gardens in some instances. In some places the coastal native planting is very well established, creating significant privacy around the building.

Above the settlement, the landscape is predominantly pastoral farmland within the Station. On the steeper slopes immediately above the southern portion of the settlement (the site location), various poplar have been planted to help with stormwater runoff (Photograph 3). Most of these are now mature, and in recent times some have begun dropping branches – as is typical for this type of tree. Closer to the bottom of the site is a selection of macrocarpa trees, as well as some mixed native scrub. As mentioned, a small pine forest is planted on the northern side of Williams Road, this having an estimated harvest date of 2035.

The settlement is separated from the beach itself by a wide stretch of modified dune land. Historically it is probable that this had been cleared, however native dune grasses have largely re-established. Some weed and pasture species are also established within the dunes, and there are several walking tracks cutting from the road to the beach. The main beach access, however, is near to the T-junction at the bottom of Williams Road, and consists of a wider, grass reserve for informal parking and picnics.

The site suffered very little land movement damage from Cyclone Gabrielle.

Overall, the landscape is evidentially heavily modified. It still retains a coastal character, largely as a result of the low-density settlement, the presence of some replanted native vegetation, and the expansive dune area.



Photograph 3: View across the central part of the site.

Planning Context

The AEE provides a detailed assessment of the relevant policies and activity status of the proposal. Below provides a summary of key legislation and policy that are relevant to the assessment of landscape, natural character and visual effects.

Operative District Plan

The proposed site is located within the *Rural Zone* under the Operative District Plan.

Lots 1,3 and 8 are located within the Coastal Margin Area identified on District Planning Map 39, with Lots 9 and 10 fully outside this area, and Lots 4,6 and 7 partially within. As a result of this, the proposal is considered a *Discretionary* activity.

There are no identified Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Features within the site area or vicinity, and no identified areas of significant conservation value. The dune area between the settlement and beach is listed as *Designation 158 – Council Reserve*.

Various Operative District Plan policies have relevance to the proposal and this assessment, including:

- ▶ **4.2.1 Objective - Rural Amenity and Quality of the Environment:** *A level of rural amenity which is consistent with the range of activities anticipated in the rural areas, but which does not create unpleasant conditions for the District's rural residents; or adversely affect the quality of the rural environment.*
- ▶ **4.2.2.3 Policy** – *To maintain clear distinctions between the urban and rural areas through zoning and the provision of performance standards specific to the rural zone, to assist in protecting the character and quality of the surrounding rural areas.*
- ▶ **4.4.1.2 Policy** – *The margins of wetlands, rivers, lakes and the coast are managed in order to preserve the natural character of these environments and the margins of identified river catchments are managed to enhance water quality.*



- ▶ **4.4.2.5 Policy** – *To control activities which have the potential to adversely affect the natural character of coast which is an important contributor to the amenity of the District.*
- ▶ **4.9.9 Coastal Margin Performance Standard** – *The following standards shall apply to the Coastal Margin Area identified on the Planning Maps:*
 - *Exotic tree planting shall be limited to 1000m² per site over any 5 year period.*
 - *Any building(s) shall be limited to a total gross floor area of 200m² per site.*
- ▶ **9.4.1 Objective** – *The maintenance or enhancement of amenity, cultural and significant nature conservation values through the subdivision process.*
- ▶ **9.4.2 Policies** –
 1. *To take the opportunity to protect significant natural features or trees, and indigenous vegetation and habitat through the subdivision process.*
 2. *To ensure that works associated with the land subdivision and development avoid or mitigate the adverse impacts on the natural qualities of the environment and on areas of significant nature conservation value.*
 3. *To encourage innovative subdivision design consistent with the maintenance of amenity values.*
 4. *To provide pedestrian and amenity linkages where useful linkages can be achieved or further developed.*
 5. *To avoid or mitigate any adverse visual and physical effects of subdivision and development on the environment, including the appropriate underground reticulation of energy and telecommunication lines in order to protect the visual amenities of the area.*
 6. *To promote the protection of waahi tapu and waahi taonga during the subdivision process.*
- ▶ **14. Coastal Margin Area - Rural Zone Performance Standard:**
 - a. *Degree to which the exotic tree planting or buildings will adversely affect the natural character of the coastline, including:*
 - i. *the loss of key views or viewpoints; and the loss of accessibility to key views or viewpoints;*
 - ii. *any obscuring of landforms or natural features;*
 - iii. *the loss or modification of the natural landscape pattern; including the loss of underlying landform pattern;*
 - iv. *the loss or obscuring of present vegetation patterns;*
 - v. *the loss of openness and spaciousness of the coastline, and the apparent naturalness of the coastline.*
 - b. *The need for tree planting for soil conservation purposes.*

The linear arrangement of coastal baches is contained within the Township Zone.



Proposed District Plan

The Proposed District Plan is being progressed through Council. It contains a variety of objectives in regard to the preservation of the coastal environment, notably CE-O1, CE-O2, and CE-O3 and the policies which these objectives lead to within the CE chapter. There is a significant focus on ensuring the scale, character, location and size of development is appropriate for the coastal location. These policies give effect to Regional Council policy and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (2010, the “NZCPS”).

Objectives under the GURZ (General Rural Zone) have a focus on maintaining rural character and rural amenity. There is also a focus on not fragmenting productive rural land with residential lifestyle development (GRUZ-P8).

Regional Policy

The Regional Resource Management Plan contains various policies intended to guide appropriate outcomes in the coastal environment. In particular, s3.2 includes the following objectives (amongst others not relevant to this assessment):

- ▶ *OBJ 4 – Promotion of the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and its protection from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*
- ▶ *OBJ 5 – The maintenance and where practicable and in the public interest, the enhancement of public access to and along the coast.*
- ▶ *OBJ 7 – The promotion of the protection of coastal characteristics of special significance to iwi, including waahi tapu, tauranga waka, taonga raranga, mahinga kai and mahinga mataitai.*
- ▶ *OBJ 8 – The avoidance of further permanent development in areas prone to coastal erosion or inundation, taking into account the risk associated with global sea level rise and any protection afforded by natural coastal features.*

Section 3.3.1 also provides a focus on the *loss and degradation of soil*, including *accelerated hill country erosion caused by the clearance of vegetation, inappropriate pastoral farming, and earthworks*.

NZCPS

As some of the proposed lots are located within the identified Coastal Area, policies within the NZCPS have relevance, including:

- ▶ *Policy 13: Preservation of natural character by avoiding subdivision or development in areas of outstanding natural character; but noting that the site is not identified in any planning instruments as having outstanding natural character.*
- ▶ *Policy 14: Restoration of natural character which promotes (but does not specifically require) restoration where practicable.*
- ▶ *Policy 15: Natural features and natural landscapes – including avoiding significant effects on natural features and landscapes.*

Policy 6 also contains direction in regard to *consolidation of residential activity* within the coastal environment, and how *visual impacts of development can be avoided in areas sensitive to such effects*.

Proposal

Before discussing the proposal to be assessed, it is important to briefly consider the landscape-led design approach taken by the Project Team. The purpose of such an approach was to consider how best to integrate



the proposal into the existing landscape and coastal community and achieve the best land use outcomes for the site.

The initial phase of work involved identifying suitable building platforms. This work was undertaken through a multi-disciplinary process that involved a surveyor, geotechnical engineer, civil engineer and landscape architect. A site envelope was established that avoided any building platforms on the upper most ridgelines. This work also included a preliminary identification of access roads to each lot, and consideration on how best to allow for ongoing management of the balance lot as part of the wider farm.

A hui was then held on site with mana whenua to determine whether any of the identified building sites would impact areas of cultural interest. One site, Lot 9, was then relocated from above Lot 8 to its now proposed location in order to avoid two previously unidentified archaeological sites.

Lot sizes were identified as minimum 4,000m² in accordance with Operative District Plan policy. However, it was identified that the nature of future ownership on a lot of this size might result in uncoordinated land use, resulting in a greater level of landscape and natural character effects. Therefore, a scheme was devised by which each lot would contain three zones, as follows:

- ▶ An identified **Building Platform**, which would be formed ready for the construction of dwellings.
- ▶ A **Privately Managed Landscape**, an area of approximately 1,000m² which can be used by the future owner for the establishment of a garden or lawn areas. Small sheds and water tanks would be allowed within this zone, but no additional buildings (such as a secondary dwelling).
- ▶ Proposed Staged **Landscape Enhancement** zone, being the remainder of the lot area and used only for the establishment of approved coastal native revegetation.

It is intended that all of the Landscape Enhancement zones across all of the lots are managed holistically by all landowners – essentially they are privately owned but managed by everyone in the subdivision for the benefit of everyone. Planting within these zones will be undertaken by the applicant and the title owner, and a **Landscape Management Plan** will be provided that outlines the requirements for long term maintenance. No buildings or exotic vegetation will be permitted within the Landscape Enhancement zones.

With building platforms, access and the zone concept identified, a **Landscape Concept Plan** was developed that provided for holistic landscape and vegetation outcomes across the site. Much of this focusses on the establishment of native coastal vegetation on the steeper faces of the site, to provide both amenity and long-term land stability improvements. Lot boundaries were then co-ordinated around the proposed vegetation, with some reshaping being undertaken to land on a suitable arrangement. The design also considered the placement of fences to allow for the ongoing management of the farm through the centre of the site, and the incorporation of wastewater disposal areas.

The only fences that will be established are between the retained farmland and any planting, it is intended to prevent the construction of any fences between lots. However, fences may be constructed within or around the Privately Managed Landscape zone on each lot.

Walkways will be constructed within the site, up to a maximum width of 1.5m. These walkways will be shared, by way of easements, to all lot owners and are for pedestrian use only (it is intended to prohibit the use of any motorised vehicles).

The final **Landscape Concept Plan** is attached (Sheet 01). It provides for 8 residential lots, each with a minimum lot area of 4,000m², access via three driveways. It is intended that many of the existing poplar across the site will be retained until native vegetation has established. The macrocarpa trees located at the bottom of the site, adjacent to Lot 1, will also be removed. Additional poplar are to be planted across some areas of the site in accordance with recommendations from the Geotechnical Engineer. In the farmland areas these will be retained



over the longer-term, and within planted areas they will be selectively felled as native vegetation becomes established.

Alongside a **Landscape Management Plan**, it is intended that a **Design Controls** manual will be established that limits the colour and materiality for each lot. Additional amenity trees (using native specimens) and landscape detailing appropriate to the coastal landscape will be developed to create a high-quality proposal. It is intended that these plans and documents are developed following issuing of a resource consent, directed through conditions detailed below:

Mitigation & Conditions

The assessment detailed on this report has been prepared on the basis of the incorporation of three **zones** within each lot, the development of a **Landscape Management Plan**, and the development of **Design Controls** (including detailed landscape enhancements). It is intended that these aspects of the proposal are developed following the granting of resource consent but governed by conditions. In this regard, it is recommended that conditions are drafted to allow for each of the following to be completed prior to the issuance of any titles:

- ▶ For each lot, the following **zones** are identified on a plan:
 - **Building Platform** zone, being the area approved for the formation of a building platform and on which the main dwelling and any approved ancillary buildings can be constructed.
 - **Privately Managed Landscape** zone, being an area incorporating the Building Platform zone up to a combined maximum size of 1,000m² and within which there are no restrictions on vegetation species or requirements.
 - **Landscape Enhancement** zone, being the balance area of each lot not occupied by the Privately Managed Landscape and Building Platform zone and which shall be planted and maintained in accordance with the **Landscape Management Plan**.
- ▶ **Design Controls** are to be developed and applied to each lot, and must incorporate the following:
 - Buildings or structures may only be constructed within the identified Building Platform zone, with the exception of garden sheds or garden pergolas up to a maximum combined footprint of 16m², and in-ground swimming or spa pools up to a maximum footprint of 40m². No buildings or pools may be constructed in the Landscape Enhancement zone.
 - The combined footprint of all buildings on any one lot must not exceed 250m².
 - The maximum height of any building on Lots 3 to 9 inclusive shall be single storey and no greater than 6.5m. The maximum height of any building on other lots shall be no greater than 7.5m.
 - Building cladding is to be timber or coloured steel/aluminium, or greywacke stone.
 - No retaining walls are to be constructed on any lot that are greater in height than 900mm, and there must be at least 2.0m separation between any two retaining walls.
 - All buildings, roofs, structures and retaining walls are to be finished in dark, earthy tones and have a reflectivity value of no more than 25%.
 - All glass, including windows and fences, must incorporate a dark tint.
 - All water tanks are to be positioned such that they are located behind any buildings when seen from the reserve area adjacent to the intersection of Okura and Williams Roads. Water tanks are to be coloured dark grey or black only.



- No commercial activities or buildings, including commercial or industrial sheds, are to be constructed on the site.
- No fences are to be constructed between lots. Fences are only permitted at the boundary between the residential lots and the retained farmland, or incorporated into the building design to provide screening or privacy within the Building Platform zone.
- ▶ A **Landscape Management Plan** is to be prepared for the development, and must include the following:
 - A plant species list comprising of New Zealand native plants that are appropriate to a Central Hawke's Bay coastal environment.
 - A planting plan for the whole property demonstrating planting areas, species mixes, plant spacing, and specifying minimum planting size. The planting plan is to be consistent with the **Landscape Concept Plan** submitted as part of the application.
 - A maintenance and management plan for all planting, including pest plant and animal control.
 - Practical guidance for future landowners on how to successfully maintain each **Landscape Enhancement** zone across the site, either individually or collectively.
 - Landscape detailing plans, including fences, signage and accessway designs.
 - Any other information considered necessary to achieve a high quality landscape outcome.
- ▶ All building platforms are to be constructed.
- ▶ All planting within all Landscape Enhancement zones is to be undertaken by the applicant and the title owner.

Potential Effects

Potential Landscape Effects

As identified, the landscape in which the site is located is highly modified. Essentially all original native vegetation has been cleared (including, most likely, across the dunes behind the beach) and land use for many decades has focussed on pastoral farming. Landform is less modified, although the clearance in vegetation has resulted in minor surface erosion on a localised scale.

Nevertheless, the landscape retains a coastal beach character due to the overall composition of the landform around the beach, the small scale of the settlement, and the presence of some re-established coastal native vegetation. The coastal experience is also enhanced through the presence of sea-spray in the air, its generally exposed nature, and the sound, sight and smell of the ocean.

These are the attributes that the proposal seeks to align with. The concept is to utilise generally poor quality farmland and enhance its character through significant coastal native revegetation. The associated dwellings have been designed to sit within this vegetation framework, with the new owners collectively responsible for maintaining an enhanced coastal amenity.

As a result, an intended consequence is that landscape change will happen as a result of this proposal. Principally this will take the form of retiring marginal pastoral land and establishing a significant framework of coastal native vegetation. In time (10-15 years), the existing Poplar across the site will fall and be replaced with a more natural, diverse array of planting that is considered to be more appropriate for the location. However, this change in land-use is permitted under District Plan policy (and potentially encouraged by the NZCPS and RPS), and is likely to have less of an impact than the eventual harvesting of the pine forest to the north of the site.



Therefore, putting the vegetation framework to one site, a notable additional change will be the introduction of built form across the site, breaking the linearity of the existing settlement and elevating the township area up the hillside. It is recognised that often the elevation of dwellings in coastal settlements can increase the dominance of built form over the natural coastal qualities, particularly if dwellings are expansive.

However, in this instance, the site is well contained, defined to the south by a prominent ridgeline that also marks the end of the existing settlement, and defined to the north and west by Williams Road. Design controls, limiting the upper sites (Lots 3-9) to a single storey, and controlling both colour and materiality will be imposed, alongside the requirement for all buildings (dwellings and any ancillary buildings) on each lot to have a combined footprint of less than 250m² (this will be applied to all lots across the site, noting that there is an additional restriction in the Operative District Plan requiring dwellings within the Coastal Area to be less than 200m²). In addition, the three ownership zones, particularly the Landscape Enhancement zones, will ensure that all buildings are integrated into the wider vegetation framework.

As will be further outlined below, the visibility of the proposal is also relatively limited. There are few, if any locations where all the proposed building platforms will be visible. The development will not appear as a new cluster of residential buildings, but rather a relatively scattered array that is contained within the same area of landform as the southern part of the existing settlement. In this regard, the proposal is consistent with the small scale of settlement that defines the character of Mangakuri, albeit that it will now include some elevated properties.

Water tanks will need to be installed for each lot, however the design controls will require these to be positioned behind dwellings relative to the coast, and coloured appropriately in dark grey or black. As building platforms will be formed prior to sale, there will be no requirement for retaining walls and it is proposed to restrict the construction of such walls to 900mm in height or less.

Amongst this development, the farming operation on the top of the ridgeline and through the centre of the site will continue. In time, Poplar species through the farming area will be replaced by mixed exotic specimen and shade trees, such as Oak, Gum and Beech trees that will continue to provide land stability, shading for stock and a degree of amenity in contrast to the native vegetation framework. Similarly, plantings within the Privately Managed Landscape zone may also include exotic amenity planting, but this will be contained to a similar scale as the existing dwellings in the settlement.

Walking tracks will provide access to Okura Road along the back of the dunes, whereby access to the beach is enabled through the Council Reserve across existing tracks.

Overall, landscape effects are considered to be **low**. The proposal is located within a highly modified landscape and introduces dwellings at a small, scattered scale within a confined site. Proposed design controls, including height, colour, materiality and footprint will ensure that such dwellings are contained to a scale relative to existing built form. Most notably, poor quality farmland will be replaced by a collectively managed framework of coastal native vegetation that can be considered as restorative enhancement to the coastal character of the site and landscape.

Potential Natural Character Effects

There is no District or Regional policy or mapping that identifies the site as having outstanding or high natural character. Rather, as explored above, the site is highly modified and any historical native landcover has long been removed. Only the recovering dune area behind the beach holds any particular natural value.

The waterways on the site are largely incised overland flow paths, including overflow from a small farm reservoir. All of the waterways are highly modified and have little, if any, natural character value. Undoubtedly



coastal bird species will make use of the Poplar and Macrocarpa trees for some shelter, but it is unlikely that these provide any useful, sustainable food or habitat.

Therefore, overall, the site is largely devoid of any physical (biotic or abiotic) natural character. Whilst it is clearly part of the coastal environment, the experiential values are derived from the outlook to the beach (where visible) and ocean, alongside its sound and smell.

As a result, the establishment of a significant framework of coastal native species can be considered an overall enhancement to natural character. It will provide stability to the landforms, particularly along the waterways, whilst creating appropriate native habitat and food sources for coastal fauna. The planting will also provide a sense of naturalness, enhancing the coastal experience. A new culvert will allow for the most significant waterway on the site to be fully protected from any stock.

The proposed built form is unlikely to diminish from the experience of naturalness. The wider landscape already contains built form, alongside human modifications by way of fences, roads and plantation forestry. The proposal is not attempting to fully restore the landscape to a natural state, but rather swing the balance away from highly modified. It is considered that the proposed dwellings, and the continued operation of the farm through the centre of the site, will achieve this balance.

It is therefore considered that the *adverse* effects on natural character resulting from the proposal will be **very-low**. Rather, it is considered that the proposal will have positive effects on natural character. With the establishment of the coastal native vegetation framework, the site will feel more natural than it does currently, and this is likely to enhance the wider coastal landscape experience.

Potential Visual Effects

As alluded to above, despite the elevated nature of the proposal above the existing settlement, there are few (if any) places where the whole of the proposal will be visible.

From Williams Road, there will be sequential visibility of some of the upper-most lots, notably Lot 10, Lot 6 and Lot 4. For the latter two, it may also be possible to see Lots 7 and 3, but these will be largely screened by landform and vegetation. In addition, the two entrances to the site will be visible, particularly the upper most entry (Photograph 4) as this is located in alignment with a short straight section of the road climbing up the ridgeline. Notably, the visual experience of arriving at Mangakuri will largely be protected. This is first achieved after Williams Road has gone over the top of the ridgeline and has started to descend towards the beach



Photograph 4: View eastward to site, with the entry to Lots 6-10 at the location of the vehicle in the image.



Photograph 5: View eastward to site, north of Lot 4 (the dwelling on Lot 4 may be visible on the far



Photograph 6: View south along Okura Road, the entrance to Lots 1 & 2 is by the limestone driveway.

(Photograph 5). From this location, a dwelling on Lot 4 may be visible, but it will mostly be tucked behind the landform and planting, as seen on the far right of the photograph. The top of Lot 3 may also be visible, but this will sit quite low below the road, such that the outward view to the sea remains visible (noting that the beach itself is not visible from this location).

On the outward journey, there will potentially be greater views into the site as the viewer is more aligned towards residential properties. It is likely that there will be locations on the upward view of a combination of Lots 3 to 9, however these will be against a land backdrop and contained within the vegetation framework.

However, overall, the visual effects of the proposal experienced from driving along Williams Road, in either direction, is considered to be **low**. Although the change in the site will be evident, the potential adversity of built form will be countered by the positive enhancement delivered through the vegetation framework. As has been outlined above, the experience of natural character will be enhanced, and the sense of arrival into Mangakuri either also enhanced, or at the least, unaffected as the proposal will not diminish views of the water.

Visibility of the site from the lower part of Williams Road and from Okura Road (behind the dunes) varies. Along the Okura Road, visibility is largely restricted by the existing dwellings and immediately surrounding vegetation,



Photograph 7: View southward to site from lower Williams Road, the site being largely the area of Poplar.

although it may be possible to have snapshots up to particular lots. The driveway entrance to Lots 1 will also be visible (Photograph 6). From this photograph it is also possible to see a snapshot of the site to the right of the photograph, where a dwelling on Lot 1 will be noticeable.

However, the visual experience along this road tends to be across the dune system to the coast, as well as to the foreground buildings and gardens (the beach style and character of the dwellings is a particular feature of interest). The proposed site sits well behind, as a distant and only partially visible backdrop. Whilst the dwelling at Lot 1 may be more prominent, this will soon diminish in the view as a result of proposed planting along the site boundary.

Overall, it is considered the visual effects of the proposal from the Okura Road will be **very-low**.

From the lower portion of Williams Road, the site is only visible when travelling in a southerly direction (essentially on leaving the settlement – Photograph 7). From certain viewpoints, a wide range of the site is visible – in its current state this being the wide extent of mature Poplar. Within this view, the prominent features are the top ridgeline, which also defines the skyline, and the mix of native and exotic vegetation around the lower dwellings. It is also possible to see the existing elevated dwelling on Williams Road (the white building in the photograph).

Future dwellings on various lots will be visible from this location, however these will all sit below the skyline ridge. Also, the native vegetation framework will also become apparent as it establishes, particularly as it slowly replaces the Poplar on the site. Overall, the visual composition of the site will closely match the composition of the lower developed area, with the exception that dwellings will all be darker in colour, and as such more recessive than the white (or red-roofed) buildings in the lower foreground.

Additionally, from this location, the view extends across the dune landscape and to the southern headland of Mangakuri. These views will be unaffected by the proposal, and will likely remain the key outward focus.

As such, it is considered that the visual effects of the proposal from lower Williams Road will be **low**.

The proposal will be visible from various areas of the beach. To assist with the assessment of visual effects from the beach, a series of visual representations of the site were built up and are attached (Sheets 02-06). These include an original photograph taken from the beach, an overlay of the digital terrain model mapped as closely



as possible (noting only 20m LiDAR contours were available beyond the site area), and then a visual representation of the proposal showing firstly dwellings, and then the proposed vegetation framework at maturity (anticipated to be 10-15 years).

This visual material demonstrates the generally low visibility of the site. Although some dwellings will be visible, mostly these will be contained within the framework of vegetation, screened from view by existing vegetation (both Poplar and Macrocarpa), or screened by existing dwellings. The extent of such visibility was also confirmed on-site, there are only a few lots where the actual beach is visible.

Increased visibility may happen over time resulting in potentially more dwellings becoming apparent. However, as outlined for landscape effects, the dwellings will be contained within an already highly modified area of the landscape, flanked by existing built form at the base. Design controls, including height, colour, materiality and footprint, will all help to ensure that dwellings are recessive against the native vegetation backdrop.

From this location, nearly all dwellings sit below the skyline ridge. Potentially dwellings on Lots 8 & 9 may breach the skyline when viewed from this particular location, but planting has been incorporated around the back of these dwellings to help integrate them with the remainder of the development. Importantly, the scale of these two dwellings compared to the overall landform is very small, and as such the overall integrity of the skyline ridge (noting that this is not deemed to be Outstanding in any District or Regional policy) will be retained across the broader landscape.

Additionally, and importantly, although the development will be visible from the beach – the site is generally not the focus of a viewer in this location. The beach experience is largely defined by the immediate coastal surroundings, the surrounding landform forming only the backdrop. The proposed changes to the site will be noticeable, but visually the site will have a character very similar to the existing dwellings. The wider experience of being in a relatively remote, small coastal settlement will remain. As such, it is considered that the potential visual effects of the proposal from the beach will be *low*.

From private locations, visibility of the proposal is largely only achieved when looking away from the prominent outward view over the dunes, beach and ocean. This is certainly the case for all the existing dwellings below the site, all of which have a focus eastward.

Vegetation along the lower boundary will further screen views towards dwellings, such that the most notable change will be the replacement of a farmland outlook with a vegetated outlook. This is particularly the case for the residential properties below Lots 1 which have been deliberately set back from the boundary to allow for such vegetation to be established. Due to the steep nature of the topography to the west, and the existing presence of large mature Poplar, there is little (if any) chance that such vegetation will provide any greater shading of adjacent properties than already experienced.

This vegetation will also help reduce any visual privacy effects, or the feeling of being looked down upon.

It is therefore considered that the visual effects on the existing residential properties below the site will be *very-low*.

Visual effects are more likely from the existing elevated property, located at 124 Williams Road, as this property already has southward views across the central part of the site and potentially up to Lots 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8. However, as for other existing dwellings, the general orientation of this property is to the east, capturing views across the coast, and so any views of the site can be considered as secondary. It is also noted that two water tanks and vegetation have been installed on the corner of the property in the direction of the site. Views are also restricted by the existing Poplar across the site, and will continue to be restricted by the proposed vegetation framework. It is therefore considered that the visual effects on this property will be *low*.



Considering visual effects overall, there is no doubt that the proposal will be visible from various public and private locations, and as identified under landscape effects, it will result in a change to the overall visual character (and amenity) of the site and wider landscape. However, the change and visual effects resulting from this change are not necessarily adverse. The extensive vegetation framework will enhance the naturalness of the site and help to visually integrate each of the dwellings. Proposed design controls will help to recess any built form, and the site is well contained within the landform (mostly below the skyline ridge). There is unlikely to be any shading or privacy effects.

Overall, it is therefore considered that the visual effects of the proposal will be **low**.

Policy Assessment

As identified, some parts of the proposal sit within the Coastal Area as defined by the Operative District Plan, and as such various policies within the NZCPS are relevant.

However, the heavily modified nature of the site means that there is little existing natural character – such value largely deriving from experiential elements beyond the site (the smell and sound of the sea, and coastal native vegetation on adjacent properties). The site is not recognised on any District or Regional planning maps as having high or outstanding natural character. As such, Policy 13 of the NZCPS is not relevant to the proposal.

Policy 14 promotes the enhancement of natural character, and the proposal seeks to establish a coastal native framework that is consistent with this policy. The proposed vegetation is considered to be a positive outcome of the development.

The proposal has also been developed to work with the existing landscape as best as possible, including identifying natural areas for building platforms and incorporating coastal native vegetation amongst the existing Poplar. As such, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with Policy 15 of the NZCPS as it avoids significant effects on natural landscapes and natural features, whilst at the same time achieving positive longer-term landscape outcomes.

The visual effects of development are also considered to be low, with the proposal seeking to establish residential built form in a landscape that already contains dwellings. Although buildings are more elevated than the existing pattern of development, they are well contained visually, and generally screened from view by existing and proposed vegetation.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is consistent with the NZCPS.

This report has traversed the assessment of landscape, natural character and visual effects that are considered relevant to various Operative District Plan policies. In all cases, such effects are considered to be **low** or **very-low**, and importantly the proposal does not affect any existing outward views to the coast. Internal amenity is provided through the design, and it is considered that effects on natural character will be positive. As mentioned, the site is well contained as part of the coastal settlement, and as such has limited (if any) effects on the surrounding rural landscape.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is consistent with the objectives detailed above in regard to the Operative District Plan. Additionally, the landscape-led design approach to the proposal means that it is also consistent with the outcomes sought by the Proposed District Plan and is consistent with the Regional Plan objectives.



Conclusion

This report has provided an overview of the proposal to establish 8 residential lots at Mangakuri. It has outlined the process undertaken to develop the proposal, identifying how this was landscape-led and was designed to avoid impacts on areas identified by Mana Whenua to be culturally important.

The proposal incorporates an extensive framework of coastal native vegetation that is designed to help integrate built form, provide an enhancement of coastal natural character. The planting has been reviewed following Cyclone Gabrielle, and some minor amendments made in accordance with recommendations from the Geotechnical Engineer. In addition, various design controls are proposed that will control the extent, colour, location and scale of built form within each lot. It is intended that these controls are developed prior to the issuance of any titles, and can be managed through the incorporation of conditions of consent.

With this planting framework and the design controls, it is considered that the landscape and visual effects of the proposal will be **low**, and the adverse effects on natural character will be **very-low** (natural character effects are considered to be overall positive). In this regard, it is considered that such effects will be **less than minor** overall, is consistent with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, and is consistent with the outcomes sought by the Operative and Proposed District Plans.

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