Lochridge Estate – Lochridge Road, Kinloch

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment



LA4 Landscape Architects
PO Box 5669, Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

Quality Assurance Statement

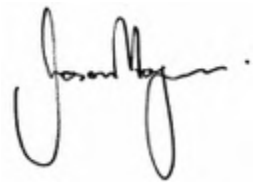
Prepared by:



Director

_____

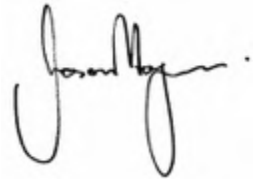
Reviewed by:



Director

_____

Approved for issue by:



Director

_____

Status: **Final**
Date: 16 September 2026

File Number/Name	26043 Lochridge Estate LVA
Author	Rob Pryor, Director | NZILA Registered Landscape Architect
Client	Lochridge Estate Limited

Table of Contents

1.0 **Introduction** … … 4
2.0 **The Proposal** … … 4
3.0 **Assessment Methodology** … … 4
4.0 **The Site and Surrounding Environment** … … 5
5.0 **Statutory Context** … … 10
6.0 **Evaluation of the Proposal** … … 14
7.0 **Conclusions** … … 26

Annexure 1: Viewpoint Location Map and Photographs

1 Introduction

1.1 LA4 Landscape Architects have been engaged by Lochridge Estate Limited ('**applicant**') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment ('**LVA**') for the proposed subdivision (the '**proposal**') within the site at Lochridge Road, Kinloch (the '**site**').

1.2 This assessment investigates the existing rural and urban character and the key landscape and visual features of the site and surroundings, and outlines the effects of the proposal on the landscape character and visual amenity values of the site and surrounding area. Investigations of the site and surrounding Kinloch and Lake Taupō environment were undertaken in August 2026.

2 The Proposal

2.1 The proposal is for the subdivision of the site into 76 residential lots varying in size between 0.46ha and 4.06ha with an average lot size of 1.23ha. The proposal is illustrated on the Kotare Consultants Subdivision Scheme plans.

2.2 Built development mitigation measures include a single storey height restriction of 4.5m, building colours will be darker natural recessive colours not exceeding a LVR of 37% and a building coverage restriction of 10% or 500m^2. Any free-standing shed will be required to match the cladding colours and style of the dwelling.

2.3 Landscape mitigation measures include 20.40ha of indigenous planting areas, a 0.40ha reserve, and 10.53ha of retired or LIA areas. In addition, there is a requirement for 10% of each residential lot to be planted with indigenous species. The proposed mitigation measures will ensure that the development is well integrated into the landscape, coupled with a strong framework of indigenous tree and vegetation planting.

2.4 The site currently has consent for 49 lots ranging in size between 1.12ha and 5.03ha.

3 Assessment Methodology

3.1 The key to assessing the landscape character and visual amenity effects of the proposal on this landscape is first to establish the existing characteristics and values of the landscape and then to assess the effects of this proposal on them. In accordance with the Resource Management Act (1991) ('**RMA**') this includes an assessment of the cumulative effects of the proposal combined with existing developments.

3.2 The methodology used in this assessment is in accordance with the Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2022 ('**TTatM**'), and designed to assess whether the proposal would have adverse effects on the landscape values and visual amenity of the site and surrounding environment. The following methodology has been used in this assessment.

Background review

3.3 A review of the background information and subdivision plans was undertaken in relation to the landscape character and visual amenity aspects of the proposal. Key landscape and environmental factors which could potentially be affected by the proposal were identified and reviewed.

Statutory context

3.4 A review of the relevant Resource Management Act 1991, Operative Taupō District Plan ('**TDP**') and Waikato Regional Policy Statement ('**WRPS**') statutory provisions was undertaken to identify the key landscape character and visual amenity related objectives and policies. The purpose of reviewing the statutory provisions was to help frame the landscape assessment.

Site and landscape evaluation – landscape and visual environment

3.5 Detailed site investigations, and an analysis of the site and surrounding environment were undertaken in August 2026, including viewing the site from within Whangamata Bay. The landscape, natural character, rural character, and visual amenity values were identified and outlined and a photographic record of the site and surrounding environment compiled. Key landscape elements and features were identified and an analysis of the existing landscape values and the landscape's ability to accommodate change as a result of the proposal undertaken.

Visual catchment and viewing audience

3.6 The physical area that would be visually affected by the proposal was defined. In turn, this indicated the range, type and size of viewing audiences that would be impacted upon, and their sensitivity to change as enabled by the proposal.

Viewpoint selection

3.7 The next step was to establish a platform from which detailed analysis could be carried out. The most practical platform for conducting such analysis is a series of viewpoints, strategically located within the visual catchment in order to assess the impact of the proposal for the potential viewing audiences.

Landscape character and visual effects assessment

3.8 A specific analysis and assessment was undertaken and key questions addressed derived from the very nature of anticipated effects on the landscape values, natural character, rural character, and visual amenity. This process assessed the effects of the proposal and identified the aspects which were likely to have high or adverse landscape character or visual amenity effects.

Conclusions

3.9 An evaluation of the proposal as a whole considering all the preceding analysis was undertaken in relation to potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity values. Conclusions were made in relation to the potential landscape character, natural character and visual amenity effects of the proposal including recommendations for avoiding, remedying, or mitigating these effects.

4 The Site and Surrounding Landscape Context

The Site

4.1 The site is located in Lochridge Drive, Kinloch, and has a southerly aspect comprising 105.59 hectares of land. The site is a complex series of gently undulating terraces, steep scarps and incised gullies and channels. The northern part of the site is accessed off Whangamata Road and comprises gently undulating northeastern slopes between RL 460m and RL 470m with an east-west running central gully. There are five existing dwellings with associated garaging and access drives as well as a vacant lot. The land then rises steeply from here as a vegetated scarp to a height of approximately RL 510m.

4.2 Lochridge Drive traverses the slope in a southerly direction to the high point at RL 510m with an existing dwelling located to the west. A broad terrace extends in a southerly direction, gently sloping south down to approximately RL 450m. To the west of here the site rises steeply up to an upper terrace at RL 550m. The land then falls from here is a south – southeast direction in a series of corrugated incised gullies and channels, falling down to an elongated lower terrace at approximately RL 470m to RL 450m. A steep west facing scarp drops from here to the lower southern terrace at approximately RL 415m. To the east of here is the densely vegetated gully rising up to the southeastern terrace at RL 450m.

4.3 The site is not subject to any overlays, however it adjoins the Department of Conservation ('**DoC**') Otaketake Stream Scenic Reserve to the west, identified as a Significant Natural Area ('**SNA**') (SNA 152) in the Taupō District Plan. Within the Otaketake Stream Scenic Reserve, is the eastern extent of the Northwestern Bays Whakaroa Point to Otuparae Point Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes ('**ONFL**') (ONFL 28) and Te Kauwae Peninsula (ONFL 45).

4.4 The Okaia Stream Scenic Reserve is located further to the east of the site, identified as SNA 170. The SNA's are dominated by podocarp-broadleaf species, beech species and mixed conifer-broadleaf species. Common canopy species include tōtara (*Podocarpus totara*), rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*), mataī (*Prumnopitys taxifolia*), kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*), and miro (*Prumnopitys ferruginea*). Mānuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) and kānuka (*Kunzea robusta*) scrub is also prevalent.

4.5 A large lifestyle property adjoins the site to the east, being the Taupō Hunt Kennels. The property has an extensive area of mature vegetation adjoining the site with mature pine and eucalypts trees and mixed subcanopy species including native underplanting's. A large area of pine plantation adjoins part of the southern boundary.

4.6 To the south of the site is the Seven Oaks Terraces subdivision with urban and lifestyle lots ranging in size between 899m2 and 1.43ha. Immediately to the south of here is the proposed Seven Oaks Stages 9-15, 87-lot residential subdivision at the western extent of Kahikatea Drive, beyond which is the existing Seven Oaks subdivision. Further to the east is the Oakdale Drive lifestyle subdivision, the Whangamata Stream Reserve and The Poplars residential subdivision.



Figure 1: Aerial view of the site and surrounding landscape context



Figure 2: Looking towards the southern part of the site



Figure 2: Looking towards the south-western part of the site

4.7 Since 2005, Kinloch's development has been subject to the provisions of the Kinloch Community Structure Plan ('**KCSP**'), which identified anticipated development densities. The KCSP Density Areas reflects the general pattern to manage future development in an orderly and coordinated way. The application site is captured within the western extent of the structure plan area, identified as an area of 'low density', with a small area of 'medium density' in the southern part of the site.



Figure 3: Looking towards the north-western part of the site



Figure 4: Looking towards the central part of the site



Figure 5: Looking towards the western part of the site

The wider landscape context

4.8 The Kinloch settlement is situated at the south end of a large remnant river terrace that extends back to the intersection of Kinloch and Whangamata Roads. The Whangamata Valley is truncated by the lake edge, and is enclosed by steep hills to the east and steep to rolling hills to the west. The valley is undulating, particularly towards the northern extremity. The landform transitions from the valley floor northwards to the rolling and undulating terrain inland.

4.9 Kinloch lies across a broad shallow valley nestled between two containing ridgelines. The site is located on the western ridgeline which extends to form Te Kauwae Peninsula to the west, and the Whakaroa Peninsula to the east. The landscape of Kinloch is characterised by steep to gently undulating topography resulting from a number of northeast trending fault lines. These fault lines have created a saw edge effect, which has been further eroded, and cut into by numerous watercourses to create a complex topography of valleys associated with the main waterways and ridges.

4.10 The township sits at the head of Whangamata Bay with a structured network of residential settlement clustered around the Kinloch Marina and Whangamata Bay. Originally established as a lakeside holiday destination with baches being built on typically 800m^2 sites, its popularity has seen Kinloch grow to include extensive residential subdivision development, a marina, world class golf course with luxury accommodation, and a currently under construction multi-unit commercial centre in Kenrigg Road West. Whangamata Bay is a broad bay, defined by two distinct headlands that frame the bay – Te Kauwae Point to the west and Whakaroa Point in the east.

4.11 Residential development transitions from the smaller and denser lots within the flatter terrace land, with new subdivisions and residential development occurring in the western extent of the valley and lower slopes including Lochridge Estate, Seven Oaks, Seven Oaks Terraces, Te Kowhai Ridge and Lisland, and Locheagles Rise on the western flank of Whakaroa Peninsula.

4.12 The Whakaroa Peninsula, on the eastern side of the bay has an Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes ('**ONFL**') overlay in the TDP (ONFL 65 Whakaroa Peninsula) as well as a very small area of Amenity Natural Features and Landscapes ('**ANFL**') (ANFL 66 Whakaroa Hills) in the northern part. Other ONFL's include Lake Taupō ONFL 20, and Te Kauwae Point – ONFL 45. Lake Taupō and the Whakaroa Peninsula are also identified as Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONFL 9 Lake Taupō) in the Waikato Regional Policy Statement ('**WRPS'**).

4.13 The attributes for Lake Taupō's ONFL are described as: *Last eruption some 1800 years ago, creating a large caldera lake with a series of bays, river tributaries, pumice beaches and sheer cliff edges. Tapuaehāruru Bay forms a prominent enclosed bay; its flat terraces forming the platform for the Taupō township. The lake forms the focal point for surrounding settlements. The identification of the lake as an outstanding feature also extents to its margins and Motutaiko Island. Highly valued recreation resource, water quality, and sense of place. Very high historical and cultural values.*

4.14 Rural land use and development patterns influence the character and visual amenity of the wider area to the north, with the open spatial character of the wider landscape compartmentalised by a combination of large tracts of production forestry, rural plantings, hedgerows, and, typically in steeper or less accessible areas, remnant native vegetation. Marotiri is a very prominent bush clad volcanic feature extending to a height of 733m above sea level.

4.15 Inland, the landscape opens up into the expansive, rural character of the volcanic plateau defined by vast, open productive pastoral land divided by rural fencing and shelterbelts. The landform consists of large scale undulating hillslopes and smooth ridges creating a highly open, expansive and exposed feeling with panoramic views over the wider lake catchment. Streams have cut down through the volcanic landform, forming gorges, channels, river terraces, flow paths and deposition plains. The landform is incised by a highly legible network of deeply incised gullies, often densely vegetated with regenerating bush. This is a working rural landscape heavily modified for high-intensity dairy, sheep and beef farming, and forestry.

4.16 The wider landscape's character is further influenced by land use, land management and development patterns including nodes of urban development populating the shoreline extending east to the Taupō township; extensive areas of reserve land on the Taupō shoreline within the northern and western bays; clusters of rural residential and rural utility buildings punctuating the productive farmland; extensive pastoral development and agrarian land-use patterns; and large tracts of production forestry.

4.17 At the southern end of Lake Taupō, Mt Tongariro, Mt Ruapehu and Mt Ngauruhoe, form the backdrop to the views across the lake and are key visual elements from the northern bays and the site. Overall, the wider landscape is of moderate-high landscape amenity value influenced by the presence of the more natural features associated with Lake Taupō including the lake itself, the OLA's, ONFL's and SNA's and the distant volcanic landforms of the central plateau to the south.

5. Statutory Context

5.1 The statutory context is covered fully in the assessment of environmental effects ('**AEE**') prepared by Simpli Consulting Limited in support of the application. The application site is zoned Rural Lifestyle Zone ('**RLZ**') in the TDP.

5.2 The relevant key landscape character and visual amenity provisions from the RMA, WRPS and TDP have been reviewed for this assessment. The purpose of reviewing the statutory provisions is to help frame the landscape assessment. It is not to undertake a planning assessment of the proposal against the provisions, which is outlined fully in the AEE.

Resource Management Act (1991)

5.3 Part 2 of the RMA sets its purpose and principles. Part 2, Section 5 states that the purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Section 6 sets out the matters of national importance that must be recognised. Of relevance to this proposal are 6(a) – 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, and 6(b) – the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

5.4 Section 7 identifies a range of matters that shall be given particular regard to in achieving the purpose of the RMA. Of relevance to this proposal is s 7(c) – the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values and s 7(f) – the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment. These are considered in this assessment in relation to potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Section 8 states that the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi must be considered in achieving the purpose of the RMA.

Taupō District Plan

5.5 The application site is zoned Rural Lifestyle Zone in the TDP. The zone has been created to address the increasing demand for rural lifestyle living. The RLZ aims to provide for rural residential development in specific locations for those who want the benefits of rural living without necessarily undertaking a productive rural activity.

5.6 By creating separate areas in appropriate locations, the RLZ creates areas for rural living on smaller property sizes, whilst retaining separation from the rural production and other activities in the General Rural Zone ('**GRUZ**'). This separation of activities serves to minimise reverse sensitivity issues. By concentrating rural residential development within the RLZ serves to preserve rural character and the productive potential of the rest of the GRUZ, and to reduce the potential for land use conflict.

5.7 The RLZ is less populated than Residential Zones, with standards in place for minimum lot sizes to preserve the rural residential aspect of the area. Limited provision is also made for home business and commercial activity to occur, but not of a scale or extent that changes the predominantly rural residential amenity and character intended. The RLZ's are located in proximity to urban areas to allow for access to community facilities within the district's townships.

5.8 Within the Kinloch Community Structure Plan ('**KCSP**') the site falls in the 'Low density' area. The size of allotments created through new subdivision and development are managed to create a radial pattern of density ranging from a 'High density' area including and adjacent to the existing Kinloch settlement through to a 'Low density' area in the north of the structure plan area.

5.9 The key planning provisions in the TDP relevant to this assessment that have been taken into consideration are as follows:

13.5 RLZ – Rural Lifestyle Zone: Objectives
RLZ-O1 Character of the Rural Lifestyle Zone
RLZ-O2 Avoid Reverse Sensitivity
RLZ-O4 Consolidate Rural Lifestyle Activities
RLZ-O9 Kinloch Rural Lifestyle Area

13.5 RLZ – Rural Lifestyle Zone: Policies
RLZ-P1 Character of the Rural Lifestyle Zone
RLZ-P2 Lot Sizes and Setbacks of Allotments adjoining GRUZ
RLZ-P4 Minor Residential Units
RLZ-P8 Kinloch Rural Lifestyle Development Plan Area

11 SUB – Subdivision: Objectives
SUB-O2 RLZ
SUB-O3 RLZ
SUB-O5 RURZ
SUB-O7 GRUZ

11 SUB – Subdivision: Policies
SUB-P1 RESZ
SUB-P2 DEV1-Kinloch

11 Development Areas

14.1 DEV1 – Kinloch
Kinloch Community Development Plan Area
DEV-P1
DEV-P2
DEV-P3

5.10 With respect to the landscape matters addressed in these objectives and policies, I comment as follows:

i) The anticipated character of the RLZ will be protected from inappropriate development. While the lot sizes exceed the maximum density of one primary residential unit per 2ha, the site is capable of accommodating smaller lots given the proposed landscape mitigation strategy of 20.40ha of indigenous planting areas, a 0.40ha reserve, and 10.53ha of retired/LIA areas which will provide a vegetated framework within which the buildings will sit.

ii) An average lot size of 1.23ha will ensure that buildings on different sites are separated from each other in a way that creates a sense of privacy. The residential dwellings will not dominate the landscape.

iii) The proposed density will still reinforce the radial pattern of density from a 'high density' area including and adjacent to the existing Kinloch settlement through to a 'low density' area in the north and west of the structure plan area.

iv) The subdivision design has made use of the existing landform and landscape features to ensure that the built form complements the character of the area and will not detract from it.

v) The proposed layout pattern of the lots; extensive indigenous planting; and layout and framing of the site by the Otaketake Stream Scenic Reserve to the west, LIA to the east and Okaia Stream Reserve beyond provide an appropriate transition to the more dense Kinloch residential area to the south

vi) The subdivision locates the larger sized lots adjoining the DoC reserve, with setbacks that will maintain open space to the reserve, maintaining the natural character and amenity values of the reserve.

vii) Larger sized lots have been located in the southern part of the site creating an appropriate transition to the Seven Oaks expanding development. The smaller lots, located in the gently sloping central northern part of the site are framed by the existing vegetated LIA area in the northern part of the site, LIA to the west and proposed indigenous planting area within the gully to the west.

viii) The scale, location, design and nature of the proposal would be entirely sympathetic with the landscape attributes of the ONFL's and OLA's in the wider landscape. Earthworks would be rehabilitated following the completion of earthworking activities and there would be no indigenous vegetation clearance required as part of the proposal.

ix) Proposed mitigation measures to address potential adverse landscape character and visual amenity effects of the proposal include a single storey height restriction of 4.5m, building colours will be darker natural recessive colours not exceeding a LVR of 37% and a building coverage restriction of 10% or 500m^2. Any free-standing shed will be required to match the cladding colours and style of the dwelling.

x) Landscape mitigation measures include 20.40ha of indigenous planting areas, a 0.40ha reserve, and 10.53ha of retired or LIA areas. The proposed mitigation measures will assist in integrating the proposal into the surrounding landscape

xi) The site has the capacity for subdivision to occur to densities which are characterised by smaller lot sizes than those identified in the Kinloch Community Development Plan Area. The subdivision has been designed in a way where any effects to the amenity or character of the area are suitably avoided, remedied or mitigated.

xii) The more intensive areas for development have been offset by the expansive areas of open space and indigenous planting to retain the lower density character of the Kinloch Community Development Plan Area. A strong framework of tree and vegetation planting is proposed to ensure that the development is not out of character with the wider development plan area.

xiii) The natural and landscape values of the site and surrounding area would be retained by the proposal. The proposed mitigation measures will assist to maintain and enhance amenity values within the OLA's, ONFL's and ALA.

Waikato Regional Policy Statement

5.11 Lake Taupō is identified as an ONFL in the WRPS – ONFL 9 Lake Taupō which coincides with TDP's OLA 60. The key planning provisions in the WRPS relevant to this assessment that have been taken into consideration are as follows:

12 Landscape (including seascape), natural character and amenity
Policy 12.1 Outstanding natural features and landscapes
Policy 12.2 Preserve natural character
Policy 12.3 Maintain and enhance areas of amenity value

NATC – Natural Character objectives and policies
NATC-O1 – Natural character

Policies NATC-P1 – Preserve natural character

NFL – Natural features and landscapes objectives and policies
NFL-O1 – Outstanding natural features and landscapes
NFL-P1 – Outstanding natural features and landscapes

5.12 With respect to the landscape matters addressed in these objectives and policies, I comment as follows:

i) The natural character values of the site have been compromised by previous productive rural activities and more recent land use practices for roading and subdivision preparation. The proposed lots are located in modified parts of the site and would be compatible with the level of natural character existing. No indigenous vegetation removal is required. The natural features, elements and processes within the site would not be adversely affected by the proposal.

ii) Proposed mitigation measures to address potential adverse landscape character and visual amenity effects of the proposal include a single storey height restriction of 4.5m, building colours will be darker natural recessive colours not exceeding a LVR of 37% and a building coverage restriction of 10% or 500m^2.

iii) Landscape mitigation measures include 20.40ha of indigenous planting areas, a 0.40ha reserve, and 10.53ha of retired or LIA areas. The proposed mitigation measures will assist in integrating the proposal into the surrounding landscape

iv) Exposed earthworks will be grassed as soon as earthworks are completed, ensuring rapid visual mitigation and slope stabilisation.

v) The scale, location, design and nature of the proposal would be sympathetic with the landscape attributes of the more distant ONFL's. The identified values and characteristics of the ONFL's would not be adversely affected by the proposal.

vi) The characteristics and values of Lake Taupō's ONFL including the expansive area of water, and memorable and vivid attributes would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The physical, aesthetic and associative attributes would be retained.

5.13 I therefore consider that the proposal meets the overall intent of the relevant landscape and amenity objectives, policies and rules of the statutory provisions and is acceptable in natural character, landscape character and visual amenity terms.

6 Evaluation of the Proposal

6.1 The key to assessing the natural character, landscape character and visual amenity effects of the proposal on this landscape is first to establish the existing characteristics and values of the landscape and then to assess the effects of the proposal on them. In accordance with the RMA this includes an assessment of the cumulative effects of the proposal combined with existing developments. The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of the nature and degree of potential landscape effects and the appropriateness of the proposal. The assessment responds to matters related to landscape character, natural character and visual amenity.

6.2 The assessment of landscape effects takes into consideration physical changes to the landscape as a resource which may give rise to changes to its character and quality and perceived landscape values. Landscape character results from a combination of physical elements together with aesthetic and perceptual aspects that combine to make an area

distinct. Landscape character is influenced by natural and built elements as well as types, patterns and intensity of land use, historic, cultural and other intangible qualities.

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

6.4 Visual effects are a consequence of landscape effects as this is how we mainly perceive effects on landscape values. Landscape and visual effects are therefore inextricably linked and are influenced by the sensitivity of the receiving environment combined with the type and magnitude of change associated with the proposal.

6.5 Sensitivity to change considers not only the receiving environment but also the nature and characteristics of the proposal. The ability of a landscape to accommodate change is dependent on a variety of considerations such as the:

i) existing land use and resultant landscape patterns
ii) physical characteristics of the landscape
iii) scale of the landscape, the quality and values placed on a landscape; and
iv) the ability to mitigate any effects.

6.6 The objective of Landscape and Visual Effects Assessments is not to assess change or visibility but the nature and magnitude of effect of change on the existing landscape values. With all assessments the objective is not to determine the proposal's extent of visibility, it is to determine how the proposal will impact on existing landscape values, including landscape character and visual amenity. Visibility of itself is not an adverse effect[1].

6.7 Matters to be addressed in this landscape assessment in relation to the landscape character and visual amenity include the following:

i) Natural character effects
ii) Landscape character effects
iii) Visual amenity effects
iv) Cumulative effects

Natural character effects

6.8 The Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines 2022 ('**TTatM**') adopt the interpretation that natural character is a type of character – the distinct combination of an area's natural characteristics and qualities, and that naturalness is one attribute of that natural character. Natural character has been interpreted as the naturalness or degree of modification of an area and an area's distinct combination of natural characteristics and qualities.[2] Natural character is evaluated across three core dimensions of natural elements, natural processes, and natural patterns alongside experiential attributes. Natural character is an area's distinctive combination of natural characteristics and qualities, including degree of naturalness.

6.9 This is consistent with Objective 2 of the NZCPS, which is (amongst other things) to recognise the characteristics and qualities that contribute to natural character; and with the matters listed in Policy 13(2), of which the range of natural character between pristine and modified (i.e. naturalness) is only one matter.

[1] Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 146]

[2] Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 205]

6.10 I have examined the existing natural character in terms of the environment's abiotic elements, biotic attributes and experiential attributes including the physical elements, natural processes and perceptual attributes. As the site itself has historically been utilised for pastoral activities and since developed for rural lifestyle living (in terms of road construction, fencing and building platform construction) the site is low in natural character values. The site is not located within any identified ONFL, SNA or areas of high natural character. There are no wetlands or streams within the site.

6.11 The characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character values of the surrounding area are Lake Taupō's ONFL and OLA, Whakaroa Peninsula's OLA, the Whakaroa Hills ALA and the surrounding SNA's, where the natural elements, natural processes, and natural patterns alongside experiential attributes remain highly legible. These include:

i) The physical elements and processes refer to the biophysical attributes of the landscape/lakescape within the area. These include the geographical features that contribute to the natural character including landform – transitioning from the rolling pastoral slopes down to the rugged volcanic escarpments and bluffs, pumice beaches, bays, river tributaries, volcanic landform and steep gully systems.

ii) The landform which is entirely natural at the lake margin around Whakaroa and Te Kauwae Peninsulas, and the transition from the water to the vegetated escarpments and bluffs up to the terrestrial slope is largely natural in profile, before the upper ridges and plateaus which have been extensively modified for rural production.

iii) Natural processes (biophysical and hydrological) including the lake dynamics and processes with water level fluctuations due to rainfall in the catchment area, seasonal weather patterns, wave action and controlled outflows managed for hydroelectric generation; sediment deposition and erosion, wind exposure and hydrological processes.

iv) Ecological values (flora and fauna) including the ecosystem and vegetation patterns with the lake margin heavily lined with extensive indigenous vegetation providing highly effective protection against shoreline erosion and storm surges, acting as nurseries for local fauna, binding the soil and stabilising water quality by filtering water from the surrounding land uses; and

v) The macrofaunal communities within and around the lake environs, including native and exotic fauna and benthic communities.

6.12 Perceptual and experiential factors involve subjective human responses to the visual, auditory and tactile qualities of a landscape. This includes the sensory experience of natural character such as the visual vividness and coherence of the Whakaroa and Te Kauwae Peninsulas, wildness aesthetic, remoteness or openness in the lake environment and dark sky values. The experiential qualities of natural character are the visual and physical connection to the lake environs, perceptions of naturalness, exposure to the water, atmospheric conditions, seasonal variation, wind movement through the trees, sounds of the water, birdlife and aquatic life.

6.13 Effects on natural character are measured against the extent of modification to the physical (abiotic and biotic) and experiential attributes of natural character and then considered in the round to determine a level of effect. The assessment of natural character addresses the extent to which these attributes and qualities have been and/or will be affected by the introduction of human modifications resultant from the proposal.

Natural character effects analysis

6.14 In my opinion, the proposal would have low adverse effects on the natural character values of the site and surrounding area in that:

i) The natural character values of the site have been compromised by previous productive rural activities and more recent land use practices for roading and subdivision preparation. The proposed lots are located in modified parts of the site and would be compatible with the level of natural character existing. No indigenous vegetation removal is required.

ii) The natural characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character of the surrounding environment would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The physical and visual integrity of the area would be retained, and the biophysical and hydrological natural processes of the location would not be adversely affected. The proposal would have no adverse effects on the ecological values of the lake environment or the macrofaunal communities within and around the lake margin including native and exotic fauna.

iii) The landscape attributes of the ONFL's would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The Whakaroa and Te Kauwae Peninsulas would retain their high physical prominence when viewed from within the lake and from Kinloch. The site is well buffered from Lake Taupō's ONFL and OLA by existing residential development.

iv) The characteristics and values of Lake Taupō's OLA and ONFL including the expansive area of water, and memorable and vivid attributes would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The physical, aesthetic and associative attributes would be retained.

v) The proposal would not result in adverse effects on the abiotic or biotic attributes of Lake Taupō or its tributaries, as the site is physically separated from the lake and does not contain any permanent streams or wetlands.

vi) In terms of the experiential qualities of natural character, while the perception of natural character may be reduced slightly by a level of built development within the modified parts of the site, buildings are a characteristic of the surrounding Kinloch landscape. Other experiential attributes including access to the water, sounds and smell of the lake environs, wind movements, lake surface conditions, atmospheric conditions, water patterns, and riparian birdlife and aquatic life will be unaffected by the proposal.

vii) The natural character values of the site and surrounding area will be significantly enhanced by the 20.4has of indigenous planting within the gullies and steeper slopes throughout the site.

Landscape effects

6.15 A landscape effect is a consequence of change in a landscape's physical attributes on that landscape's values. Change is not an effect – landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change for a landscape's values that is the effect[3]. Landscape effects take into consideration physical effects to the land resource. Assessments of landscape effects therefore investigate the likely nature and scale of change to landscape elements and characteristics. Landscape effects are primarily dependent on the landscape sensitivity of a site and its surrounds to accommodate change. Landscape sensitivity is

[3] Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 135]

influenced by landscape quality and vulnerability, or the extent to which landscape character, elements/features and values are at risk to change.

6.16 Landscape assessments are based on the links between landscape character and values. Character is an expression of the landscape's collective attributes. Values are the reasons a landscape is valued but are embodied in attributes. Effects are consequences for a landscape's values of changes to the attributes on which the values depend. Landscape character results from a combination of physical elements together with aesthetic and perceptual aspects that combine to make an area distinct. Landscape values relate to people's aesthetic perception of the biophysical environment, including considerations such as naturalness, vividness, coherence, memorability and rarity.

6.17 Effects on landscape values are assessed against the existing environment, and the outcomes sought in the relevant statutory provisions. Whether effects on landscape values are appropriate would therefore depend both on the nature and magnitude of effect on the existing landscape values and what is anticipated by the provisions.

6.18 Landscape effects take into consideration the physical effects on the land resource. Assessments of landscape effects therefore investigate the likely nature and scale of change to landscape elements and characteristics. Landscape effects are primarily dependent on the landscape sensitivity of a site and its surrounds to accommodate change and development. Landscape sensitivity is influenced by landscape quality and vulnerability, or the extent to which landscape character, elements/features and values are at risk to change.

Landscape effects analysis

6.19 The site and surrounding environment have been subjected to high degrees of modification as a result of the removal of natural cover, pastoral farming activities, earthworks and construction for subdivision development, and the associated rural, rural residential, and the wider Kinloch urban settlement pattern.

6.20 I consider that the proposal is an appropriate development and use of this part of the rural lifestyle environment. The proposal will have low adverse effects on the landscape values of the site and surrounding area, given that:

i) The site is within a modified environment characterised by an existing consented but as yet unimplemented residential subdivision, where the landscape character values are already compromised through these activities. The elements and features that contribute to the landscape values of the area would not be adversely affected by the proposal.

ii) Any potential landscape effects would be localised due to the type and small scale of change and existing on-site and surrounding landform and vegetation patterns. The proposal would not introduce elements or features that would adversely influence the landscape values and character of the surrounding area with built development being a prevailing characteristic.

iii) The proposal will not impact on any key landscape features nor alter the distinctive patterns found within the surrounding landscape. The site's moderate landscape values means it has a low sensitivity to change associated with the proposal. The broader rural character to the north and west and modified rural setting of the environment will be maintained by the proposal.

iv) The characteristics and qualities that contribute to the landscape character of the rural environment will not be adversely affected by the proposal. The location, scale and design of the proposal is appropriate in this modified environment. The physical and visual integrity of the more distant rural area will be retained, and the natural processes of the location will not be adversely affected. No vegetation removal is required.

v) The landscape values of the site and surrounding area will be significantly enhanced by the 20.4ha of indigenous revegetation planting within the gullies and steeper slopes throughout the site.

vi) The landscape character attributes of the OLA's would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The landscape characteristics and values of Lake Taupō's ONFL and OLA including the expansive area of water, and memorable and vivid attributes would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The physical, aesthetic and associative attributes would be retained.

vii) The proposal would result in a change in landscape character but will ensure a suitable level of amenity is achieved.

Visual effects

6.21 The assessment of visual effects analyses the perceptual (visual) response that any of the identified changes to the landscape may evoke, including effects relating to views and visual amenity. Visual sensitivity is influenced by a number of factors including the visibility of a proposal, the nature and extent of the viewing audience, the visual qualities of the proposal, and the ability to integrate subsequent changes within the landscape setting, where applicable. As with landscape effects, visual effects relate to landscape values. Visibility and change are not effects in and of themselves[4].

6.22 The nature and extent of visual effects are determined by a systematic analysis of the visual intrusion and qualitative change that a proposal may bring, specifically in relation to aesthetic considerations and visual character and amenity. The methodology used in this assessment is designed to assess whether or not the proposal would have adverse visual effects on the nature and quality of the surrounding environment.

Visual catchment and viewing audience

6.23 The visual catchment is the physical area that will be exposed to the visual changes associated with the proposal. The majority of the site has a restricted visual catchment due to the topography and vegetation within the site and surrounding area. The clearest views of the proposal will be gained from the adjoining properties to the south within the Seven Oaks and Seven Oaks Terraces residential settlement area. Distant, broad and panoramic views will be gained from elevated locations to the east, within Locheagles Rise. Views will also be gained from properties within elevated parts of the Whakaroa Peninsula to the east. Views will not be gained from the W2K Lake Trail due to the densely vegetated slopes and views will not be gained from Te Kauwae Peninsula to the west due to the densely vegetated cliffs, escarpments and slopes.

6.24 Landform and mature vegetation within the Okaia Stream Reserve largely screen views from the Lisland Drive and Oakdale Drive residential settlement area to the east. Views from within Kinloch itself are largely screened by the landform and vegetation within the Whangamata Stream Reserve.

[4] Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 245]

6.25 Similarly, views are not gained from the Kinloch foreshore, being screened by landform and vegetation within the reserves and the urban area. Views towards the site will be gained from the water within Whangamata Bay, albeit distant and backdropped by the prominent Marotiri and vegetated slopes to the east.

6.26 The primary viewing audiences that would be exposed to the proposal would be restricted and therefore comprise:

i) Residents within Seven Oaks and Seven Oaks Terraces to the south;
ii) Residents within Lochridge Estate;
iii) Residents within some of the elevated properties to the east in Locheagles Rise;
iv) Residents within some of the rural properties on the Whakaroa Peninsula;
v) Residents within some areas of Kinloch;
vi) Recreational users of parts of Whangamata Bay; and
vii) Distant viewers within parts of the wider surrounding land and water area.

Visual amenity effects analysis

6.27 The visual effects of the proposal have been assessed from locations within the visual catchment area which have potential for visual effects. This is achieved by using both descriptive and analytical means. The analysis is representative of the potential views from the most affected surrounding properties and public areas.

6.28 Eight viewpoints have been identified from which the visual effects have been assessed. This is achieved by using both descriptive and analytical means. The viewpoints were selected as locations that capture and fairly represent the range of public and private views towards the site. The analysis from the viewpoints is representative of the potential views from the most affected surrounding properties and roads.

6.29 The assessment is from each of the following viewpoints:

Viewpoint 1: Scarlet Drive
Viewpoint 2: Seven Oaks Drive | Okaia Drive
Viewpoint 3: Seven Oaks Drive | Broadleaf Way
Viewpoint 4: Montgomery Crescent | Lisland Drive
Viewpoint 5: Lisland Drive
Viewpoint 6: Harrier Lane
Viewpoint 7: Whakaroa Peninsula
Viewpoint 8: Whangamata Bay

6.30 A detailed assessment and analysis of potential visual effects has been undertaken to ensure that each view and changes within each view are evaluated thoroughly and consistently. The total rating given in the descriptions denote the overall visual effects rating. The following seven-point scale has been used to rate effects, based on the guidelines contained within the Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2022. The 7-point scale is a rating of magnitude, whereas an assessment of whether effects are minor (or less than or more than) is a reasoned consideration of the magnitude and importance (significance) of such effects in context[5].

Very Low | **Low** | **Low-Moderate** | **Moderate** | **Moderate-High** | **High** | **Very High**

[5] Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [6.40]

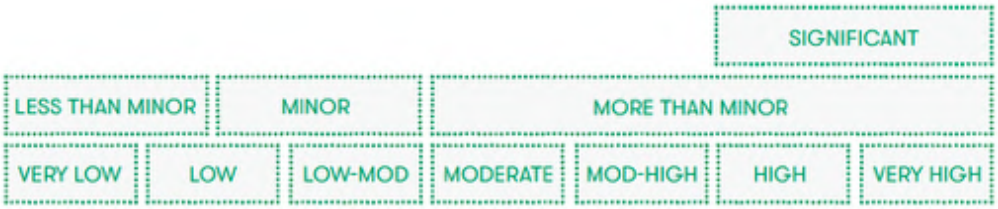


Figure 6: TTatM rating scale

6.31 The assessment has been undertaken in terms of the following criteria:

i) **Sensitivity and quality of the view** – the relative quality and sensitivity of views into the site, including landscape character and visual amenity values.

ii) **Viewpoint** | **perceptual factors** – the type and size of population exposed to views into the site, the viewing distance to the site, and other factors which indicate its sensitivity in terms of both viewing audience and the inherent exposure of the view towards the site due to its physical character.

iii) **Rural** | **urban amenity** – the impact of the proposal on the wider surrounding rural and urban amenity.

iv) **Rural** | **urban form** – the degree to which the proposal would fit into the existing rural and urban context of the surrounding environs.

v) **Visual intrusion** | **contrast** – the intrusion into or obstruction of views to landscape features in the locality and beyond and the impact upon key landscape elements and patterns.

vi) **Mitigation potential** – the extent to which any potential adverse effects of the proposal could be mitigated through integration into its surrounds by specific measures.

Viewpoint 1: Scarlet Drive

6.32 Viewpoint 1 is taken from Scarlet Drive in Seven Oaks Terraces looking in a north-westerly direction towards the site. The single level dwelling in Lochridge Estate's proposed Lot 19 is visible above the shed, behind the foreground of young revegetation planting. The dwelling in proposed Lot 1 is visible in the far distance, backdropped by the eucalyptus plantings in the LIA in the northern part of the site. While the view has distinctive rural characteristics at present, the land in the foreground is part of the Seven Oaks Terraces residential lots currently being marketed for sale.

6.33 The view extends across the site with large parts of the site screened by the intervening landform and vegetation outside the site, in particular the stand of pine trees adjoining the southern part of the site. Marotiri is very prominent in the view extending to a height of 733m above sea level. The southern terrace within the site is visible to the right of, and behind the shed before the land drops off steeply to the west.

6.34 From here, some of the larger southern lots (1.0ha to 2.25ha) will be visible to varying degrees on the southern terrace, with some screened by the pine plantation. The central planted gully and slopes are to be planted which will provide a good buffer and vegetated setting to the future dwellings. The lots will be viewed as an extension to the developing Seven Oaks subdivision and while of greater intensity, will not appear incongruous.

6.35 Some of the larger Stage 4 lots (2.03ha to 3.52ha) on the elevated western terrace will be visible to varying degrees foregrounded by the proposed indigenous revegetation planting to the steep slopes. As these lots meet the minimum permitted site size, their visual appearance will not be dissimilar to that anticipated within the RLZ.

6.36 The proposed mitigation measures including a single storey height restriction of 4.5m, building colours will be darker natural recessive colours not exceeding a LVR of 37% and a building coverage restriction of 10% or 500m^2 will assist in integrating the proposed residential dwellings into the surrounding landscape (as is evidenced by the existing dwellings within the site).

6.37 The 20.40ha of indigenous planting areas will create a dense vegetated framework, over time, within which the dwellings will be viewed. The existing LIA area in the northern part of the site and the landform will provide a good backdrop to the dwellings and the recessive colours and single height building restriction will ensure that the built form will appear subservient to the surrounding expansive landscape, appear visually integrated with the natural landscape and not be visually prominent. Exposed earthworks will be grassed as soon as earthworks are completed, ensuring rapid visual mitigation and slope stabilisation.

6.38 Overall, there would be low adverse visual amenity effects from here. The proposal will be viewed as a continuum of the radial pattern of density extending out from the existing Kinloch settlement area.

Viewpoint 2: Seven Oaks Drive | Okaia Drive

6.39 Viewpoint 2 is taken from the intersection of Seven Oaks Drive and Okaia Drive looking in a northerly direction towards the site. The land in the foreground is the recently consented 87-lot Seven Oaks Stage 9-15 residential subdivision which will screen views in their entirety from here in the future. The view is representative of road users and residents within some of the dwellings in the vicinity.

6.40 The existing rural characteristics of the wider area are evident from here with the indigenous bush in the Otaketake Stream Scenic Reserve to the west of the site, pockets of bush in the gullies and steeper slopes, scarps, pockets of forestry, mixed exotic and indigenous tree stands and the backdrop volcanic landforms.

6.41 While visible to varying degrees from the residential area to the south, the proposal will be viewed within the Kinloch settlement context. The development will be seen integrated into the landscape with a strong framework of vegetation. The proposed mitigation measures will reduce any potential adverse visual effects to an acceptable level. Overall, the adverse visual effects will be low from here.

Viewpoint 3: Seven Oaks Drive | Broadleaf Way

6.42 Viewpoint is taken from the intersection of Seven Oaks Drive and Broadleaf Way looking in a north-easterly direction along the stream corridor. The dwelling with the white roof is located within Scarlett Drive. Immediately in front of it is the proposed Seven Oaks residential development. The vegetated characteristics of the Otaketake Stream Scenic Reserve are evident to the left of the view, extending along the western boundary of the site in the vicinity of the western plateau.

6.43 From here the proposal will be viewed beyond the foreground of the consented Seven Oaks development and adjacent Seven Oaks Terraces. Vegetation within the reserve will screen a number of the lots within the southwestern part of the site. The proposed

revegetation of the scarp on the eastern side of the western plateau will provide a vegetated framework to those lots. Similarly, proposed planting within the central gully system will create a significant vegetated buffer to the development, assisting to integrate the built form into the landscape. The backdrop landform and vegetation in the surrounding area will further mitigate potential adverse visual effects.

6.44 The proposal will be viewed as an extension to the existing Kinloch settlement patter, backdropped by the dominant natural elements of Lake Taupō's volcanic landscape. In light of the above, the adverse visual effects of the proposal will be low from here.

Viewpoint 4: Montgomery Crescent | Lisland Drive

6.45 Viewpoint 4 is taken from the intersection of Montgomery Crescent and Lisland Drive looking in a northerly direction towards the site from a distance of 1.6 kilometres away. As illustrated, the majority of the site is screened by the intervening landform and vegetation within the Okaia Stream Scenic Reserve and stand of pines trees within the adjoining property to the southeast. The two elevated dwellings are with the Seven Oaks Terraces development. The urban characteristics of the Kinloch settlement are evident here with varying architectural styles, built development and boundary treatments. The juxtaposition of residential development and the stream reserves is a strong and overriding characteristic, contributing to the amenity of Kinloch. Again, from here Marotiri forms a very prominent bush clad volcanic feature, reinforcing the origins of the Lake Taupō area.

6.46 From here the majority of the proposed development will be screened from view. Some of the larger Stage 4 lots on the elevated western terrace will be visible to varying degrees foregrounded by the proposed indigenous revegetation planting on the scarp. As these lots meet the minimum permitted site size, their visual appearance will not be dissimilar to that anticipated within the RLZ.

6.47 Where visible, the proposed subdivision will be viewed as a logical extension to the existing Kinloch settlement. The proposed built form and landscape mitigation measures will ensure that the development integrates well into the lakeside setting. Overall, the adverse visual effects will be very low from here.

Viewpoint 5: Lisland Drive

6.48 Viewpoint 5 is taken from the reserve in Lisland Drive, in the vicinity of number 124 looking in a northerly direction towards the site. The view extends across the reserve and residential area to the Seven Oaks Terraces development on the plateau and beyond to the western elevated area of the site. As illustrated, the majority of the site is screened by the landform and vegetation outside the site. The vegetated characteristics of the Okaia Stream Reserve are a dominant natural element as well as vegetation within DoC's Otaketake Stream Scenic Reserve to the west.

6.49 The view is representative of recreational users of the reserve, and similar views will be gained by residents in the vicinity. From here, some of the larger Stage 4 lots (2.03ha to 3.52ha) on the elevated western terrace will be visible to varying degrees foregrounded by the proposed indigenous revegetation planting to the steep slopes. As these lots meet the minimum permitted site size, their visual appearance will not be dissimilar to that anticipated within the RLZ.

6.50 The majority of the lots will be screened by the vegetation, landform and future development within Seven Oaks and Seven Oaks Terraces. Overall, the adverse visual effects will be very low from here.

Viewpoint 6: Harrier Lane

6.51 Viewpoint 6 is taken from Harrier Lane in Locheagles Rise, looking in a north-westerly direction towards the site from a distance of 2.85km away. From here the views are expansive with the established Kinloch settlement on the lower flats, the densely vegetated Okaia and Whangamata Stream Reserves extending sinuously down towards the lake, the Seven Oaks and Lochridge Estate developments and beyond to DoC's Otaketake Stream Scenic Reserve and SNA.

6.52 From here, parts of the site are screened by offsite vegetation including the vegetated LIA to the east of the site, the pine forestry tract, and landform within the site. A number of the lots will be visible, set within the vegetated framework which will assist to integrate them into the landscape. The built form mitigation measures will minimise potential adverse visual effects as evidenced by the existing dwelling within proposed Lot 1. Some of the larger lots on the elevated western plateau will be visible behind the foreground of the vegetated scarp. As these lots meet the minimum permitted site size, their visual appearance will not be dissimilar to that anticipated within the RLZ.

Viewpoint 7: Whakaroa Peninsula

6.53 Viewpoint 7 is taken from within the property at 387 Whakaroa Road on the Whakaroa Peninsula, looking in a north-westerly direction towards the site from a distance of 4.5km. From here the views are expansive across the Kinloch settlement and beyond to the more distant rural land. The densely vegetated stream reserves are a dominant natural characteristic within the settlement effectively compartmentalising the built development areas.

6.54 The landform transitions from the valley floor northwards to the rolling and undulating terrain inland. The landscape opens up into the expansive, rural character of the volcanic plateau defined by vast, open productive pastoral land. Rural land use and development patterns influence the character and visual amenity of the wider area, with the open spatial character of the landscape compartmentalised by large tracts of production forestry, rural plantings, hedgerows, and, typically in steeper or less accessible areas, remnant native vegetation. The landform is incised by a highly legible network of deeply incised gullies, often densely vegetated with regenerating bush. Marotiri is very prominent in the view reinforcing the volcanic origins of the area.

6.55 From here the proposal will be viewed integrated well into the landscape. Visibility will be reduced significantly through the viewing distance and wider expansive landscape context. The proposed landscape mitigation measures will ensure the built form sits within a well vegetated framework, reinforcing the prevailing Kinloch characteristics. The built form mitigation measures will further integrate the dwellings into the landscape setting. While of greater density, the proposal will reinforce the radial pattern of density extending out from the Kinloch settlement.

6.56 In cognisance of the scale and expanse of the wider landscape setting, the small scale nature of the proposal, and the proposed building and landscape mitigation measures, I consider that the adverse visual amenity effects would be very low from this elevated location. The proposal could be accommodated without adversely affecting the visual amenity values of the site, surrounding area and in particular the Whakaroa Point to Otuparae Point and Te Kauwae Peninsula ONFL's.

Viewpoint 8: Whangamata Bay

6.57 Viewpoint 8 is taken from within Whangamata Bay looking in a north-easterly direction towards the site. From here the juxtaposition between the horizontality of the lake

surface, vegetated cliffs and escarpments and the skyline interface is a dominant and commanding visual characteristic. The viewer's eye is drawn to the visual transition of land, water and sky.

6.58 The viewing audience from here includes recreational users of the lake, predominantly in boats or kayaks. The majority of users would be transient, travelling through the water, although some may be static (e.g. fishing). The transient nature of the view lessens the visual effects, with the viewers' attention unlikely to focus on the site for a prolonged period. From here, the views are panoramic encompassing the northern extent of Whangamata Bay, Kinloch and the backdrop volcanic landforms. The site is visible with the undulating grassed slopes, terraces and steeper scarps. The existing access drive is visible descending the slope and the two dwellings can be seen, well integrated into the landscape through their lower height and recessive colours.

6.59 From this lower viewing location, the proposal will be visible extending up the slope behind the foreground of the Seven Oaks subdivision. The proposed mitigation measures including the height restriction and use of recessive colours will address potential adverse visual amenity effects of the proposal and assist to blend the dwellings into the landscape.

6.60 The landscape has the capacity to absorb development as enabled by the proposal through the densely vegetated foreshore, existing built development within Kinloch and the expanse and scale of the wider landscape. The proposal forms a very small component of the expansive landscape setting and within the context of the landform and lake characteristics the adverse effects on visual amenity are considered to be low.

6.61 The extensive indigenous planting areas will create a dense vegetated framework within which the dwellings will be viewed. The existing LIA area in the northern part of the site and the volcanic landforms will provide a good backdrop to the dwellings.

6.62 In cognisance of the scale and expanse of the wider landscape setting and the small scale nature of the proposal, I consider that the adverse visual amenity effects would be low from here. The proposal could be accommodated without adversely affecting the visual amenity values of Lake Taupo's OLA.

6.63 From this viewing distance the increased density would be hard to discern within the context of the expansive landscape setting. The scale and expanse of the Te Kauwae Peninsula landform, vegetated characteristics of the reserves and SNA areas and juxtaposition of the land – sky interface results in a landscape entirely capable of accommodating a development as proposed.

6.64 Overall, the adverse effects on the visual amenity values would be very low.

Wider surrounding area

6.65 From other locations within the wider surrounding area, views towards the proposal would be highly variable due to distance, orientation of the view, diversity of elements within the view and screening elements (buildings, landform, shelterbelts, prevailing vegetation patterns). Where visible from these areas, the proposal would integrate sensitively into the landscape due to the scale of the proposal relative to the site context and surrounding environs. Any potential adverse visual effects would be localised and would have very low adverse visual effects on the visual amenity and landscape values of the site and surrounding area.

Cumulative effects

6.66 Cumulative effects come into play in circumstances where an additional effect takes a landscape beyond a 'tipping point' which would normally require a benchmark against which the effects are to be measured. Such benchmarks might include the character envisaged in the district plan or the 'capacity' of a landscape to accommodate development before compromising its landscape values (its valued attributes).[6]

6.67 In my opinion the proposed subdivision will not exceed the capacity of the landscape to absorb the changes or compromise its existing landscape values or attributes. I do not consider that the proposal would adversely diminish and affect the local landscape character, values and pattern of the surrounding residential and more distant rural environment. The site has a restricted visual catchment and the existing landform and vegetation patterns within the site and outside it provide a good visual buffer to the site. The proposed building and landscape mitigation measures will ensure that the proposal integrates well into the landscape. The proposal will be viewed as part of the hierarchy of residential development radiating back from the lake edge. I therefore consider that there will be no adverse cumulative effects resulting from the proposal.

7 Conclusion

7.1 The application site and surrounding area are well suited for the proposal in that they contain a number of natural landscape elements and features that would assist in integrating and/or screening the proposed subdivision from the surrounding environment. The elevation of the site, localised landforms and on and off-site vegetation patterns mean that views towards the proposal would be screened from a number of public and private areas from with the Kinloch settlement.

7.2 The proposal would not be out of character with the surrounding residential and rural lifestyle activities, and urban settlement within the Kinloch Township and the potential landscape character effects from the proposal on the character and amenity of the environment are considered to be acceptable.

7.3 The proposal is of a small scale in relation to the wider surrounding rural environment. The restricted visual catchment, existing landform and vegetation patterns would mitigate any adverse effects on the rural character of the wider area and ensure that the amenity values of the surrounding area would be maintained. The proposal would be an appropriate use for the location and would be of a scale which would integrate well into the landscape setting.

7.4 The natural characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character of the surrounding environment would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The physical and visual integrity of the area would be retained, and the biophysical and hydrological natural processes of the location would not be adversely affected. The proposal would have no adverse effects on the ecological values of the lake environment or the macrofaunal communities within and around the lake margin including native and exotic fauna.

7.5 The landscape attributes of the OLA's would not be adversely affected by the proposal. The Whakaroa and Te Kauwae Peninsulas would retain their high visual and physical prominence when viewed from within the lake and surrounding areas. The site is well buffered from Lake Taupō's OLA and ONFL The characteristics and values of Lake Taupō's OLA including the expansive area of water, and memorable and vivid attributes would

[6] Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 6.46 [p. 155]

not be adversely affected by the proposal. The physical, aesthetic and associative attributes would be retained.

7.6 Any potential adverse landscape effects (including effects on rural character) of the proposed development would be localised and would have low adverse effects on the quality, character, and aesthetic values of the wider rural setting. The proposal is not of a scale or appearance which would dominate or detract significantly from the wider rural environment.

7.7 In my opinion I consider that within the context of the established urban and rural environment the proposal could be effectively integrated and assimilated into the site and surrounding landscape. Overall, the adverse effects on the natural character, landscape character, and visual amenity values of the surrounding Taupō environment would be low (less than minor).



Rob J Pryor
NZILA Tuia Pito Ora Registered Landscape Architect
September 2026



Annexure 1: Viewpoint Location Map and Photographs





Viewpoint 1: Scarlet Drive



Viewpoint 2: Seven Oaks Drive | Okaia Drive



Viewpoint 3: Seven Oaks Drive | Broadleaf Way



Viewpoint 4: Montgomery Crescent | Lisland Drive



Viewpoint 5: Lisland Drive



Viewpoint 6: Harrier Lane



Viewpoint 7: Whakaroa Peninsula



Viewpoint 8: Whangamata Bay