

# LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL S92 RESPONSE

## Goodland Coastal Farm 2127 Kaipara Coast Highway, Kakanui

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Kaipara Coast Landscape Architecture prepared a Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment for the proposed development of 2127 Kaipara Coast Highway, Kakanui into 25 Lots, with an updated version of the document produced in May 2022 further to changes arising from an informal S92 request issued in December 2022 which was then responded to.

The following is a response to a formal Section 92 request for further information regarding landscape and visual matters. The numbers of this document correspond with the number of the Auckland Council S92 questions.

### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

#### 57. What is the proposed materiality of the retaining walls?

Retaining walls have been minimised as much as possible. The preference has been to recontour the land to grade it back as naturally as possible into the surrounding landform.

Where required for stability and for preservation of adjacent vegetation, retaining walls are to be timber up to 2.5 metres and are to be stained dark grey tones. These walls either have vegetation located in front of them to screen them, or have vegetation spilling over the top of them to soften their appearance.

Where walls are over 1 metre high a simple black pool fence is to be attached to the top.

Some of the walls, such as those in and around the stream crossing at the site entry, are to be either gabion basket, stacked concrete blocks, or a reinforced soil system that can be planted. The exact nature of these walls have not yet been finalised and will likely change during the detailed design process. However, the intention is for these walls to be as narrow as possible so that they have as small a footprint as possible and for them to disappear into the surrounding landscape and be as inconspicuous as possible.

58. *Section 5.1.1 of the LVA from Kaipara Coast Landscape Architecture discusses the potential adverse effect of the proposal on the ONL and on the HNCA. The LVA notes that (in particular) the values of the HNCA are linked to the unbuilt and rural / natural character of the landscape. Further, it was noted in Schedule 8 of the AUP that". the peripheral*

*modification associated with the reclaimed flats disrupts the sense of cohesion and intactness within the wider coastal environment."*

*It is acknowledged that the proposed areas for development are separate from the ONL and HNCA, but it is questioned whether the development of a sequence of clusters of settlement, with associated infrastructure may have the potential to detract from the perceptual naturalness of the HNCA. Please provide further assessment in relation to this matter.*

A lot of thought and care has been taken in the strategic design of the proposal to ensure that the natural landscape features and characteristics of the subject property and the surrounding landscape are retained and enhanced. The underlying factors that were considered during the design phase of this proposal have been articulated in the background assessment of the LVEA.

The subject property is currently in a state of degradation, with stock allowed to roam through the established native vegetation and wetland areas that are pugged which no doubt results in silt entering into the adjacent waterways and the Kaipara Harbour. There are tufts of mature canopy trees located in and around the majority of the riparian areas however the current grazing practices mean that any potential regeneration under these trees do not have a chance to establish.

One of the big challenges currently facing the Kaipara Harbour environs is the pollution of the waterways, predominantly through silt entering the stream networks and making its way out to the harbour. Given this issue, the Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme has been set up to restore the health and mauri of the Kaipara Moana catchment area and reduce the amount of sediment entering the harbour. This is primarily focusing on fencing and planting riparian, coastal and eroding hill country areas. This is similar to the areas on the subject land that are to be restored. Over time, this will positively contribute to the reinforcement of the natural landscape values of the Kaipara Moana broader area. Landscape patterns associated with native vegetation in and around riparian areas will have a stronger influence on the character of the Kaipara Harbour environs, with pasture associated with grazing woven around these areas. The proposal for the subject land is very complementary to this land management regime.

The proposal to fence off, protect and replant large areas of native bush in broad areas around the existing vegetation will significantly enhance the natural landscape values and enable the existing native vegetation to thrive. When viewed from the surrounding landscape, including the Kaipara Harbour, the landscape patterns, with vegetation planted on steep slopes and within gully systems, will be strong and clear. This outcome to restore the health and vitality of large areas of native vegetation and enhance the natural landscape values has been one of the guiding principles behind the proposal. The open pasture is to be woven in and around the vegetation linkages in an organic layout and using management regimes that protects the soils.

The overriding strategy for the design of the development in and around this farm is to ensure that built form is subservient to the natural landscape features. This is why the building platforms are tucked in adjacent to existing mature vegetation, and why they are to be framed in existing and proposed vegetation. The convoluted nature of the landform is such that the only place in which it would be possible to see all possible building platforms is from the air, with discrete pockets of development potentially visible from any one location in the broader surrounds. Design controls are in place to ensure that the potential adverse visual impact of buildings is minimised. The recessive colours, complex style and nature of the built form, prevalence of vegetation in and around the buildings and the low impact on the landform assist in this.

The anticipated outcome is that the proposal will represent a significant enhancement of the natural landscape values of the subject property when viewed from the broader surrounds. There will be clear landscape patterns with the natural complexity of the native vegetation forming strong patterns within the gully systems and with the pasture wrapping around this. From different locations, such as on the Kaipara Harbour, parts of buildings will be visible in amongst vegetation which will be visually associated with the complexity of the surrounding native bush. The large areas of the reclaimed flats at the base of the property will revert back to rushes and native vegetation bringing back a cohesion and connection with the coastal environment in and around this large peninsula of land. This includes the large flat areas located between the Kakanui Stream and the subject land that are currently included as part of the grazing regime for the farm, but are outside the farm boundary.

59. In 5.1.1, the LVA discusses the biotic / biophysical benefits that will be provided, notes that the perceptual elements of landscape character will be advantaged by the enhancement of the natural vegetation patterns. It opines that the enhanced vegetation patterns will enable the integration of the proposed development, and that this will be facilitated by the design guidelines. The relevant AUP(OP) provisions have a strong focus on the maintenance and enhancement of rural character, amenity values and biodiversity values. Given the existing pastoral character of the Harbour hinterland hills with very low existing density of development, the integration of built form, and landscape patterns associated with the domestic use of the landscape (including roading, accessory buildings and structures, gardens etc) is potentially challenging and some reliance is therefore placed on the guidelines achieving the stated objectives of the development.

The Design Guidelines explain that prior to Building Consent being lodged, the plans must be reviewed against the guidelines by a design review group.

A consent notice condition relating to the Design Guidelines is proposed in the AEE (and it is agreed that references to development controls would be necessary in a consent notice condition) however this approach would require review and approval by both the design review group and the Council.

- a. How is the design review group proposed to operate, and who will be on this group?
- b. The language used in some aspects of the Design Guidelines enables a degree of flexibility and could result in different conclusions by the design review group and the Council. Is this

your expectation (i.e. that this could occur) and that this could require individual future owners to obtain consents (such as 221 RMA variation)?

Goodland Coastal Farm Residents Association will employ independent experts in landscape architecture, architecture and / or urban design to form a design review panel to confirm that the buildings, surrounds and landscaping meets the approved guidelines prior to lodging the application with Auckland Council.

This panel is to be put in place to provide constructive feedback for designers, and may request changes if buildings / proposals don't meet expectations.

The Design Guidelines have been constructed to enable as much flexibility as possible within the parameters created to achieve an outcome where the buildings are to visually and physically be tucked into, or disappear into, existing and proposed vegetation. The intention is not for the buildings to look the same, but that the buildings all be recessive and comply with the development vision statement, core values and objectives.

The Goodland Coastal Farm Residents' Association panel of experts will assess the proposals prior to them being lodged with the Council and therefore the Council can be satisfied that the design intent for the subdivision has been satisfied. It is anticipated that future owners should not need to obtain a 221 RMA variation.

60. When considering the effect of the proposed built form and associated infrastructure on the character of the landscape, what assumptions were made in the LVA - ie, was the potential for a dwelling, minor household unit and accessory building (cumulatively up to the maximum allowable coverage of 500m<sup>2</sup>) on the majority of lots, as well as the subdivision roading / driveways, retaining walls, communal building and car park taken into account in the assessment?

From the outset, the proposed capacity of development of this landscape and the overriding design principles were guided by landscape architecture outcomes. The sensitive nature of this landscape, proximity to the Kaipara Harbour and value placed on the land by Mana Whenua were primary considerations. All aspects of the design have been rigorously assessed during the design process to ensure that they will result in an outcome that has positive visual and environmental outcomes.

Future development has been kept away from the state highway with proposed building platforms kept off ridgelines and tucked down in the lower reaches of the property and adjacent to existing and proposed vegetation which will assist in screening and softening any structures which is intended to merge into the complexity of the adjacent native bush.

The relatively contained nature of the building platforms and maximum controls on allowable building coverage, combined with the controls detailed within the design guidelines restrict the size, nature and style of the built form. It is considered that providing that built form complies with these controls a degree of flexibility as to the exact nature of the outcome is desirable. They will provide enough controls to have the desired outcome, but enough flexibility to enable future owners to put their own stamp on their properties.

The aim is to construct the subdivision roading/driveways so that they blend in as much as possible. If they are visible from the surrounds, they are to appear to be farm tracks. The land surrounding them is to be blended back into the natural contours of the landform and reseeded with grass. In the areas where retaining walls are required they are to either be screened by vegetation in the front, or have vegetation spilling over them. They are to be recessive in colour.

The communal building is to be single level and located on a lower elevation. As with other buildings it will be recessive in colour and will be largely screened behind vegetation. The car parking associated with the communal building will be tucked in behind the building and adjacent to proposed vegetation.

61. The LVA determines that the landscape effect of the proposal will be very low, that the effect on the ONL and HNCA will be positive, that the effect on rural character will be very low, and that the potential adverse visual effect will be very low. Since the establishment of a vegetative structure on the Site is a key integrative and mitigative measure proposed in the application, will the level of adverse effect be very low (or positive) from the outset, or is a temporary elevated level of adverse effect anticipated? What will temporary effects be?

It is anticipated that one of the first elements of the development to be constructed will be the roading network. There will be some temporary adverse visual effect as this is established given that there will likely be some scarring on the landform with the exposure of soil as the earthworks are being undertaken. This is to be remedied as soon as possible and is only expected to have short term adverse effects that may be low – moderate in nature.

With few exceptions, the proposed planting can be implemented within the first planting season following issuing of consent (provisional on adequate supply of plants). Given the steep nature of the site and the soil type, the installation of the fencing will likely need to be undertaken during the dryer summer months. This means that the planting programme over most of the site will not have to wait until other works have been completed. This is able to be achieved as the only earthworks anticipated is that required for the construction of the roading network.

As noted within the Design Guidelines, the building platforms for each site are to retain their natural form which means that any earthworks on each site will be minor and will likely occur immediately prior to the construction of each dwelling on the site. This will minimise potential visual scarring when viewed from the surrounds and will ensure that earthworks is undertaken incrementally, in a piecemeal fashion, which will be less visually intrusive.

The proposed vegetation will take a while to establish and therefore for the first five years, while vegetation is establishing and not yet at a point where the canopies join, buildings will likely be more prominent. It is noted that there will likely be a delay of one to two years between the planting of the proposed vegetation required (and restoration of the native bush) as part of subdivision consent and construction beginning on future dwellings. This is

due to the time delays between subdivision consent being granted then purchase of a title followed by design and building consent being granted and construction beginning.

It is concluded that the potential adverse temporary landscape and visual effects of the proposed development for the first five years are likely to be low to moderate in nature reducing to very low and positive once the vegetation has established enough to adequately screen future built form with the vegetative patterns being more visible.