

PEERS BROWN MILLER LTD

Arboricultural & Environmental Consultants

REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION – MURIWAI DOWNS GOLF PROJECT

TO: Reporting Planner – Auckland Council
FROM: Matthew Paul
DATE: 28.03.2022

Applicant: The Bears Home Project Management Ltd

Proposed activity(s): The construction, operation and maintenance of a golf course, sports academy and luxury accommodation complex, including all associated ancillary buildings, structures and activities (the project)

Site address: 670 Muriwai Road, Muriwai Valley

1.0 Background

An application for resource consent has been lodged to re-develop 670 Muriwai Road, Muriwai Valley.

A request for more information from the Council planner processing the application has been received by the applicant, in which further information on an aspect of the proposal involving arboricultural/landscape matters was requested.

The following items provided as part of this request require comment from an arboricultural perspective.

2.0 Discussion of Point 35

Response

Please confirm whether any alternatives were considered in order to retain trees? For example, was the landscape values of each side of the road (values of the trees / groups) considered when deciding on the alignment?

The existing character of this road is derived in part by the nature of the vegetation, views to the open pastoral landscape is due to the sparse areas of planting and often gnarly trees. They contribute to the west coast character of Muriwai with this site being its gateway.

From an arboricultural perspective, it was deemed more pertinent to retain the continuity of the vegetation growing on the southern side of the road. There is much greater ecosystem services and benefit derived from retaining the largely continuous vegetation on the southern side when compared to the fragmented clusters on the northern side.

3.0 Discussion of Point 70

Maintenance/construction access to Green 7/Tee 8 (clearing within the SEA), is proposed via the use of an old farm track which is no longer used. This requires earthworks and tree trimming and the permanent loss of this area as SEA. It is also noted that no SEA loss or earthworks for the construction of the golf buggy tracks is shown in this location. Please update plans to show the earthworks and vegetation removal required to construct and maintain the greens/tees, bridges and golf buggy tracks.

Response

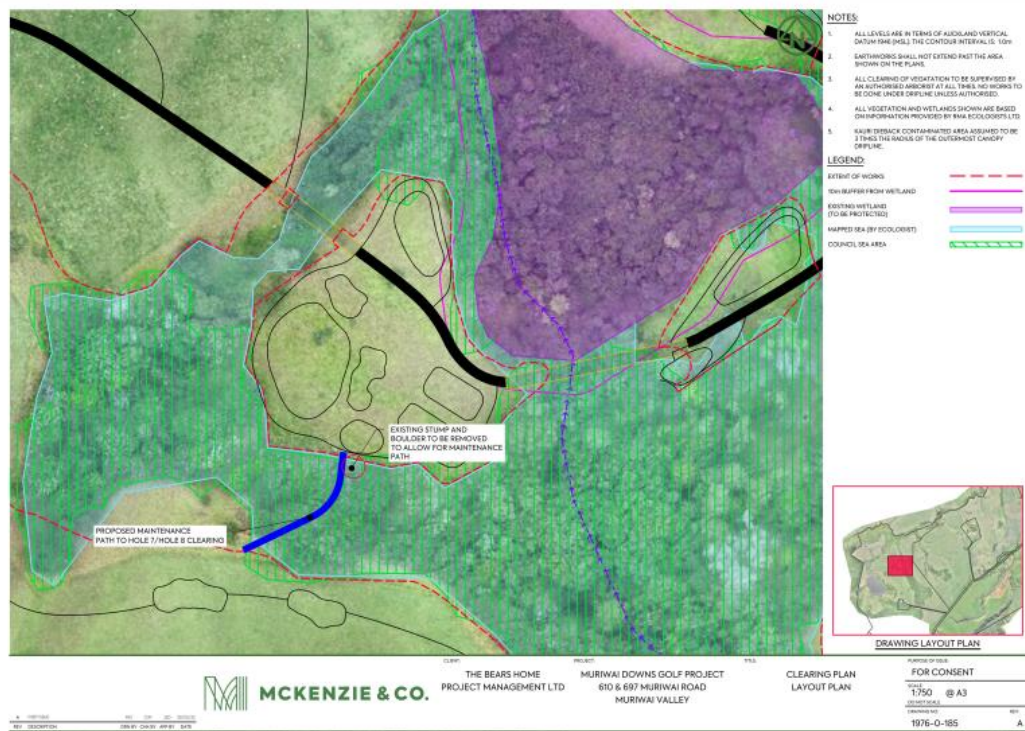


Figure 1 – Updated plan showing access track to be used for construction and long-term maintenance

4.0 Discussion of Point 87

Kohekohe tree T10 – This tree is proposed to be pruned in excess of the ‘trimming’ standard, to facilitate a machinery access track down to the 7th green. Please outline what track alignment options have been considered and discounted as it is considered that there is sufficient existing clearance for the track to be realigned to avoid the need for pruning and works in the root zone of this tree.

Response

Following on site discussed with Council specialists and the project team, the proposed access has been re-aligned to avoid the Kohekohe tree, with the existing fallen stump to be relocated and track moved away from T10. This is reflected in the drawing 1976-0-185 illustrated in Figure 1.

A small amount of new fill (base course) at a maximum depth of 150mm will still be required within the protected root zone of T10 - to form the new access track. The area where the re-aligned track is to be located drops steeply away from the main informal farm track. As such, fill will be required to increase the gradient for all weather access.

Minor pruning (10% and up to 50mm branches) to lift the tree for construction and access so as to avoid machinery conflict in the future.

All works are to be supervised in accordance with the tree management plan (TMP) provided in Section 12 of the submitted Arboricultural Assessment provided by Peers Brown Miller Ltd.

5.0 Discussion of Point 88

Kahikatea tree (T13a) is a mature tree adjacent to the hole 8 footbridge. The tree is proposed for removal due to a perceived risk of stem failure that may readily be alleviated by placement of a restraining bolt above the included stem junction. Outline what options have been considered in order to retain this tree including the option of a restraining bolt.

Response

It is accepted that the installation of a stainless-steel bolt will adequately manage the risk of stem failure in the medium term. As such, this tree will now be retained and worked around with annual inspections to be undertaken by a qualified arborist to ensure the bolt is adequate to maintain the ongoing health and safety of this tree.

6.0 Discussion of Point 89

Pruning of the Karaka (T27) and Kahikatea tree (G28) to achieve the required sightlines will exceed the E15.6.9 SEA trimming standard. The Peers Brown Miller tree report suggests that the pruning is deemed acceptable from an arboricultural perspective, however, this does not account for the reduced ability of mature trees to resist the ingress of fungal pathogens when wounded, the time taken to occlude pruning wounds, and the reduction in tree vitality when pruning is coupled with works in the root zone. Please update the arboricultural report to provide this assessment which includes the effects of the pruning upon mature trees as a result of that extent of pruning.

As outlined in paragraph 8.62 of the Arboricultural Assessment, it is suggested that pruning of T27 will initially be undertaken to provide the required sight line clearance. This pruning is to be limited to approximately 20% of the tree's live canopy if the tree is to be retained.

Response**T27**

It is acknowledged that pruning in excess of 20% of the live canopy in the case of mature trees, on a regular basis, can be detrimental to the long-term health of the tree and as such removal and replacement of such a tree would be considered the best long-term option if pruning is excessively frequent (being more than once a year). As per the same paragraph in the aforementioned Assessment, permission for the removal of this tree is requested in case the works are seen too extensive for the tree to continue to thrive. In my arboricultural opinion, the retention of a mature tree is more beneficial, provided it can be managed with minimal pruning, than removal and replacement with a smaller tree in the first instance.

It will be the responsibility of the works arborist to confer with the design team once the course works have reached a point at which the full sight line requirements can be determined. Only at this point would a decision be made as to the right course of action for T27, be that retention or removal and replacement with two new trees in an alternate location.

G38

The pruning of the Kahikatea tree within G38 will be largely limited to low hanging branches with the majority of the canopy already high enough so that only minor initial pruning will be needed as part of bridge construction. The overhanging branches are relatively small, being predominately less than 60mm in diameter and only 2-3 branches to be pruned back to the main stem. Once the initial works are undertaken, there will be infrequent need for pruning as the new bridge will keep at least a 2.0m gap between the tree and the edge of the boardwalk.

As the alignment has not been fully designed or detailed as part of the RC stage, there will be opportunity for further inputs into final heights and offsets to ensure the structure will be as far from the tree as practical - while still achieving the desired purpose of transitioning golf carts around the Fairway.

7.0 Discussion of Point 90

There are instances where the Application suggests that there may be a need for further tree pruning or removal "to be determined at the time of construction." This reduces the ability to make an accurate effects assessment, given that once the project has gained consent, if there are not clear limitations, there will be pressure upon the tree contractor to maximise the clearance for visibility and lines of sight from tees and fairways to the greens. Clarify the extent of works that consent is being sought for and include a background explanation for all points.

Where tree pruning or removal has not explicitly been detailed or described, the expectation is that any pruning works will be undertaken in accordance with permitted activity standards defined in Chapter 15 of the AUP. In my opinion, it is not deemed necessary or practical to provide a detailed breakdown of minor pruning activity to be undertaken either as part of construction or as part of the golf course operations. In my arboricultural opinion, the permitted pruning standard E15.6.9 for works within those areas that are subject to an SEA overlay would be adequate in this case and will give adequate scope for any minor pruning where required.

Where additional protection is afforded to vegetation outside of the SEA areas, it is considered that the provision of pruning allowed for under Rule E15.4.1 (A9) would be sufficient for the ongoing maintenance of the new tracks and bridge structures once established.

8.0 Discussion of Point 132c

The following additional reasons for consent have been identified (note that additional reasons may be identified during processing). Please confirm that you are applying for consent under these matters.

- c) *E15.4.1 (A24) Permitted, controlled and restricted discretionary activities in Table E15.4.2 that do not comply with one or more of the standards in E15.6 (Discretionary) - Some of the crown lifting proposed will not likely meet the PA standards*

In two cases, it is considered that the proposed pruning works may exceed the permitted standards outlined in E15.6. This would be the lifting of T7 to enable construction works and for the lifting of a Kohekohe and Karaka tree growing along the proposed boardwalk pathway between the 8th Tee and the 8th Fairway. A marked up layout plan is provided in Appendix A of this response.

As the alignment of the access pathway adjacent to T7 will now be altered, pruning will be limited to an overhead clearance of 2.5m. However, due to the tree's weeping canopy form, this pruning will alter the current habit of the tree. However, it is considered that the actual level of severance would not significantly impact the tree's physiological or structural health. The pruning of this tree will be limited to branches no larger than 50mm and up to 10% of the tree's canopy.

In the case of the two trees, being a Kohekohe and Karaka tree growing over the proposed boardwalk access between 8th Tee and 8th Fairway, identified as K1 & K2 in Figure 1. of this response, the pruning works would similarly involve the removal of the lower hanging branches to gain adequate clearance. This pruning would likely exceed 10% of the tree's canopy in the case of K2 and be nearer to 20 %, with the weeping habit also modified in the case of both K1 & K2.

In saying this, the trees are healthy specimens and will, in my arboricultural opinion, recover from the pruning works and continue to thrive in the new, modified environment.



Figure 2 – K1 & K2 as shown overhanging the proposed boardwalk pathway between 8th Tee and 8th Fairway

9.0 Conclusion

This report has been prepared to address the arboricultural matters raised by Auckland Council as part of the proposed development of 670 Muriwai Road.

Please contact me if you require any further information via email at matt.paul@peersbrownmiller.co.nz.

Matthew Paul
Director
Peers Brown Miller Ltd

Appendix A

Layout Plan Showing K1 & K2

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