

**BEFORE THE WAIPĀ DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of Proposed Plan Change 20 – Airport Northern  
Precinct Extension to the Operative Waipā  
District Plan

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF LISA JACK**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY**

**28 FEBRUARY 2023**

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**Counsel acting:**  
JR Welsh  
ChanceryGreen  
223 Ponsonby Road  
Ponsonby, Auckland 1011



## INTRODUCTION

### Qualifications and experience

1. My full name is Lisa Anne Jack. I am employed by Harrison Grierson as a Principal Landscape Architect, based in its Auckland office. I hold a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (2006) from Unitec in Auckland, New Zealand. I am a Registered member of Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (“NZILA”).
2. I have 13 years of experience as a practising Landscape Architect, 12 of those years in New Zealand. I have experience in landscape assessment, design, restorative planting and contract implementation for a range of project types and scales. My role with Harrison Grierson is primarily designing and managing landscape implementation of residential greenfield and brownfield subdivision projects, most notably in the Waikato and Auckland Regions. Examples of these projects include: Pokeno industrial and residential subdivision for Dines Group Ltd; Waiata Shores, Kowhai Ridge, Browns Road and Red Beach Peninsula greenfield residential subdivisions for Fletcher Living in Auckland; Ormiston Town Centre development and Flatbush School Road residential subdivision for Todd Property Group in Auckland; Tait Communications Campus expansion in Christchurch; Scott Point School in Auckland; Edgecumbe College in Bay of Plenty; Wayside Road in Te Kauwhata as a reporting officer for Waikato District Council; and for a Plan Change in Pokeno to extend future urban zoning.
3. From 2020 to 2022 I was either a mentor or member (or both) of the panel for the NZILA assessing members applying to become registered with NZILA.
4. I am familiar with the application site and the surrounding locality. I have read the relevant parts of: the application; submissions; further submissions and the Section 42A Report.

### Involvement in Proposed Plan Change 20

5. I have been engaged by Titanium Park Limited (“TPL”) and Rukuhia Properties Limited (“RPL”) to prepare evidence for Proposed Plan Change 20 (“PC20”). I was the author of *Landscape & Visual Assessment, Northern Precinct Expansion* (“LVA Report”), associated with TPL/RPL’s request. I was also the author of *Landscape Architecture – Response to request for further information dated 12 August 2022*.
6. I have visited the PC20 site (the “Site”) and the locality on a number of occasions, most recently in February 2023.

## **Code of Conduct**

7. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note (2023) and I agree to comply with it. In that regard, I confirm that this evidence is written within my expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

## **SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

8. In my evidence, I:
  - (a) provide an executive summary of my key conclusions;
  - (b) set out a description of the Site;
  - (c) summarise the relevant aspects of PC20 with respect to character and visual amenity values and the proposed greenbelt;
  - (d) set out an assessment of PC20 with respect to existing character and anticipated character and visual amenity effects;
  - (e) Respond to relevant submissions; and
  - (f) Respond to the s42A Report.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

9. The Airport Business Zone currently applies to approximately 41ha of the Site under the Operative Waipā District Plan (“District Plan”), with industrial and airport related activities in existing Airport Business zoning established to the east of the Site. PC20 proposes to extend this existing Airport Business Zone to enable industrial related uses to be carried out within the full site boundary. PC20’s effect on public views to the Site would be to broaden the area supporting these uses to the boundary of Middle Road.
10. The LVA Report which I completed in support of PC20 made the following conclusions:
  - (a) Character changes for the Site from a pastoral rural setting with agricultural values to a built form and structure associated with the ‘Airport Business Zone’ are enabled and expected in relation to the eastern area of the Site, which is already zoned accordingly. Changes in character for the western part of the Site are expected in the future and connected with identified future growth areas in the District Plan and the Waka Kotahi ‘Southern Links’ designation.

- (b) Mana whenua engagement identified that significant sight lines to Pirongia should be retained and enhanced through street layout and orientation, which is reflected in the proposed Structure Plan (“Structure Plan”) and which I support.
  - (c) Landscape effects will be associated with a change in use from rural to industrial, involving earthworks to create building platforms and the removal of some rural vegetation with landscaping. Due to the largely level topography of the Site, the most significant earthworks would be those associated with the removal of a small hill.
  - (d) Visual amenity effects will be associated with the extension of the existing Airport Business Zone. Public views for those in transit would be brief and consistent with views experienced in the existing industrial area to the east of the Site. Views for neighbouring residents would be static and a notable change in character but would be softened by existing rules and the proposed landscaping provisions, along with the visual break created by the Bat Habitat Areas.
  - (e) I have assessed that the overall effects of the above will be low for the wider area, and low-moderate for neighbouring residents. This is due to approximately 41ha of the Site area already enabling development in line with the Airport Business Zone, and due to the proposed Bat Habitat Areas, landscape buffer and building setback provisions.
11. I made recommendations that have been included in the Structure Plan and PC20 provisions.<sup>1</sup> These require:
- (a) Amendments to the existing zone rules to require precinct boundaries to include landscape buffers with other zones. The proposed provisions include specific standards that add to the existing District Plan rules to further dictate the height and extent of these buffers.
  - (b) An additional rule to provide vegetation screening buffers of a specific height and depth between the Airport Business Zone and adjacent zones.
12. These recommendations have been incorporated into the PC20 provisions. I consider these amendments are appropriate to visually soften the change in rural character and amenity values as seen from the surrounding rural landscape.

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<sup>1</sup> Annexure 2 of Mr Grala’s evidence.



13. Since writing the LVA Report, the Structure Plan has been amended to include an area of the Site identified as 'Bat Habitat Areas', which consists of a 50m wide corridor, and a significant proportion of the area referred to as the Hub. Planning provisions protect particular existing trees in these areas and they will be the subject of enhancement planting. The location of these areas also provides further visual amenity and softening of views to the proposed change in character as seen by residents on Middle Road.
14. Landscaping provisions are proposed to create buffers between the proposed Airport Business Zone and Rural Zone boundaries. A landscaping buffer and building setback provision is specified for boundaries with Rural zoned properties. The future industrial built form along these boundaries will be setback at least 15m, which will minimise any bulk or overlooking effects in addition to the vegetated buffer that, once mature, will ensure these properties retain visual amenity values similar to existing boundary treatments within the Rural Zone. The landscaping and building setback provisions also resolve the submission relating to greenbelt provision,<sup>2</sup> in particular along the boundaries of adjoining Rural zoned landowners.
15. The relevant submissions that I respond to raise concerns relating to the loss of visual amenity values associated with a rural lifestyle environment, lack of greenbelt provision and the proposed removal of a small hill.
16. In my assessment the effect on visual amenity values associated with rural lifestyle environments is considered low for the wider environment, and low-moderate for adjacent residents considering the PC20 provisions. I have based this on the existing environment (including Hamilton Airport and other precincts of Titanium Park), the change in character already being provided for under the District Plan and the Waka Kotahi 'Southern Links' designation, along with areas identified for future zoning changes.<sup>3</sup> This assessment is also based on my recommended provisions that will soften and screen views to the Site.
17. I note that the existing Airport Business Zone has design guidelines that must be applied to any development within the area. These design guidelines (updated as necessary) will also apply to Northern Precinct. I consider these design guidelines appropriate to achieve an attractive and high-quality development for finer grained landscape outcomes below the requirements of the existing and proposed provisions.

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<sup>2</sup> Submitter 6.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix S1 of the WDP

18. In response to these factors, I believe that PC20 has adequately addressed and responded to changing landscape and visual amenity values. It is my opinion that the proposed Structure Plan and planning provisions are sufficient to ensure a future environment that visually integrates with existing and future uses.

## **CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

### **Site Description**

19. The Site covers approximately 130ha of land in the southern outskirts of Hamilton and west of Cambridge in the Waipa District. It is bordered by State Highway 3 (SH3), Raynes Road and the Hamilton Airport. It includes seven lots, all of which are used for residential, agricultural research or farming purposes. The Site extends out from the western edge of the airport runway strips and down from these elevated points, out to Ohaupo, Narrows and Raynes Roads.
20. Approximately 41ha of the Site is zoned 'Airport Business', with the remainder being zoned 'Rural' but identified as 'Possible Future Growth Area' and 'Future Extension Direction' in Appendix S1 – Future Growth Cells of the District Plan.
21. Waka Kotahi has designated land for a future state highway and connections ('Southern Links') which is adjacent to the Site and abuts the Site on the north at the intersection with Raynes and Narrows Rd, and on the west along SH3.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN CHANGE**

22. PC20 seeks to extend the Hamilton 'Airport Business Zone' to include the balance of the Site. Subject to the extension of the zone, PC20 seeks to develop the Site in accordance with the Structure Plan.<sup>4</sup>
23. From a landscape perspective, PC20 introduces a number of new and strengthened provisions to those that currently apply to the Airport Business Zone, including:
- (a) 10.4.2.6A - For any landscaping required under Rule 10.4.2.6 that is within the Northern Precinct:

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<sup>4</sup> Annexure 2 of Mr Grala's evidence.

- i. The landscaping shall consist of specimen trees that are capable of reaching a minimum height of 4m that are also underplanted with species that are capable of reaching a height of 1.2m; and
  - ii. The location and spacing of specimen trees shall be such that at least 50% of a boundary extent shall be screened.
- (b) 10.4.2.6B - Site boundaries subject to the Rural Landscaping control as indicated on the Airport Business Structure Plan in Appendix S10 shall be landscaped at a minimum depth of 2m and incorporate species that are planted to achieve a hedge that is capable of reaching (and thereafter kept at) a minimum height of 5m high.

## **LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Scope**

- 24. The LVA Report provided an assessment of the landscape and visual effects on the Site and surrounding landscape as a result of PC20 and the development it would facilitate.
- 25. The LVA Report undertook an assessment of the:
  - (a) Existing Character – the physical, associative and perceptual character of the existing site and surrounds;
  - (b) Landscape Effects – physical effects resulting from the expansion of the Airport Business Zone; and
  - (c) Visual Effects – resulting from the expansion of the Airport Business Zone (incorporating observations from points a and b).
- 26. As a result of the findings of that assessment, the LVA Report made a number of final recommendations, which were included in the Structure Plan and planning provisions.
- 27. The findings of the LVA Report are summarised in the following sections.

## **Existing Character Assessment**

### *Physical Site*

28. The Site is a flat alluvial plain with two small hills of gentle contours. It is predominantly rural in character, with a standalone, single-storey farm homestead and ancillary structures suitable for farming.
29. The Site contains vegetation that is predominantly rural in character, consisting of pasture dispersed with pockets of exotic trees and shelter belts. There are three small areas of native planting along the western and southern boundaries of the Site, consisting primarily of pioneer shrub species. No notable native specimen trees have been identified on the Site in the District Plan. As Ms Cummings' evidence addresses, the presence of Long-Tailed bats have been recorded particularly in the vicinity of mature exotic trees along the accessway from Middle Road where the bat corridor is proposed.
30. There are no natural streams or wetlands on the Site. Mr Markham confirms in his evidence the low ecological values of the Site.

### *Surrounding physical area*

31. The character of the immediate Waikato area is distinguished by gentle low rolling hills and deep gully systems that follow the Waikato River path through the plains. Paddocks include stands of mature exotic trees, small pockets of mixed shrubs and shelter belts of primarily exotic trees.
32. The Site is surrounded by existing rural properties (both crop and pastoral) mainly to the west and north; and industrial and airport uses to the south and east. Two golf courses and event facilities (Mystery Creek) are noted in the further eastern surroundings.
33. Built form in the rural areas surrounding the Site typically consists of large single storey houses, with some two storeyed. Surrounding lots are large with big expanses of pasture and groupings of specimen trees or shelter belts located between dwellings. Dwellings are typically separated from the road by a small paddock or set back at least 15-20m. The surrounding road character consists of wide road reserves, no kerbs, open grassed drainage ditches, no street trees and no footpath.
34. The airport runway is directly adjacent to the east and south of the Site. Its character consists of large open pastoral style lawns and tarmac. Fences consist of permanent chainlink security fences with barbed wire on top or post and wire farm fencing.

35. The industrial buildings beyond the airport runway range in scale, with very large open-floor warehouses over 150m long and 20m high to boutique office spaces. Spaces between buildings are reduced in comparison to the surrounding rural landscape. Front boundaries consist of either manicured lawn or amenity planting approximately 5m deep consisting of low groundcovers/shrubs and sometimes specimen trees. If fencing is present, it is predominantly black stained post and rail style. The road character within the Airport Business Zone consists of wide road reserves, kerbs, open grassed drainage ditches on both sides and a footpath to one side. Sometimes specimen street trees are present.

*Associative and perceptual character of the Site*

36. Archaeological assessments did not find any features with the Site. However, early mana whenua engagement was carried out when developing the masterplan. This identified significant sight lines through to Pirongia which were recommended to be emphasised and retained through orientation and placement of roads within the Structure Plan.
37. The current character of the Site is pastoral and crop farm between pockets of well-kept rural homes. I have assessed that its current character blends with the surrounding rural area and provides a sense of openness.
38. The adjacent airport runway to the east adds to this visual perception of pastoral openness due to the way in which it has been developed and maintained.
39. Although the Site is currently used in a similar manner to its rural surroundings, approximately 41ha of it is zoned as 'Airport Business Zone'. Therefore, activities and uses anticipated within the Airport Business Zone are already enabled and expected for a significant portion of the Site.
40. The balance of the Site is identified as 'Possible Future Growth Area' and 'Future Extension Direction' in the District Plan, which indicates that changes to the character of these areas is anticipated.
41. Adjacent to the identified growth areas and abutting the PC20 boundary in two locations is land that Waka Kotahi have designated for a future state highway and connections, 'Southern Links' (D156).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix S1 to the Waipa District Plan.

42. The future development of the Southern Links in the next 13 years, along with the identified areas suitable for industrial growth, indicates that changes to the character of these areas is anticipated.
43. I recommended appropriate visual softening on the edges of any zones changed to 'Airport Business Zone' (despite the fact that some level of change is anticipated, as discussed above). The purpose of these recommendations was to provide visual softening to adjacent rural land residents who have not developed their land. Details on where and how this is considered appropriate are set out in the LVA Report<sup>6</sup> and included in the Structure Plan and provisions.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Sense of place and values*

44. While the entire site currently presents as primarily associated with pastoral or agricultural values, the eastern side of the site abuts with industrial and special uses (airport) adjacent to the south and east boundaries. The Site is proposed to change to align with the industrial character of the east (instead of its former pastoral uses). Identified areas for extension of this zoning in the District Plan, combined with Waka Kotahi designation, indicate that such change is anticipated. However, provision amendments have been made in recognition of the transition the nearby community will experience as the sense of place shifts.
45. The location of and views to Pirongia from and through the Site have value, as identified by mana whenua. The Structure Plan allows for views to Pirongia through its street layout and orientation, which I recommended as part of my LVA Report.
46. The proposed 'Hub' on the retained small hill on the Site will provide a sense of place and identity within the Site, along with wayfinding and quality open space. The mature trees on the Hub are to be included in a large Bat Habitat Area in line with advice from Ms Cummings evidence. The retention of mature vegetation in this area will soften the effects of change in character to the sense of place and offer amenity for the users of the Hub that is supported.
47. With the provision of Bat Habitat Areas at the Site and additional visual amenity a sense of place will be achieved. The enhancement planting required in the Bat Habitat Corridor will add further visual amenity to the Site for both internal and external viewers. Restrictive provisions will apply to the trimming, pruning or removal of vegetation inside

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to pp 12-24 and 26.

<sup>7</sup> Appendix 1 and 2.

Bat Habitat Areas as explained by Mr Inger. This will maintain some elements of the existing sense of place and further soften the transition of landscape character. Once mature, enhancement planting required within the corridor will break the horizon and provide a stretch of 50m where no buildings are established. The Bat Corridor planting in combination with the 5m landscape buffer along the boundary will further soften views to industrial development on the Site as seen from Middle Road.

48. I have identified that there is limited mature vegetation of good form on the Site, and that the sense of place provided by what is on the Site is typical of the surrounding rural landscape. While no vegetation is identified as suitable for retention in the Structure Plan from a landscape perspective, the Bat Habitat Areas will retain mature vegetation and be enhanced by further planting. This has the added benefit from a landscape perspective, of resulting in additional amenity to the Site, and softening the transition in landscape character.

#### **Landscape Effects (Physical)**

49. The landscape effects investigated by the LVA Report were broken down as Landform & Topography, Drainage & Hydrology, Vegetation and Connectivity & Access.
50. The following key effects resulting from PC20 and its associated Structure Plan were identified:
- (a) Removal of the smaller hill;
  - (b) Retention and enhancement of the larger hill (location of the homestead) as the 'Hub' which would support wayfinding and amenity outcomes within the Site;
  - (c) No hydrological features are within the Site and therefore, none are impacted by the proposal;
  - (d) Removal of crop cultivation and pastoral vegetation; and
  - (e) Additional planting protection and enhancement in the Bat Habitat Areas to maintain connections to the wider landscape and provide ecological value and habitat for the long-tailed bat identified by Ms Cummings, which will contribute positively to amenity and sense of place.

51. I recommended the following, which were accepted and incorporated into the PC20 Structure Plan:

- (a) Retain and enhance the larger hill (the Hub); and
- (b) Incorporate amenity planting and specimen trees into the new development.

## **Visual Effects**

### *Methodology*

52. To determine the visual nature, extent and sensitivity of the Site, 27 viewpoints surrounding the Site were investigated. Of those, 11 views were selected as being representative of the views available to the public and neighbouring residents. The views were then considered for their location in relation to the Site, extent of the Site and prominence within the view, viewing audience, transiency, level of contrast and potential integration. The location of the viewpoints can be seen on the plan presented in **Appendix 1**.

53. I anticipate that development facilitated by PC20 will occur in line with the District Plan rules for the 'Airport Business Zone'.

54. My assessment is based on the understanding that visual change of the Site is already anticipated by the future development of the existing Airport Business zoning and the Southern Links designation. It is also based on the fact that the District Plan identifies future growth<sup>8</sup> of the site.

55. The view assessments and consequential recommendations integrated within PC20 seek to: achieve development that is visually integrated with its current and future expected surroundings, achieve a high-quality character and retain and improve the sense of place, rather than attempting to avoid change.

56. The rating system adopted in the LVA Report was based on that within 'Te Tangi A Te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, Final Draft April 2021' (subject to final editing). Since preparing the LVA Report, the Guidelines were finalised in July 2022. There are no changes to my assessment from the finalisation of the guidelines, as the rating system in Section 6.21 (Figure 1) and main guidelines were already established in the April 2021 draft and unchanged in the final issue.

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix S1 to the Waipa District Plan.



Figure 1



## Effects

### General effects noted at all locations

57. I assessed experiences for transient viewers as low for the majority of the area, and low-moderate on Narrows and Middle Road. This is based on the proximity of the Site to the existing 'Airport Business Zone' development east and south-west of the airport runway and the provisions of PC20. I consider PC20 will be consistent with those nearby characters and believe the proposed extension to the Airport Business Zone would be perceived by transient viewers as part of their journey.
58. Views to development that is aligned with the District Plan rules for the existing 'Airport Business Zone' within the Site are already enabled and expected. Therefore, I consider that development in this area is a character change that has a low landscape and visual effect.
59. The existing 'Airport Business Zone' rules in the District Plan while appropriate, required refinement for the purpose of PC20. This is because, I consider that existing developed areas in other parts of the Airport Business Zone do not achieve appropriate visual softening to buildings as viewed from exterior roads. I considered this softening important to achieve integration of PC20 with its surrounding rural environments, particularly the residents and transient users on Middle and Narrows Road. I therefore recommended that rule 10.4.2.6 be amended to provide more specific requirements to achieve what I consider appropriate screening or visual softening along these edges. This amendment was provided as part of the PC20 provisions.
60. Bare earth during construction will be visible, with a moderate-high visual effect for nearby viewers. As this is a short-term activity that will be remedied once works are completed, I do not consider it is necessary to specify any visual mitigation in the PC20 provisions.

*Views from the northern and eastern boundaries looking south and west*

61. The primary landscape and visual effects on views from the northern and eastern boundaries of the Site (VP1, VP2, VP9, V11) were found to include:
- (a) A visual extension of the existing character within the 'Airport Business Zone' will be visible along Raynes Rd;
  - (b) Views to the existing 'Airport Business Zone' on the Site will block views to the proposed extension, and therefore it will not be visible from VP9 and VP11.
  - (c) I assessed views for residents in static locations as having a low landscape and visual effect for VP1 and VP2. Views to development aligned with the District Plan rules for the 'Airport Business Zone' is already enabled and expected from these locations. I consider PC20 as a small visual extension of that character style within each of these viewpoints.
  - (d) While VP1 has existing views to the distant landform of Pirongia on the horizon these will be obscured by buildings enabled within the existing 'Airport Business Zone.'
  - (e) The foreground of VP2 includes the Waka Kotahi designated land for the Southern Links. I consider the distance and the retention of rural character landscape between the viewer and PC20 creates a visual buffer for residential viewers until Waka Kotahi develop this infrastructure.

*Views from western boundaries looking east*

62. The primary landscape and visual effects on views taken from the western boundaries of the Site (VP3, VP4, VP5, VP6, V10) are:
- (a) PC20 will introduce a character which is not currently connected with Narrows Road and Middle Road, which are currently characterised as rural roads separated from industrial style activities.
  - (b) Views for residents will be static and will be a notable change in character from what currently exists.
  - (c) PC20 would be a visual extension to existing character within the 'Airport Business Zone' which is enabled to the east of the Site. This would bring the proposed development to the edge of the surrounding road boundaries, removing the visual

softening provided by pastoral character between enabled development and residents opposite the Site. This is an expected change due to this area being part of the 'Possible Future Growth Area' identified in the District Plan.

- (d) I note that the boundary planting required in provision 10.4.2.6A applies to the interfaces with Narrows Road and Middle Road and will ensure visual softening resulting in a low-moderate landscape and visual effect.
- (e) I assessed the viewpoint VP4 in the LVA Report based on a future connection to the Southern Links from the intersection with Middle and Narrows Road as shown in the concept masterplan (see figure 2). With that future connection in place I assessed the viewpoint as having a 'low-moderate' landscape and visual effect. This is because although the proposed future entry point at the intersection with Narrows Road and Middle Road would be a notable change in character, it includes an 'indicative landscape feature' in the Masterplan Concept which I support. I believe this is likely to include gateway planting and wayfinding features, with the potential for existing trees to be retained if services and earthworks allow. This will visually soften views to the zone change on approach from the south-east of Narrows Road, ensuring buildings are set back from the intersection even further.

Figure 2



- (f) The structure plan shows a dead end that occurs at the intersection with Middle and Narrows Roads. I assess the effects of this on viewers as low-moderate. This is because the views for residents will include a notable change in character with the introduction of industrial buildings on the boundaries of roads. However, boundary planting as required under PC20 would apply to the interfaces of Narrows Road and Middle Road and this will mitigate the landscape and visual effects as

seen on this intersection.VP4 has been amended to reflect the structure plan **(Appendix 2)**.

- (g) VP5 has been amended and included in **Appendix 2** to show the Bat Habitat Area intersecting with the boundary of Middle Road. This, combined with 5m minimum building setbacks<sup>9</sup> from adjacent boundaries, will provide a 60m wide visual break to development. This has the added benefit from a landscape perspective of retaining views of existing mature vegetation, particularly the 'Large Specimen tree on boundary' identified in the view. The view will also include open spaces and enhancement planting as required through provision 10.4.2.14B. The visual relief provided by the Bat Habitat Area as seen from VP5 will visually soften the adjacent industrial development of the Site as seen from rural properties on Middle Road resulting in a low-moderate landscape and visual effect.
- (h) PC20 indicates that the point where the Site boundary crosses Middle Road will be closed to vehicles but open to pedestrians and cyclists<sup>10</sup>. Beyond this point Middle Road will continue its use as a road within the PC20 industrial development. In line with the District Plan, street trees will be required on internal streets to the 'Airport Business Zone'. I consider the requirements of street trees an enhancement that will soften views to industrial buildings and provide additional green canopies that do not currently exist along the majority of Middle Road as seen from VP6.
- (i) Development of buildings would remove views of the sporadically vegetated horizon. However, PC20 supports the District Plan's requirement for street trees within the 'Airport Business' zone. With development, street trees would be visible in gaps between buildings, breaking the middle of the view of buildings and softening views to buildings from beyond. Likewise, growth of vegetation within the Bat Habitat Areas will break views of buildings and provide visual relief both within and outside the development.
- (j) PC20 will include the property of 141 Middle Road, which is currently a rural residential property. I recommended that a minimum 2m wide strip of screening vegetation a minimum of 5m high at maturity is implemented along the boundary of this lot to provide privacy. Provision 10.4.2.6B and the location shown on the

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<sup>9</sup> PC20 provision 10.4.2.3A requires a minimum building setback of 5m from the boundary of a BHA.

<sup>10</sup> My LVA assesses this viewpoint as open to vehicles. My assessment of the visual and landscape effects are unchanged for this location. VP6 in Appendix 2 illustrates the current Structure Plan situation.

structure plan around 141 Middle Road ensures this happens until such time as owners or land use for the lot changes.

- (k) Bare earth during construction will be visible, however this moderate-high visual effect is considered acceptable due to its temporary nature.

*Views from the southern boundary looking north*

63. The primary landscape and visual effect from the views taken from the southern boundary of the Site (VP7<sup>11</sup>, VP8) were:
- (a) Views for residents would be static, and while a notable change in character from what is existing, development would be in keeping with the District Plan rules for the 'Airport Business Zone' which is already enabled and expected. It is noted that the proposed extension lengthens this expected character change within the views. I consider the landscape and visual effects from this view will be low due to the distance of the view, nearby industrial activity and the expected activity in line with the District Plan.
  - (b) The PC20 Structure Plan includes a primary road entry from SH3. I anticipate the seal edges of SH3 will remain unchanged except for around the entry point, which will be a formed kerb and channel character in keeping with the existing 'Airport Business Zone' to the south, which is supported.

*Overall effects*

64. The primary finding of the landscape and visual effects assessment is that potential effects are either:
- (a) aligned with the anticipated development enabled by the District Plan's zoning of the Site; or
  - (b) aligned with the District Plan's notation of the Site as 'Possible Future Growth Area' and 'Future Extension Direction' and will be softened as detailed in the proposed Structure Plan and in accordance with the proposed planning provisions.
65. It is recognised that the character of areas identified as 'Possible Future Growth Area' and 'Future Extension Direction' is anticipated to change.

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<sup>11</sup> I note that VP7 incorrectly identified the location of the Southern Links. This is amended in Appendix 2, however there is no change to the assessed rating of this view or consequential comments.

66. I conclude that while it is noted that future zone changes and associated character changes are anticipated for 'Rural' areas that will change to 'Airport Business' zones (as identified in future growth map); I consider that visual softening on the edges of any zones changed to 'Airport Business zone' is appropriate. This will provide visual relief to adjacent land residents who have not yet developed their land to align with these changes. The proposed Structure Plan and proposed planning provisions provide for this outcome in measures which I consider appropriate and therefore support.
67. As such, the overall landscape and visual effects were found to be low from a wider context.
68. I append to my final conclusion to note that the landscape and visual effects for residents on Narrows and Middle Roads were found to be low-moderate, as I consider the proposed Structure Plan and proposed planning provisions provide suitable mitigation to soften the changes in Site character experienced by these land owners.

#### **RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS RAISED**

69. The submissions relevant to landscape and visual amenity effects specifically raised the following issues:
- (a) Loss of visual amenity values associated with rural living (replacement of soft landscape with hardscape);<sup>12</sup>
  - (b) Lack of greenbelt proposed in the Structure Plan;<sup>13</sup> and
  - (c) Removal of one of the hills (the smaller hill).<sup>14</sup>
70. Many of these matters have been addressed in the Structure Plan and provisions which I have explained earlier in my evidence. My additional comments below seek to summarise those explanations rather than repeat them.

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<sup>12</sup> Submitters 1, 5, 8, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Submitter 6.

<sup>14</sup> Submitter 6.

*Loss of visual amenity values associated with rural living*

71. Four submissions raise concerns on the reduction of neighbourhood or rural community amenity values.
72. Transition in character from a rural to industrial or infrastructure use is already enabled in approximately 41ha of the site.
73. The balance of the Site is identified as 'Possible Future Growth Area' and 'Future Expansion Area' within the District Plan. This indicates these areas have been identified for possible rezoning in the future to allow further development and a change in character is expected to occur.
74. Several measures are proposed as part of the Structure Plan and the District Plan provisions that will soften the resulting built structure for onlookers, create a high-amenity environment for those visiting and working within the area and visually integrate with the surrounding rural zoned land:
  - (a) Rule 10.4.2.6 requires 5m deep landscaping buffers to include specimen trees that reach a minimum 4m high at maturity, and underplanting with vegetation that reaches a maximum height of 1.2m at maturity.
  - (b) Rule 10.4.2.6A seeks to ensure that this buffer is of a high-quality and screens at least 50% of total views to each lot.
  - (c) Rule 10.4.2.6B creates a buffer between rural zoned land and the subject site, seeking a 2m deep buffer, that can then maintain a mature height of 5m minimum.
75. I consider PC20 has adequately addressed the visual interface between character zones and that the proposed measures are sufficient to ensure an outcome that addresses submitters' concerns.

*Lack of greenbelt*

76. One submission raised that there does not appear to be a substantial proposed greenbelt between the Northern Precinct and existing homeowners.
77. PC20 provides both a landscaping buffer and building setback requirement for the lot boundaries of landowners who have no formal agreement with the applicant and neighbour the Site.

78. Rule 10.4.2.6B creates a buffer between rural zoned land and the Site, requiring a 2m deep buffer that can maintain a mature height of 5m minimum. The locations of this treatment are detailed in the Structure Plan in all locations between the Northern Precinct and rural zoned lots. In my opinion this rule along with the specified locations in the Structure Plan will achieve a sufficient landscaped buffer to the Northern Precinct.

*Removal of small hill within site*

79. A landscape concern raised by one submitter related to effects that the removal of the small hill would have on noise. As my expertise does not relate to noise I cannot speak to this concern, and I note no other submissions raised concerns relating to changes in landscape topography by the proposed Structure Plan. Mr Bell-Booth addresses noise issues in his evidence.

80. I maintain the conclusion of my report, which found that the removal of the small hill as part of PC20 will have a low impact on the landscape of the area and the retention of the larger hill as a landmark feature would be a positive outcome.

**RESPONSE TO THE SECTION 42A REPORT**

81. The Section 42A Report groups matters raised into topics and sub-topics which are commented on in section 9. The sub-topics which are most relevant to my evidence are 3.1 Amenity / Landscape Planting. I comment on these matters with particular focus on the Landscape Review authored by Align in Appendix 4.

82. In sections 9.13.2 and 9.13.12 of the Section 42A Report the officer has made reference to the details of the landscape buffers around the perimeter of the zone with accompanying rules requiring a minimum depth of 5m. To clarify, there are two separate rules relating to landscape buffers.

(a) Rule 10.4.2.6A<sup>15</sup> relates to the 'Landscaping' notation on the Proposed Structure Plan, which is applied to road boundaries.

(b) Rule 10.4.2.6B<sup>16</sup> relates to the 'Rural Landscaping' notation on the Proposed Structure Plan, which has only been applied where the Airport Business zone

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<sup>15</sup> 10.4.2.6A - For any landscaping required under Rule 10.4.2.6 that is within the Northern Precinct:

(a) The landscaping shall consist of specimen trees that are capable of reaching a minimum height of 4m that are also underplanted with species that are capable of reaching a height of 1.2m; and

(b) The location and spacing of specimen trees shall be such that at least 50% of a boundary extent shall be screened.

<sup>16</sup> 10.4.2.6B - Site boundaries subject to the Rural Landscaping control as indicated on the Airport Business Structure Plan in Appendix S10 shall be landscaped at a minimum depth of 2m and incorporate species that are planted to achieve a hedge that is capable of reaching (and thereafter kept at) a minimum height of 5m high.



will directly adjoin a Rural zone (i.e. not separated by a road) and along the 141 Middle Road boundary.

83. I have identified that Rule 10.4.2.6B included a drafting error which has subsequently been corrected within the version that is included as Annexure 2 of Mr Galas evidence.
84. 9.13.13 recommended amendments to PC20 – *“Include stronger protection of any high-quality established trees on site that form a crucial part of the character of the area. This would require further input from a qualified arborist in combination with a Bat specialist to identify high value trees (in terms of both habitat and amenity)”*.
85. Mr Inger’s evidence (paragraphs 88 – 91) describe the post notification changes to the provisions that apply to the removal of vegetation both inside and outside of Bat Habitat Areas (i.e. the entire Site). I disagree with the Officer that any additional changes to the provisions for amenity reasons are necessary.

*Responses to the Landscape Review in Appendix 4 of the S42A Report*

86. A number of comments are made in the Landscape Review on the use of ‘Te Tangi A Te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’. As an opening note, these guidelines are new, and it will take time to adopt the nuances in full as the profession adapt to their use. Section 1.09 of Te Tangi A Te Manu states:  
  
*“The intent of the Guidelines is to set out a coherent framework of concepts, principles, and approaches that can be tailored to suit each assessment’s purpose and context. Promotion of such flexibility is not to be misconstrued as ‘anything goes’: on the contrary, the approach promoted by these Guidelines demands that practitioners understand what they are doing, and why, and that they explain it in a transparent and reasoned way.”*
87. With this statement underpinning the adoption of these guidelines in the writing of the LVA, the ‘recommended sequence’ is only considered a recommendation. As is stated in paragraphs 14 and 15 of the Landscape Review, *“the elements of the existing landscape review have all been covered”*, and *“the methodology is considered appropriate given the scale of the assessment and is generally in accordance with Te Tangi A Te Manu”*.

### *Appropriate methodology and method*

88. Paragraph 10 of the Landscape Review includes an example of the recommended rating scale in Te Tangi A Te Manu which differs from the one I illustrate in Figure 1 of my evidence. It is noted the figure shown in the Landscape Review is only relevant when dealing with one of three situations:
- (a) As one of the 'gateway tests' for non-complying activities under s104D
  - (b) As one of the tests for deciding if an application is to be publicly notified under S95A of the Resource Management Act 1991
  - (c) As one of the tests for determining if a person is an 'affected person' for the purpose of deciding if they are to be notified under the s95E "limited notification" provisions.
89. None of those situations apply to this plan change request, therefore comments on changes to the rating scale are not relevant in relation to the terms 'less than minor', 'minor', 'more than minor' and 'significant'.

### *Statutory planning provisions*

90. Paragraph 19 of the Landscape Review states that "*the Southern Links designation is somewhat uncertain*". Mr Grala addresses the approach of the Landscape Reviewer considering the certainty of the Southern Links designation.
91. Paragraph 20 of the Landscape Review states that there is "*no comment within the LVA by Harrison Grierson around the implications of the change of zoning in terms of objectives and policies for these zones*". I rely on the Planning evidence of Mr Grala, who does not think that the objectives and policies of the rural zone are relevant<sup>17</sup>.
92. I can confirm that I did undertake a review of the Airport Business zone provisions (including objectives, policies and rules that relate to built form) when preparing the LVA and I stated this within section 1.3.2 of the LVA Report.
93. The Harrison Grierson LVA briefly comments on the permitted activities within the 'Airport Business Zone' in section 2.3, where it describes the buildings in the industrial zone varying in scale, but sometimes reaching up to 20m high. I make the following additional comments:

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<sup>17</sup> Statement of Mr Grala: paragraph 93.

- (a) I acknowledge that a change from one zone to another cannot avoid a visual change because of development rules and their resulting outcomes in an area. Mr Grala addresses the relevant zone objectives and policies for PC20 in full in his evidence.
- (b) The Objectives and Policies in approximately 41ha east of the Site align with its Airport Business Zone. In the remaining approximately 89ha, PC20 seeks to replace the Rural zone with the Airport Business Zone specifically in the areas identified in Appendix S1 – ‘Future Growth Cells: Hamilton Airport Strategic Node’.
- (c) From a landscape perspective, the existing objectives and policies for the Airport Business Zone result in provisions that seek to consider and provide an interface with adjacent zones through the landscape amenity treatment of its boundaries<sup>18</sup>. In these provisions I conclude the zone does not limit itself to be ‘inward looking’. These provisions are considered in the LVA as part of the assessment of landscape and visual effects, and recommendations were made that resulted in strengthened provisions in this area for PC20.

94. Paragraph 21 of the Landscape Review stated that “Outstanding Natural Landscapes/Features have not been discussed”. There are no Outstanding Natural Landscapes/Features or viewshaft overlays on the site or adjacent to it. I refer to Mr Gralas evidence to address this comment.

#### *Existing landscape*

95. Paragraph 24 states “*The assessment focuses on the immediate site description and does lack some of the broad scale influences that have shaped this area.*” Broad scale influences as described in this paragraph (wider landform descriptions, reference to Waikato River gully system) are described in the Harrison Grierson LVA report in section 2.3 ‘Surrounding Character’.

#### *Landscape (including visual) effects*

96. Mr Grala addresses comments made in paragraph 30 of “*uncertainty around how the Hub area will be able to retain the topography*”.

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<sup>18</sup> 10.4.2.6 of the WDP.

97. Section 38 of the Landscape Review summarises the Viewpoint findings and subsequent peer review findings for each viewpoint in a table. Rating of effect largely correlates with my own.

*Design response*

98. Section 41 of the Landscape Review comments on the final recommendations made in the Harrison Grierson LVA. I provide further commentary as follows:

- (a) Point 2 recommends that street planting and landscape feature areas integrate recommendations for species that will support bat habitat and passage. Ms Cummings responds to this recommendation.
- (b) Point 4 comments that the current wording of provisions is ambiguous and would like to see amendments to:
  - i. Increase specimen tree height to 8m minimum
  - ii. Remove or reword reference to underplanting heights
  - iii. States the 50% coverage is open to interpretation but doesn't elaborate on what amendments are recommended.
- (c) I remain of the view that the PC20 provisions are appropriate. The Bat Habitat Areas, landscape buffers and streetscape planting together provide for an appropriate amenity response. In retaining the opinion on the 4m height of specimen trees, I take into account Hamilton Airport concerns for the potential for bird strike.
- (d) I disagree changes to underplanting heights is required as the desired outcome is canopied trees with underplanting of any height.
- (e) The wording on the 50% boundary extent screening requirements for specimen trees is intentionally flexible. This is to allow different lot owners responses that are appropriate to their needs. Some businesses will want the ability for signage to be visible, and some may not. A flexible provision allows different approaches which will in turn create a diverse visual amenity outcome.
- (f) Point 5 of the Landscape Review recommends that timeframes are put on the height being achieved for provisions 10.4.2.6, 10.4.2.6A and 10.4.2.6B- *"I would recommend that timeframes are put on the height being achieved (such as 4m high*

*at 5 years) to ensure that appropriate species and adequate grades and plants to provide the desired screening/softening in the short term.”* That recommendation is a matter of detail usually addressed in resource consent conditions at the time of detailed design. I do not support an amendment to these provisions or an additional provision in PC20.

## **CONCLUSION**

99. The LVA Report which I completed in support of PC20 made the following conclusions:
- (a) Character changes for the Site from a pastoral rural setting with agricultural values to a built form and structure associated with the ‘Airport Business Zone’ are enabled and expected in relation to the eastern area of the Site, which is already zoned accordingly. Changes in character for the western part of the Site are expected in the future and connected with identified future growth areas in the District Plan and the Waka Kotahi ‘Southern Links’ designation.
  - (b) Mana whenua engagement identified that significant sight lines to Pirongia should be retained and enhanced through street layout and orientation, which is reflected in the proposed Structure Plan (“Structure Plan”) and which I support.
  - (c) Landscape effects will be associated with a change in use from rural to industrial, involving earthworks to create building platforms and the removal of some rural vegetation with landscaping. Due to the largely level topography of the Site, the most significant earthworks would be those associated with the removal of a small hill.
  - (d) Visual amenity effects will be associated with the extension of the existing Airport Business Zone. Public views for those in transit would be brief and consistent with views experienced in the existing industrial area to the east of the Site. Views for neighbouring residents would be static and a notable change in character but would be softened by existing rules and the proposed landscaping provisions, along with the visual break created by the Bat Habitat Areas.
  - (e) I have assessed that the overall effects of the above will be low for the wider area, and low-moderate for neighbouring residents. This is due to approximately 41ha of the Site area already enabling development in line with the Airport Business Zone – including the removal of the small hill – and due to the proposed Bat Habitat Areas, landscape buffer and building setback provisions.

100. Since writing the LVA Report, the Structure Plan has been amended to include an area of the Site identified as 'Bat Habitat Areas', which consists of a 50m wide corridor, and a significant proportion of the area referred to as the Hub. Planning provisions protect particular existing trees in these areas and provide for enhancement planting. While this outcome provides ecological benefit to the bats, the location of these areas also provides further visual amenity and softening of views to the proposed change in character as seen by residents on Middle Road.
101. My earlier recommendations that have been included in the Structure Plan and PC20 provisions require:
- (a) Amendments to the existing zone rules to require precinct boundaries to include landscape buffers with other zones. The proposed provisions include specific standards that add to the existing District Plan rules to further dictate the height and extent of these buffers.
  - (b) An additional rule to provide vegetation screening buffers of a specific height and depth between the Airport Business Zone and adjacent zones.
102. These recommendations have been incorporated into the PC20 provisions. I believe that PC20 has adequately addressed and responded to changing landscape and visual amenity values. It is my opinion that the proposed Structure Plan and planning provisions are sufficient to ensure a future environment that visually integrates with existing and future uses.

**Lisa Jack**  
Harrison Grierson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Jack', with a large, stylized loop at the bottom.

28 February 2023

## Appendix 1



FIG 16 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS PLAN

KEY

- ASSESSED VIEWPOINTS DISCUSSED
- INVESTIGATED VIEWPOINTS







# **APPENDIX 2**

## **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE - REVISED VIEWPOINTS REFLECTING AMENDED STRUCTURE PLAN**

**PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE 20 - TITANIUM PARK LIMITED AND RUKUHIA PROPERTIES  
LIMITED - AIPOINT NORTHERN PRECINCT EXTENSION**

February 2023

**HARRISON  
GRIERSON**



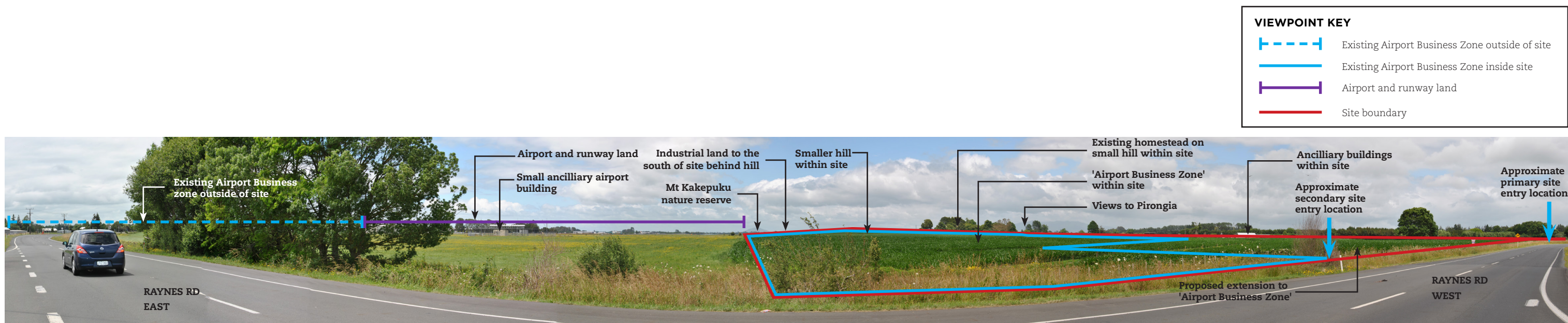


FIG 17 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 1

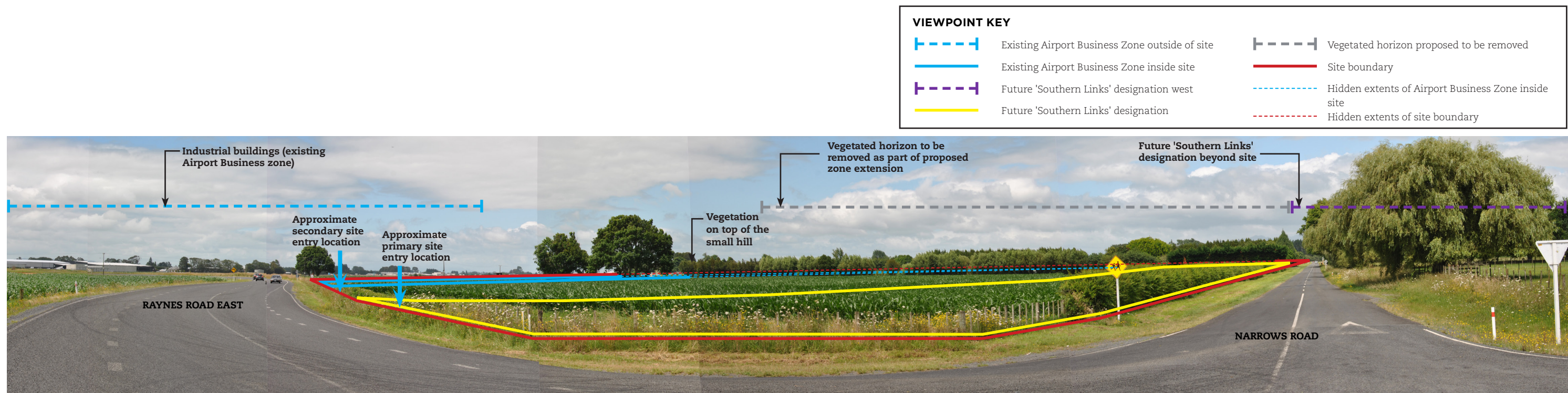


FIG 18 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 2





**VIEWPOINT KEY**

- Existing Airport Business Zone inside site
- - - - Hidden extents of existing Airport Business Zone inside site
- - - - Hidden extents of site boundary
- Site boundary

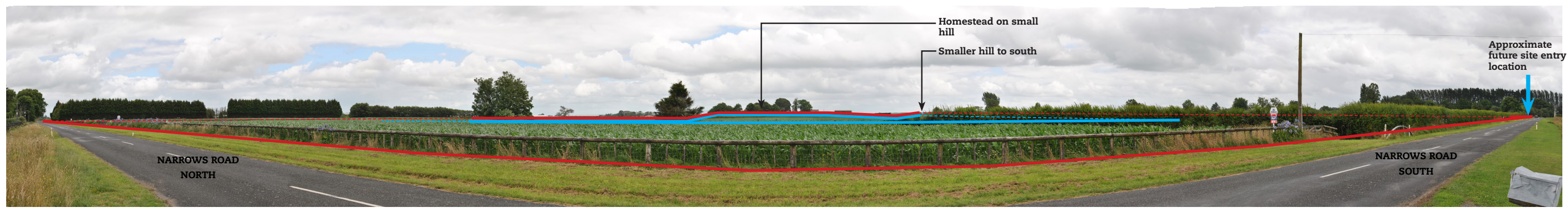


FIG 19 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 3

**VIEWPOINT KEY**

- - - - Hidden extents of site boundary
- Site boundary



FIG 20 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 4





VIEWPOINT KEY	
	Existing Airport Business Zone inside site
	Hidden extents of existing Airport Business Zone inside site
	Hidden extents of site boundary
	Site boundary
	Pedestrian/cycle entry on Middle Rd
	Approximate Bat Habitat Area location



FIG 21 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 5

VIEWPOINT KEY	
	Existing Airport Business Zone inside site
	Site boundary
	Pedestrian/cycle entry on Middle Rd



FIG 22 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 6





VIEWPOINT KEY	
	Future 'Southern Links' designation
	Hidden extents of 'Southern Links' designation
	Site boundary
	Hidden extents of site boundary

FIG 23 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 7



VIEWPOINT KEY	
	Existing Airport Business Zone inside site
	Proposed extension to Airport Business Zone inside site
	Site boundary

FIG 24 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 8



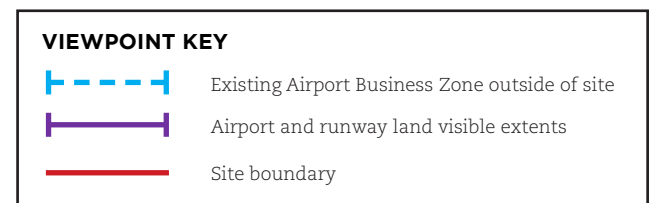


FIG 25 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 9

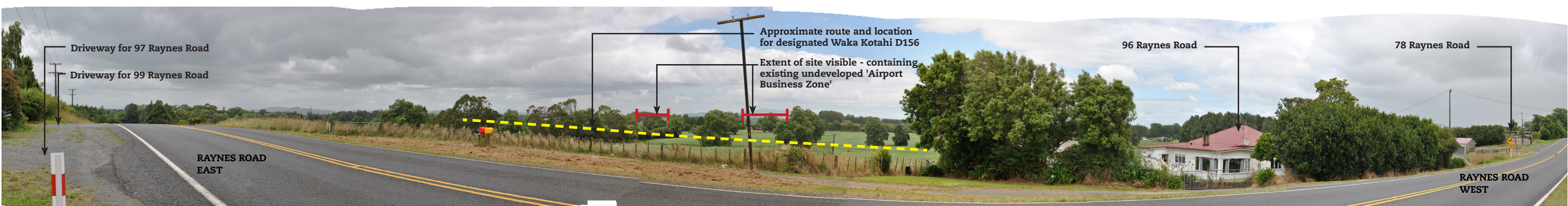
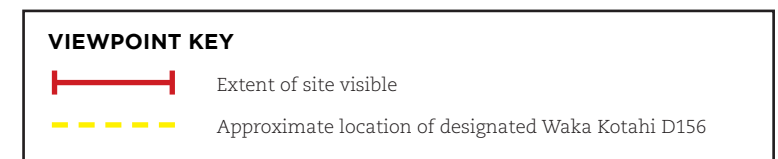


FIG 26 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 10





**VIEWPOINT KEY**  
— Extent of site visible



FIG 27 - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 11