

<b>To:</b>	Waipa District Council
<b>From:</b>	Angela Brown
<b>Job No.</b>	WPA001
<b>Date:</b>	21/02/2023
<b>Project Name</b>	Private Plan Change 20 – Titanium Park Limited and Rukuhia Properties Limited – Airport Northern Precinct Extension
<b>Subject:</b>	Landscape Review

## Introduction

1. The Private Plan Change 20 request by Titanium Park Limited and Rukuhia Properties Limited seeks to expand the Hamilton Airport Northern Precinct Airport Business zone, from the existing zone area comprising 41ha, to 130ha, encompassing 89ha of existing rural zoned land.
2. Align Ltd have been engaged by Waipa District Council (WDC) to provide a peer review of Appendix 2 of the Private Plan Change 20 application, *Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) – Northern Precinct Expansion* prepared by Harrison Grierson (HG), dated April 2022. In addition, this memo reviews and assesses the submissions received on Private Plan Change 20 that relate to landscape matters.
3. Refer to Appendix A for a summary of my qualifications and experience.
4. I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and can confirm this review has been prepared in accordance with this document.
5. In preparing this review I have considered the following documents.
  - Northern Precinct – Request for Private Plan Change by Harrison Grierson
  - Appendix 5 – Northern Precinct – Urban Design Assessment by Harrison Grierson
  - Appendix 8 - Northern Precinct Expansion – Assessment of Ecological Effects by Tonkin and Taylor.
  - PPC20 Response to Request for Further Information (email dated 18-08-22)
  - Submission received in relation to landscape matters.
6. A site visit was undertaken on the 15th of November 2022 by Angela Brown. The site visit included visiting all the LVA viewpoints and driving the perimeter of the site and broader context area to obtain a good understanding of the proposal and the landscape. It is noted that this did not include entering the site itself.

## Purpose of the Review

7. The intent of the peer review is to provide ‘an appraisal of the assessment (not a parallel assessment<sup>1</sup>) and this review follows the principles set out in ‘*Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*’, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.’
8. This includes:
  - Assessing that a suitable methodology and method have been used and whether that method is appropriate given the project scale and context.
  - That the proposal is well described in relation to potential landscape effects.
  - That the assessment responds to relevant statutory provisions for the site.
  - Confirming that the existing landscape attributes and values have been adequately described and analysed.
  - That the assessment undertakes a thorough and complete assessment of the landscape effects including visual effects and identifying key issues which are appropriate to the site, the proposal, and the statutory context.
  - That the LVA assesses the appropriateness of design responses to avoid, remedy or mitigate landscape effects.
  - Finally, validation of the report conclusions

## Appropriate methodology and method

9. Section 1.3 of HG report outlines the scope of the assessment which includes a methodology statement outlining; site visits, desk top study, statutory considerations underpinning the assessment, consultant reports and NZILA Assessment Guidelines.
10. The assessment states it has considered the 'Te Tangi A Te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, Final Draft April 2021' (subject to final editing). At the time of writing the assessment, this was the most appropriate guideline and the principles outlined in this version are consistent in the final version of the guidelines (as referred to above). This includes the recommended rating scale assumed for this assessment based of Te Tangi A Te Manu. It is noted that in the latest guidelines have a slight amendment to this rating scale (with low partially falling within Less than minor) as shown below;



11. In terms of the visual assessment methodology, this is covered in Section 4.1 of the LVA by Harrison Grierson. 27 sites were investigated, and from these, 11 representative viewpoints were selected. The location and number of viewpoints is deemed to be appropriate to give a good indication as to the likely effects from a range of distances and viewing angles/audiences.

<sup>1</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

12. Dates the photos were taken, the camera lens focal length and the standing height have been provided within the LVA by Harrison Grierson. Some information set out in the 'NZILA Best Practice Guide 10.2, Visual Simulations' (2010) is not provided (ie. field of view and image scale) but given these are not simulations, this information is not necessary in this instance. Coordinate locations of the viewpoint have also not been provided and would have been useful to enable decision makers to visit the exact positions (rather than just relying on the viewpoint map to locate these which allows some room for ambiguity).
13. The use of photo markups in this case (rather than simulations) is also deemed appropriate given that the application is for a plan change only at this stage and the built form is not yet determined. These markups can be somewhat hard to read in some instances (e.g Viewpoint 6) where it is unclear as to the affected area due to the vegetation blocking the view. In some instances, it is hard to determine whether trees in the backdrop are within the site boundary or not due to the line weight. It is also noted that this strategy does not communicate the vertical scale of any possible future development, and this is something that needs to be considered, given that a building can be up to 20m in height in the Airport Business Zone. This however, is still a useful tool to communicate the extent of the development and therefore assists one to make a judgement as to the likely effect of development within the zone.
14. In general, the report does not follow the recommended sequence in Te Tangi A Te Manu and the information could be delivered in a more logical order for ease of use, however the elements of the existing landscape review have all been covered.
15. The methodology is considered appropriate given the scale of the assessment and is generally in accordance with Te Tangi A Te Manu.

## **Proposal Description**

16. Section 1.2 of the LVA provides a succinct description of the proposal which provides a good overview of the plan change scope and proposed structure plan including supporting figures to communicate this.

## **Statutory Planning Provisions**

17. The LVA outlines the relevant statutory considerations in Section 1.3.3 of the report. This is brief and some further elaboration around the objectives in relation to landscape matters would have been useful.
18. The report outlines the following
  - 41ha of the site is existing Airport Business Zone
  - The balance is rural (89ha) of which 59ha of this is identified as 'Possible Future Growth Area as identified in the 'Hamilton Airport Growth Map' (WDC Plan Appendix S1 Future Growth Cell).
  - The proposed landscape and visual effects on the site are assessed with the understanding that future zone changes that facilitate industrial and commercial development are anticipated within the Waipa District Plan.
  - Waka Kotahi have designated land for a future state highway and connections, 'Southern Links' (D156). This is identified by the pink outline in Figure 4 adjacent. Part of this designation intersects with the site on two sides, to the North and the West.
  - The proposed landscape and visual effects on the site are assessed with the understanding that effects as viewed from areas within the Southern Links designation are of a temporary nature until the land is developed.

19. It is noted that the Southern Links designation is somewhat uncertain and therefore, it is my opinion that the effects on the landscape, should this not go ahead, need to also be taken into consideration.
20. As alluded to above, 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. For example, the Rural Zone policy (15.3.4.7) includes ‘*maintaining amenity and rural character*’. This contrasts with the policies of the Airport Business Zone where Industrial activities are permitted. Buildings can be up to 20m in height with no internal site boundary setbacks in some cases. External building setbacks have been listed below. This information has not been included in the report and is worth considering in terms of understanding the type of bulk and scale of built form that will be anticipated and permitted in this zoning.

Rule - Minimum building setback from road boundaries		
10.4.2.1	The minimum building setback from road boundaries shall be as follows:	
(a)	From internal road boundaries not adjacent to a landscaped drainage swale	3m
(b)	For sites adjacent to a landscaped swale (refer road cross section Airport Business Zone Structure Plan, Appendix S10)	0m
(c)	For road boundaries fronting a State Highway, except as indicated on the Airport Business Structure Plan in Appendix S10	5m
(d)	For all other sites fronting Raynes Road or a State Highway	15m

Figure 1: Minimum road setbacks in the Airport Business Zone.

21. Outstanding Natural Landscapes/Features have not been discussed in this section however, the importance of Mount Pirongia to this landscape has been discussed in Section 2.3/2.4/2.5, of the report. Of note is Section 1 of the Operative plan (Landscape and Viewshafts) which states;  
‘Protect the outstanding natural features of Maungatautari and Mt Pirongia by avoiding inappropriate development ‘

*25.2.1 The volcanic cones of Maungatautari and Mt Pirongia are of great significance to tāngata whenua, and are highly visible and distinctive landforms and features in the wider landscape of the District. These important values can be irrevocably compromised by development within and adjoining these mountains. The District’s natural landscapes, including views to the outstanding natural features need to be protected from the adverse effects of development, including infrastructure and tourism effects, while recognising that many of the District’s natural landscapes are located in working rural environments that will experience a degree of change over time.*

## Existing Landscape

22. Te Tangi a te Manu recommends the following definition for Landscape;  
‘Landscape embodies the relationship between people and place. It is the character of an area, how the area is experienced and perceived, and the meanings associated with it’  
As such Landscapes have ‘**physical, associative and perceptual dimensions**’ which all should be considered in analysing the existing Landscape as addressed below.
23. Section 2.2 and 3.0 of the HG LVA addresses the physical dimensions including landform and topography, drainage and hydrology, vegetation and connectivity and access. The key physical site characteristics that this assessment identifies are:

- *The site is located on the southern outskirts of Hamilton and west of Cambridge in the Waipa District. It has rural zone farmland adjacent to the north, and the Hamilton Airport runway and industrial precinct to the south and east. It is bordered by State Highway Three and Raynes Road.*
- *The site is a flat alluvial plain with two small hills of gentle contours. Two small hills have been identified onsite for retention within the hub.*
- *Hydrology on the site is largely modified through open farm drains and there are not natural streams or wetland on site.*
- *Vegetation is highly modified due to the rural nature of the site ‘consisting of pasture, maize crops, mature exotic shelter belts, stands of mixed shrubs and exotic specimen trees, and some stands of native revegetation planting.’*
- *The site has a number of stands of established (predominantly exotic) trees, in particular around the homestead. There is existing native planting to the boundary of the site with State Highway 3 which continues along part of the southern boundary.*
- *As stated in the LVA, the ecology report by Tonkin & Taylor highlights the importance of management of existing vegetation impacting long tailed bats and their flight paths and recommends incorporation of suitable tree species within future planting design.*

24. The assessment focuses on the immediate site description and does lack some of the broad scale influences that have shaped this area. This site sits within a broader ‘Waikato Lowlands’ landscape typology. *‘The Waikato Lowlands are flat and low-lying in contrast with the surrounding hill country. They comprise pasture, hedges, groups of both exotic and indigenous trees, and has a well maintained and developed landscape character<sup>2</sup>.’* Punctuating the alluvial plain landscape, volcanic cones are a predominant feature in the broader landscape including Pirongia (ONFL 7) which provides an important landmark (Which is discussed in Section 2.4 and 2.5 of the LVA). Also, of importance at a broader site level, Waikato Te Awa (The Waikato River), is located to the east of the site which flows from Mt Ruapehu to Puuaha o Waikato (Port Waikato).

25. Key Associate and Perceptual dimensions discussed in the report include:

- *Pirongia is of importance to Mana Whenua as it is the landing place for the Tainui canoe and the importance of retaining views/sightlines to Pirongia.*
- *The site is typical of its surrounds, in that it is a pastoral and crop farm between pockets of well-kept rural homes. The site provides views between these pockets, providing a sense of openness that fits with other rural blocks of land surrounding these dwellings.*
- *The areas of the airport runway which are adjacent to the eastern side of the site adds to this visual perception of pastoral openness, as they are maintained similarly to pastoral style grass.*
- *The airport itself has ‘associated rural visual value to travellers on ascent and descent when flying.’*
- *Two elevated landforms provide wayfinding within the site.*
- *The sense of place provided by the existing (tree) groupings and shelter belts (typical of the surrounding rural landscape).*
- *The Possible Future Airport Growth Area and the Southern Links designation ‘create a perception of change occurring in the next 15 years that would remove the character*

---

<sup>2</sup> Environment Waikato; Waikato Regional Landscape Assessment Technical Report 2010/12

*of open views and rural landscapes and would extend the character of the existing 'Airport Business Zone'. ‘*

- *The site ‘will have associated rural visual value to travellers on ascent and descent when flying. The change in character will remove this aspect. However, the change will be similar to that of the existing 'Airport Business Zone' to the south and east of the airport and is not considered a new character effect for the locality.*

26. The LVA states *‘The site has a limited sense of place and is primarily associated with pastoral or agricultural values’*. I disagree with this comment that the landscape has a limited sense of place, and it is the values that have been discussed in the report that make this place unique and form the sense of place. The site represents the transitional change between the airport associated industrial development, and the rural, semi-rural landscape to the North-West, North and Northeast of the airport.

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

27. Te Tangi a te Manu describes Landscape Effect as:

- *6.01 A landscape effect is an **outcome** for a **landscape value**.*
- *6.02 While effects are consequences of changes to the physical environment, they are the outcomes for a landscape’s values that are derived from each of its physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions.*
- *6.03 Change itself is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change for a landscape’s values that is the effect.*

28. Section 3.0 of the Landscape Assessment assesses the landscape and *‘identifies the landscape values which have been integrated with the plan change request’*.

29. The report states that *‘Critical landscape patterns that shape the study area’s underlying landscape character include landforms, hydrology, ecology and vegetation. Overlying landscape patterns that also shape the existing landscape character include zoning, roading, cadastral, land use and the built environment. These ‘values’ have been addressed separately below.*

30. Landform and Topography:

*The larger of the two small hills has benefit in the forms of wayfinding and amenity through retention and enhancement during development phases. In response to these benefits the retention and enhancement of this feature is promoted and enabled by the structure plan in the designation of the 'Hub', which is intended to retain elevated topography and create opportunities for open space amenity.*

Agree, however there is still uncertainty around how the Hub area will be able to retain the topography.

31. Drainage and Hydrology:

*These have no particular landscape value.*

Agree that there are no natural waterways or features that need to be protected as all these have already been modified for agricultural land use as ditches.

32. Vegetation;

- The report states the following around existing site vegetation; *‘that while not many of these specimen trees are of a form that will provide amenity to the future development, retention of mature vegetation is beneficial both ecologically and visually.’*
  - *The proposed rezoning and consequential development provides an opportunity to enhance the site with additional amenity planting and pockets of native revegetation where appropriate.*
  - *Importance of management of existing vegetation impacting long tailed bats and their flight paths and recommends incorporation of suitable tree species within future planting design.*
33. Connectivity and Access;
- *Access to the site in the structure plan is provided with two points on Raynes Road, one point on the corner of Middle and Narrows Road, and one on State Highway Three (SH3).*
34. No rating of the impact of the proposed development on these values has been provided.
35. The landscape values identified in the report focus on the effects to physical attributes of the site (albeit some of these go hand in hand with the values and character of the site). In my opinion, this part of the report fails to recognise the issues in the context of the relevant statutory provisions and in this case, the key issue around the impacts on amenity and rural character. The change of landuse from Rural to Airport Business for 89ha of land will see significant change to the rural character of this landscape. This impact can be reduced by buffer planting but there will still be a broader ramification to the character of the Rukuhia area. This effect is likely to be at least of moderate effect, however, must be considered alongside the broader picture of development in the area to ensure that development is occurring in the most appropriate areas to lessen the impact on the rural landscape. This area is identified in Waipa District Plan Appendix S1 – Future Growth Cells as a ‘Possible Future Growth Area’. This states *“future extension direction’ is shown to indicate where any further development would logically be located given the alignment of Southern Links. This future extension would provide for future industrial land beyond 2035.”* The concentration of industrial land use around the airport will consolidate industrial activity and is in accordance with the WDC planned future growth.
36. Section 4.0 provides a visual assessment. Figure 16 outlines the 11 viewpoint locations including 23 investigated viewpoints which shows a thorough site investigation was undertaken to determine the visual catchment. *‘Viewpoints are all located in public areas but are considered to be representative of the views available to neighbouring residents and to the general public from these areas’.*
37. The LVA notes the following;
- ‘Visual change is unavoidable with development facilitated by the plan change, from what is largely a rural agricultural land use adjacent to a large airport to an industrial and commercial land use. It is noted the site and its surrounding landscape is expected to have visual changes, as it is designated either by Waka Kotahi or the Waipa District Plan as areas for future change. Therefore, this assessment makes recommendations that have been incorporated into the structure plan. The recommendations, and therefore the structure plan, aim to:*
- *Achieve a development that is visually integrated with its current and future expected surroundings*
  - *Achieve high quality landscape character within the development area*
  - *Retain and improve upon sense of place ‘*

This importantly acknowledges that visual change (should the plan change go ahead) is unavoidable and that this is anticipated in area in the district plan and by Waka Kotahi.

38. Summary of Viewpoint findings and subsequent peer review findings for each viewpoint is provided in Figure 2 below

Viewpoint Reference	Location	Rating	Peer Review Rating	Peer Review Comments
VP1	Raynes Rd	Low	Low	I do not think that this view represents any residential property but concur that there will be a low impact to the transient users of the road. As mentioned, this view will be subject to change as it is already predominantly Airport Business zone and the landuse to the east of Raynes Road is already exhibiting industrial landuse with development in the south-east section of the zone such as Trade Depot.
VP2	Corner Raynes Rd and Narrows Rd	Low	Very Low (if SLD goes ahead). Low-if not.	The proposed masterplan shows a large setback from this corner to allow for the Future Southern Links designation (SLD), which will lessen the impact of views to the northern residents and transient road users. Industrial development is already visual from this viewpoint.
VP3	Narrows Rd	Low-Moderate (for residents and transient users)	Low-Moderate (if SLD goes ahead). Moderate if not.	The existing zoning currently provides physical separation between the residents of Narrows Road and the Airport Business Zone. This rural buffer would reduce the impact and effects of industrial development on these residents. The extension of the zoning to this road will at least a moderate impact visually on these residents however it is within the 'Possible Future Growth Area' in the district plan. This will be lessened if the SLD goes ahead as this will change the character of the area.
VP4	Corner Narrows Rd + Middle Rd	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate (if SLD goes ahead). Moderate if not.	This outlook will change significantly with the zone change, in the short term as the existing trees in the foreground and low density of any built form will change with the industrial activity. This will reduce as the buffer establishes but the general character of the area will still be significantly affected.
VP5	Middle Road South-(midpoint)	Low-Moderate	Moderate	This view is representative of 90, and 92 Middle Road and given this immediate outlook is not currently zoned industrial, there will be at least a moderate effect on these properties outlook and amenity. The backdrop view of the existing zoning would mean that some change to this outlook is already anticipated.
VP6	Middle Road South	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	As one moves south down Middle Road, the impact of the zone extension will become less as the existing zoning will mean a large degree of change to the landscape values is anticipated in the area already – which will likely see a change to the open pasture and scattered specimen trees evident currently. However, there will be a significant effect on the amenity to 108 Middle Road.
VP7	SH3	Low	Low (if SLD goes ahead).	The corner of land designated for the Southern Links project has a large area of established exotic trees



			Low-Moderate if not.	that provide good screening to the site from this viewpoint. If the designation goes ahead, this area will change significantly and this area becomes an obvious area for development due to it sitting between the airport and highway however, if not, this will change the current open outlook of this area which will also have some impact on the views to the NW of the airport terminal. There is existing native buffer planting to SH3 and the site which should be protected to help mitigate effects of industrial development.
VP8	Corner SH3 Ingram Rd	Low	Low	This is the outlook from the southern industrial area of the airport. This area is already exhibiting a mixed industrial use being adjacent to the airport and even though the outlook will change, this will be in keeping with the current trend of industrial landuse adjacent the airport.
VP9	Raynes Rd	Very Low	Very Low	The open expansive views will see change with the new zoning however from this viewpoint, the effects will not be any more significant than is anticipated with the existing Airport Business Zone.
VP10	Raynes Rd	Very Low	Low	There will be an increased presence of built form with the larger airport business zone proposed which will have a minor change to the background of this outlook. However, the views to Maungatautari mountain to the south will not be disrupted and the dominant fore and midground view will be undisturbed.
VP11	Mystery Creek Rd	Very Low	Very Low	There will be an increased presence of built form with the larger airport business zone proposed which will have a minor change to the background of this outlook, however, given the distance and presence of trees in the fore/mid ground this will be minor impact to this view.

Figure 2: Viewpoint Summary Table

39. In summary, the visual assessment part of the report was considered in-depth and in general I conclude with the ratings, if we are to assume the Southern Links project is to go ahead. If the Southern Links project is not considered as part of the future context, I believe that the ratings for the residences directly adjacent the development along Narrows Road and Middles Road (south) will experience higher effects than the LVA ratings as outlined in the Figure 2 table above.

## Design Response

40. The LVA states that the recommendations made in this report have been incorporated within and have informed the proposed structure plan and plan change request policy. This integrated assessment and design process is recommended in Te Tangi a te Manu.
41. Final recommendations in the report are;
- *5.1.1 Intended retention of the topography for the small hill with the existing homestead. The homestead is not promoted for retention. This is achieved through the creation of the 'Hub' which will be a commercial and open space recreation centre.*

Comment: The retention of this landform is supported in principle and is complimentary to Section 15 of the district plan (Subdivision Objectives) - *15.3.1.3 The design and layout of development and subdivision, should recognise the landform and processes of the natural environment of the site and surrounding land, and avoid or minimise alterations to the landform and ecosystems.*

The ability for this area to be able to retain the landform is not entirely clear which was questioned in the RFI. The response is below, and I recognise that this detail is not possible to provide at this stage, further certainty around how this landform will be retained is desirable.

**Landscape**

11	Clarity is requested as to how the Hub space is intended to work to ensure that the topography is able to be retained. Currently the 2d plan shows the cadastral parcel as delineating retail uses to a degree around the landform. But no open space zoning or controls are proposed limiting how the hill can be used to manage retention of this topography.	<p>The Hub is described on page 21 of the Plan Change Request as a “...higher amenity spaces within the precinct that will provide a limited extent of retail to support the convenience needs of people visiting and working within the precinct...”</p> <p>While this will be a more open and landscaped environment compared to the remainder of the precinct, it will remain in private ownership and will not be vested as open space with Waipa District Council.</p> <p>The design of the Hub, including landuse strategy, building design and locations, finished topography and landscaping will be developed as part of the resource consent process.</p> <p>The retention of the hill landform, which the Hub is centred on, is a preference of the applicants but the details of how the landform can be integrated with the built environment will only be known once a detailed design is progressed. The Plan Change deliberately avoid introducing rules that would pre-empt this detailed design process.</p>
----	---	--

- **5.1.2 Incorporation of amenity planting and specimen trees to the new development internally. This is achieved through the provision of streets which require street planting, and landscape feature areas.**

Comment: The principle of internal street and tree planting is supported. It is recommended that this planting integrates recommendations in terms of species which will support bat habitat and passage.

- **5.1.3 Views to Pirongia are considered and provided where possible through street layout and orientation.**

Comment: This is supported in principle. It is difficult to discern whether this will be achieved through the proposed road configuration.

- **5.1.4 An update to the District Plan rule 10.4.2.6: Site boundaries adjacent to Raynes Road, Narrows Road, Middle Road and State Highway 3 shall be landscaped to a minimum depth of 5m, except for any required access or egress points. The 5m landscaped area must consist of:**
  - a. specimen trees reaching heights of 4m minimum and underplanted with species up to 1.2m in height.**
  - b. A minimum of 50% of the total view to buildings on road boundaries must be screened with vegetation reaching heights of 4m.**

Comment: This is supported in principle; however, I believe that the current wording is ambiguous and would like to see this amended.

- a. I would also like to see the specimen tree height increased to 8m minimum at maturity, given the built form may be up to 20m high. In relation to the 1.2m maximum height underplanting, this does not set a minimum so therefore could be grass or groundcovers. It is recommended that this is removed or reworded.
- b. The 50% coverage is open to interpretation (i.e just half of the building road frontage could have the screen planting rather than achieving 50% coverage across the entire length of built form).

*5.1.5 A new policy rule specifying: Site boundaries adjacent to either a 'Rural' zone or to dwellings must consist of shrubs or screening vegetation a minimum of 5m high and 2m deep.*

Comment: This is supported.

In addition for both 5.14 and 5.1.5, 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 are planted to provide the desired screening/softening in the short term.

## 5.2 FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATION

- *5.2.1 Promote the retention of existing specimen trees across the site where they are of good form and can be accommodated within the proposed design. (refer note in section 2.5 regarding this promotion).*

Comment: It is recommended that there is stronger protection of any high quality established existing trees onsite which form a crucial part of the character of the area and that further protection measures are put in place for these trees once identified. This would require further input from a qualified arborist in combination with a bat specialist to identify any high value trees (in terms of habitat and amenity) that require protection and which must be integrated into any further development. For example, during the site visit I noted the driveway trees (to the existing homestead) appear to be good quality Plane trees. Although not a particularly notable species, these large established deciduous trees are typical of the area and are part of the site character. These existing trees are also important in terms of bat habitat.



Figure 3: Existing Plane trees on driveway within site

- **5.2.2 Promote the retention of existing specimen trees within the 'indicative landscape feature' as shown on the masterplan or the 5m landscape buffer planting required under the structure plan where they are of good form and can be accommodated within the proposed design. (refer note in section 2.5 regarding this promotion).**

Comment: This is supported. This would cover the existing native buffer planting to State Highway 3 which provides good landscape mitigation for views from the State Highway and the west (Refer image below). This planting continues along the southern boundary of the site and the airport land to Middle Road and it is recommended that this planting is also protected. Further trees around the homestead could not be determined on site but appear to be well established.

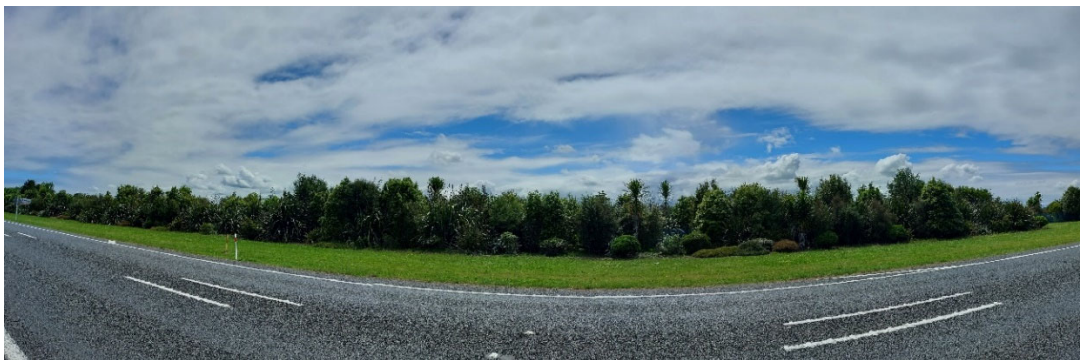


Figure 4: Existing native planting to SH3 interface recommended to be protected, providing a 'head start' for mitigation along this boundary.

## Conclusions

42. The LVA concludes that *'the overall landscape and visual effects arising from the plan change request are low'*. The key reasoning behind this are:
- *While the proposed plan change will affect the zoning of the area and consequently the type of development enabled, it is noted that the area proposed for change has already been designated for future rezoning in the Waipa District Plan. The 'Hamilton Airport Growth Map' shows areas within the site as 'Possible Future Growth Area' and 'Future Expansion Area' and identifies in the key that these areas will be rezoned in the future. These areas are bordered by the Waka Kotahi designation for Southern Links (D156).*
  - *It is also noted that 40% of the site is already zoned 'Airport Business Zone', including both of the small hills.'*
  - *The site is visible primarily from the north to the south on the western side along Raynes Rd, Narrows Rd, Middle Rd and SH3. Views of development facilitated by the plan change request primarily affect stationary viewers from existing rural zoned land, as this will form a permanent part of their outlook. Transitory viewers will primarily see development facilitated by the plan change request as part of a journey that will fit with the character of the existing 'Airport Business Zone' to the east and south of the Airport Runway.*
  - *The site cannot rely on landform to create a backdrop to it from any identified viewpoints, however, planting can do this. Buffer planting as required in the Waipa District Plan rules for the zone will help to blend the changes built form create into the surrounding landscape, and the policy amendments to rule 10.4.2.6 are considered appropriate to provide the required height to achieve this.*
  - *Landscape buffer planting as required in the Waipa District Plan along all exterior roads should be substantial enough to give a softening effect for viewers to mitigate the size and scale of potential buildings.*
43. I concur with these conclusions. However, as discussed, I think there is a lack of assessment on the effect on the rural character and amenity of the area. At the broader level, the effects on amenity will be low, given the undulating topography of the site and the clusters of specimen trees and shelter belts restricting views to the site. To the south and east, significant industrial development is already occurring in this area and therefore from these aspects, the visual and character impacts are also Low. However, the immediate rural residential neighbourhood bordering the site will have at least moderate effect on their outlook and in turn character and amenity. This includes properties to Narrows Road and Middle Road (south of Narrows Road), which currently experience a rural outlook, with sparse built form, open paddocks and clusters of trees. This proposal will see considerable change to this outlook through industrial development. It is my opinion however, that if the Southern Links project does go ahead, development of industry into this triangle of land will be appropriate as this will see significant change to the landscape values of this immediate neighbourhood.

## Review of Submissions

44. Six submissions were received in relation to landscape matters, around rural amenity and visual impact. Five of these opposed the plan change, one supported in part - each of these have been addressed separately below.
45. Submission 01 Jennifer Lillian McDowall (3/60 Lowe Rd)
- **Summary of Submission (Oppose):** Re-zoning will reduce the amenity value of my neighbourhood from a pleasant semi-rural area to a quasi-industrial area.

- **Landscape Review:** I visited Lowe Road during my site visit, and it is my opinion that the amenity of the immediate neighbourhood of Lowe Road will not be impacted by the zone change. The land between Narrows Road and Lowe Road is rolling in nature with clusters of established mainly exotic trees limiting any views to the development area. It is also noted, that should the Southern Links Designation be realised, then this would run east-west to the south of Raynes and Lowes Road, physically separating the industrial land use to the south from this neighbourhood.
- On a broader neighbourhood level, I concur that there will be a negative impact on rural amenity however, again due to the rolling nature of the site and existing vegetation, this will be largely limited to the properties immediately adjacent to the site, along Narrows and Middle Road (south of Narrows Road). These properties would experience a large change to the existing character of their neighbourhood, from an open pastoral landscape with specimen trees and sparse built form, to a likely highly developed area with increased built form and less open views to the broader landscape. The landscape mitigation planting proposed to the perimeter of the development will lessen this effect, but there is no doubt that there will still be at least a moderate level of effect on the outlook for these properties.
- The proposed development should not however restrict recreational opportunities in the area, other than the change to the amenity value of the landscape as noted above.

46. Submission 06 James Douglas Snowball and Marie Anne Snowball (248 Raynes Road)

- **Summary of Submission (Oppose):** There does not appear to be a substantial proposed greenbelt between the northern precinct and existing homeowners which would also include bunding, trees and other planting.
- **Landscape Review:** It is noted that the landscape buffer on the Integrated Masterplan Concept (Harrison Grierson Dated 03/03/22) is difficult to ascertain due to unclear graphics. However, The LVA does describe the proposed buffer and states as part of their recommendations (Section 5.1) an update to the District Plan rule 10.4.2.6;

*‘Site boundaries adjacent to Raynes Road, Narrows Road, Middle Road and State Highway 3 shall be landscaped to a minimum depth of 5m, except for any required access or egress points. The 5m landscaped area must consist of:*

- a. specimen trees reaching heights of 4m minimum and underplanted with species up to 1.2m in height.*
- b. A minimum of 50% of the total view to buildings on road boundaries must be screened with vegetation reaching heights of 4m.’*

This condition amendment is generally supported as discussed in Section 41 of this review, and I believe addresses the concern of the submission from James and Marie Snowball.

47. Submission 07 Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society NZ

- **Summary of Submission (Oppose):** Need ecological Management Plan for Long-tailed bats which are endangered in this area, written by qualified ecologist. Wider landscape must also be accounted for to protect significant habitats of indigenous fauna to avoid impact on protected species. No lizard surveys were done by ecology

consultants. (3) Lighting Management Plan needs to be included as an integrated part of the Bat Management Plan

- **Landscape Review:** It is recommended that any existing bat habitat that is identified onsite is protected or offset and that this be complemented by measures to improve the existing corridors through the landscape planting within and around the development. Further to this, an expert conference was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 in relation to Ecology and Bat Habitat. The applicant provided an amended version of the PPC20 including a revised structure plan for the Northern Precinct that identifies a bat habitat area/corridor to be protected and enhanced which includes the existing Plane trees along the driveway of 105 Middles Road and the trees around the existing house which forms the 'Hub' area. Outside of ecological considerations, the protection of these established trees onsite is supported and seen as a positive outcome from a landscape perspective as these trees form part of the existing amenity and character of the area. The revised proposal also presented an 11ha compensation area to the NE of the site which connects to the Waikato River. It is currently unclear what extent of habitat rehabilitation will occur in this area, but in principle this is a positive landscape outcome in terms of creating a biodiversity corridor to the river and will have a positive impact in terms of amenity for the Lowe Road neighbourhood to the north.

48. Submission 08 Sandra Forsyth (15 Lowe Road)

- **Summary of Submission (Oppose):** The visual impact of the proposed development cannot be underestimated. Waikato, and particularly the Waipa district are attractive as a consequence of the rural outlook and in particular the large number of trees that are seen on rural and urban properties. These features are appealing to tourists and a reason to stop in the area rather than drive through. This has not been taken into account with the current development at the Airport. The view from the drive heading east from the airport exit is unattractive due to the recently built commercial buildings almost abutting the fence line. If the rezoning must go ahead, then provision for a green belt which offsets the heating/climate damage of the building materials and roading, and visual impact of the structures is imperative.
- **Landscape Review:** The impact on the broader district in terms of visual impact due to loss of rural amenity is a valid concern. This cannot be overlooked and is a common conflict in fringe rural areas experiencing pressures from urban and industrial growth. The loss of 89ha of rural land will result in a definite change to the landscape character of the area, which as the submission states, will not only affect the nearby residents, but the broader transiting audience travelling through this area including visitors to the airport. As discussed in the landscape effects section of this review, this effect is likely to be at least moderate however, must be considered alongside the broader picture of development in the area to ensure that development is occurring in the most appropriate areas to reduce the impact on the rural landscape. This area is identified in Waipa District Plan Appendix S1 – Future Growth Cells as a 'Possible Future Growth Area'. This states '*future extension direction*' is shown to indicate where any further development would logically be located given the alignment of Southern Links. This future extension would provide for future industrial land beyond 2035.' The concentration of industrial land use around the airport will consolidate industrial activity and is in accordance with the WDC planned future growth.
- The visual change through industrial development is permitted and anticipated to the south and eastern portion of the site with the existing Operative Airport Business Zone

which will change the broader character of this area once developed. However, since this area has not yet been developed, the effects of the proposed rezoning therefore are perceived to be worse as currently no industrial land use has occurred in the Business zoned land which is currently predominantly rural land use. Once the existing business zone is developed, it would change the overall perception of the area as a semi-rural landscape.

- It is recommended that there is stronger protection of any high quality established existing trees onsite which form a crucial part of the character of the area and that further protection measures are put in place for these trees once identified. The current recommendations in the LVA (5.2) only state to 'Promote the retention of existing specimen trees across the site.' and this is not deemed a strong enough framework to ensure protection of notable species.

49. Submission 12 Joan and Robin Cuff with L&M McDowell (37B Maranui Street Mount Maunganui)

- **Summary of Submission (Oppose):** Visual effects not adequately assessed to Rukuhia Neighbourhood zone
- **Landscape Review:** This has been addressed in this review extensively and it is acknowledged that there will be visual effects to the immediate neighbourhood of Narrow and Middles Road in particular. The broader Rukuhia neighbourhood will be largely unaffected visually (except when transiting past the site) as explored in the Visual Effects section of the LVA.

50. Submission 23 (Hamilton City Council)

- **Summary of Submission (Support in Part):** Hamilton City Council supports the Airport Plan Change, including measures that require an appropriate consideration of bat habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement to assist in ensuring the continued presence of the Long-Tailed Bat in the area. This may include biodiversity mitigation, offset or compensation to address the loss of bat habitat.
- **Landscape Review:** The issue of bat habitat in relation to landscape is discussed in Section 47, Forest and Bird submission.



Angie Brown  
Landscape Architect (NZILA registered)



## Appendix A – Qualifications and Experience

---

### Angela (Angie) Clara Brown

Senior Landscape Architect

#### Qualifications & Affiliations

- Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (2nd class Hons) Lincoln University, 2006
- Certificate in Iwi Environmental Management, Te Wananga o Aotearoa, 2005
- Registered Member, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (since 2015)

#### Summary

Angela holds a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University and is a Registered Landscape Architect with the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.

Angela is Senior Landscape Architect at Align Ltd and has been a practicing Landscape Architect for 16 years in both New Zealand and Australia.

During this time, Angela gained a broad range of landscape architecture experience; from residential design to site master planning, public open space design, urban infill, streetscape and urban design. Angela has extensive experience working on projects at a structure plan level, including creating public open space strategies and movement networks.

Angela has undertaken numerous Landscape Assessment in both the North and South Island of New Zealand. This has included for winery expansion, rural subdivision, residential development projects and power projects.

#### Relevant Experience

- Kelson Heights Stage 6 LVA
- Cannon Point Stage 3 LVA (in progress)
- Pukekohe North Substation NOR commissioner hearing evidence and attendance
- Peer Review of Kingseat Substation NOR LVA
- Confidential Landscape Visual Evidence for upcoming Greenwood Roche hearing
- Greenridge Farm Subdivision LVA
- Whitehaven Winery Extension LVA