

Waipu Gateway Service Station  
47 Millbrook Road, Waipu

# Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

25<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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## 1. Introduction

Vaco Investments (Waipu Project) Limited are seeking consent to construct a new service centre at the intersection of Millbrook Road with SH1, Waipu.

The service centre will provide a range of facilities and uses, including a petrol filling station, drive through restaurants, superette, and various commercial uses, contained within nine buildings.

The updated application plans, submitted following receipt of the Council's s92 request for additional information, shows two options for the design and layout of the site, with the difference between the two options being within the northern portion of the site, adjacent to Millbrook Road.

This report assesses only Option 1.

### Preparation of this Report

This report has been prepared by Richard Knott. Richard has worked in the areas of urban design, landscape and visual assessment, planning, heritage and special character for 34 years and established his own consultancy in 2014.

Richard is an Independent Planning Commissioner and has sat on hearing panels for a number of Councils, including Hamilton City Council, Whangārei District Council, Tauranga City Council, Taupo District Council, South Wairarapa District Council and Auckland Council.

In preparation for the report, Richard has made specific visits to the site and surrounding area on two occasions. Prior to the site visits, he was generally familiar with the local area.

#### Qualifications

- MA Urban Design, 1995
- PG. Diploma Building Conservation, 2002
- Bachelor of Planning, 1989
- BA(Hons) Town and Country Planning, 1988

#### Professional Memberships (full membership)

- New Zealand Planning Institute
- Royal Town Planning Institute, UK
- Institute of Historic Building Conservation, UK
- Institute of Highway Engineers, UK

#### Accreditations

- Ministry for the Environment Making Good Decisions Accredited, with Chairs Endorsement

#### Relevant Training

- Planning Institute of Australia, Landscape and Visual Assessment (October 2019)
- NZPI Planning for Maori Values (Advanced) (October 2019)
- NZPI Conference (2023 and 2018)

## 2. Methodology

This assessment follows the concepts and principles outlined in *Te Tangi a te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*; Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (July 2022).

It has also been informed by Richard's knowledge of other good practice, including Auckland Council's *Information requirements for the assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects* (September 2017) and the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition*' (2013).

In line with *Te Tangi a te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines*<sup>1</sup>, the adopted methodology has been tailored to meet the specific requirements and circumstances of the proposal, context, and relevant provisions. It recognises that the **primary purpose** of the assessment is to establish the landscape and visual effects of the proposed service station, and in particular consider the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity, and in turn on the rural character and amenity of the area.

### Key Steps

- Site visits:
  - To inform an understanding of the existing landscape character of the site and its surroundings.
  - To gain an understanding of the viewing audience.
  - To identify the visual catchment of the site and the viewpoints to be considered in the assessment.
- The report is structured to:
  - Establish the Existing Landscape Character of the area and its surroundings, considering its physical, associative, and perceptual characteristics and values.
  - Identify the Visual Catchment and Viewing Audience.
  - Provide a brief description of the Proposed Development, recognising that this report should be read alongside the AEE, application plans and other reports.
  - Identify the Statutory Context for the consideration of the application and to establish key issues which should be considered.
  - To confirm the selected Viewpoints and the reasons for these.
  - Provide a Visual Assessment of proposed service station. This considers the nature of the effect at each viewpoint and then establishes the magnitude of this.
  - Provide conclusions and recommendations

### Magnitude of Effects

In establishing the magnitude of the effect on the visual amenity of passersby/travellers at each viewpoint, the *Te Tangi a te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines* seven-point scale is utilised, as set in Table 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu. Pg.41

In considering the long-term effects of the proposed development, regard has been given to the final height of trees and planting noted on page WAIPU -L-3.0A and illustrated on page WAIPU-L-2.1A of the previously submitted landscape plans.

*Table 1: Seven Point Scale utilised for the assessment (based upon the seven point scale included in Te Tangi a te Manu - Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines)*

<b>Magnitude of Effect</b>	<b>Description of Effect</b>
VERY HIGH (significant adverse effect)	<i>Total loss of the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape resulting in a complete change to the landscape or outlook</i>
HIGH (significant adverse effect)	<i>Major change to the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape or a significant reduction in the perceived amenity of the outlook</i>
MODERATE-HIGH (more than minor)	<i>Noticeable change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape or reduction in the perceived amenity or the addition of new but uncharacteristic features and elements</i>
MODERATE (more than minor)	<i>Partial change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity</i>
LOW-MODERATE (minor adverse effect)	<i>A slight loss to the existing character, features or landscape quality</i>
LOW (less than minor / minor adverse effect)	<i>The proposed development is barely discernible with little change to the existing character, features or landscape quality</i>
VERY LOW (less than minor adverse effect)	<i>The proposed development is barely discernible or there are no changes to the existing character, features or landscape quality</i>

### Preparation of Photo Montages

The photomontages have been prepared taking account of the best practice advice in *BPG 10.2 - Best Practice Guide Visual Simulations*, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (2010)

All photographs were taken with a Fujifilm X-E2S camera. Various lenses were utilised to fit the particular circumstances.

In view of health and safety concerns regarding working within the State Highway, the decision was taken that single frame images would be utilised for each photomontage. This reduced the time needed within the State Highway and took away the need to set up a tripod at each location. The

camera was handheld and the internal level used to ensure that it was held horizontally. The camera position represents eye level of a 1.8m tall adult.

The location chosen for all images were adjacent to clear physical features, such as road signs or field entrances, so that they could be simply marked on a map as a record of where each photograph was taken, along with a short-written description to further pinpoint the position.

The montages were prepared by Christchurch based 3D visualisation specialists VirtualRift.

VirtualRift first built a 3D digital model of the development, based on the updated CAD plans and utilising the provided finished floor levels of each proposed building and finished levels across the site. GIS contour data was used for the surrounding land and viewpoints.

Taking the clearly identified position of each viewpoint, and with data regarding the field of view of each chosen photograph, the 3D model was used to accurately populate the montages with representations of the proposed development from each viewpoint, in line with Industry best practice.

In preparing the montages, it was assumed that all buildings will be finished in the colours shown on the updated plans.

The landscaping shown in the montages was informed by the proposed landscaping shown on the previously submitted landscape plans; in particular page WAIPU -L-3.0A and illustrated on page WAIPU-L-2.1A, except where noted for Viewpoint G where the updated layout for Option 1 deviates from that shown on the landscape plan. The trees were randomised from about 3m - 8m in height. Groundcover was kept around 1m in height.

Full size copies of the original photograph and montage for each viewpoint are included as Appendix-1.

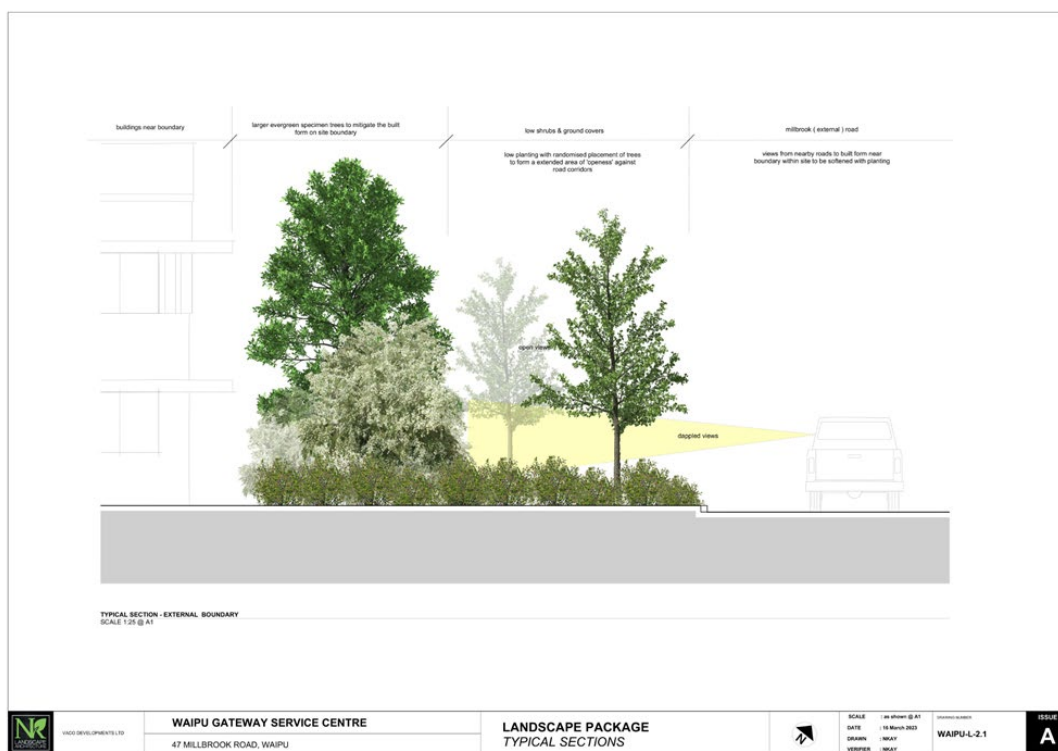


Figure 1: Reduced copy of page WAIPU-L-2.1A of the original landscape plans.

### 3. Existing Landscape Character



Figure 2: NZ Topo Map identifying location of site.

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**Richard Knott Limited**  
 Urban Design | Masterplanning | Built Heritage  
 Town Planning | Landscape and Visual Assessment

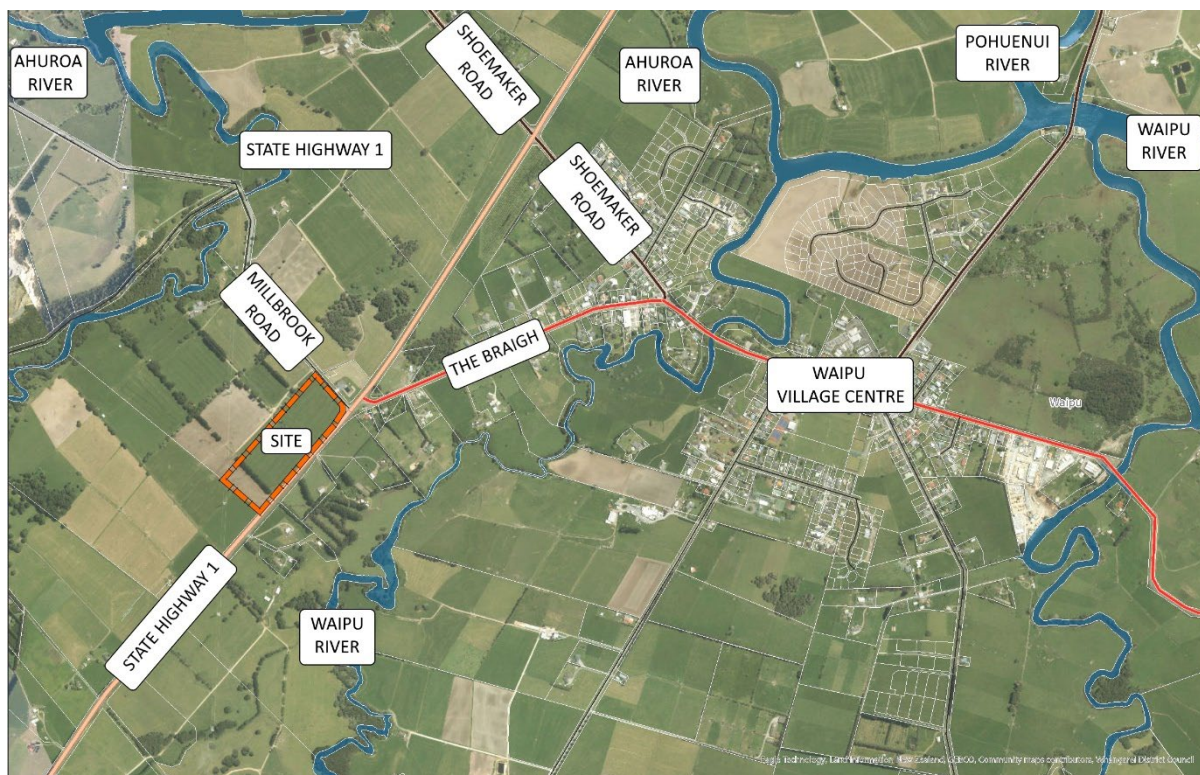


Figure 3: The local area (based on aerial photo base from <https://gismaps.wdc.govt.nz/GISMapsGallery/>)

*'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.'*<sup>2</sup>

The site is located immediately to the west of State Highway 1 (SH1), to the south of the intersection with Millbrook Road. It has an (approximately) 400m frontage to SH1 and a 150m frontage to Millbrook Road.

The site and its surroundings are an area of coastal plain surrounded by the higher Brynderwyn Hills to the south and Mareretu Forest to the west. The area is bisected by the Waipu River, and its tributaries, the Pohuenui River and Ahuroa River (which is located to the west of the site). There are views towards the Brynderwyn Hills, Mareretu Forest and Whangārei Heads (north) from the site. These visual connections are an important feature of the area.

The general character of the immediate surroundings is rural land, bisected by SH1, and local roads. SH1 is a dominant feature of the area; it is a busy road with fast moving vehicles passing by the site. This includes a large number of heavy vehicles. Whilst of national significance, it provides a barrier to east-west movement through the local area. The heavy vehicles, cars and other vehicles moving at pace through the area, alongside the site, have a significant impact on the character and values of the area; the vehicles make the area alongside the road noisy and feel unsafe for pedestrians and other non-vehicle users. The majority of drivers pass through the area; they associate it with movement and travel, rather than a place to stop and spend time.

The site and surrounding land is in pasture, with field boundaries formed by wire fences. There are areas of trees in groups and lines alongside SH1, and within the landscape generally, forming field

<sup>2</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu. Pg.76, informed by the NZILA Landscape Assessment Methodology workshops (November 2017)



boundaries or freestanding. Given the otherwise open and flat appearance of the landscape, these trees are an important feature, and make a significant contribution to the overall character of the area.

Dwellings and farm buildings are scattered alongside SH1, mainly some distance from the road frontages. Many have areas or lines of trees associated with them.

The main Waipu village is located 'off line' from SH1, to the east. The village centre is approximately 1.5 km from the site, with fingers of development stretching from the main village to SH1 along The Braigh (which forms the fourth leg of the intersection of Millbrook Road with SH1) and along Shoemaker Road (which intersects with SH1 approximately 1km to the north of the site). Dwellings in these streets come close to SH1; the final dwelling in The Braigh faces towards SH1, and is clearly viewed from the state highway. In addition, the edge of the main village is seen in views across pastoral land at Shoemaker Drive. Together these provide travellers along SH1 with an understanding of the location and scale of the village.

Most dwellings along SH1, and seen within these views, are single storey. Some of the farm buildings viewed from SH1 are greater in scale.

Waipu village was originally established by Scottish settlers, who after the Highland Clearances (the forced evictions of tenants in the Scottish Highlands and Islands) initially followed Reverend Norman McLeod, an ordained Presbyterian Minister, initially to St Ann's in Nova Scotia and then Melbourne and Adelaide, and on to Waipu. They chose to establish their home in Waipu as it was suitable for fishing, ship building, and farming and allowed the Gaelic speaking community to remain together. Whilst this heritage is important to the community, with community events held celebrating it, this history is not immediately obvious to travellers on SH1, who may only become aware of it by seeing signs to the Waipu Scottish Migration Museum.<sup>3</sup>

Immediately to the north of the site, close to the intersection of Millbrook Road with SH1 is a veterinary practice; this single level building is currently undergoing alterations and is being significantly extended. It has a simple overall shape and form; lean-to extensions with catslide roofs are being added either side of the gable roofed original building, significantly increasing the floorspace and adding to the overall bulk and form of the building (albeit that the extensions are lower in height than the original building). Whilst there is landscaping around the site of this building, it is currently a dominant form within the context of the site, being clearly seen in views along SH1 from both the south and north.

There are high voltage transmission lines passing over the southwest corner of the site, running approximately north-south, with the closest pylon to the north being about 140m from the site boundary, and the closest pylon to the south being only approximately 50m from the site boundary. The pylons and lines are a dominant feature in the landscape. The pylon to the south is seen in conjunction with the site for travellers travelling both north and south along SH1.

Overall, the site has an open character, which is not disrupted by the existing fences and vegetation along (or close to) the existing and proposed site boundaries:

- to SH1 - wire fence with some overgrown vegetation within the swale outside of the boundary
- to Millbrook Road - wire fence with some overgrown vegetation within the swale outside of the boundary
- to the west – the new boundary will be to the east of the existing boundary which is marked by a wire fence with some tree planting to its east. Both the existing fence and trees will not be within the site

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.waipumuseum.com/>

- to the south – a wire fence

### **Conclusion Overall Values**

- SH1 is the most dominant feature in the area, bringing significant traffic movement and noise to the area.
- The majority of viewers will as a result be passing by the site at speed.
- Whilst the land has a rural appearance, passerby will be aware of the proximity of Waipu Village, with development stretching towards, visible from and, in the case of the veterinary building, jumping across the State Highway.
- The route of the pylons and overhead lines across the area and the corner of the site have a negative impact on the character of land.
- The groups of trees within the landscape are also important features which contribute to the overall character of the land and the area as a whole.
- The views towards the Brynderwyn Hills, Mareretu Forest and Whangārei Heads (north) from the site are an important feature of the area.

## 4. Description of the Visual Catchment and Viewing Audience

As there are no existing footpaths or cycle paths in the local area, the most likely viewers of the proposed development are:

- Travellers passing by, both north and south, along SH1. Viewpoints along SH1 are likely to be the most travelled viewpoints of the site.
- Vehicles exiting The Braigh, coming from Waipu village and Waipu Cove, and the residents of the dwellings who live in close proximity of this (in particular the residents of 107 The Braigh who will have some views towards the site).
- Vehicles entering Millbrook Road and passing by the site along Millbrook Road (in both directions). This is likely to be the least travelled viewpoints of the site.

### **Travellers passing by, both north and south, along SH1**

#### *Travelling South*

The site visit identified that when approaching the site from the north, existing areas of trees on either side of SH1 significantly limit views of the site; see Figures 2 (1km) and 3 (540m). It is only when a traveller passes by these trees that the site comes fully into view.

#### *Travelling North*

Approaching from the south, the site is viewed against a backdrop of trees. Whilst the surrounding topography is generally flat, the existing dwelling and associated tree planting (including along the site frontage) approximately 370m south of the site disrupt clear views of the site. It is only after passing this that travellers have a clear view of the site (see Figure 4 and 5). On a clear day it is possible to see the Whangārei Heads beyond the site.

### **Vehicles exiting The Braigh (and residents of 107 The Braigh)**

The Braigh approaches SH1 at an angle. The carriageway turns at its end to better align with SH1, to provide visibility to drivers wishing to turn onto the state highway.

There are established trees within the triangular area formed where the carriageway turns. These disrupt views of the site for drivers, until such time as they are close to the intersection and about to turn.

The dwelling at 107 The Braigh does not directly face the site, but it is likely that residents will have some views of the site from the dwelling and will have views of the site from their land.

### **Vehicles entering Millbrook Road and passing by the site along Millbrook Road.**

Vehicles entering Millbrook Road and travelling in either direction on Millbrook Road will have clear views of the site. Whilst the land is generally flat, the curve in Millbrook Road around 350m to the west and the existing trees on land alongside the road will limit views for drivers travelling from the west until they are closer to the site.

## Photographs<sup>4</sup>



*Figure 4: East side of SH1 close to the intersection of Shoemaker Road with SH1; approximately 1000m north of the north-east corner of the stie (photo RKL - 19 03 2022)*



*Figure 5: On the east side of SH1, approximately 540m north of the north-east corner of the site (photo RKL - 19 03 2022)*

<sup>4</sup> All photographs RKL 19.035.2022. Camera Fujifilm X-E2S with 35mm lens (equivalent of 53mm lens on a full frame camera) .



Figure 6: From the west side of SH1, approximately 330m south of the south-east corner of the site (photo RKL - 19 03 2022)



Figure 7: From the west side of SH1, approximately level with the south-east corner of the site (photo RKL - 19 03 2022)



*Figure 8: From south side of The Braigh, approximately 115m from the north-east corner of the site (photo RKL - 19 03 2022)*



*Figure 9: From north side of Millbrook Road, approximately 200m west of the site boundary (photo RKL - 19 03 2022)*

## 5. The Proposed Development



Figure 10: Extract from updated plans showing the Option 1 layout for the site (provided by client)



The proposed development includes:

- A roundabout and new road providing access to the site from SH1, approximately 175m from the site's southern boundary.
- South of the new road into the site, a petrol filling station, consisting of freestanding shop building, freestanding canopy over petrol pumps and various other structures.
- North of the new road into the site:
  - o A new north south access road
  - o A series of freestanding buildings along the west boundary of the site, facing the new access road, with car parking between the buildings and the road
  - o To the east of the new access road, a series of building arranged across the site, with their end elevations facing SH1, with areas of car parking and yard between them.
- A comprehensive landscaping scheme, including planting along the boundaries of the site, specimen trees and areas of lawn.
  - o The landscape scheme consciously does not seek to provide lines of continuous trees along the site boundaries, but instead places specimen trees and other planting along boundaries and within the site individually or in small groups to provide a natural appearance. This directly responds to the landscape values of the area, where groups of trees and freestanding trees are an important feature of the local landscape.
  - o Built stone walls are proposed at the entrance from SH1 to provide a 'gateway' into the development.

- The stormwater ponds, SW-01 and SW-02 are intended to be dry ponds; they are therefore able to be maintained grass or can be planted with grasses which do not need to be mowed but are tolerant of drought, stress and inundation. They are shown as maintained grass on the landscape plans to reflect the pastoral use of the site and surroundings as existing.
- The landscaping plans were not updated to reflect Option 1 prior to the preparation of the photo montages prepared to support this visual assessment report. However, discussions with the landscape architect informed the planting shown on the montages (see sketch included as Figure 11). Subsequently, updated landscape plans have been prepared and are attached as Appendix 5 to the AEE.



Figure 11: Sketch plan prepared by NK Landscape Architecture - October 2023



## 6. The Statutory Context

The land is zoned Rural Production Zone in the Whangārei District Plan (operative in part). The land is not identified as an outstanding natural feature or landscape; it is therefore not a matter of national importance under s6(b) of the RMA and it is therefore not a requirement to recognise and provide for the protection of the land from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

Whilst the Objectives for the Rural Production Zone seek to protect the land for rural production activities (Objective RPROZ-O1), they do anticipate commercial and industrial activities which support rural production activities and rural communities (Objective RPROZ-O2). This includes recreation and tourist based activities.

Notwithstanding this, Objective RPROZ-O3 seeks to recognise, maintain and where appropriate protect the rural character and amenity of the zone (in line with the need to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values, in s7(c) of the RMA).

The associated policies, require (amongst other things) consideration of whether the development:

- Will contribute to the protection of rural productive land, rural character and amenity
- Has a direct connection to rural production activities, rural communities, and recreation and tourist activities.
- Requires a rural location
- Will contribute positively to the economy of the District
- Maintains amenity and character by ensuring new buildings are of a scale and character appropriate to the zone, are set back from boundaries and avoid ribbon development.

In this instance, the proposed development will deliver:

- Facilities which will support recreation and tourism in the wider area (with the provision of a petrol station, restaurants and other relevant retail and commercial activities)
- Space which can be used for businesses which support rural production activities (such as servicing of vehicles and machinery, or farm supplies)
- Requires a rural location, in so much as SH1 passes through rural land and a number of the facilities provided on the site, including the petrol filling station and restaurants are intended to meet the needs of travellers on SH1
- Will deliver employment and investment in the local community
- Buildings, particularly at the north end of the site, which are of a scale and character appropriate to the zone.

In view of this, the development can be viewed as a form of development which could be anticipated in the area, supported by Objective RPROZ-O2.

For the purpose of this report, the statutory issue considered is whether the development will protect the rural character and amenity of the area.

## 7. Provided Viewpoints



Figure 12: Plan identifying the six selected viewpoints (plan prepared by VirtualRift)

Whilst a wider number of locations were visited and considered as potential viewpoints, based upon the 'Description of the Visual Catchment and Viewing Audience' (section 4 above), six key viewpoints were chosen to illustrate the visual impact of the development in views from:

- The north along SH1.
- The Braigh (east), for drivers exiting Waipu Village.
- On the east side of SH1 close to the intersection of The Braigh with SH1, where drivers will be pausing to join SH1 (and also representing views from 107 The Braigh).
- The south along SH1.

## 8. Visual Assessment of Proposed Service Station

### Viewpoint D



- As noted above, in selecting this viewpoint, consideration was given to other viewpoints further to the north. From these other viewpoints existing trees on land to either side of SH1 would obscure much of the proposed development. The visual impact from these locations would therefore be less. Viewpoint D was therefore selected as it represented a worse scenario than these other viewpoints.
- From this viewpoint, SH1 is the most dominant feature in the area, bringing significant traffic movement and noise to the area. The majority of viewers will be approaching and passing by the site at speed.
- Whilst the land has a rural appearance, passerby will be aware of the proximity of Waipu Village, with development stretching towards, visible from and, in the case of the veterinary building, jumping across the State Highway.
- The route of the pylons and overhead lines across the area and the corner of the site have a negative impact on the character of land.
- The groups of trees within the landscape, which drivers will have passed by, are an important feature which contribute to the overall character of the land and the area as a whole.
- The proposed buildings at the northern end of the site are visible in views across the open land to the north of the veterinary building. They are viewed in the context of the pylon and overhead lines to the south. The buildings are lower than the backdrop of the Brynderwyn Hills to the South and Mareretu Forest to the west – they do not break the skyline.
- In the foreground the veterinary building and the associated shed will be viewed as though they are part of the new group of buildings.
- The shape and form of the buildings is not out of keeping with the shape and form expected of agricultural buildings within this landscape, and will not appear out of place given viewers appreciation of the relatively close proximity of Waipu village.
- Overtime the proposed landscaping scheme will break the shape and form of the development in this view. The trees around the boundary and within the site will reflect the groups of trees already existing to the north.
- In the short term the proposed development will cause a partial change to the existing character of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity from this viewpoint, and therefore has MODERATE visual and landscape effect. This effect would be equal to a more than minor adverse effect.
- Over time, as the trees and landscaping become established the planting will achieve significant height and density, as illustrated on page WAIPU-L-2.1A of the previously submitted landscape plans. This will significantly decrease the visibility of the buildings. The trees will by this stage better reflect the groups of trees which characterise the area, reducing the visual and landscape effect to LOW-MODERATE with the development only having a slight loss to the existing character and landscape quality of the area. This effect would be equal to a minor adverse effect.

### Viewpoint E



- From this viewpoint, drivers will have driven past the existing dwellings and commercial buildings along The Braigh, will be aware of the dwellings alongside them and have the existing vets building firmly within their view. They will be aware of the proximity of Waipu Village and be aware of commercial development jumping across the State Highway, with the veterinary building being located on the north side of Millbrook Road.
- Vehicle travelling at speed along SH1, including many heavy vehicles, make a significant impact upon the amenity and quality of this area.
- A pylon can be seen in the centre of the view and has a negative impact on the character of land.
- Relative to Viewpoint D, this area already feels more urban in character.
- The groups of trees within the landscape, including those at the end of The Braigh, are an important feature which contribute to the overall character of the land and the area as a whole.
- The proposed buildings at the northern end of the site are visible in views, although the existing trees on the triangle of land at the intersection of The Braigh with SH1 will provide instant screening of all but the northern end of Building 28.
- The development is viewed in the context of the Mareretu Forest to the west – the buildings do not break the skyline.
- The large stormwater field at the intersection of Mill Road with SH1 ensures that the buildings are stepped well back from the intersection, so decreasing their prominence in this view. The shape and form of the buildings is not out of keeping with the shape and form expected of agricultural buildings within this landscape.
- Overtime the proposed landscaping scheme will further break the shape and form of the development in this view, and significantly reduce the visibility of the buildings. In addition, the trees around the boundary and within the site will reflect the groups of trees already seen behind the buildings and at the intersection.
- As noted above, this viewpoint already appears more urban in character than others, due to the existing dwellings and commercial buildings along The Braigh, the high visibility of the existing vets building and the vehicles travelling at speed along SH1. As such, the development will only cause a slight loss to the existing character of this area, and therefore has LOW-MODERATE visual and landscape effect. This effect would be equal to a minor adverse effect.
- Over time, as the trees and landscaping become established the planting will achieve significant height and density, as illustrated on page WAIPU-L-2.1A of the previously submitted landscape plans. This will further decrease the visibility of the buildings, better respond the significance of trees in the local landscape and further reduce the visual and landscape effect, although the effects are likely to remain LOW-MODERATE with the development still leading to a slight loss to the existing character and landscape quality of the area. This effect would remain equal to a minor adverse effect.

### Viewpoint G



Figure 13: Stitched photograph from viewpoint G.

- As with Viewpoint E, many drivers will have driven past the existing dwellings and commercial buildings along The Braigh, and will be aware of the dwellings alongside them and of existing vets building to the north of Millbrook Road.
- Other drivers will be glancing towards the site whilst passing along SH1. They too will be aware of the dwellings in The Braigh and the vets building.
- Vehicle travelling at speed along SH1, including many heavy vehicles, make a significant impact upon the amenity and quality of this area.
- Relative to Viewpoint D, this area already feels more urban in character, with the dwelling at 107 The Braigh (behind the viewpoint) and the vets building both being prominent features of the area.
- Building 28 is clearly in view, although the large stormwater field at the intersection of Mill Road with SH1 ensures that it is stepped well back from the intersection, so decreasing its dominance in this view.
- In this close view the building breaks the skyline. However, the shape and form of the buildings is not out of keeping with the shape and form expected for agricultural buildings within this landscape.
- Overtime the landscape planting along the boundary and the trees closer to building 28 will in time become the dominant feature. The trees around the boundary and within the site will reflect the groups of trees already seen in the local area and beyond.
- The original landscape plan is not up to date for this part of the site. An updated sketch plan was prepared, to inform the preparation of the Montage of this viewpoint and to assist with the consideration of the landscape and visual effects (see Figure 11). These updates are now included on the updated landscape plan attached as Appendix 5 to the AEE.
- In the short term, the development will cause a partial change to the existing character of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity of the area, and therefore has MODERATE visual and landscape effect. This effect would be equal to a more than minor adverse effect.
- Over time, as the trees and landscaping become established the trees and planting will achieve significant height and density, as illustrated on page WAIPU-L-2.1A of the previously submitted landscape plans. This will significantly decrease the visibility of the buildings and also better reflect the significance of trees in the local landscape. Whilst this will still be a change from the existing appearance of the site, the visual effects of the proposal will lessen with the reduced visibility of the buildings; the visual and landscape effect will be LOW-MODERATE, with the mitigation provided by the planting reducing the effects such that the development will bring only a slight loss to the existing character of the area. This effect would be equal to a minor adverse effect.

**Viewpoint H**

- *From this viewpoint, the proposed development will be viewed in the context of the pylon and overhead lines to the south. It will sit lower than the backdrop of the trees to the north, and will not break the skyline. Whangārei Heads can be seen above it. As a result of their colours and their low scale relative to their backdrop of trees and landscape beyond, the proposed buildings will only be partly visible in views across the open land to the south of the site.*
- *The development will not be a dominant feature in this view. From this viewpoint, the proposed development is barely discernible with little change to the existing character, features and landscape quality of the area. Views over open land and the surrounding groups of trees remain the dominant feature, maintaining the existing landscape character of the area. It would therefore have a LOW visual and landscape effect. This effect is equivalent to a less than minor adverse effect.*
- *Overtime, as the trees and landscaping become established the trees and planting will achieve significant height and density, as illustrated on page WAIPU-L-2.1A of the previously submitted landscape plans. This will further decrease the effects of the development, although the visual and landscape effects of the development will remain LOW – equivalent to a less than minor adverse effect.*

**Viewpoint I**

- *Relative to Viewpoint H, the buildings are more visible, although in general are no taller than their backdrop of trees.*
- *The overhead lines and pylon are a very significant element in this view; in particular the pylon is significantly more dominant in this view than the proposed development. It has a significant negative impact on the character of the view.*
- *The colours and their low scale relative to their backdrop of trees reduces the potential dominance of the proposed building, and allows the views across open land and the trees forming the backdrop to these to remain a dominant feature.*
- *The proposed development will cause a partial change to the existing character of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity from this viewpoint, and therefore has MODERATE visual and landscape effect. This is equivalent to a more than minor adverse effect.*
- *Overtime, as the trees and landscaping become established the trees and planting will achieve significant height and density, as illustrated on page WAIPU-L-2.1A of the previously submitted landscape plans. Trees will again form the main backdrop to this view. This will decrease the effects of the development, such that relative to the existing situation, it would lead to a slight loss to the existing character and landscape quality of the area, and would therefore have a LOW-MODERATE visual and landscape effect. This is equivalent to a minor adverse effect.*

**Viewpoint J**

- *In this close up, wide angle, view, the proposed roundabout will represent a significant change, although is not out of keeping with the existing roundabout at the intersection of SH1 with SH15 (Port Marsden Highway). It is therefore a feature which could be expected by travellers.*
- *The shapes and forms of the buildings seen in the backdrop to the roundabout are more complex than those viewed at the north of the site, and as such have less in common with the agricultural buildings which could be expected in the area. In this close view the buildings break the skyline.*
- *In the short term the development will represent a noticeable change to the existing character of the landscape and a reduction in the perceived amenity of the viewpoint, through the addition of new uncharacteristic features and elements. It would therefore have a MODERATE-HIGH visual and landscape effect. This is equivalent to a more than minor adverse effect.*
- *Over time, as the trees and landscaping shown on the original landscape plan and illustrated in the montage become established, they will more effectively shield and break the form of the buildings, such that their complex shape and forms are less visible and the trees become a more dominant feature. As such their effects will be reduced, so that relative to the area as existing the development will bring only a partial change to the existing character of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity of the area, such that the development will have a longer term MODERATE visual and landscape effect.*
- *I consider that with additional specimen trees to the front of the buildings, adjacent the entrance to the Service Centre, and hedging along the drive through (as set out in the updated landscape plan attached as Appendix 5 to the AEE), any visual and landscape amenity effects will be mitigated to an extent that the effects of the development would be reduced to only a slight loss to the existing character and landscape quality of the area, and would therefore have a LOW-MODERATE visual and landscape effect. This is equivalent to a minor adverse effect.*



## 9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Viewpoint	Immediate Landscape and Visual Effect	Long Term Landscape and Visual Effect
D	Moderate	Low-Moderate
E	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
G	Moderate	Low-Moderate
H	Low	Low
I	Moderate	Low-Moderate
J	Moderate-High	Low-Moderate

Having visited the site on two occasions, selected representative viewpoints and considered the landscape and visual effects of the development against a seven point scale, I have found that the development will in the long term, with the implementation of the updated landscape plan, have a minor or less than minor adverse effect on the rural character and amenity of the local area.

Overall, I consider that with the implementation of the updated landscaping scheme, the proposal will satisfactorily protect the rural character and amenity of the area (as expected by the objectives and policies for the Zone).

However, to ensure that the anticipated level of effects from all viewpoints, it is recommended that a condition be placed on the consent requiring that the landscaping scheme be implemented and maintained, and that materials and colours for buildings generally be recessive colours.

All signs and lighting should comply with the relevant District Plan standards, unless otherwise agreed by way of a resource consent.



Richard Knott MNZPI MRTPI IHBC IHE

Director, Richard Knott Limited

25<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### Richard Knott Limited

PO Box 272-1352, Papakura, 2244

09 392 0091

021 242 5865

richard@RichardKnottLtd.co.nz

Waipu Gateway Service Station, 47 Millbrook Road, Waipu

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment

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## Appendix 1 – Full Size Original Photographs and Photo Montages

























