

**Before the Independent Hearings Panel
at Far North District Council**

UNDER	the Resource Management Act 1991
IN THE MATTER OF	Submissions and further submissions in relation to the proposed Far North District Plan
AND	15C Rezoning
AND	Lucklaw Farm Limited; Trustees of the Taranaki Trust, and Grace Sturgess

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF BRIDGET MARY GILBERT (LANDSCAPE)

11 June 2025

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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Bridget Mary Gilbert. I am a Landscape Architect and Director of Bridget Gilbert Landscape Architecture Ltd, Auckland. I have held this position since 2005.
2. I hold the qualifications of Bachelor of Horticulture from Massey University and a postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Lincoln College. I am an associate of the Landscape Institute (UK) and a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects. I am currently an Independent Hearing Commissioner for Auckland Council. I have recently been a panel member of the Auckland Urban Design Panel (chair endorsement).
3. I have practised as a Landscape Architect for over thirty years in both New Zealand and England. Upon my return to New Zealand, I worked with Boffa Miskell Ltd in its Auckland office for seven years. I have been operating my own practice for the last twenty years based in Auckland. I was one of three peer reviewers of *Te Tangi a te Manu* (Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines) (**TTatM**). This has given me an up-to-date understanding of landscape assessment best practice.
4. Of particular relevance to this evidence is my experience in undertaking district and region-wide landscape assessments to determine landscape overlays throughout the country¹. I have also assisted several Councils and landowners over the years in reviewing rezoning requests in more sensitive coastal landscapes such as the site².
5. I am familiar with the submission made by Mr John Gilbert Sturgess for Lucklaw Farm Limited (submitter number S551) on 21 October 2022 and the issues discussed in that submission and in the related parties' submissions by Trustees of the Taranaki Trust, and Grace Sturgess.
6. More specifically, the submission seeks that parts of the land at 690 Rangiputa Road, Karikari Peninsula (the site) and adjacent land to the west is rezoned from Coastal Production to Mixed Use/Residential or Rural Lifestyle (refer **Figure 1** below).

1 For example, the identification of RMA s6(b) and s7(c) landscapes in Queenstown Lakes District, Te Tai o Poutini (West Coast), Waitomo District, Thames Coromandel District, Whangarei District, Auckland Region and Tasman District; and the evaluation of RMA s6(a) areas in Te Tai o Poutini (West Coast), the Waikato Region, Thames Coromandel District and Tasman District.

2 For example, in the Hauraki Gulf Islands, the Waitakere Ranges and Auckland's west coast, Queenstown, Wanaka, the Upper Clutha Basin, the Whakatipu Basin, the McKenzie Basin, Coromandel Peninsula and Golden Bay.



Figure 1: Proposed Zoning (A Mixed Use / Residential; B Rural Lifestyle; C Rural Production)

7. I have been engaged by Lucklaw Farm Limited to provide evidence on its behalf and on behalf of the related parties' submissions by Trustees of the Taranaki Trust, and Grace Sturgess.

CODE OF CONDUCT

8. Although this is not an Environment Court hearing, I note that in preparing my evidence I have reviewed the code of conduct for expert witnesses contained in part 7 of the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with it in preparing my evidence. I confirm that the issues addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

9. In my evidence, I will address:
- a) The existing landscape values of the site and local area;
 - b) The existing natural character values of the site and local area;

- c) Drawing from the existing landscape and natural character values identified above, make recommendations with respect to the key landscape characteristics of any future rezoning of the land;
- d) The landscape-related effects of the proposed rezoning; and
- e) Residual matters that the Panel may wish to consider.

10. In preparing my evidence I have reviewed:

- a) the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA, the Act**);
- b) the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (**NZCPS**);
- c) the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (**NPSUD**);
- d) the Regional Policy Statement for Northland (**NRPS**);
- e) the operative Far North District Plan (**OFNDP**);
- f) the proposed Far North District Plan (**PFNDP**);
- g) the submissions of Lucklaw Farm Limited, Trustees of the Taranaki Trust, and Grace Anne Sturgess;
- h) draft evidence of Ms Bridget Gilbert (Landscape) for Lucklaw Farm Limited;
- i) draft evidence of Ms Melanie Dixon (Ecology) for Lucklaw Farm Limited;
- j) draft evidence of Mr Gavin Sole (Infrastructure) for Lucklaw Farm Limited; and
- k) draft evidence of Mr James Blyth (Hydrology) for Lucklaw Farm Limited.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

11. The landscape assessment that informs my evidence has been undertaken in accordance with *Te Tangi a te Manu* (Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines) (**TTatM**).
12. Consistent with TTatM, my assessment uses the following rating scale³:

³ Noting that the seven point rating scale applies to the rating of landscape and natural character values, as well as adverse landscape related effects.

						SIGNIFICANT
LESS THAN MINOR	MINOR		MORE THAN MINOR			
VERY LOW	LOW	LOW-MOD	MODERATE	MOD-HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH

13. In terms of the relationship between landscape values and natural character values, it is widely accepted (and explained in TTatM) that landscape values embrace three overlapping dimensions: physical values⁴; perceptual values⁵ and associative values⁶.
14. Natural character values involve the interpretation of the natural science (abiotic and biotic) and experiential aspects of the environment.
15. The following diagram⁷ prepared by Boffa Miskell provides a helpful explanation of the way that these two concepts interrelate yet are different (as observed in the NZCPS 2010).

4 Relates to the natural and man-made physical attributes of a landscape.

5 Relates to our perception of landscape and often includes visual amenity, aesthetic, legibility, and expressiveness considerations.

6 Relates to the ‘meaning’ of the landscape and often includes reference to the cultural, historical, recreational aspects of landscape and whether/why an area is valued by a community.

7 It should be noted that this diagram was prepared before TTatM was adopted by the NZILA and Boffa Miskell are in the process of updating the diagram to better align with the terminology in TTatM.

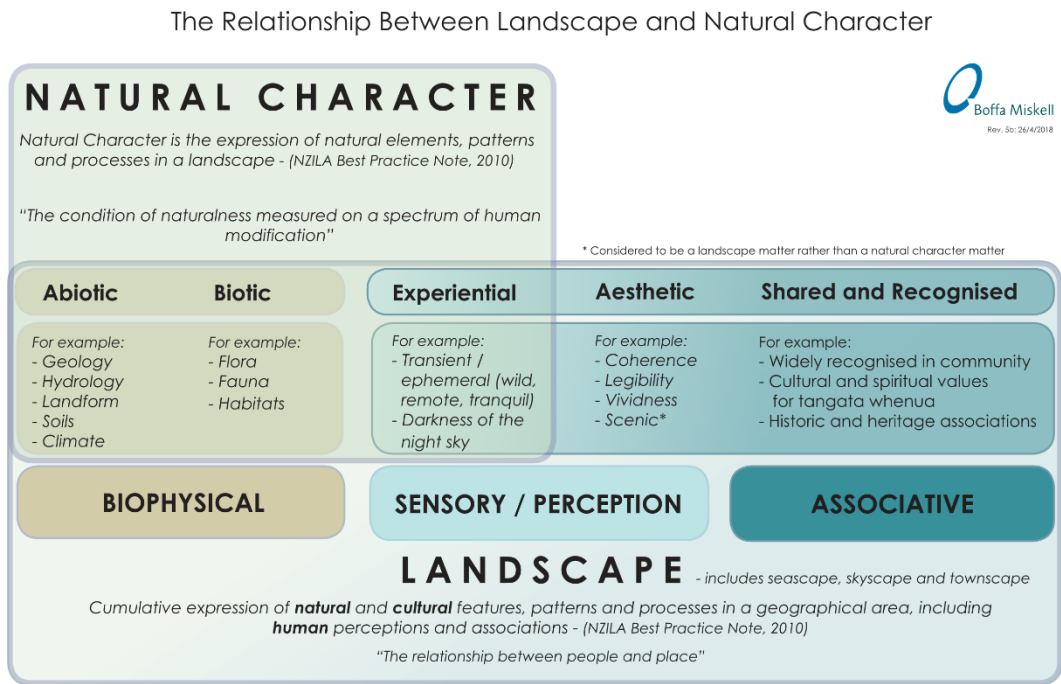


Figure 2: Relationship between Landscape and Natural Character

KEY LANDSCAPE RELATED TESTS FOR THE REZONING

16. I understand that the fundamental landscape test in relation to a proposed rezoning relates to whether the rezoning proposal is appropriate from a landscape perspective. In more sensitive coastal locations such as the site and local area, this usually requires:
- a) the protection of and avoidance of adverse effects on the key landscape characteristics and values that contribute to the outstandingness of an RMA s6(b) type landscape;
 - b) the maintenance and enhancement of the key landscape characteristics and values that contribute to an RMA s7(c) type landscape;
 - c) the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the key landscape-related aspects of natural character in areas where RMA s6(a) is of relevance;
 - d) the avoidance of adverse effects on the key landscape-related aspects of natural character in areas of Outstanding Natural Character; and
 - e) the avoidance of significant adverse effects on the key landscape-related aspects of natural character in other areas of the coastal environment.

DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF THE REZONING STRATEGY

17. My landscape and natural character effects assessment has included testing of the rezoning strategy for the site. This has involved a collaborative and iterative process involving a joint site visit by the project team, followed by a series of workshops. This process has given me a sound understanding of the ‘other expert’ technical opportunities and constraints associated with the site and, in particular, the characteristics which have played an important role in shaping where certain types of development can and cannot be located on the site.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES

18. I am conscious that the cultural dimension of landscape is a critical part of landscape values.
19. It is acknowledged that the area is a rich cultural landscape. Ngati Kahu hold mana whenua status, with ancestral relationships to the land likely extending to other Te Hiku iwi. Recorded archaeological sites are clustered mostly along the marginal strip located behind the beach and these are largely administered by the Department of Conservation with some recognised in the OFNDP.
20. I note that these archaeological sites are located away from the main areas proposed to be developed (which are explained shortly) and I am advised by Mr Langman that suitable protocols and assessments can take place as part of subdivision, and that there is little risk in acting on the request to change zones as set out in the submissions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

21. Drawing from the main body of my evidence, the **key landscape values** associated with the site and local area that are deserving of protection and careful landscape management can be summarised as follows:
- a) Localised **‘High’ Physical Values** across the area associated with: the volcanic feature of Puwheke; the coastal cliffs framing the western end of Puwheke Beach and the entrance to Rangaunu Harbour; the sandy beach and dune systems, swales and estuarine areas associated with Puwheke Beach; the waters of the Tasman Sea and Rangaunu Harbour; the dune lakes and wetland areas (coastal peatland) behind Puwheke Beach; the network of streams; the heathland areas through the sloping land across the western

portion of the site; and the habitat values associated with these areas that supports 'threatened' and 'at risk' species.

- b) **Perceptual Values** ranging from '**Moderate**' to '**High**' across the area (depending on the location). Values towards the higher end of the spectrum derive from the collective arrangement and dominance of the various physical attributes identified above, which work together to impart high memorability, aesthetic, naturalness, legibility, expressiveness and remoteness values.
- c) **High Associative Values** deriving from the importance of the area to manua; and the popularity of the area for recreational uses.

22. Again, drawing from the main body of my evidence, the **key natural character values** associated with the site and local area include:

- d) Localised **High Abiotic and Biotic Values** across the area associated with: the volcanic feature of Puwheke; the coastal cliffs framing the western end of Puwheke Beach and the entrance to Rangaunu Harbour; the sandy beach and dune systems of Puwheke Beach; the Tasman Sea and Rangaunu Harbour; the dune lakes and wetland areas behind Puwheke Beach; the network of streams; the heathland areas through the sloping land across the western portion of the site; and the habitat values associated with these area that supports 'threatened' and 'at risk' species.
- e) **Experiential Values** ranging from '**Moderate**' to '**High**' across the area (depending on the location). Values towards the higher end of the spectrum derive from the collective arrangement and dominance of the various physical attributes identified above, which work together to impart high aesthetic, naturalness, remoteness, wildness and isolation values, a strong impression of a dark night sky environment and strong aural and olfactory coastal associations as a consequence of the proximity to the Tasman Sea.

23. The development and testing of the rezoning strategy for the site has been a collaborative and iterative process involving a joint site visit by the project team, followed by a series of workshops. This has culminated in the preparation of the Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy (in collaboration with Mr Jack Earl of Earl Design), that illustrates how the proposed rezoning strategy might be implemented in a way that aligns with the various landscape tests (set out in paragraph 17 above) – refer **Appendix D Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy**.

24. From a landscape perspective, the key factors that have guided the Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy include:

- a) **Protecting and avoiding development within the parts of the site with high or very high landscape and natural character values.** This includes: intact wetland areas; unmodified dune, stream, swale, estuarine and gully areas; coastal headland edges; and higher value parts of the heathland areas.
- b) **Encouraging the landscape restoration and ongoing landscape management of more degraded parts of the site** including: modified wetland areas; modified dune, stream, swale, estuarine and gully areas; coastal headland edges; and heathland areas.
- c) Establishing **walkways/cycleways** through parts of the site, configured to allow for a range of loop routes.
- d) Optimising the high amenity value of the site (in terms of outlook and aspect) while ensuring that any built development is **located so that it does not detract from the amenity enjoyed outside (and within) the site.**

More specifically:

- i. In the Rural Production Zone parts of the site, utilising the Management Plan Subdivision provisions to establish **rural lifestyle and coastal lifestyle type development** in high amenity locations corresponding to easier land (that minimises earthworks disturbance), and positions that afford opportunities for landscape integration via existing landform and / or vegetation features, and landscape enhancement as part of such development. In addition, an **Education Centre** is envisaged in this part of the site, near Puwheke maunga, that celebrates the rich history and identity of the area and there is the potential to integrate **low key glamping type visitor accommodation development** throughout the mid and hind dune parts of the area in response to the landscape sensitivity and character of this part of the site.
- ii. Configuring **Rural Lifestyle Zone development** in gently sloping locations (suggesting the need for minimal earthworks) that are reasonably well removed from public vantage points (roads and beach). In this location, intervening vegetation between public vantage points, and the Rural Lifestyle Zone development area provides a screening, filtering or anchoring influence (e.g. the existing vegetation adjacent

Rangiputa Road and the southwestern portion of the site), and there is the opportunity for future development to incorporate appreciable landscape restoration (riparian planting) which will assist the integration of new development and contribute positively to the broader landscape values and residential amenity.

- iii. In the existing heathland and manuka/kanuka farm operations part of the site, establishing a **mountain bike park and associated zip line** that can, with careful design of the track network and zip line structures, successfully absorb such development in both a visual and ecological sense.
 - iv. Locating a **Lodge and Visitor Accommodation** on the modified headland slopes where existing buildings are clustered.
 - v. Arranging **Mixed Use Zone development** in the south western corner of the site, adjacent Rangiputa Road focussed around the existing rural shed (in an area devoid of noteworthy landscape or natural character features), to create an attractive and sympathetic entrance to Rangiputa settlement that contributes positively to the vitality and identity of the coastal settlement.
 - vi. Configuring **General Residential Zone development** adjacent the (proposed) Mixed-Use Zone area. This location: logically builds on the existing residential settlement patterning at Rangiputa (suggesting good connectivity); comprises a high amenity area (in terms of aspect and outlook); corresponds to 'easy' land (minimising earthworks) that is devoid of noteworthy landscape or natural character features and where existing vegetation provides a screening, filtering or anchoring influence in external public views; and provides the opportunity for future development to incorporate appreciable landscape restoration (riparian planting) which will assist the integration of new development and contribute positively to the broader landscape values and residential amenity.
25. Importantly, I expect that the arrangement of the various landscape, natural character and SNA related overlays, along with the landscape related zone provisions for the Rural Production Zone, Mixed Use Zone, Residential Zone and Rural Lifestyle Zone

could be realistically expected to deliver the sort of development outcome contemplated in the Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy.⁸

26. Overall, it is my expectation that with careful refinement through a more detailed design process, the scale and character of development anticipated by the Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy could be successfully absorbed into the local landscape from a landscape effects perspective.
27. For these reasons, it is my opinion that the proposed rezoning is appropriate from a landscape effects perspective.
28. Further, in assessing the landscape and natural character values of the site and local area it is apparent to me that the current vehicular access to Puwheke Beach and presence of vehicles on the beach itself is significantly detracting from the landscape and natural character values of the beach (and noting that all of the foredunes are identified as ONL and the majority of the dune system is identified as ONC).

EXISTING LANDSCAPE VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE AND LOCAL AREA

29. The following description of the site and local area should be read in conjunction with **Appendix A Graphic Supplement** and **Appendix B Photographs**.

Physical Characteristics and Values

30. The site is located at the far western end of the Karikari Peninsula, a distinctively shaped land mass on the east side of the Aupōuri Peninsula, separating Rangaunu Harbour from Doubtless Bay. The rocky outer part of the peninsula was formerly an island. Today it is part of the mainland, connected by the formation of Tokerau Beach, located on the east side of the peninsula, and enjoys a subtropical climate with minimum winter temperatures of around 6-9°C.
31. Located approximately 35 minutes' drive from Kaitia, the site spans the western elevated land framing Rangiputa coastal settlement and the entrance to the Rangaunu Harbour and takes in the north-eastern facing slopes and coastal dune and coastal flats (including dune lakes) hinterland behind Puwheke Beach.
32. Key **geomorphological features** include the distinctly conical shaped, volcanic landform of Puwheke. At approximately 132m asl, Puwheke maunga forms a

⁸ By this it is meant that there is a plethora of policies to guide the protection and appropriate management of landscape and natural character values.

prominent local landmark enclosing the eastern end of the Puwheke Beach. The western end of the beach is enclosed by the coastal headland framing the eastern side of the entrance to Rangaunu Harbour.

33. Puwheke Beach itself forms a broad sweep of silica sand, backdropped by a continuous sequence of large-scale and highly dynamic fore dunes. Collectively, the fore dunes, hind dunes and coastal flats form part of the Karikari Peninsula tombolo dunefields, which is an extremely large example of a tombolo landform containing some of the best examples of coast parallel foredunes in Northland.
34. A sequence of bold coastal cliffs interspersed with small sandy beaches borders the coastline between Rangiputa and Puwheke Beach.
35. The majority of the area is flat to gently sloping in nature. The exceptions to this are the coastal cliffs, dunes, dune lake margin, and Puwheke landform where the land is steeply sloping. In a similar vein, the majority of the area enjoys a western, northern, or eastern aspect. More extensive tracts of south-facing land are associated with parts of the coastal headland, the inland (or rear) side of the dune landforms, and Puwheke.
36. Relying on the evidence of Ms Dixon, **ecological values** associated with the site and local area include the dune systems, swales and estuarine areas associated with Puwheke Beach; the dune lakes and wetland areas (coastal peatland) behind Puwheke Beach; the network of streams; the heathland areas through the sloping land across the western portion of the site; and the habitat values associated with these areas that supports 'threatened' and 'at risk' species.
37. Key **hydrological features** within the site and local area include:
 - a) the expansive and highly dynamic clear waters of the Tasman Sea;
 - b) Lake Rotokawau freshwater dune lake, extending across approximately 63ha to a depth of some 12m with a hard iron pan base and no inflows or outflows.
 - c) A smaller unnamed freshwater dune lake to the east of Lake Rotokawau.
 - d) A complex patterning of numerous permanent and intermittent streams/overland flow paths draining from the coastal headland to Puwheke Beach.
 - e) A series of wetland areas, with the larger features located behind the foredunes and adjacent the dune lakes.
 - f) The Rangaunu Harbour to the west of the site, which, at approximately 115 square kilometres is the fifth largest harbour in New Zealand.

38. Typical of much of the flatter areas of Northland which were originally covered in kauri-dominated forest, so-called gumland **soils** developed throughout the area. These were mined for kauri gum in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Superphosphate is needed on gumland soils used for forestry, and potassium fertiliser is used on podsolised sands (areas leached of nutrients by weathering and acid tree litter). Forest grown near coastal sand dunes also needs nitrogen fertiliser, or associated plantings of lupins – which ‘fix’ nitrogen in the soil so it can be used by the trees. Soils are acidic and low in natural phosphorus and sulphur, so lime and superphosphate are needed for pasture growth.
39. In terms of current **land use**, large parts of the local area are in low-intensity grazing, and production forestry.
40. Within the site itself, there is an historically unmanaged forestry throughout the western elevated quadrant and open grazing land (including a short, grassed airstrip) throughout the gentler northeast-facing slopes overlooking Lake Rotokawau. In recent years, a mix of structured⁹ and unstructured plantings of manuka have been established across the north-western slopes to support manuka honey production. The patterning of regenerating bush, production forestry, and manuka plantings across the western part of the site forms an informal buffer between the more developed western side of the coastal headland and the more undeveloped eastern area associated with Puwheke Beach.
41. **Settlements** in the vicinity of the site include the small-scale settlement of Rangiputa (to the west of the site) and further afield, , the larger-scale settlements of Tokerau Beach and Whatuwhiwhi on the eastern (or Doubtless Bay) side of the Karikari Peninsula. The Rangiputa wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is located close to the **Rangiputa township** and there is a larger WWTP approximately 7km to the east serving Whatuwhiwhi and Tokerau Beach. This means that lot sizes are smaller than would be typically expected for settlements of this scale within a reasonably out-of-the-way coastal rural context such as Karikari Peninsula.
42. The Rangiputa wastewater treatment plant is located within the southwestern portion of the site and is surrounded on three sides by the landholding. It is understood that the ponds are that there is concern that effluent is not contained entirely within the designated site, and that there may potentially be effluent discharging beyond the boundary of the treatment plant site.

⁹ By this it is meant that the manuka plantings have been interspersed with shelterbelt plantings to promote plant establishment.

43. Stock yards and a large shed are located on the elevated flat land adjacent the property entrance from Rangiputa Road (ie the southwestern corner of the site).
44. At Rangiputa, the settlement pattern is characterised by a ribbon of predominantly older homes along the toe of the coastal cliff, with a more recent swathe of development along the top of the cliffs, accessed via Motutara Drive. The entry to Rangiputa is informally defined by the short and steep vehicular descent down the coastal cliff. A modest convenience store is located at the base of the cliff towards the southern end of the settlement, with the odd visitor accommodation facility evident, along with informal boat ramps.
45. Otherwise, it is understood that Rangiputa is, at heart, a small-scale and relatively unpretentious holiday spot, popular for its high coastal amenity values and proximity to good fishing and water sports. More recently, and with the advent of improved communications, it would appear that more people are choosing to live within the settlement on a part time or permanent basis.
46. Ongoing coastal erosion has seen the construction of large-scale, informal rock seawalls along the coastal edge of many of the existing water's edge properties.
47. On the coastal headland, immediately to the west of the site and north of Rangiputa, are three generously proportioned coastal rural living properties (approximately 7.2ha to 13.8ha).
48. Within the site itself there are six residential buildings, generally clustered on the hill slopes at the western end of Puwheke Beach (around the farmhouse) and accessed from Rangiputa Road. Buildings are generally modestly scaled, and in most instances are settled into a complex, vegetated landform setting which means that they are visually unobtrusive.
49. In terms of the relevant statutory context that applies to the site and local area, under the PFNDP,¹⁰ the Rangiputa settlement area is zoned General Residential and Sport and Active Recreation. Outside the settlement area, Rural Production zoning is proposed. The PFNDP explains that:

The Rural Production zone is the largest zone in the district and accounts for approximately 65% of all land. The Rural Production zone is a dynamic environment, influenced by changing farming and forestry practices and by a wide range of productive activities. The purpose of this zone is to provide for

¹⁰ Under the OFNDP the minimum site size in the General Coastal Zone is 20ha (restricted discretionary) under Rule 13.7.2.1(viii), or 6ha through a management plan subdivision (full discretionary) under Rule 13.9.2.

primary production activities including non-commercial quarrying, farming, intensive indoor primary production, plantation forestry activities, and horticulture. The Rural Production zone also provides for other activities that support primary production and have a functional need to be located in a rural environment, such as processing of timber, horticulture, apiculture and dairy products. There is also a need to accommodate recreational and tourism activities that may occur in the rural environment, subject to them being complementary to the function, character and amenity values of the surrounding environment....

50. The Plan includes commentary on the role of historic fragmentation of rural land in undermining the integrity of the rural environment and its ability to function for its intended use. Policies relevant to landscape assessment focus on the maintenance of rural character.
51. Under the PFNDP, an ONC overlay applies to the majority of the large-scale dune landforms running behind Puwheke Beach (ONC 44) along with much smaller-scale fragments of ONC along the coastline near Rangiputa. The FNDC have agreed that the mapped extent of ONC44 should be shown as the full RPS extent (however, those mapping changes have not been made yet so my Appendix A mapping shows what I understand to be the current mapped extent) of ONC 44).
52. A series of HNC overlays is identified around much of the coastline to the north of Rangiputa extending to Puwheke Beach, with additional fragments also mapped, which would appear to correspond to some of the wetland areas behind Puwheke Beach.
53. Under the PFNDP, a continuous ONL overlay applies to the coastline extending northwards from Rangiputa around the Karikari Peninsula to Whatuwhiwhi township on the Doubtless Bay side of the landform. This includes the large-scale dunes behind Puwheke Beach and the landform of Puwheke Maunga.
54. A separate ONL overlay applies to the two dune lakes and adjacent wetland behind Puwheke Beach.
55. I am not aware of any specific landscape or natural character 'schedules of values' that relate to these various areas in the Proposed Far North District Plan.
56. I have, however, reviewed the relevant ONL Worksheet under the Northland Regional Policy Statement (refer **Appendix C**), in the preparation of my evidence.

57. In terms of **landownership**, land within the vicinity of the Puwheke Beach, the s58 Marginal strip portion of the site is owned by the Crown and managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). There is a similar strip around the margins of Lake Rotokawau and, the unnamed lake to the east. Parts of the Puwheke foredunes are within the Lucklaw Farm boundary.
58. **Access** to the site and local area is via a series of local roads, with the route between Kaitaia and Rangiputa (including the entrance to the site) being sealed.
59. A dead-end gravel road (Puheke Road) provides access to the eastern end of Puwheke Beach and up to an informal carpark area on the lower north-western flanks of Puwheke.
60. It is understood that, in recent years, an informal vehicular route has been established at the far eastern end of the road adjacent the beach, which enables vehicular access down the dunes to the beach itself. Large rocks line the informal vehicular track signalling it to be an appropriate route for road users.



Figure 3: Typical character of the informal vehicular access that has been established at the far eastern end of Puwheke Beach

61. Top Energy (**TOPE**) has a 11kV power feed close to the Rangiputa settlement. The Lucklaw Farm shed is a registered electricity participant and exports small amounts of solar energy into the TOPE grid.

62. There is an off grid solar system with battery storage located in the coastal headland area that services the dwellings located in that area.

Perceptual Characteristics and Values

63. Throughout the site and local area, there are a number of appealing landscape compositions that display high **aesthetic and memorability values**, including:
- a) The attractive largely natural landscape sequence of dune landforms backdropping the broad sweep of white sandy beach and expansive coastal waters at Puwheke Beach. It is noted that vehicular activity on the beach forms a jarring contrast which serves to detract from the aesthetic and memorability values.
 - b) The dramatic arrangement of steep pōhutukawa fringed and unmodified coastal cliffs juxtaposed against the highly dynamic waters of Rangaunu Bay.
 - c) The distinctive and prominent conical landform of Puwheke which forms a local landmark and contrasts markedly with the predominantly low-lying flats and rolling coastal hinterland of the peninsula.
 - d) The attractive and relatively unmodified dune lakes fringed by regenerating vegetation and expansive regenerating wetland areas, all frequented by birdlife.
64. Such values tend to be lower throughout the balance of the site and local area, although the elevated and more open, pastoral land enables highly attractive coastal views out over Puwheke Beach to Puwheke, the broader peninsula coastline (with its striking arc of white sandy beaches), and the vast waters of Rangaunu Bay.
65. With respect to **naturalness values**, these rate highly in the more undeveloped parts of the site and local area such as the fore dunes, dune lakes, wetland areas, and seascape. Although human modification is clearly apparent in the forested and grazed parts of the site, these elements are 'of nature'. This characteristic together with the limited influence of built modification means that an impression of naturalness remains, albeit somewhat reduced by comparison to the undeveloped areas. In contrast (and as alluded to above), the vehicular access on Puwheke Beach serves to undermine the impression of naturalness.
66. In terms of **legibility and expressiveness values**, the dune landforms, wetland areas, dune lakes, sandy beach, and Puwheke landform are all highly expressive of the landscape's formative processes.

67. Noteworthy **views** within the site and local area (and which contribute to the perceptual values) relate to:
- a) Public views from Puwheke Beach of the foredunes, Puwheke, coastline and sea.
 - b) Public views from Puwheke across the beach, dunelands and sea.
 - c) Public views from on the water in Rangaunu Bay and Rangaunu Harbour back to the sweeping coastline, Puwheke and the coastal headland.
 - d) Public views from Rangiputa Road and Puheke Road across the dunefields and dune lakes to Puwheke, and the coastline/sea (where the elevation enables).
 - e) Particularly striking private vistas from within the property, including the expansive coastal views in the vicinity of the airstrip and available from existing dwellings, and the framed and more intimate views of the dune lakes, wetland areas, streams, and largescale fore dunes throughout parts of the site.
68. The physical and visual separation of the majority of the site from Rangiputa, along with the very limited level of development evident on the site and dead-end gravel road, evokes strong impressions of **remoteness, wildness, and isolation**. The rough wetland vegetation and, in places, unkempt appearance of surrounding farmland adds to this feeling.
69. The vehicular activity on Puwheke Beach forms a jarring contrast within this context and detracts from this impression.

Associative Characteristics and Values

70. It is understood that **cultural values** associated with the local area include the importance of Karikari Peninsula to Ngāti Kahu as the place that in Māori mythology, the waka (canoe) Waipapa, captained by Kaiwhetu and Wairere, made its first landing in New Zealand.
71. It is understood that that there are various versions of the Te ao Māori history associated with the local area and that there are a number of archaeological sites **on** the beach and dunelands of Puwheke Beach.
72. **Recreational and shared and recognised values** associated with the local area relate to its popularity for game and recreational fishing, shellfish harvesting, water sports, swimming, diving, surfing, beach walking, visiting Puwheke maunga, and the local golf course, winery, and café facilities.

EXISTING NATURAL CHARACTER VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE AND LOCAL AREA

73. The **abiotic values** associated with the site and local area are addressed under the discussion of geomorphological and hydrological features above.
74. The **biotic values** associated with the site and local area are addressed under the discussion of ecological features above.
75. The **experiential values** associated with the site and local area are addressed under comments with respect to aesthetic values, naturalness values, and impressions of remoteness, wildness, and isolation.
76. In addition, the limited level of development in the local area means that there is expected to be a reasonably strong impression of **darkness associated with the night sky**.
77. The very close proximity of the site and local area to the coast means that the **sounds and smells associated with the coastal environment** play an important role in shaping the experience of the landscape.

PROPOSED REZONING

78. As explained earlier, Lucklaw Farm Limited seeks that parts of the land at 690 and 700 Rangiputa Road, Karikari Peninsula (**the site**) and adjacent land to the west is rezoned from Coastal Production to Mixed Use/Residential (labelled as 'A' in the rezoning submission plan) or Rural Lifestyle (labelled as 'B' in the rezoning submission plan)(refer **Figure 4** below).



Figure 4: Proposed Zoning (A Mixed Use / Residential; B Rural Lifestyle; C Rural Production)

79. Also, as explained earlier, the development and testing of the rezoning strategy for the site has been a collaborative and iterative process involving a joint site visit by the project team, followed by a series of workshops. This has culminated in the preparation of the Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy that illustrates how the proposed rezoning strategy might be implemented in a way that aligns with the various landscape tests set out in paragraph 17 above – refer **Appendix D Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy**.
80. From a landscape perspective, the key factors that have guided the Puwheke Spatial Strategy include:
- a) **Protecting and avoiding development within the parts of the site with high or very high landscape and natural character values.** This includes: intact wetland areas; unmodified dune, stream, swale, estuarine and gully areas; coastal headland edges; and higher value parts of the heathland areas.
 - b) **Encouraging the landscape restoration and ongoing landscape management of more degraded parts of the site,** including: modified wetland areas; modified dune, stream, swale, estuarine and gully areas; coastal headland edges; and heathland areas.
 - c) Establishing **walkways/cycleways** through parts of the site, configured to allow for a range of loop routes.

- d) Optimising the high amenity value of the site (in terms of outlook and aspect) while ensuring that any built development is **located so that it does not detract from the amenity enjoyed outside (and within) the site.**

More specifically:

- i. In the Rural Production Zone parts of the site, utilising the Management Plan Subdivision provisions to establish **rural lifestyle and coastal lifestyle type development** in high amenity locations corresponding to easier land (that minimises earthworks disturbance), and positions that afford opportunities for landscape integration via existing landform and / or vegetation features, and landscape enhancement as part of such development. In addition, an **Education Centre** is envisaged in this part of the site, near Puwheke maunga, that celebrates the rich history and identity of the area, and there is the potential to integrate **low key glamping type visitor accommodation development** throughout the mid and hind dune parts of the area in response to the landscape sensitivity and character of this part of the site.
- ii. Configuring **Rural Lifestyle Zone development** in gently sloping locations (suggesting the need for minimal earthworks) that are reasonably well removed from public vantage points (roads and beach). In this location, intervening vegetation between public vantage points, and the Rural Lifestyle Zone development area provides a screening, filtering or anchoring influence (e.g. the existing vegetation adjacent Rangiputa Road and the southwestern portion of the site), and there is the opportunity for future development to incorporate appreciable landscape restoration (riparian planting) which will assist the integration of new development and contribute positively to the broader landscape values and residential amenity.
- iii. In the existing heathland and manuka/kanuka farm operations part of the site, establishing a **mountain bike park and associated zip line** that can, with careful design of the track network and zip line structures, successfully absorb such development in both a visual and ecological sense.
- iv. Locating a **Lodge and Visitor Accommodation** on the modified headland slopes where existing buildings are clustered.

- v. Arranging **Mixed Use Zone development** in the south western corner of the site, adjacent Rangiputa Road focussed around the existing rural shed (in an area devoid of note worthy landscape or natural character features), to create an attractive and sympathetic entrance to Rangiputa settlement that contributes positively to the vitality and identity of the coastal settlement.
 - vi. Configuring **General Residential Zone development** adjacent the (proposed) Mixed-Use Zone area. This location: logically builds on the existing residential settlement patterning at Rangiputa (suggesting good connectivity); comprises a high amenity area (in terms of aspect and outlook); corresponds to 'easy' land (minimising earthworks) that is devoid of note worthy landscape or natural character features and where existing vegetation provides a screening, filtering or anchoring influence in external public views; and provides the opportunity for future development to incorporate appreciable landscape restoration (riparian planting) which will assist the integration of new development and contribute positively to the broader landscape values and residential amenity.
81. Importantly, I expect that the arrangement of the various landscape and SNA related overlays, along with the landscape related zone provisions for the Rural Production Zone , Mixed Use, Residential and Rural Lifestyle zones could be realistically expected to deliver the sort of development outcome contemplated in the Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy. ¹¹
82. Overall, it is my expectation that with careful refinement through a more detailed design process, the scale and character of development anticipated by the Puwheke

¹¹ By this it is meant that there is a plethora of policies to guide the protection and appropriate management of landscape and natural character values.

Preliminary Spatial Strategy could be successfully absorbed into the local landscape from a landscape effects perspective.

83. For these reasons, it is my opinion that the proposed rezoning is appropriate from a landscape effects perspective.

RESIDUAL MATTERS

84. Further, in assessing the landscape and natural character values of the site and local area it is apparent to me that the current vehicular access to Puwheke Beach and presence of vehicles on the beach itself is significantly detracting from the landscape and natural character values of the beach (and noting that all of the foredunes are identified as ONL and the majority of the dune system is identified as ONC).

Bridget Mary Gilbert

11 June 2025

APPENDIX A: Graphic Supplement

APPENDIX B: Photographs

APPENDIX C: NRC ONL Schedule of Landscape Values

APPENDIX D: Puwheke Preliminary Spatial Strategy