

IN THE MATTER OF     The Resource Management  
                                  Act 1991  
AND                        An application for  
                                  subdivision consent and  
                                  associated resource  
                                  consents for earthworks and  
                                  vegetation clearance, at  
                                  Rangihoua Road, Purerua  
                                  Peninsula  
  
                                  Far North District Council

## **EVIDENCE OF GAVIN CRAIG LISTER FOR THE APPLICANT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1     My name is Gavin Craig Lister. I am a director of the Isthmus Group, a specialist landscape architecture and urban design practice based in Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch. I have a Post-Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Lincoln College, a Bachelor of Arts degree from Auckland University, and I am an associate of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.
  
- 2     I have 16 years experience as a landscape architect in a wide range of design and assessment projects. These range from policy studies (*including the proposed Silverdale South Structure Plan; Porirua Plan Change 1 -Overhead Infrastructure; Howick Special Character Area, and Devonport Centre Plan*); large scale parks (*such as Duder and Scandrett Regional Parks near Auckland; Maidstone Park in Upper Hutt; the Wellington Botanic Garden development plan; and Claudelands Park in Hamilton*); city and town centre urban development projects (*such as Hastings City Centre, New Plymouth City Centre, Mount Maunganui; Browns Bay; Onehunga; and Otahuhu*); and infrastructure and roading projects (*such as the Hau Nui wind farm near Martinborough; Awhitu wind farm near Waiuku, West Coast Coal Terminal near Westport; Shakespeare Bay Port at Picton; Huntly e3p power station; Transpower 400kV North Island route investigation, SH1 MacKays Crossing; SH18 Upper Harbour Crossing; and the Central Motorway Junction Spaghetti*

*Junction scheme assessment*). I have acted as an Independent Hearings Commissioner for Wellington City Council, and been a member or leader of teams receiving New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects national awards on ten occasions since 1992.

- 3 The design work for this project was carried out by the owners in conjunction with other consultants. I was initially engaged by the applicant to peer review this work. I formed the view that the project had been carefully designed, that there was a commitment from the owners to a quality outcome evident in works already carried out, and that the proposal was appropriate for the context. Subsequently I was engaged to prepare the assessment of landscape and visual effects that was appended to the application, and take part in further refinements of the design as issues were discussed following the application having been lodged. During this process two house sites were deleted (10 and 15), the position of several others shifted or fine-tuned (2,9,16,18,20,34, 40 & 41), and some minor changes made to the recommended design conditions.
- 4 I have visited the site on four separate occasions, including twice when I have been able to travel by boat around the site.
- 5 My evidence briefly outlines the proposal, and describes the existing landscape. I set out statutory provisions that appear most relevant to landscape and visual considerations. I then analyse the landscape and visual effects of the proposal in terms of natural character, landscape effects, and visual effects. Finally I reach the conclusion that the application is appropriate.

## **PROPOSAL**

- 6 The proposal is described in detail in the A.E.E. and in the evidence of others, particularly Peter Jones. In summary it entails a comprehensive coastal-rural subdivision incorporating the following landscape features:

- Subdivision to create 39 house lots, with the balance of the land (approximately 85%) retained in single titles<sup>1</sup> in order to facilitate ongoing management of the natural and open space framework and to ensure an overall coherence to the subdivision.
- A natural and open space framework including restored stream and wetland corridors; re-vegetated dunes, coastal escarpment and prominent hill faces; and retention of remaining ridges and hillsides as pasture.
- Careful selection of house sites and access, and a set of controls and design guidelines intended to ensure the houses are in keeping with the overall vision for the site.

## DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING LANDSCAPE

- 7 The site is at the end of the Purerua Peninsula which separates the outer Bay of Islands from the Te Puna and Kerikeri Inlets. The west face of the site overlooks Te Puna Inlet, an enclosed and relatively shallow waterway surrounding by low-lying rolling hills. The remainder of the site is orientated to the outer Bay of Islands with its more iconic landscape of open ocean horizon studded with headlands and islands, and distant views towards Cape Brett.
- 8 The Bay of Islands as a whole is one of New Zealand's iconic landscapes. Its significance is a combination of the qualities of the natural landscape setting, and the human history of the area. It was a focus of pre-European Maori life, and was the setting for early Maori-Pakeha contact and settlement. I refer further to qualities of the Bay of Islands in my evidence below.
- 9 The site itself has several components.
- The southern part of the site comprises Poraenui Point, a steep sided promontory with stronger relief than the landscape to the north, and a rocky shoreline skirted by a bush-clad coastal escarpment. The point 'itself' has a

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<sup>1</sup> The balance land of the main part of the site will be retained in one title (Lot 50) of 262ha., which will also incorporate a small area (Lot 51 -9.8ha) of farm on the opposite side of Rangihoua Road, and the land on the separate Terakihi Peninsula (currently Lot 52 -14ha).

picturesque profile with the rocky headland separated from the adjoining land by a 'moat'. The Te Puna inlet side contains two small, picturesque coves, "Poraenui Bay" and "Pirinoa or "Church Bay"

- The northern part of the site adjacent to Wairoa Bay and Te Puna Bay has a more rolling topography. Both bays have sandy beaches, separated by a low headland (Papuke Point). There are three main stream valleys entering Wairoa and Te Puna Bays. The southern one ("Wairoa West Stream ") is narrower and steeper, and has a narrow mouth into Wairoa Bay. The central valley ("Wairoa East Stream ") is somewhat similar although more open. The northern valley behind Te Puna Bay is the widest and most open, although there is also a prominent escarpment along its northern side. There are dunes behind the beach and extensive low-lying land and wetlands.

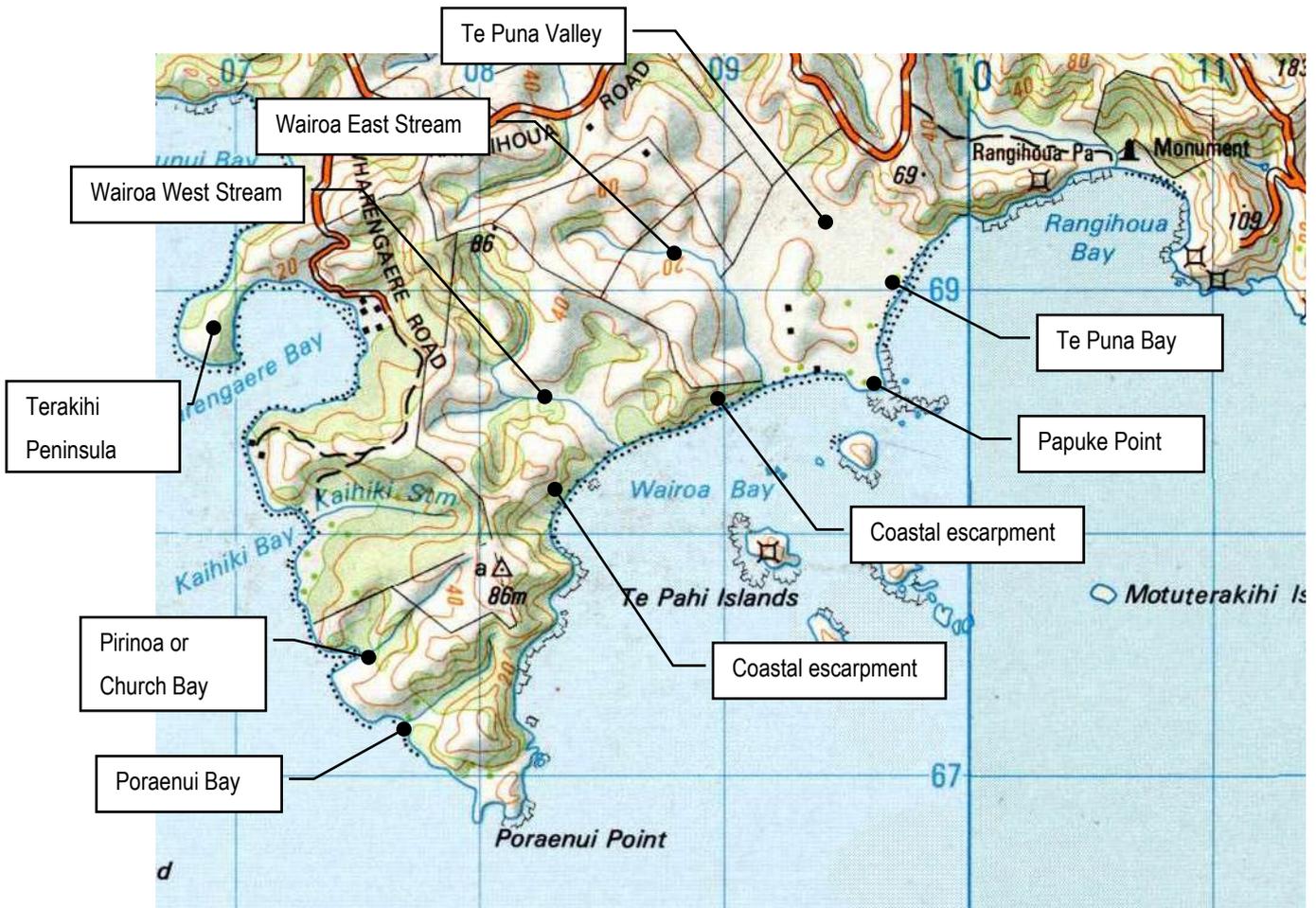


Figure 1  
Topographic map of site (NTS)

- The picturesque Te Pahi Islands are not part of the site, but lie just offshore and help to define both Wairoa Bay and Te Puna Bay.
  - The site also includes a separate peninsula (Terakihi Peninsula) on the Te Puna Inlet. This slender, curving landform helps to enclose the almost perfectly circular Wharengaere Bay.
- 10 The area has an important history. The site housed a considerable pre-European Maori population centred particularly on nearby Rangihoua Bay, and there are several pa sites in the vicinity including headland pa on either side of Rangihoua Bay, on Papuke Point between Te Puna Bay and Wairoa Bay, on Te Pahi Islands, and on Poraenui Point itself. New Zealand's first Church Missionary Society mission station was established in nearby Oihi in 1813

under the patronage of Te Pahi of Rangihoua, and was relocated to Te Puna Bay in 1830. The Maori population in the area began to decline shortly afterward and the land was later purchased from its Maori owners and farmed, initially by the Hansen family and subsequently the Mountain family. The original Hansen family homestead site was located nearby at the base of Papuke Peninsula on a site marked by a Norfolk Island pine and other exotic vegetation. The Mountain family homestead was on a nearby knoll at the northern end of Wairoa Bay currently occupied by farm buildings. The family later moved to the woolshed (which became the primary residence) on the beach below the homestead, and remained there until June 2002.

- 11 The site has previously been cleared of essentially all its original vegetation, initially to provide cultivation land, and later for pastoral farming. In recent decades significant areas have been re-colonised by native vegetation dominated by kanuka. This has occurred mainly in the gullies, upper valleys and steeper slopes, and on the steep coastal escarpment. This naturally regenerating vegetation includes a significant weed component including woolly nightshade and gorse.
- 12 Substantial areas have been replanted in the last three or four years by the current owners, including restoration of wetlands and the construction of a series of ponds in the Wairoa East Stream. This planting has been intensively maintained, has achieved high survival and growth rates, and indicates a commitment by the owners to its successful establishment.

### **RELEVANT STATUTORY PROVISIONS**

- 13 Statutory provisions are dealt with mainly in others evidence. I believe provisions most relevant to a landscape and visual assessment of the proposal include the following:

#### **Resource Management Act**

- 14 The site is within the coastal environment and a band of the coastal environment is also classified in the proposed District Plan as an 'outstanding landscape'. Sections 6(a) and 6(b) are therefore relevant to assessing the proposal in terms of landscape and visual issues. Sections 6(a) and 6(b) require as a matter of national importance;

*“(a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment ...and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development”*

*“(b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development”*

- 15 Sections 7(c) and 7(f) are also relevant to assessing landscape and visual effects. These require that particular regard shall be had to:

*“(c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values*

*(f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment”*

### **New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement**

- 16 The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement provides principles and guidance to on the application of the R.M.A. in terms of coastal resources. In addition to Part 2 matters the following principles and policies relevant to a consideration of landscape and visual effects include the following:

#### ***Principles***

*2 The protection of the values of the coastal environment need not preclude appropriate use and development in appropriate places.*

*8. Cultural, historical, spiritual, amenity and intrinsic values are the heritage of future generations and damage to these values is often irreversible*

#### ***Policy 1.1.1***

*It is a national priority to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment by:*

*(a) encouraging appropriate subdivision, use or development in areas where the natural character has already been compromised and avoiding sprawling or sporadic subdivision, use or development in the coastal environment.*

*(b) taking into account the potential effects of subdivision, use, or development on the values relating to the natural character of the coastal environment, both within and outside the immediate location; and*

*(c) avoiding cumulative adverse effects of subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment*

#### ***Policy 1.1.3***

*It is a national priority to protect the following features, which in themselves or in combination, are essential or important elements of the natural character of the coastal environment:*

*(a) landscapes, seascapes and landforms, including:*

*(i) significant representative examples of each landform which provide the variety in each region:*

*(ii) visually or scientifically significant geological features; and*

*(iii) the collective characteristics which give the coastal environment its natural character including wild and scenic areas;*

*(b) characteristics of special spiritual, historical or cultural significance to Maori identified in accordance with tikanga Maori; and*

*(c) significant places or areas of historic or cultural significance*

### **Far North District Plan**

- 17 The Revised Proposed District Plan provides for subdivision as a controlled activity with minimum lot sizes of 20ha in the Outstanding Natural Landscape area and 12ha in the General Coastal Zone. These standards provide as a controlled activity, for approximately 22 lots (average 15ha) on the site as a whole.
- 18 The proposal entails approximately double this density, and consequently falls into discretionary activity status provided the proposal is in accordance with a Management Plan. The District Plan includes provisions for well-designed subdivisions of higher density than those provided for under controlled activity rules through measures such as Management Plans and bonus lots.
- 19 The most specific objectives, policies and criteria<sup>2</sup> are those relating to Outstanding Natural Landscapes in Section 11 of the Proposed District Plan. These objectives and policies are not predicated on preserving landscapes in their existing state, but on managing change in order that it might enhance, or at least not diminish, outstanding character. Particular policies note that both positive and adverse effects should be taken into account when assessing applications; that buildings on ridgelines should be avoided, remedied or mitigated; that encouragement should be given to restoration of degraded

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<sup>2</sup> In terms of landscape and visual assessment

landscapes; and that the high value of indigenous vegetation to outstanding landscapes should be taken into account.

## **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT**

- 20 The proposed subdivision will clearly lead to substantial change to the existing pastoral landscape. Change is not in itself an adverse effect and the District Plan does not seek to preserve the landscape in its current state. Rather an assessment needs to consider both the positive and negative effects on natural character and landscape values, taking into account the level of development that might reasonably be anticipated in this landscape, and considering such things as the location and prominence of individual house sites and their cumulative effects, house form and design, restoration of biophysical natural values, and the overall form of the development in relation to the landscape.

### **Effects on Natural Character**

- 21 Natural Character comprises those aspects of a landscape that are the product of nature rather than the product of human culture. It concerns the physical elements of a landscape, their underlying processes, and the appearance or appreciation of the degree of naturalness. Natural character exists on a continuum from pristine wilderness to highly modified landscapes. It includes exotic flora and fauna, such as pastoral landscapes for instance, although intact indigenous vegetation will have greater natural character and value than a landscape comprising exotic species.
- 22 In order to gauge the degree of natural character I have found it useful to use indicators identified in a report prepared for the Ministry for the Environment<sup>3</sup> to help assess the landscape component of natural character. Five indicators were suggested, including the degree of modification of landform (which I take to include waterways) and vegetation; the apparent naturalness of vegetation patterns; and the extent and prominence of human structures and infrastructure. These indicators cover both physical and perceptual aspects of landscape.

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<sup>3</sup> *Environmental Performance Indicators, Landscape Aspect of Natural Character*, Boffa Miskell, February 2002).

- 23 The site is not pristine, but comprises modified land cover and some existing human structures. As discussed above, the area housed considerable pre-European Maori settlement, an early missionary settlement, and was subsequently completely cleared and farmed over the following approximately 170 years. The current areas of native vegetation are either second growth that have re-colonised areas of the farm in recent decades or more recently replanted as part of this project. Similarly the steams and former wetland areas have all been previously modified, with fencing and restoration work being commenced only recently. There is a relatively low level of built structures and those that exist are not visually dominant, but the existing features include farm roads and tracks, a small quarry, and two clusters of buildings; one comprising the “Boathouse” and other farm buildings at the southern end of Wairoa Bay, the other comprising the farm manager’s house and farm buildings in the centre of the site.
- 24 In my opinion, therefore, the site currently has a moderately high degree of natural character, but is by no means pristine.
- 25 In the wider context the site is surrounded by a somewhat modified landscape. The natural landforms and waterways are the dominant features of the Bay of Islands, but the outlook from the site also illustrates a modified pastoral landscape with a widespread scattering of houses around the bays and headlands, and small settlements such as at Wharengaere Bay and Opito Bay, and houses on Moturoa and at Days Point. In fact the intimate relationship between natural and cultural layers is part of the broader character of the Bay of Islands. When compared with the broader context of the Bay of Islands, the site has a higher degree of natural character than more closely settled areas such as the Kerikeri Inlet and a lesser degree of natural character than more remote areas such as the Cape Brett Peninsula.
- 26 The proposal will have both positive and negative impacts on natural character. It will increase the extent of buildings, and spread the influence of these over the site. On the other hand aspects of the plan will retain or enhance natural character.
- 27 The proposal uses existing areas of regeneration as the starting point of a comprehensive landscape restoration plan. This work will emphasise the

natural landform by re-vegetating the valleys and wetlands, the prominent coastal escarpment and some of the more prominent slopes. As well as improving the bio-physical landscape values, it will also result in a more picturesque and visually coherent landscape. The proposal will restore some 154ha bush or wetland areas (45% of the site), as well as retaining a further 127 ha (37% of the site) as open pasture and 9.6ha (2.8%) as heritage area. The pasture and heritage areas will maintain open space qualities of mainly ridges and spurs. In other words approximately 85% of the site will be managed as a conservation landscape.

- 28 Retention of the bulk of the site in a single title<sup>4</sup> will help facilitate on-going management of the natural and open space areas, and ensure greater visual coherence over the whole site. Often the most significant visual impacts from land subdivision arise because of a patchwork of different land uses between sites, and accentuation of boundaries between lots. The proposal avoids this by retaining the bulk of the natural and pastoral areas in a single title. This will help ensure the development as a whole hangs together. House sites and access roads are located in such a manner that the landform and natural landscape framework will remain dominant. House sites have been located in a manner that reduces their individual and collective prominence, as assessed in more detail under **visual effects** below. Building and landscape design guidelines have been prepared to help ensure buildings fit into the landscape. Covenants on sale and purchase agreements will require house and landscape designs to be approved by a Design Review Board. The guidelines are based on the principle that houses be integrated with natural landscape, and cover such factors as massing and orientation of house bulk, materials, and screening of parking. Landscape guidelines are based on the principle that the landscaping be tied-in with the natural framework of the overall property. For instance it is anticipated planting will be of native species in keeping with the area, re-vegetation areas will be protected where these fall within individual lots, and the recommended driveway materials are limited to asphalt or locally sourced gravel.<sup>5</sup> As well as helping ensure houses individually fit the landscape, this

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<sup>4</sup> Lot 50, which will amalgamate Lots 51 & 52 as discussed

<sup>5</sup> Should the use of concrete be necessary, where slopes are greater than 1:6, the texture or colour of the concrete should be ameliorated by the use of, for example, oxides or exposed aggregate surfaces

approach (architectural & landscape guidelines and design panel) ought to result in a more coherent character between the different houses than might otherwise be the case.

29 Visual effects are described separately below. In summary the number of houses that will be visible from any one place as one moves around the site is restricted, reducing the potential for cumulative effects.

30 Taking these effects into account I believe the proposal is appropriate for the following reasons:

- The site has moderately high natural character but is not pristine.
- The District Plan anticipates development within the site.
- The application itself has significant design features that will have some positive effects on natural character, and that will serve to reduce and mitigate other potential negative effects on natural character. It will improve the landscape's framework and largely retain its open space qualities.

#### **Effects on Outstanding Natural Landscape Qualities**

31 The coastal part of the site falls within an area identified as an '*outstanding natural landscape*'. This classification extends around a large proportion of the Bay of Islands coastline, with Cape Wiwiki and Cape Brett additionally identified as '*outstanding natural features*'. In other words to put it in context, the site has been identified as part of the broader Bay of Islands outstanding landscape rather than as a particular landscape in itself.

32 Criteria referred to as the 'Pigeon Bay' criteria have been used as a guide to assessing landscape significance in recent Environment Court decisions<sup>6</sup>. The Bay of Islands as a whole ranks highly in most of the criteria. In terms of natural **science** factors the Bay is an interesting example of a drowned landscape, geomorphologically **expressive** of the processes that have formed it. The landscape has high **aesthetic** qualities, with its intricate coastline, network of waterways and pattern of islands. The coastal setting in itself also provides

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<sup>6</sup> C180/99, Wakatipu Environmental Society Inc & ors vs Queenstown-Lakes District Council

**transient values**, from marine life and bird life within the bay, to the changing aesthetic qualities with different weather and light conditions. The area in particular has **historical** and **tangata whenua** values. The Bay of Islands was a focus of pre-European settlement and the setting for early Pakeha-Maori contact and settlement.

- 33 The site itself has several specific noteworthy aspects:
- The early contact involved in the first mission station provide special significance to the landscape comprising Rangihoua, Oihi, and Te Puna.
  - Te Pahi Islands are a picturesque cluster of islets off Wairoa Bay.
  - Poraenui Point also has significance in terms of aesthetic or 'mental map' attributes as it forms a prominent headland between Te Puna Inlet and the Bay of Islands proper.
  - Terakihi Peninsula is a distinctive and picturesque landform containing the distinctive Wharengaere Bay.
- 34 In considering effects on the landscape attributes of the site there is considerable overlap with consideration of natural character effects, however some additional points can be made.
- The significance of the Bay of Islands results from the interplay between natural and cultural aspects. It is a historically settled landscape rather than a pristine wilderness.
  - The site has been classified as part of the overall Bay of Islands outstanding landscape rather than a special feature in itself, although it is recognised that a distinction can be made between different parts of the site.
  - The District Plan provides for a certain level of development within the outstanding landscape. It does not seek to retain it in a completely natural or unsettled condition.
  - As outlined above in the discussion on natural character, the proposal has been designed in a manner that is sensitive to the landscape qualities, and in a way that will avoid or mitigate potential adverse landscape effects.

- 35 I therefore believe the proposal is appropriate in terms of the 'outstanding landscape' classification.

### **Visual Effects**

#### *Visual Catchment and Viewing Audiences*

- 36 The site has low visibility from surrounding land to the north and west, with the perimeter ridgelines within the property screening most views from adjoining land and roads. It appears there are views from only one building site in the adjacent Mataka Station and there are only the barest glimpses from public roads. The site will mostly be visible looking in from the coast. The main 'viewing audiences' will be people on boats passing the site, mooring in the bays, or landing on the beaches. It is understood people visit the beach in Te Puna Bay and the main casual mooring is at the southern end of Wairoa Bay. There is also a house on one of the adjacent Te Pahi Islands. Other views will be across the water but from more distant places on islands and coastline around the Bay of Islands and some limited views across Te Puna Bay from parts of Rangihoua Bay (approximately 1km), from Moturoa Island and Days Point to the south (approximately 2-3km), and from parts of the Opito Bay Peninsula to the south west (approximately 1km).

#### *Individual Building Sites*

- 37 An assessment of **individual building sites** is appended as **Appendix 1**. In summary the house locations are characterised by the following:
- A high proportion of the sites are located within the valleys behind the coast. Even some house sites that appear on plan to be close to the coastal edge, (Lots 41, 4, 5, 8 & 9) are located on the inland side of the coastal escarpments so that they relate more to the valley than the beach.
  - Other sites on the coast are typically set on terraces above the bush clad coastal escarpment, (Lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 25). This means there will be a sense of separation between them and the coastal edge. The bush-clad escarpment will remain the dominant element around the coastal edge.
  - Most house sites are also located so that they will have a landscape backdrop when viewed from the coast. They avoid prominent ridgelines and

most sites also make use of a backdrop and foreground of regenerating bush to reduce the prominence of building sites and some sites, for instance Lots 1, 4, 6, are almost completely embedded in regenerating bush.

- Access ways in most cases approach the house sites from the inland side, following existing farm tracks, and using areas of regenerating bush to conceal them from the coast.
- As discussed above, sale and purchase agreements will require all house designs to be approved by a Design Review Board, and many of the house sites (including all those in the outstanding natural landscape area) are restricted to essentially single storey construction.

### *Representative Viewpoints*

- 38 An assessment from **representative viewpoints** around the site (considering the overall or cumulative effects of the development from certain places) is appended as **Appendix 2**, and is summarised as follows:
- 39 In essence the **cumulative effects** of houses will be restricted by the pattern of locating houses below ridgelines and/or within valleys inland from the coastal edge. As one moves around the site only a small proportion of the development will be visible from any one place. , and these houses will sit comfortably within the landscape.
- 40 From Te Puna Bay, for instance, there will be one house reasonably prominent (40) in addition to the existing house on the knoll to the south (42), although the former will be set back from the coast inland of the wetland and at the toe of a backdrop slope; two that will be anchored and partially screened by landform and vegetation (41, 3<sup>7</sup>), one that will be difficult to see at all (1) and three to four distant inland houses (2<sup>8</sup>, 34, 35, 36).
- 41 From the northern end of Wairoa Bay in front of the “Boathouse” there will be one house that will be reasonably prominent (5) in addition to the existing house on the knoll (42), and two distant houses visible at the southern end of the bay

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<sup>7</sup> Revised location, moved to the south behind trees

<sup>8</sup> Relocated to near site 34

above the coastal escarpment (11, 12). As one travels to the southern end of Wairoa Bay up to eight houses (8, 9, 7, 20, 27, 28, 26, 29, 30) will become visible within the narrow “Wairoa West Stream” valley from certain parts of the bay but these will be inland of the coastal escarpment, visually connected with the valley, and two of them will be quite distant in the hills behind the valley. In my earlier assessment I noted that house 10 would domesticate the beach and reduce the natural character and sense of privacy for people using the bay. This site has now been deleted.

- 42 As one leaves Wairoa Bay travelling toward Poraenui Point there will be glimpses of two houses (13, 14) from certain parts of the bay but there will be no houses visible near Poraenui Point itself.
- 43 On the Te Puna Inlet side typically between three and four houses will be visible from any one place –although more will become visible the further one travels offshore. For instance from inshore waters in the first cove (“Poraenui Bay”) up to four will be visible (18,19,17 and 16) and similarly in the adjacent cove (“Pirinoa or Church Bay”) up to four also will be visible (21, 22, 23 and 24).
- 44 In particular it is noted that house locations avoid the most prominent features of the landscape including the coastal escarpment wrapping around the southern part of the site; the main ridgelines and hilltops; Poraenui Point itself; Terakihi Peninsula, the stream corridors and wetlands; and the dunes and low-lying land behind Te Puna Bay.

## **ISSUES RAISED IN SUBMISSIONS**

### **Heritage Landscapes**

- 45 Submissions raised issues relating to heritage landscape aspects in Te Puna Bay. Heritage features in this area, including features beyond the site itself, include Rangihoua (settlement area, hill-top pa, Marsden Cross); the smaller headland pa at Papuke Point; the former mission site in the middle of Te Puna Bay; and the Hansen house site on the hill at the south end of the bay.
- 46 Assessing effects on heritage landscape should take into account direct physical impacts on heritage sites, the extent to which development might

visually dominate such sites, and the extent to which development might compromise essential historical landscape connections or contexts.

- 47 My understanding from other's evidence, in particular that of Dr Rod Clough, is that the proposal does not directly impact important heritage sites. It also does not visually dominate any of the specific sites or the broader historical landscape, or compromise the key aspects of their broader context. For instance the main historical context and connections of the former mission station are with the beach and with Rangihoua to the north. The proposed house sites and access are inland, are in the opposite direction from these historical connections, and have been located in a way that they avoid visually dominating the site. (Refer Figure 8). Similarly the proposal will not compromise the context or landscape connections, or visually dominate the experience of sites at Rangihoua (Refer Figures 6 & 7).

#### **Poraenui Point**

- 48 Submissions also raised issues with houses on Poraenui Point on the basis that it is a strategic landmark that should not be developed.
- 49 As discussed above, I agree that Poraenui Point is a distinct part of the property that plays a more prominent role as the headland between the Te Puna Inlet and the outer Bay of Islands. It is more dissected and currently contains no buildings. Nevertheless there is no distinction in the District Plan between this area and other parts of the 'outstanding natural landscape' area on the site, and one might reasonably anticipate a number of sites being subdivided on Poraenui Point in terms of the District Plan provisions.

50 An issue is defining the extent of Poraenui Point. At a broad scale I believe it is reasonable to define it as all the land south of a line between Wairoa Bay and Kaihiki Bay or between Wairoa Bay and Wharengaere Bay. However the peninsula is transacted by several valleys that divide it into units, and a distinction can be made between the broader peninsula and the landform at the point itself. This landform is defined by the valley that extends from Poraenui Bay through to the saddle south of house site 13, almost severing the peninsula, and containing a prominent hill behind the point, a distinctive moat between that hill and the headland pa, and the point itself. (Refer Figure 2, 11 & 12).

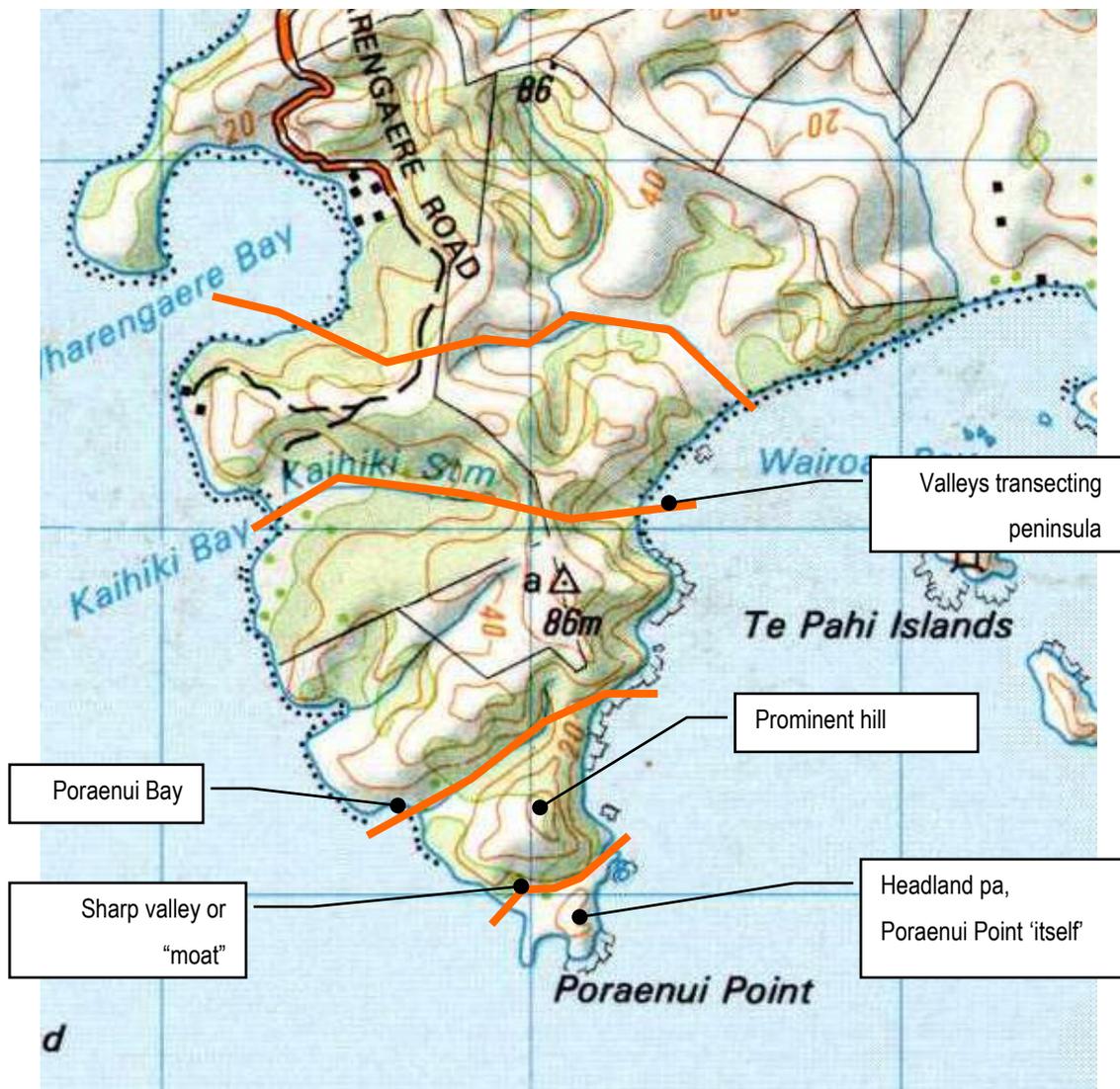


Figure 2  
Poraenui Point Features (NTS)

- 51 House sites 16 and 17 face into the valley away from the Point and in my view do not compromise the feature. House site 15, which faced toward the point, has now been deleted.
- 52 The Consultant Planner's Report raises the question of pairs of houses "clustered together" on Poraenui Point. She refers to lots 11 & 12; 18 & 19 & 21; 22 & 23; 24 & 25<sup>9</sup>. Reference is also made to lots 16 & 17 as being in close proximity to each other. The issue raised is whether this clustering might lead to a greater dominance of buildings, or greater apparent density of buildings in the landscape.
- 53 Proximity of houses to each other is one factor affecting rural character and the apparent degree of development, along with a range of other factors including the extent of open space retained between buildings or groups of buildings, and the dominance of house sites in relation to natural landscape. Clustering is a technique sometimes used as a means of concentrating development and retaining greater open space elsewhere. This works best where a strong vegetation framework is also used around the houses to help ensure a sense of separation between them, to provide anchoring and a degree of screening. For instance, substantial planting between sites 24 & 25 would help ensure the houses appear disconnected, would help visually anchor the houses, and would increase the extent to which only one or other of the houses is seen from different angles. Such an approach is intended and I believe it is appropriate it be required as a condition of consent as recommended by the Consultant Planner and agreed to by the applicant. I also note that one of the clusters referred to in the Planner's Report is separated by topography. House site 21 is tucked in a small cove, 18 & 19 are on the opposite side of a ridge to the east of the cove, and 18 is on a lower and quite separate terrace to 19.

#### **DISTRICT PLAN OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

- 54 As discussed above, the Revised Proposed District Plan provides for subdivision as a controlled activity with minimum lot sizes of 20ha in the Outstanding Natural Landscape area and 12ha in the General Coastal Zone.

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<sup>9</sup> House 15 has now been deleted as discussed above

The Plan also includes provisions for well-designed subdivisions of higher density than those provided for under controlled activity rules through measures such as Management Plans and bonus lots. The most specific objectives, policies and criteria<sup>10</sup> are those relating to Outstanding Natural Landscapes in Section 11 of the Proposed District Plan. These objectives and policies are not predicated on preserving landscapes in their existing state by preventing change, but on managing change in order that it might enhance, or at least not diminish, outstanding character. Particular policies note that both positive and adverse effects should be taken into account when assessing applications; that buildings on ridgelines should be avoided, remedied or mitigated; that encouragement should be given to restoration of degraded landscapes; and that the high value of indigenous vegetation to outstanding landscapes should be taken into account. The proposal is in accordance with these objectives and policies.

55 The District Plan also includes specific assessment criteria. I believe the application responds positively to these criteria as follows:

- The application design will retain the coherence and scale of the application site as a whole (criterion 'r')
- It includes a comprehensive programme of re-vegetation and enhancement (criterion 'q')
- Retaining the bulk of the property in single titles with covenants relating to management of the site's natural and open space framework will give permanent legal protection in terms of outstanding landscape values (criterion 'o')
- The building sites are located to avoid ridgelines [and in fact much more] (criterion 'h')
- The controls included on sale and purchase agreements will result in appropriate design of buildings including scale and earthworks (criterion 'i')

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<sup>10</sup> In terms of landscape and visual assessment

- Vehicle access has been designed to follow contours and use bush areas in order to remain unobtrusive (criterion 'j')
- Criterion 'p' requires consideration of the benefits that might be achieved in terms of permanent legal protection of outstanding natural landscapes in relation to an increase in residential activity. I consider that the effects resulting from the higher density would be more than offset by the nature of the project's design.

56 One could easily imagine a less desirable outcome resulting from subdividing the site into 22 blocks, with a variety of large houses located in prominent positions on each lot, and with a piecemeal patchwork of different land uses discordant with the underlying landform.

## **CONCLUSION**

57 The site is within the coastal environment and part of an outstanding landscape, but the District Plan anticipates and provides for some development in such areas depending on the manner in which it is done.

58 The proposal will lead to a higher density than provided for under controlled activity status, but is an example of a careful and comprehensively designed subdivision by owners who have demonstrated a commitment to a high quality outcome. I believe the proposal is appropriate for the following reasons:

- The site is not a wilderness but a modified pastoral landscape with some existing human elements, and is part of a broader landscape comprising a fine mix of human and natural features.
- The proposed natural bush and wetland management areas will improve the landscape's natural character, both visually and in bio-physical terms.
- Retaining the natural and open space framework in single titles will make on-going management of these areas more certain, and will help retain a visual coherence and broad scale over the whole site.
- The house sites are located in such a way that they are subordinate to the natural and open space landscape framework. Houses sites are typically located within valleys behind the coastal escarpment, or on terraces above the coastal escarpment, and make use of landscape backdrops and bush to

visually anchor or screen the houses. Controls will also promote house designs that sit within the landscape rather than dominating it, and should lead to a coherent quality amongst the different houses.

- The pattern of house sites within valleys and below ridgelines will limit the number of houses visible from any one place and help avoid potential cumulative effects.

59 In my opinion the likely landscape and visual effects will be more positive than might be expected by typical subdivisions complying with the standards for controlled activities.

Gavin Lister

29 November 2004

**APPENDIX 1:**

## COMMENTARY ON INDIVIDUAL HOUSE SITES

<i>Site</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
<b>Te Puna Bay</b>		
1	OL	This site is located at the side of the valley at the toe of a bush-clad escarpment, and adjacent to the point where a tributary stream enters the extensive wetland. The house site has a low elevation, is set back some 350m from the coast behind the coastal dunes and extensive wetland, is surrounded by regenerating bush, and has a substantial landscape backdrop. It is likely there will be only glimpses of the house from the bay or coastline.
2	GC	The site is located on a terrace, below the main ridge approximately 1km inland of Wairoa Bay. This house site was relocated from nearer Te Puna Bay. The house will be glimpsed from the parts of the coast but will appear distant and well inland, and will be seen against a backdrop of rising ground. The access will follow the contours and approach the house from the side.
3	GC	This site is located on the second spur back from the coast, approximately 400m from the beach, and on the inland side of a stand of pine trees.
40	OL	The site is located on the lower slopes within the valley behind Te Puna Bay. It will be visible from the beach but visually connected with the valley. The house will be set back from the beach (250m) beyond the coastal dunes and estuary wetland, at the toe of a slope, and seen against rising ground and an existing stand of pines. It is recommended this house be restricted to one storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its potential prominence and so it is in keeping with the group of houses behind Te Puna Bay.
41	OL	The site is located on the inland side of the headland spur. Although in plan the site appears close to the coast and will provide views of the beach, it essentially faces inland up the valley. The foreground spur will provide separation between the house and the beach and will help visually anchor the house. The access follows an existing farm track within the tributary valley and is screened from the coast. It is recommended this house be restricted to one storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so it does not overpower its anchoring spur and so it is in keeping with the group of houses behind Te Puna Bay.
34	GC	The site is located on a terrace, below the main ridge approximately 1.1km inland of Wairoa Bay. The specific location of this house site was shifted in order that it sit lower in the landscape. The house will be visible from the parts of the coast but will appear distant and well inland, and will be seen against a backdrop of rising ground. The access will follow the contours and approach the house from the side. It is recommended this house be restricted to one storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its location high in the landscape, and that planting be carried out to visually

Site	Zone	Commentary
		anchor the house and driveway.
35	GC	The site is on a lower spur overlooking the head of the Te Puna valley stream. It will be visible from certain places in Te Puna Bay, but will appear distant (approximately 1.1km) and well inland, will sit quite low in the landscape, and will have a backdrop of rising ground. Access will approach the house from the inland side.
36	GC	The site is in a similar setting to #35 above, situated on a lower spur overlooking the Te Puna valley wetlands. It will be well inland (approximately 800m), will sit quite low in the landscape against a backdrop of rising ground, and will be separated from the bay by a complex foreground landscape comprising dunes, and extensive wetlands. The access follows contours along the top of the spur from the inland side.
<b>Wairoa Bay –Northern End</b>		
4	OL	This site is relatively close to the beach adjacent to the mouth of the valley. However although it appears close to the beach in plan view, the house site is located on the inland side of the coastal escarpment ridge, on a small terrace surrounded by regenerating bush. The site's visibility will be restricted by both topography and vegetation, and the house will have a backdrop of a bush clad hill. Access follows an existing short track off the road, and is embedded in regenerating bush. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey design , or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so that it does not overpower its anchoring vegetation and landform.
5	OL	The site is on the opposite side of the valley to # 4. It likewise is located inland of the coastal escarpment ridgeline, so that although close to the coast it will not be visible from the beach directly below the site. It will be visible in more oblique views from where the road meets the beach. It will be on mid-slope, with a backdrop of rising land behind the house. It will be connected with the valley. Access follows an unobtrusive route around the contours on the inland side of the house site. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey design, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so that it does not overpower its containment behind the coastal escarpment, and to prevent it dominating the beach.
<b>Wairoa Bay –Southern End</b>		
6	OL	The site is located on mid-slope on the side of the valley, within a stand of regenerating bush. It is inland of the coastal escarpment ridge so that, even without the vegetation, it would unlikely to be visible from the beach below the site. There will be glimpses of the house from within the bay, but it will be surrounded by regenerating bush and will be seen against a landscape backdrop. The access follows an existing farm track embedded within the bush. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey design , or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so that it does not overpower its anchoring vegetation.

<i>Site</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
7	OL	The site is located on a spur overlooking the wetland at the mouth of the valley. It will be visible in oblique views from a small part of the beach and within the bay, but will be set back within the narrow valley, and be seen beyond a complex foreground comprising wetland and revegetated bank. Visually it will be part of the valley rather than the coast. It will have a mid-slope position with a backdrop of rising ground clad in regenerating bush. The access follows an existing farm track, approaching the house site from the inland side, and will be embedded in regenerating bush.
8	OL	The site is located close to the mouth of the valley. It has a similar setting to that of #5 above. Although it appears close to the beach in plan view, it is located on the inland side of the coastal escarpment so it will not be visible from the beach immediately below the house site. It will be visible in more oblique views from the beach, in which it will appear on the lower part of a slope, with a backdrop of rising land and native bush. Access approaches the house from the inland side. While the drive will descend the slope to the house, it is aligned so it curves around the perimeter of an area of regenerating bush. Additional tree planting is recommended on the west side of this drive to further reduce its prominence. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey design, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so that it does not overpower its containment behind the coastal escarpment, and to prevent it dominating the beach.
9	GC	The site is near a prominent peak on the coastal escarpment. However the house site is located below the knoll and on its inland northern side overlooking the valley. The house site is over the crest of the coastal escarpment so it will not be visible from the beach below although the top of the house will be visible in longer distance views from out in Wairoa Bay and Te Pahi islands. In these views it will appear over a foreground skyline of regenerating bush. The access follows a ridge on the inland side of the coastal escarpment, and is within regenerating bush. It should not be visible from the coast at all. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its potentially prominent location and high location in the landscape.
11	OL	The site is on a small terrace, or light depression, above the coastal escarpment. It will not be visible from the beach directly below although it will be visible in more distant views from the northern part of Wairoa Bay. In these views it will appear set back from the prominent coastal escarpment so that it will seem visually separate from the coastal edge. It will have a foreground and backdrop of regenerating bush. The access follows an existing ridgeline farm track, approaching the house site from the inland side. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so that it sits low behind the bush edge of the coastal escarpment.
12	OL	The site is similar to that of #11 above. It similarly is on a terrace near the top of the coastal escarpment. Its visibility will be reduced by the nature of the bush clad escarpment. Where it is visible it will be seen with a foreground and backdrop of bush, and with higher land behind the house. The access follows a ridgeline route, approaching the house from the inland side. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so that it sits low

Site	Zone	Commentary
		behind the bush edge of the coastal escarpment.
12A	OL	This is an alternative site on a spur a short distance east of #12. Despite its spur location the house site is contained by regenerating bush on either side. Views of the house would be restricted to a relatively narrow viewshaft across the bay, and it would be seen against a landscape backdrop, with a knoll located behind the site. A house in this location would be a little more visually separated from #11. A house built on this site would need to be restricted to one storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform.
26	GC	The site is on a minor spur near the head of the valley. The house will be visible up the valley from part of the beach, but it will appear well inland (approx. 600m), will sit low in the landscape with a backdrop of rising hills, beyond a complex foreground comprising wetland and bush clad banks. The access will approach the house from the inland side.
27	GC	The site is on a spur within the valley. It will be visible up the valley from a section of the beach, but will be set well back (approx. 500m) within a relatively confined valley with a complex foreground, and will be seen against rising ground. Visually it will be within the valley rather than on the coast. Access will follow a route around the contours from the inland side of the house site. It is recommended that planting be carried out to provide a backdrop to the house and visually anchor the approach road.
28	GC	The site is located lower on the same spur as #27 above. It similarly will be set well back (approx. 450m) within a relatively confined valley with a complex foreground (wetlands and re-vegetated banks), and will be seen against rising ground with a regenerating bush backdrop. Access will follow a route along the contours from the inland side, and will be screened behind the re-vegetated banks.
<b>Poraenui Point</b>		
13	GC	The site is located in a small terrace or slight depression on the inland side of the coastal escarpment. The site is essentially orientated inland although it will afford views over the bay. The site is also partially screened by existing bush on the coastal escarpment. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, so that it sits low behind the bush edge of the coastal escarpment.
14	GC	The site is on a saddle in the skyline ridge, on the second ridge back from the coastal escarpment. It will not be visible from the coastline but will be visible from part of the bay to the east. The house will appear set back from the coast, behind the coastal escarpment. It will be anchored by higher knolls on either side of the saddle, and framed by re-generating bush. Setting the house site a short distance could reduce the potential prominence of the house further back from the edge of the saddle. The access follows the existing farm track, approaching the site from the inland side. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its skyline location and so that it sits low in the saddle between higher landforms, and that its specific location be shifted a short distance to the west to help visually anchor the house behind the crest of

<i>Site</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
		the ridgeline.
16	OL	The site is on spur below a prominent hill, and above the coastal escarpment. The future house is potentially prominent in views from the south-west, but these effects can be addressed by locating the house a short distance off the top of the spur, ensuring the house design hugs the landform, and implementing the planned bush restoration to provide a foreground and backdrop to the house. There is access from the inland side following the contours and spur ridge, and also from the cove below. Both routes will be embedded in regenerating bush. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey , or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its potentially prominent location, and so it is in keeping with the other houses on Poraenui Point.
17	OL	The site is tucked away behind the beach in a small cove (“Poraenui Bay”), adjacent to the small Poraenui Stream. The house will only be visible from a narrow viewshaft extending from the bay, or from people who land in the cove itself. There will be a domestication of the cove, however the house will have low visibility and prominence from beyond the cove itself. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, partly because of its proximity to the small cove, but mainly so that remains in keeping with the group of houses on Poraenui Point.
18	OL	The site is on a terrace on a small headland defining one side of the cove discussed above. In some respects the site sits comfortably in the landscape; it is behind the bush clad coastal escarpment and has a prominent hill as a backdrop. However it also has a protruding and commanding position over the cove and the water between the site and Poraenui Point. Locating the house as far back from the coastal escarpment as possible and designing it so that it hugs the landform could address potential impacts. There are two potential access routes. One follows an existing track around the contours of the headland. Re-vegetation should be carried out to screen this route. The alternative route follows an existing track through bush from the cove. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey , or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its potentially prominent location, and so it is in keeping with the other houses on Poraenui Point.
19	GC	The site is located on a ridge running inland from a prominent headland. The house site is potentially prominent because it is near the skyline ridge, however several factors combine to reduce this prominence. The site is some distance inland from the steep headland face, is considerably lower than the prominent skyline hill, the house site is located a short distance below the spur ridgeline, is orientated to face the valley, and is located adjacent to the edge of the bush clad hillside. The access route follows the spur ridgeline, but is aligned to trace the edge of regenerating bush. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey , or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its potentially prominent location, high location in the landscape, and so that it does not overpower the anchoring vegetation, and so it is in keeping with the other houses on Poraenui Point.
21	OL	This site similar to #17 above, tucked away behind the beach in a small cove –“Pirinoa or Church

<i>Site</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
		Bay". There will be a domestication of the cove, although this will be re-establishing an earlier house location. The house will have low visibility and prominence from beyond the cove itself. The sharp headlands and narrow bay entrance mean the house will only be visible from a narrow viewshaft extending across the inlet. It will be seen nestled within the cove at the toe of steep hill. Access follows existing farm track, and is aligned so that it faces up the valley away from the coast. The vehicle turning area will be behind the house. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, partly because of its proximity to the small cove, but mainly so it is in keeping with the group of houses on Poraenui Point.
22	GC	The site is on a terrace within the small valley running up from the cove. The site will be set well back approximately 150m from the beach in the cove, and approximately 300m from the main coastline. It will be visible from a narrow band of water extending across Te Puna Inlet, and will be seen against a backdrop of rising ground and bush. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, partly so that it nestles unobtrusively behind the cove, but mainly so it is in keeping with the overall group of houses on Poraenui Point.
23	GC	The site is similar to # 22 above, but will be further inland (approx. 250m from beach in cove) and even less visible. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, mainly so it is in keeping with the group of houses on Poraenui Point.
24	OL	The site is on a terrace on a headland above the small cove referred to above. The headland is low, and does not protrude into Te Puna inlet. The house site is located so that it overlooks the entrance to the cove but nevertheless has a relatively unobtrusive location. It is located above the bush clad coastal escarpment and will be visually separate from the coastal edge. Potential prominence can be further addressed by ensuring the house design hugs the landscape. The access is from the inland side following an existing track and will not be visible from the coast. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its potentially prominent location, does not overpower the anchoring vegetation, and is in keeping with the other houses on Poraenui Point.
25	OL	The site is on the same terrace to #24 above, but because it doesn't occupy a headland in a similar manner to #24 above, it will be less visible and less prominent. It will be visible from offshore in Te Puna Inlet, but seen beyond the bush-clad escarpment that is the prominent foreground feature, and with a backdrop of trees. As with #24 above, the access is from the inland side following an existing track and will not be visible from the coast. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its potentially prominent location, so that it does not overpower the anchoring vegetation, and so it is in keeping with the other houses on Poraenui Point. .

#### **Inland Sites**

Site	Zone	Commentary
20	GC	This site on a mid-slope terrace inland of the main access road. It will be approximately 700m from Wairoa Bay, and will be seen against a landscape backdrop.
29	GC	The site is located on a ridge near the centre of the peninsula. The site is located off the crest of the ridge adjacent to regenerating bush edge. It will be anchored by bush on the opposite side of the spur, and will be seen against rising ground. The house will be well inland (approx. 700m from Wairoa Bay). The access will follow a route mostly embedded in regenerating bush, or tracing the edge of the bush. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its high location in the landscape and so that it does not overpower the anchoring vegetation.
30	GC	The site is in a similar setting to #29, but a little higher on the ridge. The house site will be below the skyline knoll, and is located off the crest of the spur adjacent to the regenerating bush edge. It will be anchored by bush on both sides and seen against rising ground. The access will follow a route mostly embedded in regenerating bush, or tracing the edge of the bush. It is recommended this house be restricted to single storey, or designed in a way that hugs the landform, because of its high location in the landscape and so that it does not overpower the anchoring vegetation.
31	GC	The site is located on an upper slope but well below the main ridge, so that house will be seen against rising ground. It will appear quite distant (approximately 1.5km inland from Wairoa Bay) and connected with an inland landscape. The access will approach the house from below. Planting is recommended to visually anchor the house and roadway.
32	GC	The site is in a similar setting to # 31 above. It is on an upper slope but well below the main ridge, so that house will be seen against rising ground, and will appear quite distant (approximately 1.2km inland from Wairoa Bay) and connected with an inland landscape.
33	GC	The site is located in the existing quarry. The house will have a backdrop of higher ground, and a foreground of re-vegetated hill slope. It will be approximately 1km inland from Wairoa Bay. The access will follow the existing farm road, approaching the house from the inland side.
<b>Terakihi Peninsula -Wharengaera Bay</b>		
37	GC	The site is located at the base of the peninsula overlooking Patunui Bay to the west. The house is inland of a line drawn along the beach in Patunui Bay. The house will be above and behind the regenerated coastal escarpment, and located against rising ground.
38	GC	The site is similar to #37 above. It is located at the base of the peninsula overlooking Wharengaera Bay to the south-east. The house is generally inland of the "back" of the bay. It will be above and behind the regenerating bush clad coastal escarpment, and located against rising ground.

## APPENDIX 2

### ASSESSMENT FROM REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

*Vpt*    *Commentary*

#### **A**    **Te Puna Bay**

The north end of the bay is enclosed by an escarpment covered in regenerating native vegetation, which extends inland along the north side of the valley behind the beach. The south end is defined by a slender point (“Papuke Point”) and the picturesque Te Pahi Islands. There is a sandy beach and low dunes across the head of the bay, and extensive wetlands in the valley behind the beach. The land cover within the catchment is mostly pasture, with the exception of the escarpment on the north side, and recent revegetation areas.

Eight building sites are proposed within this visual catchment.

Three sites (40, 41, 3) are reasonably close to the beach on the south side of the valley. However these are all located inland of the coastal edge, in tributary valleys or low spurs within the main valley. Although visible from the beach these sites will appear within the valley behind the beach. They will be visually connected with the valley rather than the beach, and will be seen beyond a complex foreground comprising low dunes, and restored wetland. 41 and 3 will be partially screened by vegetation. They will also appear to sit comfortably within the valley’s topography, located on the inland side of spurs (41, 3); located off the spur ridgelines and back from prominent escarpment faces (41, 3); or located at the toe of a slope with rising ground backdrop (40). One site (1) is in a low position amongst the bush management area on the north side of the valley and will have particularly low visibility.

The remaining four sites are well inland ( 850m – 1km), avoid prominent faces or ridgelines, and have backdrops of rising land.

#### **B**    **Wairoa Bay North End**

Wairoa Bay can be divided into two parts. The north end is enclosed by the Te Pahi Islands, and has a more developed character. It has a rolling backdrop, with better quality pasture. It was a former homestead site, and currently contains the “Boathouse” with its boat ramp and seawall, the “Lodge” building on the knoll above the beach, and other features such as the existing road and landmark Norfolk Island pines.

Site 5 will be reasonably prominent in views from this end of the bay. However it is located on the inland side of the coastal escarpment and, although visible from the bay, it will appear visually connected with the valley. The rest of Wairoa Bay to the south will retain its dominant natural character. From the north end of the bay sites 11 & 12 will be visible, but these will be on a terrace with a landscape backdrop, and set back behind the bush clad coastal escarpment. They will appear separated from the coastal edge itself, and nestled relatively unobtrusively near the inland end of the Poraenui Point headland. There will be glimpses of one or two other

*Vpt Commentary*

houses from certain points within the northern end of the bay. Site 34 and 2 will be visible in the distance at the head of the valley, but below the ridgeline. Site 4 will be visible from part of the bay, but it is on a small terrace enclosed in regenerating bush and is inland of the coastal escarpment.

**C South End of Wairoa Bay**

The south end of Wairoa Bay has a relatively steep escarpment clad in a mix of regenerating bush and weed vegetation. It has a more rugged and natural character.

Sites 11 and 12 will be screened from the bay directly below them, but will be visible from more distant places in the bay. As discussed above they will appear quite separate from the coastal edge and will nestle unobtrusively on benches behind the coastal escarpment. Lot 6 will be enclosed by regenerating native bush. The remaining sites are located within the valley running inland from the narrow beach. Each of the sites is located unobtrusively for instance; on the inland side of the coastal escarpment (8,9), on secondary spurs within the valley (7, 27, 28, 26), with rising ground backdrops (all sites). Although visible from the bay, houses on these sites will appear visually part of the valley, and will be connected with the complex landscape of wetland and revegetated hill slopes within the valley.

Three sites are set further inland on a spur behind the valley (20, 29, 30), but these also have a backdrop of rising land and will be anchored by regenerating bush.

Other lots on the Poraenui headland (for instance 13, 14, 16) will not be visible from this end of Wairoa Bay.

**D East Side of Poraenui Headland**

There will be glimpses of two houses as one leaves Wairoa Bay in the direction of Poraenui Point.

Lot 13 will be largely screened behind bush of the coastal escarpment, with just glimpses from the water. Lot 14 will be visible framed between two minor headlands from a narrow band of water. The site is in a saddle on the second ridge back from the coastline, and will be seen beyond a complex foreground of the bush-clad coastal escarpment.

No further houses will then be visible until one has travelled around the Point to the Te Puna inlet side.

**E Te Puna Inlet Side of Poraenui Headland**

Houses will be revealed in threes and fours as one travels west along the Te Puna inlet side of the Poraenui Point headland – although more houses will be visible from more distant views on the water.

From near the point itself two houses are likely to be visible, 18 and 19. Lot 18 may be potentially more prominent. Although more distant it will be on a protruding small headland point overlooking a small cove (“Poraenui Bay”), and commanding the adjacent water. Careful positioning and design of the house can reduce this. Lot 19 will be set back further from the coast behind a bush-clad hillslope.

As one travels past the cove (“Poraenui Bay”) Lot 17 will be visible enclosed within the cove itself, and Lot 16

*Vpt Commentary*

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will become visible on the spur above the cove. The latter is on a prominent hill slope but is located off the crest of the spur, and will be anchored by proposed revegetation of the hillslope. Potential prominence of this house, as with all others in the area, would be reduced through design controls to ensure the house hugs the landform.

**F Te Puna Inlet –Pirinoa or Church Bay**

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Further to the west there will be glimpses of Lot 21 in the small cove (“Pirinoa or Church Bay”), and Lots 22 and 23 on a low spur inland behind the cove. The visibility of these three lots will be restricted to a relatively narrow viewshaft across the water. Lots 24 and 25 will be more visible on a relatively minor headland west of the cove, but these sites are set back from the bushclad coastal escarpment.

**G Wharengaere Bay/Patunui Bays (Terakihi Peninsula)**

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Terakihi Peninsula is a slender landform containing one side of Wharengaere Bay and forming a headland at one end of Patunui Bay. From the water and coastline the natural character of this feature will be retained and in fact enhanced through management of the bush clad coastal escarpment. There will be glimpses of one house from each of Wharengaere Bay and Patunui Bay, but they will be well integrated in the landscape. They will be located at the base of the peninsula, avoiding its distinctive ridgeline profile, and more prominent locations on the headland itself. The houses will be set behind the bush clad coastal escarpment and will be visually separate from the coastal edge. They will have backdrops of rising land and will be anchored by the bush revegetation.

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