

Memorandum

TO: Darryl Sycamore, Planner

FROM: Barry Knox, Landscape Architect

DATE: 13th February 2017.

SUBJECT: **LUC-2016-481: 1069 HIGHCLIFF ROAD. COMMENT FROM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.**

This memorandum is in response to your request for comment on a resource consent application to establish a residential activity on an undersized rural site within a Landscape Management Area, the Peninsula Coast Outstanding Landscape Area (PCOLA). The site is 8.3 hectares, and a minimum of 15 hectares is required for dwelling activity to occur.

This is not provided for as a permitted activity in the rural section, and it is assessed as non-complying, pursuant to Rule 6.5.7(i). Proposed changes to the plan [2GP] require a minimum site size of 20 hectares, which would also render the application a non-complying activity. (However the relevant rule provisions have not yet been given effect to or made operative, so Council need not have regard to this).

There are two proposed structures, a house and a shed. (I understand only the dwelling requires a resource consent)

The AEE has been accompanied by a Landscape Assessment Report prepared by Mike Moore. This is comprehensive and detailed, and there are a number of recommended mitigation measures which, if fully enacted if approval were to be given, would combine with the relatively modest scale of the dwelling to considerably reduce adverse effects and maximise integration, should the development proceed.

Mr Moore accepts the proposal would introduce a minor degree of domestication, but is of the opinion that it is not seen as inappropriate in terms of landscape effects in this setting on the edge of Pukehiki settlement which has other dwellings. He notes that in his opinion the visibility would be low from significant public and residential viewpoints and adverse effects on landscape and visual values will be minor initially. This would improve as proposed plantings enhance the natural character values of the area.

General Comment

There are a number of planning related factors which need consideration for this application, including the non-complying activity status, the opportunity for precedence, and plan integrity. I will not comment directly on these elements which are more of a planning preserve, and will concentrate more on effects of the values of the PCOLA. However, in this location from a planning and landscape effects perspective, the number of relevant factors needing to be considered increases the need for very careful overall assessment.

In my opinion this relatively modestly scaled new building, if established with the proposed suite of landscape conditions forwarded in the application, would be likely to have adverse effects on the values of the PCOLA which would be no more than minor after several years. As with any mitigating landscape conditions, however, there is a time element, and initial adverse effects in this more elevated location could initially be minor to moderate until mitigation measures become more fully established.

Some other considerations include:

- I accept that for the most part the dwelling site has "low levels of visibility". However, this is countered to some extent by its elevation on Peggy's Hill and the lack of other nearby structures, both of which increase potential visual sensitivity.

- There needs to be care about reference to the context of settlement at nearby Pukehiki as a mitigating factor. Although close on plan, the visual context is quite separate. The subject site is on the south east side of Peggy's Hill, visually apart from smaller Pukehiki sections and dwellings, which have a more north westerly aspect.
- Notwithstanding these factors, there are some positive elements, including the small scale of the dwelling, proposed landscape activity around the structure, and eventual possible increase to worthwhile site vegetation and greater biodiversity.

Overall in my opinion, although I agree with Mike Moore that in the longer term, with the proposed reasonably innocuous dwelling and appropriate site development the specific adverse effects on the values of the PCOLA are not likely to be more than minor and in some aspects positive; I remain with the concern that the earlier, initial adverse effects may be moderate, prior to establishment and maturity of proposed landscape planting mitigation.

Features and Characteristics of the PCOLA to be Protected.

The Dunedin City District Plan notes these following issues for protection in the PCOLA:

- *The general visual dominance of the natural landscape elements over human landscape elements (eg buildings or shelter plantings) giving the area a sense of maturity and harmony.*
- *An apparently remote, isolated rural character.*
- *The integrity, extent, coherence and natural character of the landform, streams and remaining areas of indigenous vegetation.*
- *The minimal influence of any large scale structures or exotic plantings to diminish the impact of the natural landscape forms and features.*
- *The dramatic coastal landforms and views.*
- *The presence and quality of human-made features which are relics of the past, eg old lime kilns, stone walls.*
- *Highlights of 'transient' wildlife interest, eg seals, penguins, etc.*
- *Outstanding and dramatic landform features including the following which are included in the NZ Geological Society Geopreservation Inventory for the Otago Region:*
 - *Hoopers/Papanui inlets*
 - *the Pyramids*
 - *Sandfly Bay earthflow*
 - *Sandfly Bay lag surface and ventifacts*
 - *Sandymount sea arch*
 - *Sandymount terracettes.*
- *The extent and quality of areas of remnant forest, eg Taiaroa bush.*
- *The significance of places which are special to Maori, eg Pukekura (Taiaroa Head), Pyramids, etc.*

As noted earlier, with landscape mitigation, effects on the values of the PCOLA are likely overall to be minor. The proposal would introduce human elements into an area which has a predominantly natural character, and this domestication would not be dominant. However, the area currently has no obvious built structures, and any such intrusion would be likely to be more noticed because of this existing unbuilt character.

Prior to establishment and maturity of proposed landscape planting mitigation, in my opinion initial adverse effects on the values of the PCOLA may be moderate.

Barry Knox
Landscape Architect