

A7. Rural Character Values

A7.1 High Country Rural Zone

Description

The High Country Rural Zone extends along the north-west boundary of Dunedin City, incorporating the high country Rock and Pillar and Lammermoor Range ridgelines rising above the Strath Taieri Plain. These have a north-east/south-west orientation typical of Central Otago ridgelines further to the west. It continues onto the elevated land of the Taieri Ridge to the east of the Middlemarch Basin Rural Zone. The zone extends to the south of the Taieri Ridge where it merges with the Hill Country Zone close to Bald Hill and the Moonlight Road.

This Parts of this zone comprise **{CP 1088.61}** highly significant and visible high country areas containing **{CP 1088.61}** distinctive and rugged ridges, ~~and is centred around~~ encircling **{RU cl.16}** the Strath Taieri Plain. It is characterised by a strongly defined landform and minimal influence of human elements. The scale is large and expansive. Although much of the area is grazed and managed under an extensive pastoral regime, the vegetative cover, in the main, retains its natural patterns and character.

The landscape is highly coherent with rock outcrops creating particular interest. The skyline in many places is dramatic on account of these. The rugged character of the landform and the large scale of this landscape combine to create an effect which is distinctively reminiscent of {RU cl.16} Central Otago. The landscape is modified over a small area by the Macraes Gold Project, which is largely within the Waitaki District but now also extends into Dunedin City. {CP1088.61}

Values

- a. Large scale, open, expansive character. Highly coherent natural landform under an apparently largely unmodified grassland vegetative cover. The zone covers a high country area distinctive for Dunedin.
- b. Unique landforms, reminiscent of Central Otago. These include the Rock and Pillar Range (Patearoa), the Lammerlaw Range, the Lammermoor Range and elevated sections of the Taieri Ridge. Rock outcrops and tors are distinctive features.
- c. Predominantly pastoral land use including intact scrub and snow tussock vegetation sequences progressing to sub-alpine herbfields, as well as some modified grasslands.
- d. ~~Takata Whenua~~ Manawhenua **{RU 1071.126}** values. Historic Māori trail across Taieri Ridge.
- e. Limited visual impact of human imposed elements such as tracks, buildings and exotic tree plantings. The relative visual dominance of the natural landscape elements ~~over these {RU cl.16}~~ is a fundamental characteristic.
- f. Human made elements which emphasise local character and contribute to visual quality, e.g. stone buildings, rock fence posts.

A7.2 Middlemarch Basin Rural Zone

Description

Situated in the north-west of Dunedin district, the Middlemarch Basin Rural Zone is an outwash plain of the Taieri River. Relatively flat, this landform is surrounded by the high country ranges which rise steeply from either edge. Open and wide in the south but narrowing towards the north, the plain forms a scenic access route carrying the majority of transport travelling from inner Dunedin into neighbouring Central Otago via State Highway 87 which runs north to south along with the Taieri River and the railway.

The beginning of a trend to intensify land use in the foothills of the Rock and Pillars may have a future impact on the amount of water that is available in the Middlemarch Basin, by drawing water from the tributaries and therefore reducing the available water that reaches the basin itself.

Middlemarch is the main settlement and at the core of the roads which criss-cross across the plain. The roads, tracks, fences and shelterbelts form a typical rural patchwork on the land which speaks of the long tradition of farming in this area. Historic farm dwellings and settlements are located on the periphery of the plain, often nestled into the foothills of both the Rock and Pillars to the west, and the Taieri Ridge to the east. The flourishing Central Otago Rail Trail has provided a burgeoning tourist industry for Middlemarch township.

Though open and expansive, the landscape is highly modified. The initial establishment of flood embankments enabled the drainage of marshland, allowing farming, and preventing future flooding of arable land. Pastoral farming of beef, sheep and deer are the main and ongoing land use. In recent decades, farm practice on the plains has changed to a system encouraging intensification whilst still operating within the bounds of a dryland environment.

Values

- a. An open, expansive rural character.
- b. ~~Typically high class soils. These are sometimes subject to drought. The presence of highly productive land, including high class soils, which are sometimes subject to drought.~~ **{RU cl.1090.13 and RU cl.16}**
- c. ~~Has~~ **{RU cl.16}** A long tradition of pastoral farming, now predominantly beef, sheep and deer. Roads, tracks, fences and shelterbelts form a typical rural patchwork on the land which echoes this tradition.
- d. Human made elements which emphasise local character and contribute to visual quality. Heritage buildings, drystone walls and post features are cultural characteristics of this rural landscape.
- e. ~~Has a~~ **{RU cl.16}** Tourist industry centred around the Central Otago Rail Trail.

A7.3 Taieri Plain Rural Zone

Description

The Taieri Plain Rural Zone encompasses the Taieri Plain, a modified and managed landscape located west of Dunedin. Bordered by the Maungatua ranges in the west and hills to the north and east, it is a natural alluvial plain which is now predominantly rural farmland. Dunedin City's main south access runs through this area as well as it being the location of the Dunedin International Airport. These significant transport routes through the southern hinterland of the district make the area a scenic and strategic gateway into Dunedin City, linked with a sense of identity for locals and a first impression for visitors.

Originally this area was wetland, being the outwash plains of the Taieri River. However, early settlers colonised and modified the area, beginning at the better drained north eastern corner. This beginning is reflected today in the eastern end being the most established area of the plain, hosting the township of Mosgiel. It was a logical choice, given that the south west area is close to sea level, with some areas actually below it. The transformation of the plain into pasture affected a significant mahika kai gathering area used by local Māori, who hunted eels, birds and other food from the wetland. Draining the plain, as well as protecting it from frequent flood events, was challenging. Today the area is criss-crossed with extensive open drain networks, mechanical pumps and flood embankments. The very south-western end of the plain has maintained some wetlands which feed into the remaining lakes: (namely **{RU cl.16}** Lake Waiholā and Lake Waipori (both are located just outside of Dunedin City boundaries). These lakes {RU cl.16} are two of what once were several located across the plain.

Values

- a. Soil quality: significant areas of Dunedin's high class productive **{RU cl.16}** soils are located on the Taieri Plain, with particular value for the production of food.
- b. The role of waterways: large parts of the Taieri Plain are intensively farmed and surface water flows are mostly directed through artificial drains that dissect the landscape. The plain is crossed by three main watercourses water bodies {RU 360.40}; the Taieri, Silverstream and Waipori rivers. The Taieri River is also of significance to Manawhenua. {RU 1071.127}
- c. Productive capacity: while in early times farms in this area ran mixed stock and often crops of wheat or barley/oats, or operated as market gardens, there are now significant areas of the northern Taieri Plain that are rural lifestyle blocks. These blocks are seldom intensively used for food or crop production, though some horticultural production continues in the area. {RU 1090.41}
- d. Rural character: moving west on the Taieri Plain, a change in land use occurs from rural lifestyle, to more traditional sheep and beef farming, and then into intensive dairy farming. With this change in land use comes a change in rural character. The urban settlements of the northern Taieri are replaced by a working rural environment.
- e. Traditional development patterns: the typical pattern of development on the Taieri Plain conforms to a grid-like layout, where fence lines, shelterbelts and consequent land use activity have a distinguishing rectangular regularity.
- f. Typical building built **{RU cl.16}** forms: building forms in the north east of the Taieri Plain, which was developed earlier than other more westerly sections, are typically of larger, more distinctly heritage forms.

A7.4 Hill Country Rural Zone

Description

The Hill Country Rural Zone is the largest rural zone **{RU cl.16}** in Dunedin, forming a significant south west/north east swathe of largely open, rolling, pastoral downland, extending from the high country Lammermoor and Rock and Pillar Ranges, to the Taieri and Waikouaiti Valleys. It includes Lee Downs to the south west, Strath Taieri Hills further north to where this extends into the Taieri Ridge, and the Peat Moss Hills and Waikouaiti Valley further east.

There is considerable topographical and character variety over this extensive area, but typically the landscape is expansive, open and large scale, with a predominantly horizontal character and few vertical elements, whether natural or human made.

The gently rolling pastures of Lee Downs are increasingly being modified where farming machinery can gain access to the open hill slopes and ridges. Numerous gullies remain with riparian vegetation and small streams feeding into the larger waterways, including Lee Stream and Deep Stream, both of which are important contributors to the Taieri River, a significant river for Kāi Tahu.

Further north within the Strath Taieri Hills the rural character is still predominantly pastoral, characterised by frequent rocky outcrops of schist boulders and tors. This part of the Hill Country Rural Zone is extremely dry, but despite this several waterways cut through the area providing moisture for trees and woody vegetation in the gullies. The Strath Taieri area was likely to have been used for seasonal food gathering by the Waitaha iwi, as well as a transport corridor for Māori traveling between the Lakes District Central Otago **{RU cl.16}** and the east coast. Māori needing to avoid the wetlands of the Middlemarch basin would have used the dry hill tops to traverse this land. Numerous relics have been found, along with evidence that the area was once prolific in both moa, and moa-hunters.

Bordering the Strath Taieri Hills to the west, the Waikouaiti Valley to the east, and Silverpeaks to the south, the Peat Moss Hills form another distinctive part of the Hill Country Rural Zone. This is remote interior land that is very sparsely inhabited. It is a harsh and exposed environment that has minimal settlement, few roads and is seldom visited.

The eastern extent of the Hill Country Rural Zone is the Waikouaiti Valley area which has been shaped by a long history of human habitation. The nearby Waikouaiti township became one of the early economic centres of colonial New Zealand. Established in 1830, expansion into the rural area began in earnest in the 1860s. Given its significant history of successive human interventions this interior landscape has managed to maintain a moderate level of ecological health. This has occurred largely as a result of the steep sided valley systems localising the potential for intensification of pastoral production.

Values

- a. Typically a remote, open, expansive, horizontally focused character, dominated by extensive pastoral holdings, with some conservation estate at higher elevations.
- b. A significant predominance of natural features over human made features. The zone has a relatively low density of built structures and associated services.
- c. Distinctive rural settlement character: human settlement is sparse and consists of isolated farm houses and farm buildings, mixed in age and character, often surrounded by mature exotic vegetation typical of long established rural dwellings.
- d. Intact connected waterways with associated riparian links. These provide ecological corridors through the landscape and need to be preserved and enhanced. Given that the zone is primarily an agricultural landscape, protection of the waterways is often necessary through fencing and protecting appropriate vegetation growth along the riparian margins.
- e. Appropriate, sustainable land use practices. With increasing intensification of farming practices and

replacement of tussock with introduced grasses there is potential for increases in wind erosion in exposed more upland areas, particularly in prolonged dry periods.

- f. Pockets of important and varied biodiversity. There are significant areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats for indigenous fauna.

A7.5 Hill Slopes Rural Zone

Description

The Hill Slopes Rural Zone lies in close proximity to urban Dunedin, predominantly occupying the more elevated land to the north of the city. Here it includes three prominent landmarks - Flagstaff, Mt Cargill and Swampy Summit. These are joined by ridges creating a distinct rolling and hilly backdrop to the city, generating an enclosed and contained quality for the urban area.

The Hill Slopes Rural Zone also encompasses areas above the residential zones on both sides of the harbour (including slopes near Port Chalmers on the west side, and Harbour Cone on the east side); and the more elevated land to the north and east of the Taieri Plain (including Ferny Hill, Whare Flat and Chain Hills).

Values

- a. Backdrop/Enclosure: to a significant extent the Hill Slopes Rural Zone establishes the character and setting for the main urban parts of Dunedin, providing a predominantly unbuilt natural backdrop to the central city, harbour and Mosgiel.
- b. Distinctive hill features: specifically, the elevated areas surrounding Dunedin provide one of the main components of its recognised distinctive character. The main features include Harbour Cone, Signal Hill, Mt Cargill, Flagstaff and Swampy Summit.
- c. Recreation: sparsely inhabited, ~~or largely uninhabited~~, **{RU cl.16}** the Hill Slopes Rural Zone is close to the main urban parts of the city and therefore frequently used for recreation activities.
- d. A significant **{RU cl.16}** predominance of natural features over human made features. The zone has a relatively low density of built structures and associated services. There is variability of settlement patterns, with more lifestyle block development on the Taieri slopes and closer to existing Dunedin urban areas. However, natural character is still largely dominant. With a diversity of land management, there is a potential for exotics such as gorse and broom to encroach on both pasture and native bush.
- e. Pockets of important and varied biodiversity: there are significant areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats for indigenous fauna. Scattered indigenous vegetation dominated by kanuka is present in some marginal sites on the Taieri slopes. Further towards Flagstaff and Mt Cargill the zone is dominated by the naturalness of forest cover which contrasts with the urban area it borders. As well as its importance for biodiversity, the forest cover serves an important role in protecting key water supplies for the city, including the Leith and Cedar Farm catchments.

A7.6 Coastal Rural Zone

Description

The Coastal Rural Zone is in two distinct sections north and south of the main urban area of Dunedin.

The southern section extends from close to Taieri Mouth along the coast to the built up urban area around Green Island and Corstorphine, and goes inland as far as Henley Hill and north to Chain Hills to include the dissected hill country between the Taieri Plain and the coast. Saddle Hill is located within this part of the Coastal Rural Zone.

The south coast part of this zone consists of the low hill range that follows the southern coast, bound by the coast on the eastern side and the edge of the Taieri Plain on the western side. It is unified by its landform, topography and soils, and the subsequent limitations of land use.

The northern section of the zone stretches from the inner harbour area of Deborah Bay and continues north to Aramoana, along the coast to include Heyward Point, Long Beach, Potato Point, Warrington, Seacliff and Kāritane. It extends inland incorporating a considerable part of the coastal slopes above Whareakeake, areas south of Blueskin Bay, Porteus Hill, Round Hill and land adjacent to Waikouaiti towards the northern boundary of Dunedin city.

The north (Waikouaiti) coast is rich in Māori and European history and exudes a strong sense of place, reflecting an environment that has always been important for human habitation. The area is drained by two major river systems. On the north side of the Kilmog the twin branches of the Waikouaiti River join to flow as one through the Waikouaiti-Kāritane estuary system and south of the Kilmog, the Waitati River and Carey's Creek flow into Blueskin Bay. The smaller Pūrākaunui estuary is the other outlet of significance.

Both of the distinct north and south sections are highly significant areas for Kāi Tahu, and contain ~~hundreds of many~~ **{RU cl.16}** cultural sites ~~(see Appendix A4)~~ (Wāhi tupuna, see Appendix A4). **{RU cl.16}**

Values

- a. The general visual dominance of natural elements such as natural landforms, streams and remnant indigenous vegetation over human landscape elements e.g. buildings or shelter plantings.
- b. The generally limited visual influence of any large scale structures or exotic plantings to diminish the impact of the natural landscape forms and features.
- c. The extent and quality of the dramatic coastal landforms and views, with visual interest focused on the coastal edge.
- d. The remote wilderness character of the beach landscapes and the visual separation of these areas from adjacent developed areas by dunes or other landforms.
- e. The human-made features which are relics of the past, e.g. remnant shelter plantings and drystone walls.
- f. ~~The highlights of~~ Transient wildlife of **{RU cl.16}** interest, e.g. seals.
- g. Areas of ~~which have~~ **{RU cl.16}** significant habitat value, e.g. Aramoana salt marsh and Pūrākaunui Estuary.
- h. The landscape and cultural values of the historically and culturally significant Quarantine Island/ Kamau-taurua and Goat Island/ Rakiriri, pā sites at Huriawa (Karitāne) and Mapoutahi (Pūrākaunui Bay) and site of early European settlement at Matainaka (Matanaka).

A7.7 Peninsula Coast Rural Zone

Description

The area covered by the Peninsula Coast Rural Zone is very similar to that for the Peninsula Coast Outstanding Natural Landscape. It extends between Taiaroa Head and Andersons Bay and includes the land with a south facing aspect from the most elevated parts of the Peninsula down to the coast. It encompasses rural land north of Portobello, including Quarantine Point, but excludes most of the rural land below Highcliff Road towards the inner harbour above Macandrew Bay and Broad Bay (this is part of Hill Slopes Rural Zone). The Peninsula is highly valued for Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou. {RU 1071.128}

A dramatic coastal profile of prominent headlands and offshore stacks incised by broad tidal inlets, flats and sandy bays is reflected in the pronounced volcanic topography of the Peninsula landform. The sheltered Hooper and Papanui inlets bring the tidal waters of the Southern Ocean in close proximity to the Otago Harbour south of Portobello. At Sandymount and Cape Saunders, sheer cliffs have been sculpted by natural southerly forces, whilst shifting dunefields occupy the adjacent sandy bays. These extremes of coastal habitats support a range of unique wildlife associations that favour the remoteness of the immediate coastline. The steep seaward slopes of the Otago {RU cl.16} Peninsula coast are traditionally farmed in spite of limited access and inclement weather – windshorn vegetation is indicative of the harsh prevailing climate. Native vegetation persists patchily within the deep gullies and hillside slopes, but the interior landscape has been largely stripped of its natural cover to reveal the conical profiles of volcanic landmarks such as Mt Charles/Potiri and Harbour Cone. Original farming settlement and farm buildings are sporadically located within the seaward slopes and often surrounded by shelterbelts and amenity plantings. Traditional stone walls, along with macrocarpa shelterbelts are frequent boundary features of this heritage working landscape.

Values

- a. The general visual dominance of the natural landscape elements such as natural landform, streams and remnant indigenous vegetation over human landscape elements (e.g. buildings or shelter plantings)
- b. The predominant pastoral land use is a key feature of the remote, isolated rural character.
- c. Dramatic coastal landforms and views.
- d. The minimal influence of any large scale structures or exotic plantings to diminish the impact of the natural forms and features.
- e. The presence and quality of human made features which are relics of the past, e.g. old lime kilns and stone walls.
- f. The extent and quality of areas of remnant forest, e.g. Taiaroa bush.
- g. The significance of places which are special to Māori, e.g. Pukekura (Taiaroa Head). Some settlements such as Ōtākou date back to pre-European times.
- h. Tourism provides substantially to the local economy, particularly wildlife tourism.

