

Memorandum

TO: Lianne Darby, Planner

FROM: Barry Knox, Landscape Architect

DATE: 12th October 2016.

SUBJECT: **SUB-2016-90 & LUC-2016-459, 505 SADDLE HILL ROAD.
COMMENT FROM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.**

This memorandum is in response to your request for comment on an application to subdivide a Rural site into five lots. The Saddle Hill Road part of the site is within the Saddle Hill Landscape Conservation Area (SHLCA) and the land is shown to be subject to "unknown" hazards. The residential lots are all proposed to have areas from 4800m² to 1.1 ha, and the balance lot, containing regenerating native bush and gorse, would be over 80 ha.

The proposed subdivision is considered to be a non-complying activity pursuant to Rule 18.5.2 as the new lots will be smaller than the minimum lot size of 15.0ha set for this zone. The proposed residential activity is also considered to be a non-complying activity pursuant to Rule 6.5.7(i) as the District Plan requires 15.0ha of site area for a residential activity.

Under the second generation plan (2GP) the site is zoned Rural Coastal and the proposed house sites are within the Saddle Hill Significant Natural Landscape overlay (SHSNL). Rule 16.7.4 stipulates a minimum site size of 40 ha for this zone, and it now has legal effect, which confirms the non-complying activity status.

The application includes a Landscape Report by Mike Moore which provides a comprehensive outline of likely landscape effects and proposes appropriate mitigation for environmental enhancement.

I visited the site on 10th October 2016. Two of the photographs taken at this time are included as Appendix 1.

Brief Comment

This site is potentially quite visible and adjacent to the notable Saddle Hill and Scroggs Hill features. Any increase in residential activity here, in spite of the proximity to existing nearby rural residential dwellings, needs to be carefully considered with respect to adverse effects on the SHLCA. The report by Mike Moore contains a number of proposed conditions, which, if fully implemented if consent were to be granted, would provide a reasonable degree of assurance that the four proposed dwellings close to Saddle Hill Road would be well integrated with the surrounding landscape, and the balance part of the site, currently well vegetated, would be enhanced.

There are the usual number of planning related considerations - plan integrity, precedence, true exception, 2GP, cumulative effects - which need to be addressed for this application, but which I will not comment on directly. However, in my opinion, the overall effect of this application on visual and rural amenity values in this specific location would be no more than minor, if undertaken as recommended in the application landscape report.

Effect of the Application on the Values of the SHLCA

The following relevant "*Features and Characteristics to be Preserved*" of the SHLCA are noted in the Dunedin City District Plan:

- *The visual dominance of natural landform and other natural elements (such as remaining indigenous vegetation) over cultural or human-made landscape elements, eg buildings or plantations.*
- *The extent, integrity, coherence and natural character of the major natural elements such as landform, streams and areas of indigenous vegetation.*

- *The extent and quality of views from the principal public routes and viewpoints.*
- *The skyline generally defined by natural elements.*
- *The following significant landform features listed in the NZ Geological Society Geopreservation Inventory for the Otago Region:*
 - *Saddle Hill.*

The dwellings would be close to the skyline when viewed from some locations, and they would be alongside a frequently used public road. They would also be within visual proximity of the Saddle Hill feature mentioned in the list. In spite of these factors, the location of reasonably adjacent rural residential dwellings, the position above a quite recessive gully area and existing vegetation would all help to mitigate adverse effects on visual amenity values.

Four proposed rural residential style lots would extend the immediately adjacent existing rural residential development into a relatively recessive location contributing to minor to moderate adverse effects, which would diminish when mitigation measures would mature.

In the longer term, if the proposed comprehensive "suite" of mitigation measures are fully implemented, this would most likely result in positive effects on the natural and ecological character of the surrounding indigenous forest.

Concluding Comment

As noted, I consider that, notwithstanding planning related considerations such as Plan integrity and precedence, the proposed subdivision would be unlikely to lead to adverse effects which would be more than minor, as long as mitigation measures promoted in the application are fully implemented. *"The Landscape and Visual Assessment Report, 24 June 2016"* has these suggested mitigation actions noted on pages 6 to 7, and they are repeated in the AEE on pages 4 and 5. In my opinion, should consent be approved, these should be attached as conditions.

Recommended Conditions

The following proposed conditions for proposed lots 1 to 4 have been extrapolated from the application Landscape Report and should be incorporated, if consent is approved:

- *All buildings shall be located within the identified building platform.*
- *All buildings shall be a maximum of 5 metres above existing ground level.*
- *All buildings shall be finished in naturally weathered timber or locally appropriate stone, or in colours that have low levels of contrast with the colours of the bushland setting. Painted surfaces shall not have light reflectivity values (LRV) exceeding 15%.*
- *All services shall be located below ground.*
- *Driveways shall retain an informal rural character with gravel surfaces and soft edges and no kerbs. There shall be no monumental gates or driveway lighting.*
- *Water tanks shall be sited, and/or buried and/or screened by planting to have minimal visual impact beyond the property boundaries.*
- *Above the bush protection line, all planting on the property shall be confined to indigenous species appropriate to the character of the site, with the exception of plantings below 1.5 metres in height at maturity.*
- *Indigenous species to be used shall be from those listed in the application landscape and visual assessment report Appendix A. No golden or variegated plants shall be used anywhere on the site, nor any pest plants listed in Appendix 10B of the second generation Dunedin Plan.*
- *Locally appropriate indigenous screen planting shall be established within a 6 metre wide strip adjacent to Saddle Hill Road, using species and initial plant densities specified in the application Landscape and Visual Assessment report, Appendix A. This area is as shown in Figure 9(a) of this report. The area shall be managed to control weed plants and animal pests, and establishment of the planted species and natural regeneration shall be encouraged.*
- *Below the "bush protection line" shown in Figure 9(a) all areas shall be managed to protect and enhance the extent and quality of indigenous vegetation. Woody weed species listed in the application Ecological Assessment report shall be removed within two years of resource consent granting, and subsequently controlled to avoid re-establishment.*

- *Areas within the "bush protection area" shown in Figure 9 shall be protected by fencing, and Pinus radiata trees killed within 5 years of consent granting. General management shall be in accordance with the 2016 Wildlands Ecological Assessment report included in the application documents.*

Barry Knox,
Landscape Architect

APPENDIX 1. Photographs Taken 10th October 2016.

Photo 1. View to the south-west from Saddle Hill Road, near Saddle Hill. The proposed four smaller lots would be to the left (south) of the road opposite existing Rural Residential dwellings in the middle of the photo (mostly obscured from this view).

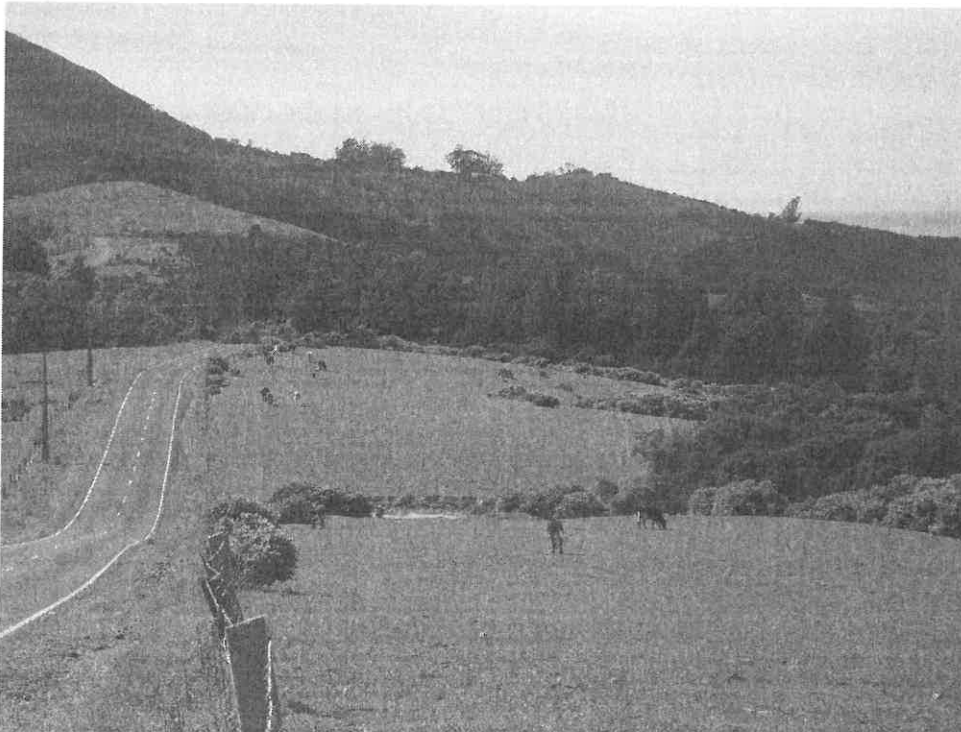


Photo 2. View towards the north-east from Saddle Hill Road, with Saddle Hill to the left. Proposed four lots in the middle distance at the end of the road shown where gorse is located, and partly obscured from this view by the gully.