

# LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

PROPOSAL TO SUBDIVIDE TO CREATE  
TWELVE LOTS: NINE RESIDENTIAL  
LOTS, TWO SHARED ACCESS LOTS  
AND ONE BALANCE LOT AT 336 & 336A  
PORTOBELLO ROAD.

## INTRODUCTION & DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 1 This report identifies and evaluates the landscape and visual effects likely to arise from a proposal to subdivide the site at 336 and 336a Portobello Road, the Cove (the site). The site is legally described as Lots 22 & 25 DP 5628 & Pt Section 45 - 46 Upper Harbour East Survey District. The site is 7.3Ha in size.
- 2 The details of the proposed activities are set out in the resource consent application and its various appendices. I will not repeat that detail here, other than to make the following summary points that are relevant to an assessment of landscape issues.
  - The proposal is for a 12 Lot subdivision that will comprise nine residential allotments ranging in size from 545m<sup>2</sup> to 935m<sup>2</sup>, two shared access lots and one balance lot.
  - The proposed balance lot (Lot 10) is 6.3ha and entirely within the Inner Peninsula Bays, Significant Natural Landscape (SNL), pursuant to the Dunedin City Second Generation District Plan (**2GP**)
  - A small part of the residential Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8 is within the SNL. Building platforms have been identified on each lot, outside the SNL. No buildings are enabled within the SNL.
  - With regard to landscape treatment within the SNL, it is recommended that a condition of consent would require a landscape management plan to be submitted and approved in order to achieve the following:
    - The gullies are revegetated in appropriate species native to the Otago Peninsula.
    - The remainder of the SNL within the site is retained as open pastoral land.
    - Invasive exotic species on the site are effectively managed so as to be eradicated in the long term.
    - Native vegetation shall be established to provide effective screening of any future water tanks within the SNL from outside the site.

## METHODOLOGY

- 3 The methodology for this assessment has been guided by:

- The Te Tangi A Te Manu, Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines<sup>1</sup>
  - The New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects "Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management" Practice Note<sup>2</sup>
  - The landscape assessment guidance of the Quality Planning Resource<sup>3</sup>.
  - The landscape-related provisions of the 2GP.
- 4 When describing effects, I will use the hierarchy of adjectives given in the top row of the table below. The bottom row shows how the adjectives that I use can be related to specific wording within the RMA<sup>4</sup>.

|                 |       |         |                 |          |             |           |
|-----------------|-------|---------|-----------------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| very low        | low   | low-mod | moderate        | mod-high | high        | very high |
| less than minor | minor |         | more than minor |          | significant |           |

- 5 The site is located on the hillside of the Otago Peninsula overlooking the Otago Harbour. The upper section of the site is located within the Inner Peninsula Bay SNL. The values of this SNL that are to be protected have been identified in Appendix A3.3.5 of the 2GP. I have listed the identified values in the relevant sections below.

### ***Physical Attributes***<sup>5</sup>

- 6 The site is on the Otago Peninsula, a relatively steep, rugged landform, shaped by historic volcanic activity. The peninsula flanks the southern edge of the Otago Harbour to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The peninsula is a relatively natural in terms of landscape character, comprising primarily pastoral land cover with pockets of remnant native vegetation. Several small nodes of residential development are evident, generally concentrated nearer the city and on the northern side of the peninsula. Numerous roads and trails run across the peninsula providing public access and recreational opportunities to much of the headland.

<sup>1</sup> Te Tangi A Te Manu, Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, April 2021, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architecture

<sup>2</sup> New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Education Foundation; 2010; Best Practice Note 10.1 'Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management'.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/node/805>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, paragraphs 6.21 and 6.36 to 6.40.

<sup>5</sup> The NZILA Guidelines define physical attributes as "both the natural and human-derived features, and the interaction of natural and human processes over time", at paragraph 4.23.

- 7 As discussed above, much of the site is within the Inner Peninsula Bay SNL. Biophysical values of the Inner Peninsula Bay SNL identified in Appendix A3.3.5 of the 2GP are listed below:
- *Defining elements include steep spur and gully hillsides descending from prominent volcanic ridgelines.*
  - *Eroded volcanic landform remains legible and largely intact.*
  - *The area surrounding the iconic Harbour Cone (an ONF) provides a significant backdrop to the harbourside settlements of Broad Bay and Portobello.*
  - *Small areas of regenerating indigenous forest.*
  - *Interconnections with the marine environment.*
  - *Indigenous biodiversity and habitat for indigenous wildlife.*
- 8 The site itself is a large sloping lot that rises from a belt of residential development adjacent to Portobello Road (to the north) up to open rural land adjacent to Highcliff Road (to the south). For the most part, the site appears rural, comprising a mix of open pastoral landscape, large established macrocarpa, scraggly exotic scrub (concentrated in the gullies) and a small number of native trees and shrubs. The site contains one dilapidated dwelling in the lower part of the site (nearest Portobello Road). Much of the exotic vegetation around the dwelling has been cleared.

### **Associative Attributes<sup>6</sup>**

- 9 As discussed above, much of the site is within the Inner Peninsula Bay SNL. Associative values of the Inner Peninsula Bay SNL identified in Appendix A3.3.5 of the 2GP are listed below:
- *The upper slopes and peaks of the Peninsula are highly valued including by Manawhenua and have wāhi taoka values.*
  - *High tourism and recreational values.*
  - *European cultural features throughout the area include drystone walls and remnant Macrocarpa shelter trees and building sites.*

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<sup>6</sup> The NZILA Guidelines define associative attributes at paragraph 4.23 as "the intangible things that influence how places are perceived – such as history, identity, customs, laws, narratives, creation stories, and activities specifically associated with a landscape".

- *Rural character contributes to the shared and recognised natural and amenity values of the harbour landscape.*
- *Otago Peninsula has high tourism and recreational values and is viewed as a special area of Dunedin.*

### **Sensory Attributes<sup>7</sup>**

10 Sensory values of the Inner Peninsula Bay SNL identified in Appendix A3.3.5 of the 2GP are listed below:

- *Legibility of the natural landform and associated visual coherence of the landscape i.e. patterns of land use reflecting the underlying topography.*
- *Naturalness of landforms, including lowlands, slopes, summits and ridgelines.*
- *Naturalness attributes of the rural landscape which provide backdrop and containment to the discrete harbourside settlements.*
- *The extent, integrity, coherence and naturalness of the major natural elements such as landform, streams and areas of indigenous vegetation. A key feature here is the extent and quality of areas of regenerating indigenous bush.*
- *Outstanding panoramic views which are available both of the area and from the area.*
- *Expressive of the landscape's eroded volcanic formative processes.*
- *High rural amenity with low impact of built elements, earthworks, exotic tree plantings, and the significant relative dominance of natural landscape elements.*
- *Open views across the landscape from roads and tracks.*

11 The wider peninsula is recognised for views of dramatic coastal landforms and open rural landscapes. The site itself contributes to the open rural views, with much of the site being pastoral and tying in with the pleasant, bucolic landscape surrounding the upper slopes of the

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<sup>7</sup> The NZILA Guidelines define perceptual attributes at paragraph 24.3 as being "both sensory experience and interpretation. Sensory appreciation typically occurs simultaneously with interpretation, knowledge, and memory".

site. The lower part of the site comprises a dilapidated house, cleared vegetation and earth worked areas and is perceived as a less visually appealing part of the site.

### **Landscape Values<sup>8</sup>**

12 Landscape values of the site include amenity values associated with the legible landforms (spur and gully hillside) and the openness and naturalness attributes of the rural landscape. The threats to these values are identified in Appendix A3.3.5.3 of the 2GP and the threats relevant to this application are listed below:

- *Inappropriate siting, design, scale, density and finish of buildings and structures such that they become visually dominant from public viewpoints*
- *Inappropriate siting, scale and design of roads and tracks such that they cut across the landform rather than follow it and become visually dominant features.*
- *Continuing encroachment into pastoral areas is a threat to this area.*

## **RELEVANT STATUTORY CONTEXT**

13 I understand the site is located within the Rural Residential 2 Zone of the 2GP. The lower part of the site in which the proposed residential lots are located is proposed to be rezoned as Township and Settlement Zone by variation 2. I understand the variation 2 zoning is yet to be heard by the Council and therefore little weight can be placed on the zoning provisions.

14 The majority of the site is within the Peninsula Bays SNL. I understand that the decisions have been issued regarding this SNL and therefore weight can be placed on its extent and the relevant objectives, policies and rules in the 2GP.

15 The most relevant provisions from 2GP are:

### **Objective 2.4.4 Natural Landscapes and Natural Features**

*Dunedin's outstanding and significant natural landscapes and natural features are protected.*

### **Policy 2.4.4.3**

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<sup>8</sup> The NZILA Guidelines define landscape values at paragraph 5.6 and the glossary as "the reasons a landscape is valued – the aspects that are important or special or meaningful" and note that "values are embodied in certain attributes". Also, at paragraph 5.55, it is helpfully notes that "hybrid terms such as 'visual amenity', 'rural amenity' and natural amenity' are shorthand for 'landscape values that contribute to amenity values'".

*Protect the values in identified Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF), Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) and Significant Natural Landscape (SNL) overlay zones by listing these values in Appendix A3 and using rules that:*

- b. require resource consent for activities in ONFs, ONLs and SNLs, where they may be incompatible with the values of the area; and*
- c. restrict the scale of development in ONFs, ONLs and SNLs and ensure the design of development is appropriate.*

**Objective 2.4.6 Character of Rural Environment**

*The character and visual amenity of Dunedin's rural environment is maintained or enhanced.*

**Policy 2.4.6.1**

*Identify the important character and visual amenity values of different rural environments that should be maintained, and use these as part of the determination of rural zones that require different management approaches. Identify and list these values in Appendix A7 based on the following:*

- a. landform and naturalness;*
- b. open space characteristics;*
- c. nature, scale and design of buildings;*
- d. density of development;*
- e. nature, scale and types of productive uses; and*
- f. presence of indigenous vegetation and habitats for indigenous fauna.*

**Objective 10.2.1**

*Biodiversity values are maintained or enhanced, including by protecting areas of significant indigenous vegetation and the significant habitats of indigenous fauna.*

**Policy 10.2.1.11**

*Only allow subdivision activities where the subdivision is designed to ensure any future land use or development will:*

- maintain or enhance, on an on-going basis, biodiversity values;*

- *protect areas of significant indigenous vegetation and the significant habitats of indigenous fauna; and*
- *be in accordance with policies 10.2.1.2, 10.2.1.3, 10.2.1.4 and 10.2.1.8.*

***Policy 10.2.5.10***

*Only allow subdivision activities in Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF), Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL), and Significant Natural Landscape (SNL) overlay zones where the subdivision is designed to ensure that any future land use or development will maintain or enhance the landscape values identified in Appendix A3 and will be in accordance with policies 10.2.5.1, 10.2.5.2, 10.2.5.3, 10.2.5.4, 10.2.5.6, 10.2.5.7, 10.2.5.8 and 10.2.5.9.*

- 16 Principle threats to values of the Inner Peninsula Bays SNL are identified in table A3.3.5.3 of Appendix A3.3.5 of the 2GP and key design elements to be required or encouraged are identified in table A3.3.5.4.

## **ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS**

- 17 In light of the above description of the existing landscape and the uncertainty of the zoning of the site, the assessment of visual effects will relate to the context and views of the site, the higher-level objectives and policies and the objectives and policies relating to the SNL.

### **VISUAL CATCHMENT AND VIEWING AUDIENCES**

- 18 The subject site is part of the northern face of the Otago Peninsula, overlooking the Otago Harbour. The location of the proposed subdivision is on the lower part of the site, that is outside the SNL and is adjacent to existing residential development on neighbouring properties. There is some degree of potential visibility of the proposed subdivision from:

- Neighbouring properties
- Portobello Road
- Highcliff Road
- Ravensbourne
- The Otago Harbour

- 19 When considering the visual effects of the proposed activities, it is relevant that residential activity enabled by the proposed subdivision will be concentrated in the lower part of the site and no buildings are proposed within the more visible section of the site or the SNL. The proposed residential lots can be expected to develop over time to become established properties,

supporting dwellings and residential activity, akin to neighbouring development along Portobello Road.

## **EFFECTS ON VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY**

20 Visual effects are:

*“effects on landscape values as experienced in views. ... A proposal that is in keeping with the landscape values, for example, may have no adverse visual effects even if the proposal is a notable change to the view. Conversely, a proposal that is completely out of place with landscape values may have adverse effects even if only occupying a portion of the view”<sup>9</sup>.*

### Neighbouring Properties

21 Residential properties wrap around the site to the north and the east. The topography and north-facing aspect of this part of the peninsula is such that the dwellings are generally situated downhill from the site and orientated to the north, overlooking the harbour and facing away from the site. As such, while neighbours will obviously be aware of residential activity on the site, the degree of adverse effects on views and visual amenity of neighbouring properties will be very low at most.

### Portobello Road

22 The site sits above Portobello Road and is entirely screened by topography, vegetation and existing development. As such, the degree of adverse effects on views and visual amenity of Portobello Road will be nil.

### Highcliff Road

23 Appendix 1 shows the stretch of road from which some visibility of the proposed activities can be gained. Appendix 2 contains photographs illustrating the views towards the site. Highcliff Road traverses the peninsula’s northern face above the site. The topography of the peninsula is such that Highcliff Road meanders around the hillside and for the most part the landform screens the site.

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<sup>9</sup> Te Tangi A Te Manu, Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, April 2021, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architecture, paragraphs 6.25 and 6.27.

- 24 Fleeting views towards the site can be gained along a short stretch of road above the site as set out in Appendix 1. The site is in the peripheral view of road users and the wider view is a stunning panorama comprising the Otago harbour, the Otago Peninsula, and headlands. The site will form a very small part of the wider views, with the majority of the site retaining its pastoral character and appearance, as can be seen in Appendix 2. This more visible part of the site will be managed in a long term way (as per my recommendation in paragraph 2) so as to maintain and enhance the values of the SNL.
- 25 The proposed residential lots will be set back considerably from Highcliff Road, adjacent to the existing residential development that is visible but not prominent in existing views. Future building and domestication within the proposed residential lots will be located at the far end of the site, away from Highcliff road and will tie in with existing residential development. The siting, scale and density of buildings is such that they will not be visually predominant from Highcliff Road, and the proposal will be unimposing and will not detract from the impressive wider views from the relevant stretch road. As such, the adverse effects on views and visual amenity from Highcliff Road are considered to be of a very low degree at most.

#### Ravensbourne

- 26 Appendix 1 shows two indicative viewpoints from which some visibility of the proposed activities can be gained. Appendix 2 contains corresponding photographs. The wider views from Ravensbourne Road are complex, comprising industrial and port activity in the foreground with the more natural views of the Otago Harbour in the midground and Otago Peninsula in the distance.
- 27 The site will be visible across the harbour at a distance of over 1.6 kilometres. The site, particularly the sliver of proposed residential development comprising a formed accessway and nine residential allotments, will form a very small part of the wider views as can be seen on the Appendix 2 photographs. Several instances of domestication are evident along the toe of the peninsula, the proposed residential development will create a subtle increase in visible domestication that will appear as a natural extension of the surrounding residential activity.
- 28 Two proposed shared access lots are proposed. A cul-de-sac will lead from the existing access off Portobello and traverse around the lower slope between the existing residential development and the proposed residential allotments, providing access to the majority of the residential allotments. A smaller accessway will branch off to travel up the slope between Lots 1 & 2 and

Lots 3 & 4, providing access to two residential lots (Lots 2 & 3) and the balance lot (Lot 10). Where possible the location and scale of the proposed access will be located on the lower slopes of the site and follow existing track alignments. Also, the natural topography, and existing structures and amenity planting on adjacent properties will provide significant screening. The proposed roading infrastructure will not be visually dominant when viewed from Ravensbourne. Despite this, some considerable earthworks are proposed. I recommend that conditions of consent require effective reinstatement and suitable re-grassing or revegetation of all disturbed ground.

- 29 The rural upper reaches of the site will remain open and pastoral and will continue to appear visually cohesive with the more natural elevated slopes of the peninsula. Over the medium to long term, gully vegetation and maintenance of invasive species over the proposed lot 10 will mean that the gullies become more legible as native filled natural landforms with the open pasture of the rolling spurs between them. I consider that this will be an ongoing enhancement to the visual qualities of the SNL. The proposal will result in a subtle modification to the landscape and the wider views from Ravensbourne will be maintained. Overall, the adverse effects on views and visual amenity from Ravensbourne are considered to be of a very low degree at most.

#### Otago Harbour

- 30 The site will be visible from on the water in parts of the Otago Harbour. As with the Ravensbourne views discussed above, the site will form a very small part of the wider views. In views from nearer the peninsula, the site will be somewhat screened by topography, existing dwellings and amenity planning. In more distant views, nodes of residential development are evident along the toe of the peninsula. The proposed residential development will be seen as a modest increase in the number of dwellings and roading infrastructure within an existing cluster of residential land uses, in keeping with the level of residential development in the vicinity. The rural upper reaches of the site will remain open and pastoral and will continue to appear visually cohesive with the more natural elevated slopes of the peninsula. Again, there will be enhancement overtime. Overall, the adverse effects on views and visual amenity from the Otago Harbour are considered to be of a very low degree at most.

### **LANDSCAPE EFFECTS**

- 31 *"A landscape effect is a consequence of changes in a landscape's physical attributes on that landscape's values. Change is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change on landscape values that is*

*relevant. To assess effects, it is therefore necessary to first identify the landscape's 'values' – and the attributes on which such values depend*"<sup>10</sup>.

- 32 The site is a large sloping site that is relatively open rural land that is void of structures aside from one dilapidated dwelling on the lower part of the site. I understand the dwelling is to be removed. The proposal will introduce nine new residential lots to the lower part of the site, which is bordered by established residential development. The proposed lots follow a similar contour to residential development in the vicinity of the site and will not extend up the slope above existing residential activities along the peninsula. The residential nature and the lot sizes of the proposed residential lots are akin to the surrounding residential development. The scale, density and location of the proposed subdivision and building platforms are consistent with the overall settlement pattern of the Otago Peninsula.
- 33 As discussed above no buildings are proposed with the SNL. Conditions relating to the landscape treatment of the SNL have been recommended to ensure the values of the Inner Peninsula Bay SNL identified in Appendix A3.3.5 of the 2GP are maintained and incrementally enhanced. The existing open pastoral landscape will be retained over much of the site, and the gully features will be visually and ecologically enhanced through native revegetation. A small sliver of the upper sections of Lots 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 will be within the SNL. The location of the building platforms in these Lots has been informed by the boundary of the SNL to ensure no buildings are located within the identified area and the open character is somewhat maintained in this area. I note that there is no clear delineation between the SNL and the non-SNL parts of the site, and the boundary runs through the existing dwelling on the site. This SNL edge part of the site will be screened by dwellings in front of it in any event.
- 34 Overall, the proposal will lead to a small increase in residential development on the lower part of the site that is akin to the existing development in the vicinity and the Otago Peninsula and will protect and enhance the SNL in the upper part of the site. The degree of adverse effects on landscape character resulting from this proposal will be of a low degree at most. I consider that the patterns that will result from the proposal will be logical and will tie in with the surrounding situation quite seamlessly.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- 35 The proposal will lead to a small increase in residential development on the northern slope of the Otago Peninsula. All future residential buildings are to be located outside the identified SNL and will be regulated by the zoning that is ultimately applied to the land by the district plan review process. The values of the SNL are to be enhanced and protected through restrictions on building, revegetation, and long-term management of the open pastoral land as per my recommendations.
- 36 I consider that the proposal is consistent with the relevant objectives and policies of the 2GP that relate to SNLs and district wide matter. The character, visual amenity and values of the SNL and the rural environment will be protected and maintained through retention of open paddock land and revegetation of gullies to tie in with the wider landscape and create continued visual cohesion with the wider peninsula.

**Jess McKenzie**

**Landscape Architect**

**vivian+espie**

**22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022**



**GTJM PROPERTY LTD - LANDSCAPE REPORT MCKENZIE APPENDIX 1 : CONTEXT AND VIEWPOINT MAP**



REF: 1758.01  
DATE: 22.02.2022  
SCALE: 1: 15,000 @ A3

**Context and Viewpoint Plan**  
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**Viewpoint 1** - Looking towards the site from Ravenbourne Road.



**Viewpoint 2** - Looking towards the site from Ravenbourne Road.

## **GTJM PROPERTY LTD - LANDSCAPE REPORT – MCKENZIE – APPENDIX 2 : PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs were taken with a fixed focal length of 50mm. Photographs are intended to illustrate points made in this report. If this sheet is printed at A3 size, the photographs are not at full size so as to replicate the full-scale field of view as taken in by the human eye.



**Viewpoint 3** - Looking towards the site from Highcliff Road.



**Viewpoint 4** - Looking towards the site from Highcliff Road.

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