

# Integrating nature and culture

Landscape and Visual Assessment Report

Mangawhai Heads 196 Tara Road Mangawhai 0573

#### **Document Quality Assurance**

Mangawhai Heads: 196 Tara Road, Mangawhai Landscape Assessment Report Greenwood Associates Landscape Architecture Ltd

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The report has been prepared in support of a proposed private plan change on behalf of Mangawhai Hills Limited (hereinafter referred to as 'the applicant').
- 1.2. The landscape assessment report will provide an assessment of the landscape of the private lots included within the scope of the plan change (hereinafter collectively referred to as 'the site') and will identify key landscape elements within the site. These elements are identified from the perspective of within the boundaries of the site itself and when experienced from outside of these boundaries. Broad direction will be provided on how to protect and enhance these features against the backdrop of future development (enabled by the proposed private plan change).
- 1.3. The site is currently zoned 'Rural' under the Kaipara Operative District Plan (KODP) and sits within the 'Harbour' overlay and is identified as a 'Growth area' catchment for Mangawhai (as a result of the Mangawhai Structure Plan, adopted by council January 2005).
- 1.4. This application seeks to create 400-500 lots under the Integrated Residential Development subdivision provisions associated with the current plan.

# 2. Methodology

- 2.1. This assessment of landscape values is undertaken as an 'Area-based landscape assessment' as outlined in section 10 (Tātaki / Quick Guides) of Te Tangi A Te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2. Prior to conducting the assessment, a desktop study was completed which included a review of the relevant information relating to the landscape and visual aspects of the proposal. This information included:
  - KODP including relevant planning maps
  - · Aerial photography
  - Ground contours.
- 2.3. A site visit was undertaken on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 in order to further understand the site and the surrounding context. The site visit focused on identifying the key landscape elements of the site that not only define the landscape character of the site itself but also constituent elements of the wider, prevailing landscape character. These elements were identified by walking over the site and viewing the site from afar to determine which elements made the greatest contribution to the prevailing landscape character.
- 2.4. During the site visit, multiple photographs were obtained from within the site, these photographs are presented as a collection of both standalone and panoramic images within appendices 3.1-3.5 of this report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Te Tangi A Te Manu – Aotearoa New Zealand landscape Assessment Guidelines – Published July 2022

# 3. Assessment of landscape character and landscape values of the site

- 3.1. The purpose of this section is to identify the wider landscape character of both the site and its immediate surrounds, this will be completed by identifying the following from both a desktop study and site visit.
  - Identifying land use patterns across the wider landscape and analysing recent development patterns,
  - Identifying commonly occurring landscape elements within the wider landscape,
  - Identifying landscape elements within the site and determining which of those are particular to the site and which of those are congruent with landscape elements identified through the wider landscape,
  - Assess the site from afar to determine where the impacts of any future development would be most greatly felt with regards to effects on the prevailing landscape character.

#### Site Location

- 3.2. The site sits approximately 570m north-west of the Mangawhai town centre, 1.9km south-west of the Mangawhai golf club and 4.7km south-west of the Mangawhai surf club.
- 3.3. The site sits upon Tara Road, which links (to the south) with Kaiwaka-Mangawhai Road which, in turn, links the site to settlements to the east. To the north of the site, Tara Road links to Cove Road, which, in turn, links to the Mangawhai township.

### Wider Landscape Description

- 3.4. This sub-section addresses the visual appearance and subsequent landscape character of the wider landscape.
- 3.5. The settlement of Mangawhai sits to the east of the site and can be considered to represent a typical 'New Zealand Rural Village' with the following features present;
  - Variable architectural signature with appreciable variance in residential built form in terms of bulk and architectural style.
  - Established trees spread across private lots.
  - Variable planting across the public realm
  - Remnant areas of native vegetation spread through residential neighbourhoods, primarily located at riparian margins.
- 3.6. Outside of Mangawhai township, the landscape can be classified as a predominantly pastoral landscape utilised for agricultural activities. The landscape sits across rolling terrain characterised by a series of ridgelines and incised gullies and streams. Areas of remnant native forest are present throughout the landscape and are generally located at riparian areas with their margins / shapes largely defined by the extent of

- these riparian areas. Outside of this remnant native forest, vegetation across the landscape is primarily limited to utilitarian planting (shelter belts / boundary definition), horticultural planting and private lot ornamental planting.
- 3.7. The interplay between the fragments of native remnant forest and the pastoral landscape creates a visual rhythm that is perceptible across the landscape.
- 3.8. Whilst the landscape outside of the Mangawhai township can be considered to have a large number of perceptible landscape elements that are associated with rural character, these elements are inclusive of;
  - Pastoral landscape divided into geometrically shaped paddocks with post, wire and batten fencing,
  - Remnant native forest fragments spread across the pastoral landscape with margins and extents defined by riparian corridors,
  - Geometrically shaped planting used as wind breaks and to define property boundaries.

The landscape has been undergoing a progressive change in land use with a number of life style / rural-residential properties appearing within the landscape, the majority of these properties have little, if any traditional rural activity occurring within their boundaries, therefore these properties can be considered to be predominantly residential in nature. These properties are predominantly located at both the southern and western peripheries of the subject site and share some commonalities with the characteristics of the Mangawhai township, most notably the presence of a varied architectural signature of residential built form and residential built form set within remnant native forest.

3.9. In concert with the proliferation of lifestyle / rural-residential properties within the landscape, the urban edge (of the Mangawhai township) has been shifting southwards towards areas of traditional rural landscape.

#### Existing Site and Immediate Surrounds Description

- 3.10. This sub-section addresses the visual appearance and subsequent landscape character of both the site itself and its immediate surrounds as it exists in its current state.
- 3.11. The individual properties that make up the wider site currently function as a combination of working cattle farms and lifestyle properties.
- 3.12. The main portion of the site (196 Tara Road) contains a gully at its central spine, this gully contains a stream that is fed by overland flow paths that are visible from within the site, the slopes leading down to this gully can be steep with gradients typically in the range of 5% 25%. The overland flow paths are readily identifiable from both within, and outside of the site through the presence of native and exotic vegetation at their margins with larger areas present at detention points where water gathers during periods of rainfall.
- 3.13. The majority of the site consists of pasture grass to house livestock, these pastured areas are divided into paddocks with the use of post, wire and batten fencing,

- gravelled tracks are located across ridgelines and down less steep gullies to facilitate the movement of cattle and farm vehicles.
- 3.14. Outside of the riparian corridors within the site a significant amount of native vegetation is present on the northern slopes of the site this vegetation is currently fenced but the boundaries still follow the natural slopes of the landscape. Natural revegetation processes can be observed within these planting blocks.
- 3.15. The site features two main ridgelines towards its northern and southern boundaries spread across its western and central portions. The northern ridgeline sits higher than the southern ridgeline and is highly visible from within areas of the Mangawhai township. The Southern ridgeline is less prominent and is generally only visible from south of Tara Road and is viewed with the northern ridgeline as a backdrop.
- 3.16.Lifestyle / Rural-residential properties sit directly opposite the sites southern boundary and western boundaries. Pockets of built form also sit adjacent to the northern boundary, this is inclusive of a cluster of dwellings sitting at the northern ridgeline.
- 3.17.It is noted that the rolling landscape on the northern boundary of the subject site (to the south and north of Mangawhai village and Mangawhai central) is already zoned 'residential' under the KDP. These properties are not within this structure plan and in most cases this land occupies the crest of the ridgeline.
- 3.18. The residential built form located within these sub-divided properties sits at various elevations upon the rolling landscape. This built form varies in terms of architectural style, bulk and external finish with no discernible pattern visible and has, in essence, been allowed to develop organically across the sub-divided properties. Pockets of this built form sit within native forest remnants, an example of this is the approximate nineteen residential lots (the majority of which are occupied by residential built form) that sit adjacent to the northern ridgeline of the site.
- 3.19.In instances where dwellings are present upon the crest of the ridgeline they are absorbed into the landscape through planting that either directly screens the dwelling on all sides or sits on a single side to act as a backdrop or screen (dependent on the viewing angle).
- 3.20. It is also notable that the dwellings located upon the nearby lifestyle / rural-residential properties are largely devoid of structural retaining that is externally visible with the positioning of the dwelling fixed to work with the prevailing landform and any required integration achieved via land forming.

## Identified Key Landscape elements

3.21. This section will discuss key landscape elements both within and near the site that are considered defining elements in determining the landscape character of the site and that will require protection / enhancement / controls, for the purposes of this document these will be divided into two subcategories, natural and cultural. Natural elements broadly consist of vegetation, landforms and coastlines. Cultural elements consist of manmade structures that could be considered to be potentially character defining such as walls, residential and commercial built form and pieces of infrastructure (bridges, pathways).

#### Natural elements

- 3.22. Key natural elements within the site and its immediate surrounds have been largely identified through the analyses in sections 3.4-3.20 above;
  - Remnant native forest fragments spread across the pastoral landscape with margins and extents defined by riparian corridors and the interplay between these forest elements and the pastoral landscape;
  - Incised gullies and riparian corridors situated within a rolling topography; and
  - Northern and southern ridgelines of the site.

#### Cultural elements

- 3.23. The site itself is largely devoid of cultural elements, with these comprising solely of ancillary buildings, standalone dwellings and farm fencing. However cultural elements in areas located adjacent to, and in close proximity to the site, have been identified through the analyses in sections 3.4-3.20 above;
  - Varied architectural signature across the surrounding landscape with no discernible pattern in terms of architectural style and building bulk;
  - Clusters of dwellings located within blocks of remnant native forest;
  - Positioning of the majority of dwellings below crest of ridgeline, where dwellings are positioned on the crest of the ridgeline, planting is utilised to absorb them into the landscape; and
  - Lack of structural retaining

The interaction of these cultural elements with the above listed natural elements (refer section 3.22) can be considered to be the critical elements of the prevailing landscape character.

#### Landscape Character

3.24. Landscape character describes peoples visual or cogitative perception of both natural and developed landscapes, landscape character is also synonymous to a "sense of place" and represents an attitude concerning ones environs.

Landscape character is also informed by the amenity of the area, amenity describes peoples visual or cogitative perceptions of activities that occur in an area. For example, a large open pastured area punctuated with ancillary buildings would lead to the perception that the area is used for farming activities, therefore in terms of landscape character the area would be perceived as having a rural character.

It should be noted that landscape character and amenity are not mutually exclusive and certain physical landscape elements may be both considered defining elements of both landscape character and amenity.

- 3.25. Defining the landscape character of the site forms the basis of analysing the landscapes sensitivity to absorb change and hence the effect of the proposal upon the landscape. Defining landscape character also has an impact on the determination of the level of potential adverse visual effects upon the site as an outcome that can be deemed as being in keeping with the prevailing landscape character can be considered more acceptable than one that does not correlate with the prevailing landscape character.
- 3.26. The natural features of the landscape that give the site and its immediate surrounds its 'sense of place' consist of the rolling topography, incised gullies and riparian corridors, network of ridgelines (set against the Brynderwyn Range) and native forest remnants.
- 3.27. The interplay of these elements contributes to the landscape character with the interplay between the native forest remnants and open pastoral spaces creating a distinctive pattern that is readily perceptible when viewed both at elevation and ground level.
- 3.28. As discussed in preceding sections the site sits within a landscape undergoing a change in land use from traditional rural land uses to one with a high level of residential built form spread across the landscape. The residential built form constitutes the dominant cultural element across the areas immediately adjacent to the site, with key characteristics of this built form being the varied architectural signature which consists of a high variation in building bulk and an appreciative variance in architectural signature which results in no discernible pattern of built form (or 'ribbon development') being present within the landscape.
- 3.29. In essence the recently established residential built form located in the areas immediately adjacent to the site has evolved 'organically'<sup>2</sup> within the sub-divided properties and thus does not feature uniform built elements that would be readily perceptible in an urban environment (and indeed are proposed for the under construction 'Mangawhai Central' subdivision at the western edge of the Mangawhai township).
- 3.30. Taking the above into account and based upon site observations the landscape character of the site and its immediate surrounds to be **defined as rural-residential**.

Summary – Assessment of landscape character and landscape values of the site

3.31. The site sits within a landscape that has been undergoing a gradual change from a traditional rural landscape dominated by activities typically associated with agricultural and horticultural activities to one with natural rural elements interspersed with elements of built form.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Note that 'organic' development in this instance refers to appreciable variation in built form that avoids the perception of 'ribbon development' consisting of built form of identical bulk and appearance are avoided within the landscape

Whilst the introduction of multiple residential built form elements has the potential to degenerate the prevailing rural character elements, the 'organic' development of this built form has ensured that the rolling topography incised by gullies and riparian corridors, interplay of pastoral landscape with native forest remnants and network of ridgelines have not been degenerated and ensure that these elements contribute to the prevailing rural-residential character of the immediate surrounds of the site.

## 4. Managing the Landscape Values

- 4.1. This sub-section will provide overarching principles to manage the landscape values that contribute to the prevailing rural-residential landscape character identified through section 3. The overarching principles proposed through this section are considered with a view to the perception of the site within its current receiving environment when experienced from both within the site and afar.
- 4.2. For ease of reference the following sub-sections will follow the natural and cultural landscape elements identified in sections 3.22 and 3.23

#### Natural Flements

4.3. The following subsection will discuss managing the natural landscape values as identified in section 3.22.

Remnant native forest fragments

- 4.4. The presence of remnant native forest fragments across the pastoral landscape and their interplay with one another is a key landscape character element.
- 4.5. Likewise, these forest fragments also play a role in integrating built form into the landscape with clusters of built form in the areas surrounding the site (particularly on the northern boundary) situated within native forest remnants.
- 4.6. To this end, the existing remnant native forest fragment to the south of the northern ridge line should be retained with any and all future built form to work around this fragment.
- 4.7. It is recommended that this existing fragment is enhanced and expanded upon, the existing unvegetated areas on the southern facing slopes within the valley that runs through the centre of the site at the western end of the site represent a preferable location to establish native planting to increase the size of this remnant native forest fragment.4.7
- 4.8. In order to preserve the element of interplay between pastoral landscape and remnant native forest, it is recommended that areas of open space be placed adjacent to the margins of remnant native forest, this could be achieved by placing

this beside existing areas of remnant forest or new areas of supplemental native vegetation planting.

Incised gullies and riparian corridors

- 4.9. The incised gullies and riparian corridors are currently visible throughout the site due to the presence of sporadic vegetation at their margins and an appreciable change in landform profile. The future presence of built form upon the site may, however, reduce their relative conspicuousness within the landscape.
- 4.10.Therefore, it is recommended that the riparian corridors are subject to revegetation planting with any built form set back a sufficient distance to allow these corridors to form bold statements within the landscape, it is recommended that this planting is linked to the native forest remnants and/or any proposed native planting (refer section 4.7 above).
- 4.11. Additionally it is recommended that interfaces between these riparian corridors and future residential development are managed through the use of earthworks as opposed to structural retaining, and in the instances where structural retaining must be utilised that sufficient dense planting be established to screen its presence within the landscape.

Northern and southern ridgelines of the site

- 4.12.Two ridgelines run approximately parallel through the site, with the northern ridgeline being the most prominent. This prominence is derived from this ridgeline being visually prominent from areas of the Mangawhai township, where this ridgeline is visually prominent it represents the visual foreground of the network of ridgelines that form an important character element of the wider landscape. It is however important to note that the majority of the ridgeline on the eastern boundary is already zoned 'residential' as per the KDP and is owned by numerous external parties. (Refer appendices 3.1-3.5 for images of ridgeline from within the wider landscape).
- 4.13.As stated within section 3.19 very few dwellings are present upon the crest of the ridgeline, therefore unless effectively managed the presence of built form upon this northern ridgeline must be effectively managed to avoid it degenerating the prevailing landscape character.
- 4.14.An overarching principle of placing residential built form at or near the ridgeline shall be to avoid the perception of 'ribbon development'. Recommended strategies for achieving this can include;
  - Allowing built form to develop organically and avoid repetition in terms of bulk, style and architectural style. This will avoid the perception of a discernible pattern within the landscape, which can be considered a typical urban outcome;

- Limiting the bulk of built form by restricting heights of structures at or near the crest of the ridgeline to single storey structures;
- Ensuring sufficient separation between elements of built form and staggering their positions within the landscape; and
- Establish native planting in close proximity to built form to allow for their gradual absorption into the landscape, it would be advantageous (though not essential) to have this planting installed prior to erection of any built form.

#### Cultural Elements

4.15. The following subsection will discuss managing the cultural landscape values as identified in section 3.23.

Appreciable variance in architectural signature

- 4.16. Appreciable variance in the architectural signature is a key component of the prevailing landscape character as it allows the perception of 'organic'<sup>3</sup> development of built form by the avoidance of any discernible built form pattern and preventing the perception of ribbon development within the landscape.
- 4.17. It is recommended that the following principles be utilised to promote 'organic'<sup>4</sup> development of built form within the landscape;
  - Limit the amount of specific architectural design controls outside of visually sensitive areas (i.e.: the northern ridgeline) to encourage natural variation in the architectural signature of designed built form across the site;
  - Encourage varied setbacks and separation between built form to avoid perception of uniformity; and
  - Promote tree planting within private lots, allow for a variation with a varied species list to allow for natural variation between lots;

Clustering dwellings within remnant native forest

4.18. Whilst it is not preferred to alter the existing native remnant vegetation fragments on site to accommodate built form, those additional areas recommended to be planted (refer sections 4.4-4.8) can be arranged to be accommodate built form. This approach is highly recommended at visually sensitive areas (i.e.: the northern ridgeline) to reduce any impact of future built form upon the prevailing landscape character values of the site and its immediate surrounds.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Note that 'organic' development in this instance refers to appreciable variation in built form that avoids the perception of 'ribbon development' consisting of built form of identical bulk and appearance are avoided within the landscape

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Note that 'organic' development in this instance refers to appreciable variation in built form that avoids the perception of 'ribbon development' consisting of built form of identical bulk and appearance are avoided within the landscape

Absorbing future built form into the prevailing topography

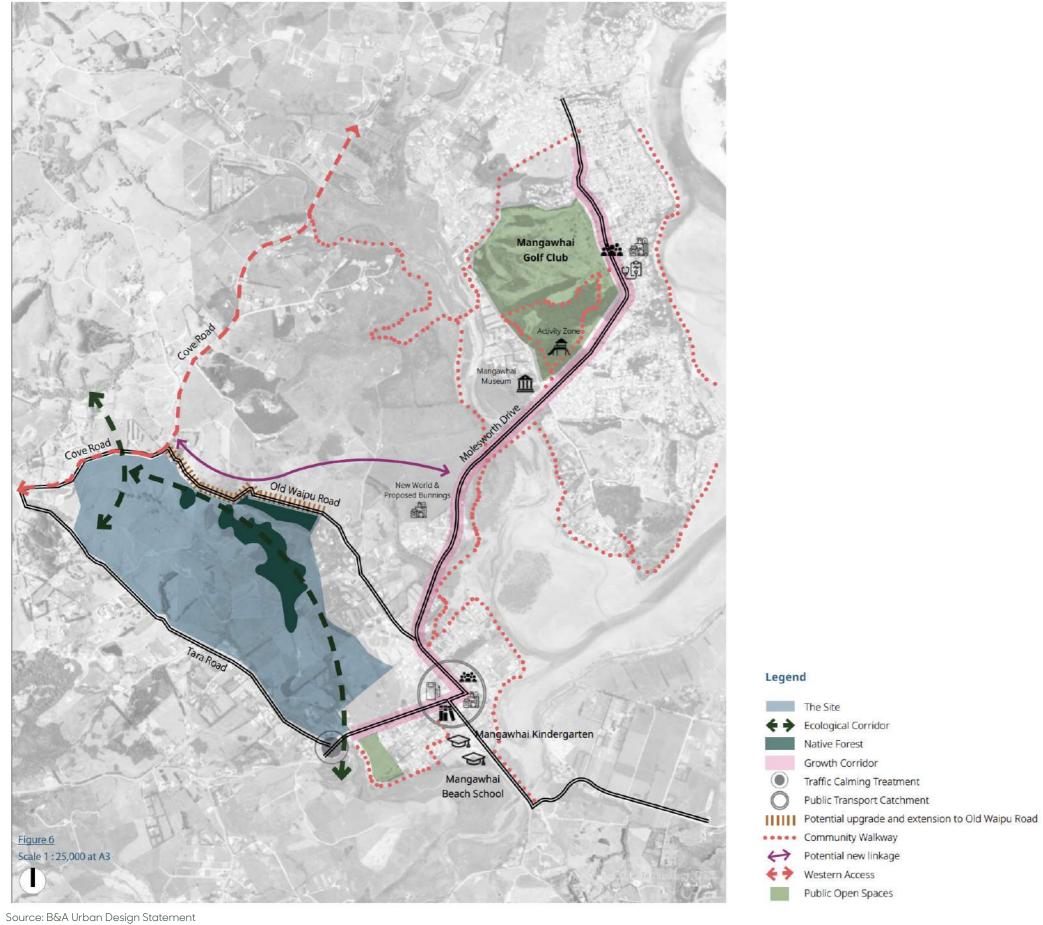
- 4.19. A key feature of the integration of lifestyle / rural-residential built form into the surrounding landscape was the absence of structural retaining and utilisation of earthworks to accommodate built form.
- 4.20. To continue this practice within the site it is recommended that the following principles are utilised when selecting locations for built form within the site;
  - Establish built form on flatter portions of the site to limit the requirement of land adjustment, where areas of flatter terrain are deemed sensitive utilise the principles above (refer section 4.17) to ensure absorption into the landscape;
  - Where land modification is required utilise planted embankment slopes to absorb the dwelling into the landscape; and
  - Where structural retaining is required utilise retaining within the building envelope as opposed to standalone retaining walls.

## 5. Conclusion

A plan change is proposed for the site to allow for the erection of 400-500 lots across a series of properties predominantly utilised for traditional rural activities.

The immediate surrounds provide a perceptible example of how built form can be integrated into a rural environment without compromising the constituent natural landscape values that contribute to the overarching landscape character of the wider landscape.

Utilising these methods in conjunction with protecting and enhancing the natural landscape values of the site will ensure that the future implementation of 400-500 individual elements of built form can be successfully managed without degeneration of the prevailing landscape character values.







Client Mangawhai Hills Limited

Project Mangawhai Hills, Mangawhai Northland Appendix 1 Local Context School

il Library

A Playground

**M**useum

Petrol Station

Medical Centre

Community Centre - cluster of a

Four Square/ Supermarket













Client Mangawhai Hills Limited Project Mangawhai Hills, Mangawhai Northland

Appendix 3,1 Panorama - Image 1

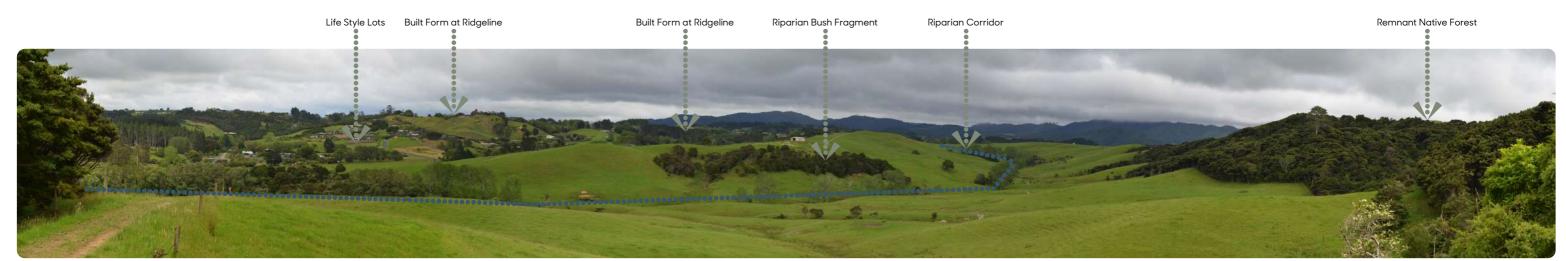


PN-02: PANORAMA VIEW - NORTH RIDGE LINE (HIGHPOINT) OF SITE: SOUTH-WEST VIEW SHOWING BUILT FORM SITTING ACROSS LANDFORM OPPOSITE SITE



PN-02A: PANORAMA VIEW - NORTH RIDGE LINE (HIGHPOINT) OF SITE: SOUTH-WEST VIEW SHOWING BUILT FORM SITTING ACROSS LANDFORM OPPOSITE SITE





PN-03: PANORAMA VIEW - NORTH RIDGE LINE (HIGHPOINT) OF SITE: SOUTH-WEST VIEW SHOWING BUILT FORM SITTING ACROSS LANDFORM OPPOSITE SITE AND ILLUSTRATING RIPARIAN CORRIDORS



PN-04: PANORAMA VIEW - VIEW TOWARDS SITE FROM LIFESTYLE LOTS TO THE WEST OF SITE









PN-06: PANORAMA VIEW - WESTWARDS VIEW TO SITE (TOWARDS NORTHERN RIDGE LINE / HIGH POINT OF SITE) (Note: Land at foreground of ridge line is owned by outside parties and is zoned 'residential' as per the KDP)







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