

**BEFORE THE KAIPARA DISTRICT COUNCIL'S HEARING PANEL**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

the Resource Management Act 1991 (**the Act**)

AND

**IN THE MATTER**

An application for Private Plan Change 85 (**PPC85**) –  
**MANGAWHAI EAST** by Foundry Group Limited  
(formerly Cabra Mangawhai Limited) and Pro Land  
Matters Company to rezone approximately 94-  
hectares of land at Black Swamp and Raymond Bull  
Roads, Mangawhai

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF ROB PRYOR ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANTS**

**(Landscape)**

**16 December 2025**

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## INTRODUCTION

### QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

1. My full name is Robert James Pryor. I am a registered landscape architect and Director of LA4 Landscape Architects (**LA4**).
2. I hold a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Otago University and a post-graduate Diploma of Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I am a registered member of Tuia Pito Ora, the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (**NZILA**). I am also a member of the Resource Management Law Association (**RMLA**) and the Urban Design Forum (**UDF**).
3. I have over 38 years' experience undertaking landscape assessments for clients in both the public and private sectors on a wide range of major projects within a range of landscape settings. I specialise in the preparation of landscape and visual effects assessments and I have experience in a wide range of private plan change applications. Relevant examples include:
  - (a) PC78 – Mangawhai;
  - (b) PC109 – Whenuapai Green;
  - (c) PC110 – Heights Road Industrial;
  - (d) Spedding-Trig Industrial;
  - (e) PC40 – Warkworth-Clayden;
  - (f) PC2 – Pukekohe East;
  - (g) PC74 – Pukekohe;
  - (h) PC90 – Highbrook ;
  - (i) PC44 – George Street Precinct;
  - (j) PC51 – Drury 2 Precinct;
  - (k) PC21 – Brightside Hospital;
  - (l) PC8 – Rotokauri North;

(m) PC6 – Auranga B1; and

(n) PC109 – Crestview Rise.

#### **EXPERT WITNESS CODE OF CONDUCT**

4. Although this is not a hearing before the Environment Court, I record that I have read and agree to and abide by the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses as specified in the Environment Court's Practice Note 2023. This evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I rely upon the evidence of other expert witnesses as presented to this hearing. I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

#### **PROJECT INVOLVEMENT**

5. I was instructed by Foundry Group Limited (formerly Cabra Mangawhai Limited) and Pro Land Matters Company in October 2024 to provide landscape architectural input and to undertake a Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment (**LVA**) for Private Plan Change 85 (**PPC85**). I am the author of the LVA, dated 26 June 2025 and am familiar with the area to which the plan change application relates. I have visited the PPC85 site (**Site**) and surrounding area on a number of occasions.

#### **SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

6. My evidence will address the following:

(a) Summary of evidence;

(b) The Site and surrounding environment;

(c) Landscape assessment methodology;

(d) Landscape assessment of PPC85;

(e) Comments on Council's Section 42A Report (**s42A Report**);

(f) Comment on landscape matters raised by submitters; and

(g) Concluding comments.

## **SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE**

7. The proposed urbanisation of the Site resulting from development enabled by PPC85 will significantly change its current open and semi-rural and coastal landscape character. Development enabled by PPC85 will however be suitable due to its proximity to Mangawhai Village, will provide a choice of living opportunities, provide potential access to the eastern side of the harbour and represents an efficient compact and comprehensive urban outcome.
8. Although parts of the subject Site are largely in pasture interspersed with shelterbelts, its semi-rural character is lessened to a degree by the existing land uses including the residential dwellings, holiday park accommodation units, the brewery, garden centre, horticulture and viticultural activities, ancillary farm buildings and structures, accessways and drives, in close proximity to Mangawhai Village to the west. The Site has limited productive land and is a highly modified Site with relatively low landscape values away from the coastal edge. In light of these considerations the Site is well suited to the type of urban development proposed to be enabled by PPC85.
9. The proposed urbanisation of the land will inevitably result in the transformation of the Site from a fringe rural area to one with urban residential and commercial characteristics. This will have implications on the surrounding semi-rural land, with the urban development impacting on the 'rural' quality of this area. Nevertheless, this is a landscape in transition, and the proposal will result in a comprehensively planned urban development, rather than sporadic and ad hoc development which has occurred in and around Mangawhai.
10. While there will be a loss of 'rural' landscape character, the key methods of mitigating this loss are to retain and enhance where possible existing landscape features and create a quality urban development. Although development enabled by PPC85 will result in the loss of existing semi-rural characteristics there are number of positive landscape outcomes associated with PPC85 including:
  - (a) Protection and enhancement of the stream and salt marsh wetlands, including riparian planting and ecological and walkway connections;
  - (b) Enhancement of the coastal edge through indigenous riparian planting, ecological connections and a clearly defined public walkway to ensure ecological effects of the development, off site are acceptable.

- (c) The provision of public access to and along the edge of the coastal environment within the estuary reserve and Kaipara District Council (**KDC**) esplanade reserve;
- (d) Visual and physical connections to the coastal edge providing access to the coastal estuary reserve. These outcomes will enhance visual and physical connectivity with the coast and riparian environments, providing a sense of place and an appropriate interface with the natural environment; and
- (e) Lower density development along the sensitive coastal edge, through the Rural Lifestyle Zone (**RLZ**) which provides an appropriate transition into low to medium density development towards the middle of the Site.

11. Because of the nature of development enabled by PPC85, rather than trying to screen the development or create significant buffers, the approach has been to accept the change and develop the Site in accordance with accepted urban design principles to create a quality residential and commercial development with a high level of amenity leveraging from the existing and consented land uses in the area, as described above, albeit an urban amenity.

12. Development enabled by PPC85 will initially generate landscape character and visual amenity effects of some significance. These however are inevitable with urban development at the start of a process of urbanisation. Change is not an adverse effect in itself. In addition, the landscape character and visual effects of the development of the Site apparent from the early stages will decrease over time as the riparian and coastal plantings, street tree plantings and landscape plantings typically associated with the urbanisation of an area become established.

13. The proposed residential zoning pattern and outcomes that will be delivered by the Development Area provisions respond appropriately to the transition between the Site and adjoining coastal edge and rural residential areas. I note that Council's reporting planner concludes that PPC85 will deliver acceptable landscape outcomes in terms of immediate effects both within and adjacent to the plan change area.

14. In my opinion, development enabled by PPC85 represents a positive and efficient transformation of environmental management and enhancement, landscape character, natural character, and physical/visual amenity of the existing environment, including the Site and its contextual rural/rural-residential and coastal setting. The sensitive environmental areas of the Site including the existing estuarine and coastal

wetlands, natural and introduced vegetation patterns, and the coastal environment interface are proposed to be enhanced and protected as part of the proposal.

15. I consider that the Site is more suitable for an integrated residential development with superior landscape outcomes than 'sprawling' large lot subdivision, or other ad hoc development proposals that would be likely to occur over time and would effectively lose the opportunity for a co-ordinated, efficient, and quality development to occur. The aim of PPC85 is to ensure that this area is well planned and integrated with the existing settlement of Mangawhai rather than becoming a series of small subdivisions, undertaken over time, that lack connectivity to each other or to existing infrastructure and amenities.
16. In my opinion the PPC85 Site represents an appropriate and logical extension to the future development of the Mangawhai community and has the potential from a landscape character and visual amenity perspective to deliver a form of residential growth sensitive to the location (and agreed by Council's reporting planner as outlined above).
17. In conclusion, development enabled by PPC85 will fulfil the need for residential and urban intensification and provide an opportunity for an innovative and environmentally sustainable urban development. PPC85 will be largely consistent with the regional growth strategies for the area and will result in a high-quality urban development consistent with the outcomes sought by the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (**NPS UD**).
18. Overall, I consider that in the context of the established environment PPC85 can be accommodated without adversely affecting the landscape values, landscape character, natural character and visual amenity values of the Site and surrounding Mangawhai environment in the medium to long term.

#### **THE SITE AND SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT**

19. The Site comprises 93.3 hectares of land split into two areas to the north (northern Site) and south (southern Site) of Black Swamp Road and bordered by Raymond Bull Road along the northern and part of the eastern boundary. The western boundary is demarcated by the Mangawhai Harbour upper estuarine environment extending through to Insley Street / Tomarata Road.

### ***Landform***

20. To the north of Black Swamp Road, the Site is largely in two parts. An elevated plateau covers most of the northern Site at approximately RL 4m and above with the highest elevation in the north-eastern corner falling to a low point in the north-west. An extensive low-lying area extends to the north-west of this, typically at RL 2m and below continuing towards the coastal edge. These two distinct areas are separated by a north-east oriented, relatively steep bank. A raised bund is located along the coastal edge at the northern extent of the Site, approximately 1.5-1.8m high. Armouring is present along the coastal edge south of the bund.
21. The southern Site is primarily sloping hill country extending to approximately RL 50m at the crest of the southern ridgeline. The slope falls to the north where it meets a tributary of the Mangawhai Estuary which extends east, inland from the causeway at Black Swamp Road.

### ***Land use***

22. The southern Site is currently being grazed and contains an existing dwelling (now converted to an office), with three additional sheds/barns on the Site. A farm track links through the Site connecting to Black Swamp Road at the western and eastern ends of the Site. The northern Site is currently in rural land uses, with grazed pasture in the eastern side of the Site. More intensive land use activities are located in the western part of the Site including smaller lifestyle blocks, horticultural activities, olive groves, cropping, garden centre and brewery. The Riverside Holiday Park occupies the south-western part of the Site with a large number of camping sites, studios, cabins and chalets. The KDC esplanade strip abuts the western side of the PPC85 Site, next to the estuary.

### ***Vegetation***

23. Vegetation values within the Site are limited due to the restricted number of trees present on the Site and the dominance of exotic vegetation and pasture. The southern Site is predominantly in pasture, with several water bodies and wetland systems throughout the Site. Exotic vegetation on the Site includes stands of poplar largely concentrated alongside some of the permanent and intermittent streams. Willows are

clustered towards the northern boundary, with areas of pine and eucalypt scattered throughout the Site.

24. The eastern part of the northern Site is largely in pasture with mature exotic trees present across the Site, mainly planted as shelterbelts along paddock edges, or along waterways. An olive orchard and vineyard are located to the west of the northern Site.
25. Native vegetation throughout the Site is sparse. Along the north-eastern boundary of the camping ground is a strip of planted natives. Along the coastal stop bank on the north-western edge of the Site there are scattered pōhutukawa trees. Further south along the coast is a mix of pōhutukawa, houpara, ngaio, karo, mingimingi and flax.
26. There are a number of areas dominated by rank grass and weedy exotic species including pampas, woolly nightshade, and golden wattle primarily around the northern and north-western edges of the northern Site, adjacent to the coast.

#### ***Streams and wetlands***

27. There are no intermittent or permanent streams within the northern Site, only artificial drainage channels associated with agricultural practices. Salt marsh – natural inland wetlands have been identified in the north-west of the Site and one in proximity to the southern boundary of the northern Site. There is an extensive area of salt marsh in the northwestern part of the Site behind a man-made stopbank which is legally protected. Several constructed ponds are located within the Site.
28. A tributary of the Mangawhai Estuary is located within the southern Site which extends east, inland from the causeway at Black Swamp Road. This is fed by a number of artificial drainage channels, intermittent and ephemeral streams. A number of farm ponds are located within the Site.

#### ***Coastal edge***

29. The coastal edge extends around the western part of the Site and is identified as an area of High Natural Character in the Northland Regional Council Proposed Regional Plan (**NRCPRP**). The harbour contains a wide variety and representative succession of habitats spanning dunes, tidal flats, channels, mangroves, saltmarsh and freshwater wetlands and adjacent shrubland.

30. A thin strip of salt marsh vegetation extends around much of the coastal edge, with mangroves beyond, except along the campground site where the channel is closer. In some areas there is evidence that mangroves have been removed. Most of the coastal edge has been modified by construction of retaining walls, seawalls and a stop bank.

#### ***The Landscape Context***

31. Mangawhai has a unique rural, residential and bach settlement character which is rapidly changing. Over the last 20 years, emerging residential infill and commercial development has seen significant changes to the character of the Mangawhai settlement and wider Mangawhai catchment environment and landscape. The wider Mangawhai catchment area is seeing rapidly increasing density in residential and urban development reflective of the demand for this location.
32. The Site and surrounding area to the east of the Mangawhai Harbour is characterised by a number of diverse activities including intensive land use activities in the western part of the Site including the Riverside Holiday Park, smaller lifestyle blocks, horticultural activities, olive groves, cropping, a garden centre and brewery. Further to the east are rural lifestyle properties, rural landholdings, horticultural activities and other mixed uses. Light industrial activities extend further to the east, with marine engineering, electrical supplies and crane and truck transportation services. The southern Site has subdivision consent for 19 lots between 0.30ha and 1.1ha with a balance lot of 18.1ha. These lots are considerably smaller than the Spatial Plan's indicative 2ha-4ha.
33. The landscape character of the Site and surrounding area has therefore changed over the years, being highly modified, with the PPC85 Site essentially ringed by existing rural residential growth. The PPC85 area is largely free from natural constraints and the majority of the land is owned and controlled by the Applicants, making it suitable for integrated master planning and sustainable urban growth. Through the proposed Development Area, PPC85 promotes extensive and comprehensive physical, ecological, and aesthetic landscape enhancement treatment as an inherent outcome of the future urban landscape.
34. The wider surrounding area to the west is characterised by the Mangawhai settlement pattern surrounding the Mangawhai Harbour and estuarine inlet with Mangawhai Village, the rapidly developing Mangawhai Central commercial and residential area,

the now operative PC84 Mangawhai Hills to the west, and beyond to Mangawhai Heads in the north.

35. The wider landscape context to the east of the Mangawhai Harbour is characterised by rural lifestyle properties, rural landholdings, horticultural activities and other mixed uses. An area of light industrial activities extends to the east. Further to the east is the Mangawhai Spit Sand Dune and the extensive Tara Iti Golf Club and Te Arai Links Golf Course set within the sand dunes along the coastal edge. Large areas of production forestry, a sand mining operation and a closed quarry are also located to the east. Three natural lakes include Tomarata, Slipper and Spectacle Lakes.
36. Although there are some localised areas within the wider environs that retain a relatively high level of rural, and/or general landscape amenity, apart from sections of the coastline, the landscape values and sensitivity is generally relatively low. This is a consequence of the level of modification to the rural environment, which has in many instances been degraded by land use practices, a wide dispersal of rural residential sites, limited significant indigenous vegetation, and generally exhibits few particularly distinctive rural characteristics, or significant landscape features.

#### **LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

37. The assessment methodology used in this evidence is in accordance with the methodological framework of the Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines 2022 (**TTatM**), and assesses whether development enabled by PPC85 would have adverse effects on the landscape values and visual amenity of the Site and surrounding environment.
38. The objective of landscape assessments is not to assess change or visibility but the nature and magnitude of the effect of change on the existing landscape values. To that end, my evidence does not determine PPC85's extent of visibility, it determines how PPC85 will impact on the existing landscape values, including landscape character and visual amenity, as visibility itself is not an adverse effect.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, page 146.

## **LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF PPC85**

39. My evaluation of the landscape character and visual amenity includes assessment of the following:

- (a) Natural character effects;
- (b) Landscape character effects; and
- (c) Visual amenity effects.

### **Natural Character Effects**

40. Natural character relates to the degree of 'naturalness' of a landscape. It is primarily determined by the nature and extent of modification to a landscape and can be expressed in relation to natural processes, patterns and elements in the landscape. Assessments of natural character therefore broadly assess:

- (a) Natural processes – the underlying formative processes that have shaped and given expression to the landscape (geological, volcanic, ecological, fluvial etc.)
- (b) Natural elements – features within the landscape that are products of natural processes (landform, vegetation, waterbodies etc.)
- (c) Natural patterns – the natural expression or distribution of un-manufactured elements and features within the landscape; and
- (d) Development / land use – the presence or absence of development such as structures and buildings and the level of modification as a result of land use and management.

41. The highest levels of natural character are where there is the least modification. Natural character effects relate to the degree to which a proposal alters the biophysical and/or perceived naturalness of a landscape.

### ***Natural Character Effects Analysis***

42. The Site is not high in natural character values (other than the coastal edge) and has been extensively modified through previous and current pastoral, residential, horticultural and lifestyle activities. The area is highly modified by vegetation clearance, modified streams, roading, dwellings, holiday park accommodation units,

garden centre, brewery, vineyard, and other buildings, accessways and associated structures. The Site is a component of the highly modified Mangawhai urban and peripheral rural environment.

43. I consider that the adverse effects of development enabled by PPC85 on the natural character values of the Site and surrounding area will be **low** given that:

- (a) PPC85 will preserve the characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character of the coastal environment. The provision of the estuary reserve on the land south of Black Swamp Road, 10m wide indigenous planting along the western coastal edge of the existing esplanade reserve, and 10m wide indigenous planting from the edge of natural wetlands, intermittent and permanent streams will restore and rehabilitate the natural character values of the coastal environment to a high degree.
- (b) The Site is located within an area already characterised by development and where the natural character values have been reduced. The proposal is set back from the CMA through the provision of the estuary reserve on the southern portion of the PPC85 land and the existing KDC esplanade reserve, which will protect the natural character values of the coastal environment.
- (c) The 10m wide planting along the coastal edge, and defined walking track and signage will enhance the natural character values of the Site and surrounding coastal area.
- (d) The location, scale and design of development enabled by PPC85 will mitigate adverse effects on the characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character values by ensuring appropriate built form setbacks, riparian planting where appropriate, and the protection of existing wetlands not already protected.
- (e) The natural features within the Site, including intermittent streams, saltmarsh 'natural inland wetlands,' and to the greatest extent possible all indigenous vegetation are to be protected and enhanced as part of PPC85 which will enhance the natural character values of the Site and surrounding area.

#### **Landscape Effects**

44. A landscape effect is a consequence of change in a landscape's physical attributes on that landscape's values. Change of itself is not an adverse effect – landscapes change

constantly. It is the implications of change for a landscape's values that is the effect<sup>2</sup>. Landscape effects take into consideration physical effects to the land resource. Assessments of landscape effects therefore investigate the likely nature and scale of change to landscape elements and characteristics. Landscape effects are primarily dependent on the landscape sensitivity of a site and its surrounds to accommodate change. Landscape sensitivity is influenced by landscape quality and vulnerability, or the extent to which landscape character, elements/features and values are at risk to change.

45. Landscape assessments are based on the links between landscape character and values. Character is an expression of the landscape's collective attributes. Values are the reasons a landscape is valued but are embodied in attributes. Effects are consequences for a landscape's values of changes to the attributes on which the values depend. Landscape character results from a combination of physical elements together with aesthetic and perceptual aspects that combine to make an area distinct. Landscape values relate to people's aesthetic perception of the biophysical environment, including considerations such as naturalness, vividness, coherence, memorability and rarity.
46. Effects on landscape values are assessed against the existing environment, and the outcomes sought in the relevant statutory provisions. Whether effects on landscape values are appropriate will therefore depend both on the nature and magnitude of effect on the existing landscape values and what is anticipated by the provisions.
47. Landscape effects take into consideration the physical effects on the land resource. Assessments of landscape effects therefore investigate the likely nature and scale of change to landscape elements and characteristics. Landscape effects are primarily dependent on the landscape sensitivity of a site and its surrounds to accommodate change and development. Landscape sensitivity is influenced by landscape quality and vulnerability, or the extent to which landscape character, elements/features and values are at risk to change.
48. Landscape character results from a combination of physical elements together with aesthetic and perceptual aspects that combine to make an area distinct. The wider Mangawhai landscape to the west has, and continues to, undergo rapid change and

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<sup>2</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 135].

development with the urbanisation of Mangawhai Central (and future development of PC84 Mangawhai Hills) area transforming the previously semi-rural landscape to one of highly modified characteristics through earthworks, ground shaping, roading construction, associated infrastructure for residential and commercial development, and the construction of dwellings and commercial activities.

49. The existing attributes that contribute to the existing 'rural' character of the area will become progressively less pervasive as the Site is developed with the future urbanisation of the area. Development enabled by PPC85 will inevitably transform the local semi-rural character to that of more intensive and mixed urban development which will have an influence on the surrounding area. It is important to note however that this type of development is not entirely unanticipated, and the Mangawhai Spatial Plan identifies the Site as one area to accommodate future urban growth requirements in this part of the region, as did the previous structure plan with the area mapped within the Indicative Growth Area – Greater Growth Area Catchment on the Operative Kaipara District Plan maps. As previously outlined, I note that Council's reporting planner notes that PPC85 will deliver acceptable landscape outcomes in terms of immediate effects both within and adjacent to the plan change area.
50. It is also important to note that although the Site and local area currently exhibit semi-rural characteristics, neither display a high degree of 'ruralness' due to a combination of the size of landholdings, existing infrastructure, the holiday park, residential and lifestyle development, garden centre, brewery, vineyards and horticultural activities, light industrial activities, in close proximity to the urbanised Mangawhai Village on the western side of the estuary. Consequently, distinctly urban influences are highly evident in the surrounding area, which further reduce the sensitivity of the Site and surrounding environment to change as anticipated by PPC85.

#### **Landscape Effects Analysis**

51. Based on the preceding description and analysis of the Site and surrounds it is clear that there are relatively low landscape values and sensitivity associated with the Site other than around the coastal edge. The Site is a relatively degraded, highly modified landscape lacking significant landscape values, in close proximity to Mangawhai's existing residential area on the western side of Mangawhai Harbour. Therefore, the only negative outcomes in landscape terms will be the loss of the remaining semi-rural character. Development enabled by PPC85 will result in a change in landscape

character, but will ensure a suitable level of amenity, albeit an urban, rather than a semi-rural character is achieved.

52. Overall, development enabled by PPC85 will have low adverse landscape effects, particularly in relation to the character and quality of the Site and surrounding area given that:

- (a) The Site does not contain high landscape character or values, and development enabled by PPC85 will not adversely affect any significant landscapes or features. The Site and surrounding area are a distinctly modified environment that has arisen from a long history of farming activities and more recent changes in land use associated with the close proximity to the existing urban activities including the holiday park, garden centre and brewery.
- (b) The landscape values associated with the Site itself are not high due to the modified nature of the Site and the activities and land uses within the Site and surrounding area. The landscape character of the Site is not high due to these characteristics. As such the landscape sensitivity of the Site to change as enabled by PPC85 is low.
- (c) The landscape character, amenity values and biodiversity values of the Site and surrounding area will not be adversely affected by development enabled by PPC85. The form, scale and nature of the proposal will be similar to the pattern of residential development occurring within the surrounding environment to the west and will therefore not appear out of character. The character, intensity and scale of the proposal will be in keeping with the local characteristics.
- (d) Development enabled by PPC85 will not introduce new elements or features that will adversely affect the landscape values and character of the Site and surrounding area with residential settlement being prevalent in the area. While there will be a greater intensity of development, the area nonetheless exhibits a high degree of residential land use already. In my opinion, the enabled intensity can be appropriately integrated within the context of Mangawhai's urbanisation.
- (e) All natural features including intermittent streams, saltmarsh 'natural inland wetlands,' and to the greatest extent all indigenous vegetation on the Site are

to be protected and enhanced as part of PPC85 which will enhance the landscape values of the Site and surrounding area.

- (f) The proposal will preserve the characteristics and qualities that contribute to the landscape values of the coastal environment. The provision of the estuary reserve and riparian and wetland plantings will restore and rehabilitate the landscape values of the Site and coastal environment.
- (g) Any potential landscape effects will be localised due to the type and scale of change and the existing settlement, landform, and vegetation patterns.

53. PPC85 will not adversely affect the landscape character to any great degree and will ensure a suitable level of amenity is achieved. Overall, the adverse effects of development enabled by PPC85 on the Site and surrounding area will be low. The landscape character values of the Site will be significantly enhanced through the ecological and riparian planting of the coastal edge, wetlands and stream banks. The Mangawhai East Development Area provisions will maintain and enhance the landscape character of the Site's natural features and mitigate potential adverse landscape effects from development enabled by PPC85.

### **Visual Amenity Effects**

54. The assessment of visual effects analyses the perceptual (visual) response that any of the identified changes to the landscape may evoke, including effects relating to views and visual amenity. Visual sensitivity is influenced by a number of factors including the visibility of a proposal, the nature and extent of the viewing audience, the visual qualities of the proposal, and the ability to integrate subsequent changes within the landscape setting, where applicable. As with landscape effects, visual effects relate to landscape values. Visibility and change are not effects in and of themselves<sup>3</sup>.

55. The nature and extent of visual effects are determined by a systematic analysis of the visual intrusion and qualitative change that a proposal may bring, specifically in relation to aesthetic considerations and visual character and amenity. The methodology used in this assessment is designed to assess whether or not the proposal will have adverse visual effects on the nature and quality of the Site and surrounding urban, coastal and semi-rural environment.

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<sup>3</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines, [p. 245]

## **Visual Amenity Effects Analysis**

56. The assessment has been undertaken by reference to the following:

- (a) Adjoining properties;
- (b) Surrounding roads;
- (c) Wider surrounding area;
- (d) Construction effects; and
- (e) Cumulative effects.

### **Adjoining Properties**

57. The adjoining properties to the Site will be most affected by future urban development enabled by the PPC85. This will include the adjoining properties to the south, north and east accessed off Black Swamp Road, Tern Point, Tomarata Road, Coal Hill Road, Ocean Sands Place, Coastview Lane and Sandhill Heights. Views towards parts of the Site however will be moderated, filtered or partially screened by the proposed landscape edge enhancement planting along Raymond Bull Road, rural edge enhancement planting to the south and east, existing vegetation patterns within the surrounding properties, buildings and structures, and orientation of the view.

58. For the immediately adjoining properties, the existing outlook will change considerably from a relatively open semi-rural scene characterised by 'pastoral', lifestyle, horticultural and mixed use activities, into a comprehensive urban view. Although this will constitute a distinctive change to the existing character and a loss of the spaciousness, the quality nature of the future urban development and the proposed landscape initiatives will ensure that a suitable level of amenity is achieved.

59. The protection and enhancement of the natural features within the Site, including intermittent streams, saltmarsh natural inland wetlands, will provide a good visual break between the northern and southern Sites, and provide a vegetated framework within which future development will be viewed.

60. Once the Site is developed, the existing views will be replaced with a mixed residential and business development with planted streetscapes and other planting, including the riparian planting of the stream and wetland, coastal edge and planting associated with

the residential dwellings. Views will also be softened by the proposed' rural edge enhancement' and 'landscape edge enhancement' plantings illustrated on the structure plan.

61. The Large Lot Residential Zone (**LLRZ**) within the southern portion of the Site will be similar in character and provide an appropriate buffer to the landholdings along Coal Hill Road, Ocean Sounds Place, and Sandhill Heights. Development enabled by the proposal will not be out of context due to the residential settlement pattern within Mangawhai Village on the western side of the estuary, the existing residential land uses within the Site, the built development within the holiday park, and the rural lifestyle properties to the south. In addition, the Mangawhai Spatial Plan process identified the Site as a potential residential growth area (albeit a rural residential zone) suitable for residential development.
62. From these close viewing locations, the full effects of change brought about by PPC85 will be gradual as the land is retired from its current use, modified, and staged built development extends across the landform. It is anticipated that the full progression from semi-rural to urban will logically take a number of years, in line with similar urban development occurring locally (including Mangawhai Central and Mangawhai Hills). This will reduce the impact of the change to some degree, due to the incremental nature of change and a general conditioning of the audience over time as urban development progresses.
63. Development enabled by PPC85 will inevitably change the visual amenity currently experienced for the surrounding properties. Potential adverse visual effects will be mitigated by the landscape and open space outcomes that will be delivered by the Mangawhai East Development Area provisions and proposed standards.
64. Overall, the adverse visual effects from the adjoining properties will be moderate initially reducing to low-moderate following establishment of the landscape initiatives.

### **Surrounding Roads**

65. The Site's location adjoining two roads, results in a high level of exposure towards the Site. For road users, in particular those who live locally, the future development of the Site is likely to result in visual effects of some significance. For general road users, the effects are likely to be of much less significance as development enabled by PPC85 will be seen as part of the wider pattern of land use change occurring locally within the

surrounding Mangawhai environs, particularly that occurring within Mangawhai Central. The proposed riparian planting along the stream corridor on the southern side of Black Swamp Road will provide a good visual break when viewed from both Black Swamp Road and Raymond Bull Road. The proposed landscape edge enhancement planting proposed along Raymond Bull Road will provide a suitable transition to the rural land to the east.

66. Overall, the adverse visual effects from the surrounding road network will be low.

#### **Wider Surrounding Area**

67. Distant views towards parts of the Site will potentially be gained from parts of the wider surrounding area. Where visible from the surrounding area, views of development enabled by PPC85 will be highly variable due to distance, orientation of the view, diversity of elements within the view and screening elements (buildings, landform, shelterbelts, and prevailing vegetation patterns). While a noticeable level of built form will be introduced into the landscape, it will be viewed in the context of the surrounding residential settlement pattern within Mangawhai Village and therefore not appear incongruous.
68. For the properties on the western side of the Mangawhai Harbour, views will be moderated by the lower density RLZ in the northern part of the Site, the buffer of vegetation along the coastal edge and the proposed estuary reserve and riparian planting. The Large Lot Residential zoning within the southern portion of the Site will be similar in character to the development along Coal Hill Road, Ocean Sounds Place, and Sandhill Heights existing along the ridgeline, which is the most visual portion of the Site as seen from the wider context.
69. Development enabled by PPC85 will integrate sensitively into the semi-rural and coastal landscape due to the scale of the proposal relative to the Site context and appearance and visual compatibility with existing built development within the surrounding Mangawhai environs. Any potential adverse visual effects of PPC85 will be localised and will have minor implications on the quality, character, and aesthetic values of the surrounding area.
70. While development enabled by PPC85 will be visible from parts of the wider surrounding area, I consider that the adverse visual effects will be low to very low and entirely acceptable within the context of the existing Mangawhai environment and

identification of the Site as a potential residential growth area (albeit rural residential) within the Mangawhai Spatial Plan.

### **Construction Effects**

71. Construction effects are temporary in duration with the most noticeable changes and resultant effects on visual amenity arising from earthworks associated with roading and associated infrastructure. The construction stage includes impacts on the physical landscape, including vegetation removal and landform modification, and visual amenity from public and private locations. Due to the nature and scale of development, and the level of change it will bring to the existing landscape, the visual effects will generally be high during and immediately following construction. These visual effects will however be viewed in the context of the existing residential intensification occurring locally within Mangawhai.
72. Overall, there will be low adverse construction effects given:
  - (a) The temporary nature of the construction works; and
  - (b) The context of the existing and emerging Mangawhai urban landscape.

### **Cumulative effects**

73. The cumulative effects of PPC85, in combination with the existing settlement pattern, will not detract from the landscape values of the surrounding area. Overall, I consider that in the context of the established coastal, semi-rural and urban environment, development enabled by PPC85 could be implemented without adversely affecting the landscape values, visual amenity, and character of the surrounding area.

### **COUNCIL'S SECTION 42A REPORT**

74. I have read the s42A Report prepared by Mr Jonathan Clease, Consultant Planner. Mr Clease agrees with the conclusions reached in the Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment<sup>4</sup>. He considers that PPC85 will deliver acceptable landscape outcomes, and there are no fundamental barriers to rezoning in relation landscape values which

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<sup>4</sup> Section 42A Report, Paragraph 304.

are able to be resolved through the PPC85 provisions and subsequent consenting processes<sup>5</sup>.

75. Mr Clease also recommends that the LLRZ rule (DEV X-LU-S11) controlling exterior finishes also apply to the RLZ given the area's proximity to the sensitive coastal environment. I concur with this recommendation and refer to the updated Development Area provisions attached to Ms O'Connor's planning evidence.

#### **MATTERS RAISED BY SUBMITTERS**

76. I have reviewed the submissions in relation to landscape character and visual amenity matters. A number of submitter's request that the Site be retained as a Rural Zone. They express concern about the ongoing expansion of Mangawhai and the impacts this would have on the existing village character of the township and the ecological and landscape values of the harbour environment.
77. While there will be a loss in existing 'rural' landscape character there are number of positive landscape outcomes associated with PPC85 including enhancement of the stream and salt marsh wetlands, with stream protection, riparian planting and ecological and walkway connections; enhancement of the coastal edge through indigenous riparian planting, ecological connections and a clearly defined public walkway; provision of public access to and along the edge of the coastal environment within the estuary reserve and KDC esplanade reserve; and visual and physical connections to the coastal edge providing access to the coastal estuary reserve.
78. The proposed range of zoning across the Site will result in a sensitive landscape outcome, with the very low density of development facilitated by the RLZ around the coastal margins, and the LLRZ on the southwestern steeper slopes providing a good transition to the adjoining LLRZ area. I note that the LLRZ rules also manage the colour and cladding of buildings to ensure darker colours are utilised to minimise visual prominence.
79. In my opinion, the landscape character values of the Site will be significantly enhanced through the ecological and riparian planting of the coastal edge, wetlands and stream banks. The Mangawhai East Development Area provisions will maintain and enhance

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<sup>5</sup> Section 42A Report, Paragraph 506.

the landscape character of the Site's natural features and mitigate potential adverse landscape effects from development enabled by the PPC85.

80. While there will be a distinctive change to the existing character, the quality nature of the future urban development and the proposed landscape initiatives will ensure that a suitable level of amenity is achieved.

## **CONCLUSION**

81. In my opinion, development enabled by PPC85 would not be out of character with the surrounding environment and the potential natural character, landscape character and visual amenity effects from PPC85 on the character and amenity of the environment are appropriate.
82. Overall, I consider that in the context of the established environment PPC85 could be integrated and assimilated into the Site and surrounding landscape without adversely affecting the natural character, landscape character and visual amenity values of the site and surrounding Mangawhai environment.

**Rob J Pryor**

**16 December 2025**