

**BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL**

**UNDER**

the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

the submissions of B & A Stokes on  
the Waimakariri Proposed District  
Plan (#214) and Variation 1 (#29)

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**PRIMARY EVIDENCE OF MATTHEW  
NEIL CHARLES LESTER ON BEHALF  
OF B AND A STOKES**

**(Landscape and Visual Assessment)**

4 March 2024

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**GREENWOOD ROCHE**

LAWYERS

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## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 My evidence addresses the landscape and visual amenity considerations associated with the proposed rezoning of the approximately 144 hectare site located at 81 Gressons and 1375 Main North Road, Waikuku (the **Site**), sought by B & A Stokes through their submissions on the proposed Waimakariri District Plan (**PDP**). Those submissions seek to rezone the Site from Rural Lifestyle Zone (**RLZ**) and Large Lot Residential Zone (**LLRZ**) (as notified under the PDP) to General Residential / Medium Density Residential. Development of the Site would occur in accordance with the Outline Development Plan (**ODP**) attached as an Appendix to the evidence of Mr Clease, and would enable approximately 1,500 lots (the **Proposal**).
- 1.2 The Site is currently a dairy farm and is located on the northern fringe of Ravenswood that faces existing rural, rural residential and golf course land adjacent to State Highway 1 (**SH1**).
- 1.3 Valuable landscape elements have been identified within the Site and as part of the broader landscape framework, and these will be incorporated as part of the Proposal. They include a transitioning rural lifestyle character, an existing copse of trees, springs and channelised spring flow through the Site (including the ecological values associated with those flows), and a wāhi tapu site.
- 1.4 Alongside these existing features, the Proposal includes a number of initiatives which seek to address and, compared to the existing environment, enhance the landscape and visual amenity of the Site as part of the Proposal. These include:
- (a) extensive, new riparian planting within a landscape buffer adjoining each of the main waterways/overland flow paths;
  - (b) an extensive stormwater area along the eastern part of the Site which will have an important infrastructure function, but will also provide a significant set back from SH1 as well as amenity value for residents; and

(c) specific boundary treatments along the southern, western and northern boundaries to soften the transition between the Proposal and adjoining land uses / character.

1.5 With these initiatives, and having regard to the wider landscape context and the relevant directions of documents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**), the Proposal can, in my opinion, be supported from a landscape and visual effects perspective.

## **2 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE**

2.1 My name is Matthew Neil Charles Lester. I am a Senior Landscape Architect and shareholder with Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects (**RMM**) (formerly Rough & Milne Landscape Architects), which is a Christchurch-based landscape architecture consultancy that was established in 2010.

2.2 I hold a Bachelor of Science (Geography) from Canterbury University, a Post-Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture (Lincoln University) and am a Registered Member of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.

2.3 I am currently involved in a range of planning, consent and design projects across New Zealand, principally in the north east of the South Island. I have extensive residential subdivision design and planning experience, including on projects such as Ravenswood, Te Whariki at Lincoln, Halswell Commons and Knights Stream. I am currently working on PDP submissions for this project and for Spark Land, Boys Road in Rangiora as well as previous plan change application projects such as Tekapo Campground (now Station Bay Residential Development) in Tekapo via the Mackenzie District Council (PC 16). I have carried out previous landscape and visual assessment projects for a number of solar farms and residential subdivision developments including at Paekakariki and Taupo.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

2.4 While this is not an Environment Court proceeding, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses set out in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with the Code

of Conduct in preparing this evidence and will continue to comply with it while giving oral evidence. Except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person, this written evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed in this evidence.

### **3 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

#### **Assessment methodology**

- 3.1 The methodology and terminology used in this evidence has been informed by the Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (**Te Tangi a te Manu**).
- 3.2 RMM was first engaged on behalf of the Stokes in late 2021 to visit and assess the Site and its landscape context, and to prepare an ODP and an ODP Report (24 November 2021) in support of its potential rezoning. Since that time, we have worked alongside the rest of the Stokes' consultant team to assess the Proposal and develop the ODP and supporting narrative in response to those assessments.
- 3.3 RMM has coordinated preparation of the ODP plan and cross sections which illustrate the proposed landscape treatments, spatial character and edge treatments (refer to GA Sheets 9 – 11) (**Cross Sections**). These and other graphic material relevant to my evidence are contained within an A3 Graphic Attachment (**GA**) contained in **Appendix 1** of my evidence.
- 3.4 I have visited the Site on several different occasions (November 9 2021, December 12 2023 and January 17 2024). On those occasions, I viewed the Site from the surrounding public roads (being Wards Road, SH1 and Gressons Road), from the paper road in the north western corner of the Site, and from within the Site itself.

#### **Scope of evidence**

- 3.5 My evidence addresses the landscape and visual amenity considerations relating to the Proposal. It is structured as follows:
  - (a) description of the receiving environment, including the Site;
  - (b) the existing landscape values of the receiving environment;



- (c) the key landscape elements of the Proposal;
- (d) assessment of the Proposal's landscape and visual effects; and
- (e) conclusion.

3.6 In preparing this evidence, I have reviewed:

- (a) Te Tangi a te Manu;
- (b) the Stokes' submissions on the PDP;
- (c) the evidence of Ms Lauenstein on behalf of the Stokes;
- (d) the evidence of Mr Hall on behalf of the Stokes;
- (e) the evidence of Mr Payne on behalf of the Stokes;
- (f) the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (**NPS-UD**), and the relevant provisions of the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2016 (**CRPS**) and the notified PDP;
- (g) the Boffa Miskell *Waimakariri District – Rural Character Assessment* prepared for the PDP (**BML Rural Character Report**).<sup>1</sup>

#### 4 THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The Site is bounded by SH1 and some smaller rural lifestyle holdings to the east, Gressons Road to the north, adjoining rural pastoral land to the west and Wards Road to the south. Across Wards Road to the south is the stormwater management area (**SMA**) connected to the adjoining Ravenswood development and two residential lifestyle properties (refer to GA Sheet 12).
- 4.2 In addition to the adjoining road boundaries, there are several paper road connections to the Site including a paper road along much of the Stokes Drain alignment and another section that accesses the north-western part of the Site from Gressons Road.

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<sup>1</sup> Boffa Miskell (2018) *Waimakariri District – Rural Character Assessment*, 6 June 2018.

- 4.3 The Site is currently owned by the Stokes and is used for the purpose of dairy farming. It is split into four management zones, with three running east/west across the Site and one at the western end. There are two long laneways which run east/west and connect through the farm to the dairy shed at the eastern end. The three southern zones are split into rotationally grazed areas and the northern zone has larger paddocks. All are pivot irrigated. There is a large dairy shed and curtilage area along the centre of the eastern boundary, near to SH1, which includes two dwellings for farmworkers.
- 4.4 The BML Rural Character Report has assessed the existing landscape character and amenity of the wider coastal plains receiving environment in which the Site is located. The Report identifies a dozen "character areas" that make up the rural areas of the Waimakariri district, and provides a commentary on the potential for rural residential development and intensification of existing rural land, while considering the provisions of the CRPS and the operative Waimakariri District Plan, (refer to GA, Sheet 3).
- 4.5 The BML Rural Character Report identifies the rural context of the Site and much of the surrounds as "Coastal Plains" (refer to GA Sheet 4). This character area encompasses approximately 15km of coast between the mouth of the Waimakariri River and the Ashley River / Rakahuri Lagoon, the coastal margin seaward of urban and residential areas of Kaiapoi, Woodend, Pegasus and Waikuku, and the lower plains of the Ashley River. I agree with that characterisation.
- 4.6 The Site is also located on the periphery of the "Lower Plains" area which includes most of the urban development within the Waimakariri district, including the townships of Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend and Pegasus, as well as semi-urban development clusters at Mandeville, Ohoka, Fernside, Tuahiwi and Swannanoa.
- 4.7 The BML Rural Character Report describes the character of the "Coastal Plains" by referencing landform, landcover, land use and built form character and patterns / boundaries and edges. I have adopted that approach in the following description of the receiving environment (including the Site) for the Proposal.

## Landform

### *Wider context*

- 4.8 The Site is located within the low-lying hinterland area of the Coastal Plains, which comprises flat floodplains of gravel, sandy silt and clay, with the character of the area having been influenced by the sea and coastal processes, braided rivers depositing material and loess being blown from earlier glacial activity. The Site is approximately 2km from the Ashley River / Rakahuri to the north, which marks the northern extent of the "Coastal Plains" character area and District boundary, and 2.5km from the east coast. The Waimakariri River is approximately 9km away to the south, which marks the southern extent the same.
- 4.9 The topography of the wider area is mostly flat rising to 20msl inland towards Rangiora, with many of the low-lying areas prone to surface flooding. Spring fed streams flow through the area, many fed from springs, in this lower catchment area, either meandering or channelised to suit farming or land ownership boundaries. Coastal features include river mouths, open beaches, dunes, ponds, wetlands, and remnant lagoons. The low-lying plains of the adjoining "Lower Plains" area is also relatively flat with much of the area having been drained during the early years of European settlement to create farmland.

### *The Site*

- 4.10 Within that context, the landform of the Site itself is generally flat with a gentle fall to the east (refer to GA, Sheets 9 – 11, Cross Sections). As described in the evidence of Mr Payne and Mr Hall, there are a number of springs on the Site and two sources of spring water that enter the Site from the west.<sup>2</sup> In general, these springs are channelled towards a single drain running west to east in the northern half of the site. This is known as Stokes Drain. As described in the evidence of Mr Payne, the ecological values of Stokes Drains are considered to be 'moderate'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Evidence of Roland Payne, paragraph 4.3; Evidence of Andrew Hall, paragraph 7.3.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of Roland Payne, paragraph 6.6(a).

## **Landcover**

### *Wider context*

- 4.11 The open, productive rural areas of the locality largely comprise pasture grass cover with vegetation patterns of exotic hedgerows, and sporadic groups of established (and a few individual) trees. The finer grain pattern of the rural residential development is prevalent to the north of Gressons Road and typically includes shelterbelts enclosing small, grassed paddocks, small copses, exotic amenity / shelter trees, and domestic scale indigenous and exotic vegetation gardens. Ravenswood to the south has the residential character of newly established street trees and garden vegetation. Some riparian planting can be found on the margins of waterways although the above residential areas are largely absent of indigenous vegetation.
- 4.12 To the east there is the low, rolling, open, manicured character of the Pegasus Golf Course and further east again is the established modern township of Pegasus. Moving further east towards the coast, the land cover becomes increasingly complex, diverse, and natural around river mouths, estuaries and sand dunes. Pine plantations dominate the fore dunes as well as further inland tracts. Shelterbelts, pasture, willows, gorse and broom are also present.

### *The Site*

- 4.13 The Site itself is predominantly covered in pasture grass, which varies in quality depending on the grazing regime and season.
- 4.14 There are a number of exotic species shelter belts running north/south and east/west through the Site, particularly in the north-western part. Along the eastern edge, there is a greater variety of existing planting. Low shelter belts enclose the service areas of the farm. There is a tall well-established copse of trees associated with the farm dwellings. To the north of this, there is a wāhi tapu site, surrounded on three sides by pine shelterbelts. The other remaining trees on the Site are generally single, exotic shelter trees rather than high amenity specimen trees. Mr Payne's evidence confirms that there is minimal indigenous vegetation

beyond the riparian edges of the water bodies around the Site, and generally low ecological values throughout the Site.<sup>4</sup>

- 4.15 A mature copse of significant exotic trees, being mostly *Quercus* (Oak) and *Platanus* (Plane trees), is located on the north western edge of the Site (refer to GA, Sheet 8). They occupy an area of approximately 275 x 30 metres. My observation of the trees is that they seem to be generally healthy, well-spaced and, in my opinion, are a valuable landscape asset to the Site. Further examination of the trees by a qualified arborist is recommended to confirm their health as part of any future subdivision consent process.

### **Land use, built form, character and edge patterns**

#### *Wider context*

- 4.16 The wider area has been highly modified by the larger urban and residential areas of Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend and Pegasus and the small coastal bach / lifestyle settlements at Waikuku Beach, Woodend Beach and Pines Beach along the coastline.
- 4.17 West of the Site is a patchwork of pastorally farmed blocks, typically used for dairy farming. There are no existing public road connections to this land from the Site. This landscape, punctuated by pockets of rural residential development and natural features, such as streams, extends west towards Rangiora, but is a generally open, rural landscape (refer to GA Sheet 13).
- 4.18 The Waikuku settlement adjoins the Site to the north and shows a pattern of residential sections ranging between 1000m<sup>2</sup> and 1.5 ha with small scale service businesses surrounded by larger 4 ha blocks containing well planted rural residential development with a pleasant but semi enclosed character (refer to GA Sheet 15). This varies from the wider, more rural character west of the Site, however there is an area of consistent enclosure from shelter hedge planting on the north side of Gressons Road, further to the west.
- 4.19 East of the Site and SH1 is the golf course landscape of the Pegasus development. The area is relatively open, manicured, interspersed by

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<sup>4</sup> Evidence of Roland Payne, paragraph 6.1.

clusters of dwellings in a spacious setting overlooking the course (refer to GA Sheet 14). Further to the north along this eastern boundary there is a range of rural lifestyle properties, all with a very typical rural character for the location. This comprises open vistas, shelter and amenity planting and rural residences at a variety of distances, between each other and from the road, creating a short rhythm of openness and enclosure (refer to GA Sheet 16).

- 4.20 On these three boundaries the land use and landscape character are a mix of the pleasant and familiar. There is a typical mix of openness and enclosure with variation between open rural vistas and semi-enclosed rural residential areas. On these boundaries it is the open space and variety of planting that principally forms the character rather than any built form.
- 4.21 South of the Site is the Ravenswood development, identified under the operative Waimakariri District Plan as a Key Activity Centre (**KAC**) albeit separated by the Waimakariri District Council-owned SMA. Ravenswood essentially forms an extension to the well-established Woodend township with areas for business, residential, open space and a primary school (refer GA, Sheets 5 and 6). Along this boundary runs Wards Rd, currently formed as a gravel one-way road, which appears to end just past an existing residence.
- 4.22 The SMA, the KAC and the surrounding residential character are a distinct change from the variety of rural scales and open manicured landscape seen over the other three boundaries. This will soften to a degree over time as street trees and private planting matures, but currently this is a character that does not provide the familiar rhythms of the rest of the receiving environment and the built form of the Ravenswood KAC is a definite change to this pattern.

#### *The Site*

- 4.23 As described the Site is currently used for dairy farming. However, it also forms part of a wider context with a long and varied history of habitation.
- 4.24 The Site falls within the takiwa of Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga, and is located some six km away from Tuahiwi, being the centre of that takiwa.

To the east of the Site lies the historic Kaiapoi Pā, which was built around 1700 and holds great significance for mana whenua. As described by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu:

*... Kaiapoi Pā was established by the first Ngāi Tahu ancestors when they settled Te Wai Pounamu. Kaiapoi Pā was the major capital, trading centre and point from which further penetration of the South Island occurred so the area is a genealogical centre for all Ngāi Tahu whānui (descendants).<sup>5</sup>*

- 4.25 In addition to the known wāhi tapu site at the eastern boundary central edge of the Site (refer to GA, Sheet 8), the Site itself is almost entirely located in a silent file area within the PDP, indicating its significance to mana whenua.
- 4.26 Further consultation with mana whenua is required to ascertain/understand the specific values of this Site, and to identify opportunities for how those might best be protected through the Proposal. As described below, some initiatives have already been adopted which provide landscape support around known features of value (preservation planting around the wāhi tapu site and various waterway enhancements), however it is acknowledged that there may be other values/narratives which require assessment (as part of the landscape) and, where possible, accommodation within the Proposal.
- 4.27 The area also has an interesting history of European habitation. The Site has been farmed since 1853 by early settlers John Raven and Ingram Shrimpton, who farmed this land in the 1860s, before Raven turned to the priesthood and Shrimpton returning to his previous printing trade.

### **Key views of the Site**

- 4.28 The key views to the Site are experienced as part of a wider journey through the “Coastal Plains” and “Lower Plains” landscape of North Canterbury having emerged from the city of Christchurch and the supporting service towns of Kaiapoi and Woodend (described further below). Those key views are obtained from the roads bounding the Site

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/ngai-tahu/papatipu-runanga/ngai-tuahuriri/>, accessed 25 February 2024.

(described above), which are variously classified as a national SH, primary collector and low volume local road.

- 4.29 The SH1 journey travelling south follows a sequential and repeating pattern of openness and enclosure conveyed by: pastoral farmland or more recent elements such as the Pegasus Golf Course; roadside planting enclosing established rural properties; or more recent rural residential developments. Generally, planting is the predominant character, screening built form which can be experienced when passing through established villages and increasingly where new residential developments are visible from SH1. This character is broken by the Ravenswood/Woodend township immediately to the south of the Site, but generally runs from the Ashley/Rakahuri River through the start of the northern motorway at Kaiapoi, over a distance of 11.5 km.
- 4.30 Along Gressons Road, a similar pattern occurs comprising two main elements. Immediately to the north of the Site is the well-established large lot residential development of Waikuku where both residences and hedged boundary planting create a short rhythm of openness and enclosure. Travelling further west, a shelter belt to the north encloses and constrains views to the road corridor. Further to the west the pattern is more rural in that the landscape experience is predominantly more open and pastoral with small clusters of dwellings, generally close to the road and surrounded by established planting. This character extends from the Gressons Road/SH1 corner over 6.5 km to the edge of the Rangiora township.
- 4.31 From SH1 looking west, there are intermittent views into the Site as shelter belts and existing dwellings partially screen the extent of open space within the Site (refer to GA Sheet 14). At the north-eastern corner of the Site at the Gressons Road/SH1 intersection, the boundary is open and affords views into the Site and to the wider landscape (refer to GA Sheet 13).
- 4.32 Along the northern boundary with Gressons Road there are views southwards into the Site with wider/extensive/distant views to the west and south possible. Views to the north are confined by the existing shelter belt on the north side of the road (refer to GA Sheet 15). From farmland west of the Site, the views into the Site are partially open with



riparian planting of the Waikuku Stream and other farm plantings providing some screening of the Site when viewed from Gressons Road (refer to GA Sheet 13).

- 4.33 Wards Road runs along the southern boundary of the Site and is a narrow (10m wide) gravel road that has the character of a private property access road despite being a public road. Views are likely limited to local property owners who will look north into the Site, to generally open views except where they are partly obscured by two lengths of shelterbelts along the Site boundary (refer to GA, Sheet 15).
- 4.34 Overall, while the Site has small segments of existing boundary enclosure, it is generally open to public view.
- 4.35 In recent years travel along the roads described above, particularly SH1, has become increasingly punctuated by the distant views of new residential developments. In this locality examples include Ravenswood from SH1 and Gressons Road, Pegasus from SH1 and Waikuku Beach large lot development from Waikuku Beach Road. These may be fleeting and/or distant glimpses but indicate to the public the changing character of these areas. As described above, the Site is also located in close proximity to known locations and features of great significance to Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu generally.

## **5 EXISTING LANDSCAPE VALUES OF THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT**

- 5.1 As discussed in Te Tangi a te Manu,<sup>6</sup> landscapes generally have three dimensions which are:
- (a) Physical, meaning both natural and human features and the action (and interaction) of natural and human processes over time.
  - (b) Associative, meaning intangible things that influence how places are perceived – such as history, identity, customs, laws, narratives, creation stories, and activities specifically associated with the qualities of a landscape.

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<sup>6</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022, paragraph 4.23.

(c) Perceptual, meaning both direct sensory experience and broader interpretation through the senses.

5.2 The balance of this section assesses those dimensions within the existing receiving environment for the Proposal.

### **Physical**

5.3 As part of the wider Coastal Plains landscape type, the Site has low to moderate physical values. It currently displays a generic Canterbury Plains rural character that is typically open and pastoral, while the surrounding and adjoining receiving environment is diverse in character due to increasing urban development. As noted above, the physical attributes and resulting values are mainly perceived from the SH1 east of the Site and Gressons Road north of the Site.

5.4 Nevertheless, there are moderate to high physical values associated with the prevalence of spring fed streams, including the Stokes Drain and its habitat value.

5.5 Vegetation, both indigenous and exotic, is often associated with natural streams and/or SMAs. Established exotic trees are often associated with the hydrology and climate or farming traditions of the area. In this instance, as a feature of the landscape, the copse of trees in the northwest part of the Site has moderate high value due to the quality of the species, the apparent good health of the trees (to be confirmed), and their role in supporting the health of nearby habitats within Stokes Drain.

### **Associative**

5.6 As set out above, the receiving environment is understood to have long-standing, profound significance for Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. Within the Site specifically, the wāhi tapu area and the existing springs and spring water conveyance are understood to have particular significance for mana whenua. As noted above, a silent file area extends across the majority of the Site.

5.7 These matters, and the nature of any further matters of cultural significance, require further consultation/discussion with mana whenua. However, based on the information at hand, the associative values of

the receiving environment (including the Site) are, in my opinion, likely to be very high.

- 5.8 That provisional finding is further supported by the European associations (also described above).

### **Perceptual**

- 5.9 The Site has low experiential value as there is currently no public access to the Site.
- 5.10 The perceptual values of the Site relate to the landscape character associated with the public experience of travelling via SH1 through a landscape sequence that has an attractive, open and rural character interspersed with nodes of development that create a sense of enclosure. As described above, the recent and rapid change to the surrounding rural landscape from increasing urban development along the SH1 corridor is evident. Notwithstanding this, a high level of amenity is retained within the wider environment (although not the Site specifically) by the extensive areas of blue/green networks and open space with enhanced natural character accompanying the more recent urban development.

## **6 KEY LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

- 6.1 As described above, the Proposal aims to enable the development of approximately 1,500 lots in accordance with the ODP attached to Mr Clease's evidence and included in my GA along with the Cross Sections.
- 6.2 That ODP will be supported by an ODP narrative, which provides more detail on the specific outcomes sought for the development. A Design Narrative Plan / Site Analysis, which shows the spatial concepts behind the ODP is provided with Ms Lauenstein's evidence.

### **Key landscape elements**

- 6.3 As illustrated on the ODP and in the Cross Sections, the key landscape elements of the Proposal comprise:
- (a) Retention and enhancement of existing landscape features on the Site including:

- (i) The existing copse of trees in the north-western corner of the Site.
  - (ii) Stokes Drain, which will be enhanced through provision of an extensive landscape buffer along either side of the waterway.
  - (iii) Existing springs on the Site, which will be redirected into either Stokes Drain or a new waterway proposed to extend along the entire southern boundary (**Southern Waterway**).
  - (iv) The wāhi tapu site, which will be protected via an additional planting buffer.
- (b) Provision of new landscape features, including a blue/green network, comprising:
- (i) landscape buffer planting along Stokes Drain, the Southern Waterway and the Central Flood Bypass Channel (described in the evidence of Mr Hall);
  - (ii) an extensive stormwater treatment area extending along the eastern boundary of the Site, which will comprise, together with other features, wetland planting;
  - (iii) dedicated green spaces for residents; and
- ((b)(i) – (iii) are described as the **blue/green network**)
- (iv) specific edge treatments with the south, west and northern boundaries, and treatment along pedestrian/cycling connections.

6.4 These features are described below in further detail.

#### **Enhanced features**

- 6.5 The copse of existing trees in the northwest part of the Site will be protected by a proposed green space.
- 6.6 The four springs along the southern boundary and the three through the centre of the Site will be connected to the two main spring water channels shown on the ODP (Stokes Drain and the Southern Waterway).

The design of these connections will be confirmed at the subdivision stage.

- 6.7 As detailed in the evidence of Mr Payne, Stokes Drain has been assessed as having moderate ecological values.<sup>7</sup> The existing alignment of the Drain is proposed to be retained to protect those values. As illustrated on the ODP, an extensive riparian landscaped buffer will be provided along the edge of Stokes Drain. Further detailed design will be required for this area, including the treatment of the existing *Arizona Cypress* (*Cupressus arizonica*) shelter trees. These are currently providing a degree of habitat protection along part of the north bank of the Drain, but are of low quality and are a typical exotic farm shelter species.
- 6.8 The ODP provides for a 15m wide landscape/planting buffer on the western side of the wāhi tapu area. In addition, a small part of Stokes Drain will be realigned around that area. The opportunity for a small ecological habitat area to the northwest of the wāhi tapu area has also been provided. These features will be subject to further consideration/review as part of any future consultation with mana whenua.

### **Blue/green network**

- 6.9 The ODP provides for an extensive blue/green network and network of green spaces throughout the Site.
- 6.10 As described further in the evidence of Mr Hall, this network has been designed to protect existing spring-fed waterways and to provide hydraulically separate treatment for stormwater, while also managing flood flows through the Site.
- 6.11 The blue/green network comprises:
- (a) Stokes Drain and the Southern Waterway (described above).
  - (b) A flood diversion channel on the western boundary of the Site which will direct flood flows into the Central Flood Bypass Channel (**Western Diversion**).

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<sup>7</sup> Evidence of Roland Payne, paragraph 6.6(a).

- (c) The Central Flood Bypass Channel, which, as illustrated in the Cross Sections, will include a planted landscape buffer.
- (d) An extensive SMA on the eastern boundary of the Site, comprising three stormwater facilities which have been hydraulically separated by the Central Flood Bypass Channel and Stokes Drain. An additional stormwater treatment area is also provided in the north eastern corner of the Site.

6.12 The specific design detail of the SMA is yet to be confirmed, however the SH1 frontage is proposed to be predominantly visually open with an ecologically planted spring flow channel close to the boundary. To the west of that, the Site will be contoured for grassed treatment basins and flow paths, accompanied by plant species typical of wetland treatment systems (refer to GA Sheet 10). This is intended to protect the open character of rural views currently obtained from SH1 and from the small strip of houses located on the Site's south eastern boundary, albeit replacing the rural outlook with managed open space with residential development seen in the distance behind. As previously noted (and as illustrated on the ODP), the SMA will also include the opportunity for ecological habitat creation/enhancement.

6.13 The combined area of the blue/green network is approximately 25.5 ha, subject to final detailed design.

6.14 Two other green spaces are proposed, as illustrated on the ODP. One is a 3.2 ha (measuring approximately 180m x 180m) green space adjoining the intersection of the internal north-south and east-west road layout. This green space would allow for two senior playing fields (and/or other combinations) as well as supporting passive recreation opportunities. This larger green space has a potential community hub shown bordering it to the south.

6.15 A smaller 0.8 ha green space is shown in the Western part of the Site. This is intended to protect the values afforded by a copse of established, heritage trees and mitigate potential shading effects for future residential lots adjoining the south of the green space.

### **Edge treatments**

- 6.16 Edge treatments are an important element of a proposed change in land use within rural environments as they assist in transitioning/softening the character of that change.
- 6.17 As part of the Proposal, specific edge treatments will be provided along the boundaries of the Site to the north with Gressons Road, to the west with the adjoining rural land, and to the south (refer to GA Sheet 8 – ODP and Sheet 11 - Boundary Treatment Cross Sections).
- 6.18 The northern boundary of the Site on Gressons Road lies opposite the LLRZ area of Waikuku. The ODP anticipates the provision of larger lots along this boundary to reflect that character/scale of adjoining residential activity. A 10m building setback and landscape zone is also proposed along that boundary, with the intention of retaining an open space road frontage with a spatial and landscape character that complements the Waikuku development opposite the Site (refer to GA Sheets 8, 11). In this setback, it is anticipated that post and rail wooden fencing up to 1.2 metres high will enclose a 10 metre strip containing two amenity trees per lot and low planting which will be provided by the developer, complementing the inclusive building set back.
- 6.19 At other places along the northern boundary, the Site abuts existing rural residential properties. It is proposed to have a 6 metre wide building setback and landscape zone containing a post and rail timber fence up to 1.2 metres in height and including a continuous boundary hedge and one amenity tree per lot (refer to GA, 8,11).
- 6.20 The Western Diversion is proposed to be established along the western boundary of the Site. The Diversion is a necessary part of the flood management proposed for the Site, but will also form part of the boundary treatment / interface between this side of the Site and the adjoining rural properties. In addition to the Diversion, this boundary is anticipated to comprise a 6 metre wide setback contained by a timber post and rail fence up to 1.2 metres in height, and continuous hedge planting with one amenity tree per lot.
- 6.21 Along the southern boundary fronting Wards Road, the Site is proposed to be buffered by the 16.5 metre wide Southern Waterway, containing

spring water flow, amenity and ecological planting and pedestrian cycle connection, (refer to GA Sheet 9).

- 6.22 The interface between the eastern boundary of the Site and SH1 (and south eastern residential neighbours) will comprise the SMA (described above).

### **Connection network**

- 6.23 The roading layout and pedestrian/cycling network is described in further detail in the evidence of Mr Rossiter and Ms Lauenstein. For the purposes of my evidence, I note that the pedestrian/cycling connections proposed in the ODP largely align with the blue/green network, providing the opportunity for enhanced amenity along these connections through the adjoining landscaping.

### **Density**

- 6.24 Although not specifically a 'landscape feature' of the Proposal, the anticipated density of the Proposal is directly relevant to its landscape and visual amenity effects.
- 6.25 To that end, I note that the Proposal anticipates a target yield of 1,500 lots. Approximately 20% (or 30 ha) of the 144 ha Site will be used for the blue/green network. If the remaining 114 ha of land is subdivided to create 1,500 lots, then the overall net density (calculated under the CRPS as including the roading network) is approximately 13 households per hectare.
- 6.26 That number is less than the PDP target net density of 15 dwellings per hectare, and would be less than the number of dwellings which could be theoretically enabled under the underlying MRZ zoning. It is however reflective of the extensive blue/green network proposed for the Site which is larger than that typically found in greenfield residential developments, and is reflective of the plausible market demand set out in the evidence of Mr Sellars.
- 6.27 As described above, in response to the existing character of the LLRZ area north of Gressons Road, specific provision is made within the ODP for lower density housing within the Site along the northern boundary. The supporting ODP narrative also encourages the delivery of higher



density (where appropriate) in proximity to the Ravenswood KAC. The landscape and visual amenity implications of this approach are assessed further below.

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

- 7.1 The potential landscape and visual effects, including cumulative effects, arising from the Proposal relate to the change in visual and landscape character of the Site, particularly as experienced from SH1 and Gressons Road.
- 7.2 Other changes to that character resulting from the Proposal will, in my opinion, generate positive effects through the protection and enhancement of existing established trees, the habitat values of the Stokes Drain, natural character values associated with the existing springs and water flow, and the cultural values associated with the wāhi tapu site.

### **Assessment of visibility and visual effects**

*“A visual effect is a kind of landscape effect. It is a consequence for landscape values as experienced in views. Visual effects are a subset of landscape effects. A visual assessment is one method to help understand landscape effects.”<sup>8</sup>*

- 7.3 The significance of a visual effect is influenced by the visibility, distance, duration of the view, the scale, nature and duration of the proposal, its overall visual prominence, the context in which it is seen, and the size of the viewing audience.
- 7.4 As described above, the key views into the Site are obtained from SH1 and to a lesser degree from Gressons Road. The views into the Site from SH1 are part of an established visual journey comprising the predominantly open space rural areas, punctuated with established properties and farm planting, the finer grain and shorter rhythm of rural residential areas, and the recent phenomenon of glimpses to new urban development replacing a rural outlook. Also of relevance in this part of

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<sup>8</sup> Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

the journey is the proximity of the Woodend/Ravenswood township that interrupts this rural rhythm.

- 7.5 Along SH1, the Proposal will replace a rural pastoral outlook generic to the Canterbury Plains with a comprehensive SMA and ecological area. Those features will retain and enhance the open space character of the Site (when viewed from that aspect) through adding biodiversity and ecological benefits. That character will also be consistent with the more recent developments along the SH1 including the Pegasus Golf Course and the Ravenswood commercial and residential development frontage. To illustrate, the proposed open space within the Ravenswood commercial zone land which fronts SH1 is setback approximately 60 metres from the SH, and the closest residential lot within Pegasus is setback approximately 80 metres. In comparison, the ODP shows a setback of 250 metres to the closest lots opposite Pegasus and beyond the wāhi tapu site, and a setback of 40 metres (minimum) towards the Gressons Road intersection (both subject to detailed design).
- 7.6 Development enabled through the Proposal will be clearly visible from Gressons Road. However, the PDP already anticipates a level of development along the northern boundary of the Site (as that part is zoned LLRZ in the notified PDP), and as previously discussed, the ODP would reflect that initiative in seeking to provide for lower density development in this location to complement the LLRZ on the northern side of Gressons Road. In my opinion, that is appropriate and, in conjunction with the proposed set back and landscape buffer, it will ensure a co-ordinated landscape outcome and the retained sense of open space in this area.
- 7.7 Along Wards Road open rural views will be replaced by dwellings set beyond the Southern Waterway (including berms, with a likely width of 16.5 metres). This visual change will be consistent with, and read as an extension of, the existing residential and commercial character of Ravenswood located some 245 metres south of the Site beyond the existing Council stormwater reserve. Taking into account the low volume and limited use of Wards Road, in my opinion, the Proposal will therefore create a low adverse visual effect when viewed from this area.

- 7.8 There are also views from private land. To the north are the residents of Waikuku and those properties on the south side of Gressons Road adjacent to the northwest of the Site. The visual effects from these properties will be mitigated by the proposed boundary treatments. The existing properties on the east, bordering SH1, will be separated from the Site by the Eastern SMA / Open Space and, consequently, the resulting visual effects will be low. The proposed zoning of properties to the west of the Site is RLZ. With the proposed boundary treatment including the Western Diversion and the proposed building setbacks and landscape zone, any visual effect of development enabled by the Proposal will be low, especially given the proposed roading and spring water connections that are shown to link from the Site to any future development.
- 7.9 In terms of development density, this will have a visual effect, however it is my opinion that the proposed landscape features (including the enhancement of existing features and new features) are appropriate in terms of off-setting the level of density anticipated by the Proposal (1,500 lots), especially in relation to the baseline of the proposed RLZ. The broader implications of the anticipated density in terms of residential amenity are addressed in the urban design of Ms Lauenstein.
- 7.10 Overall, I consider that the visual effects of the Proposal will be low. The various boundary treatments will ensure that the experience of development enabled by the Proposal, particularly from the two key roads of SH1 and Gressons Road, is well-managed. In particular, while there will be a change in character, these features will ensure that the existing sense of open space will be maintained to appropriate levels and will maintain a level of amenity for the outlook from surrounding public roads. The effects from Wards Road and looking to the western boundary of the Site from public land are far less significant due to limited use viewers and the proposed setback buffer and planting.

### **Assessment of landscape effects**

*"A landscape effect is an outcome for a landscape value. ... Change itself is not an effect: landscapes change constantly. It is the implications of change on landscape values that is relevant."*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines'. Tuia Pita Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

- 7.11 The existing landscape features and values of this Site are identified above in my evidence at section 4.
- 7.12 As also set out above, key physical landscape features (including the copse of trees, the springs/waterways) will be protected and/or enhanced through the Proposal (noting that those matters will be subject to further detailed design).
- 7.13 In terms of associative values, the proposed enhancement of planting around the wāhi tapu site is intended to recognise, and provide additional protection of, the associative values of that area. Similarly, the enhancement of Stokes Drain and the relocation and enhancement of the existing springs on the Site are intended to recognise and protect the associative values inherent in those features. In these respects (and subject to any consultation with mana whenua), I consider that the Proposal will have positive effects on the associative values of the Site. Further consultation with mana whenua will be required to inform the way in which the Proposal will respond to other matters of cultural significance.
- 7.14 As noted above, the Proposal will inevitably generate a change in the Site's landscape character from rural to residential. However, development enabled by the Proposal will be well set back from adjoining road boundaries by the blue/green networks (including the SMAs) and setbacks that afford enhanced natural character, biodiversity and enhanced ecological values and open space. This will retain the existing perceptual values of the Site in terms of spatial rhythm and be consistent with distant residential development as a backdrop to the viewer experience already established in this location.
- 7.15 Overall, the Proposal will, in my opinion, protect the key landscape features of the Site and will otherwise ensure that any effects on existing landscape values will be low or positive.

#### **Relevant RMA directions**

- 7.16 As part of preparing the ODP, specific consideration was given to:
- (a) the relevant objectives and policies of the NPS-UD, including the directive for "well-functioning urban environments that enable all

people and communities to provide for their wellbeing and health and safety, now and into the future”;<sup>10</sup>

- (b) the directions in the CRPS which apply to outline development plans;<sup>11</sup> and
- (c) the relevant directions of the PDP which apply to subdivision of greenfield areas.<sup>12</sup>

7.17 The evidence of Mr Clease and Ms Lauenstein address these matters in more detail. To the extent that those directions relate to landscape or visual amenity matters however, I confirm that, in my opinion, the Proposal will achieve and/or is consistent with those directions.<sup>13</sup>

## **8 CONCLUSION**

8.1 The Site is in a strategic position between Woodend/Ravenswood and Waikuku Village and adjoining SH1 to accommodate and support residential growth.

8.2 In my opinion, the Proposal, as guided by the ODP, will enable that growth while also protecting and, in some cases enhancing, the identified landscape values of the Site and the wider area. In my opinion the Proposal can be supported from a visual and landscape effects perspective.

**Matthew Neil Charles Lester**

4 March 2024

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<sup>10</sup> National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020, objective 1.

<sup>11</sup> Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2016, policy 6.3.3

<sup>12</sup> Notified PDP, SUB-O1 – O3; SUBP1 – P6.

<sup>13</sup> For example, CRPS, policies 5.3.1(5), 5.3.3(2); notified PDP, P1(5); P6(2)(b)(vi), (2)(d)

**Appendix 1 – Graphic Attachment**





Stokes Land, Waikuku, Waimakariri

1 March 2024



# Document Information

<b>Project</b>
Stokes Land Waikuku
<b>Address</b>
1323 Main North Road, Waikuku
<b>Client</b>
Brian & Anne Stokes
<b>Document</b>
Graphic Attachment to Landscape Assessment Report
<b>Status</b>
Proposed District Plan Submission
<b>Prepared By</b>
Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects Ltd
Project Number: 21346
Author: Matt Lester, Daniel Watt, Laelys Follerot
Peer Reviewed: Nikki Smetham

## Disclaimer

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# Rural Character Areas



Scale 1:250,000 @ A3

Source: Boffa Miskell - Waimakariri District Rural Character Study

## Legend



The Site



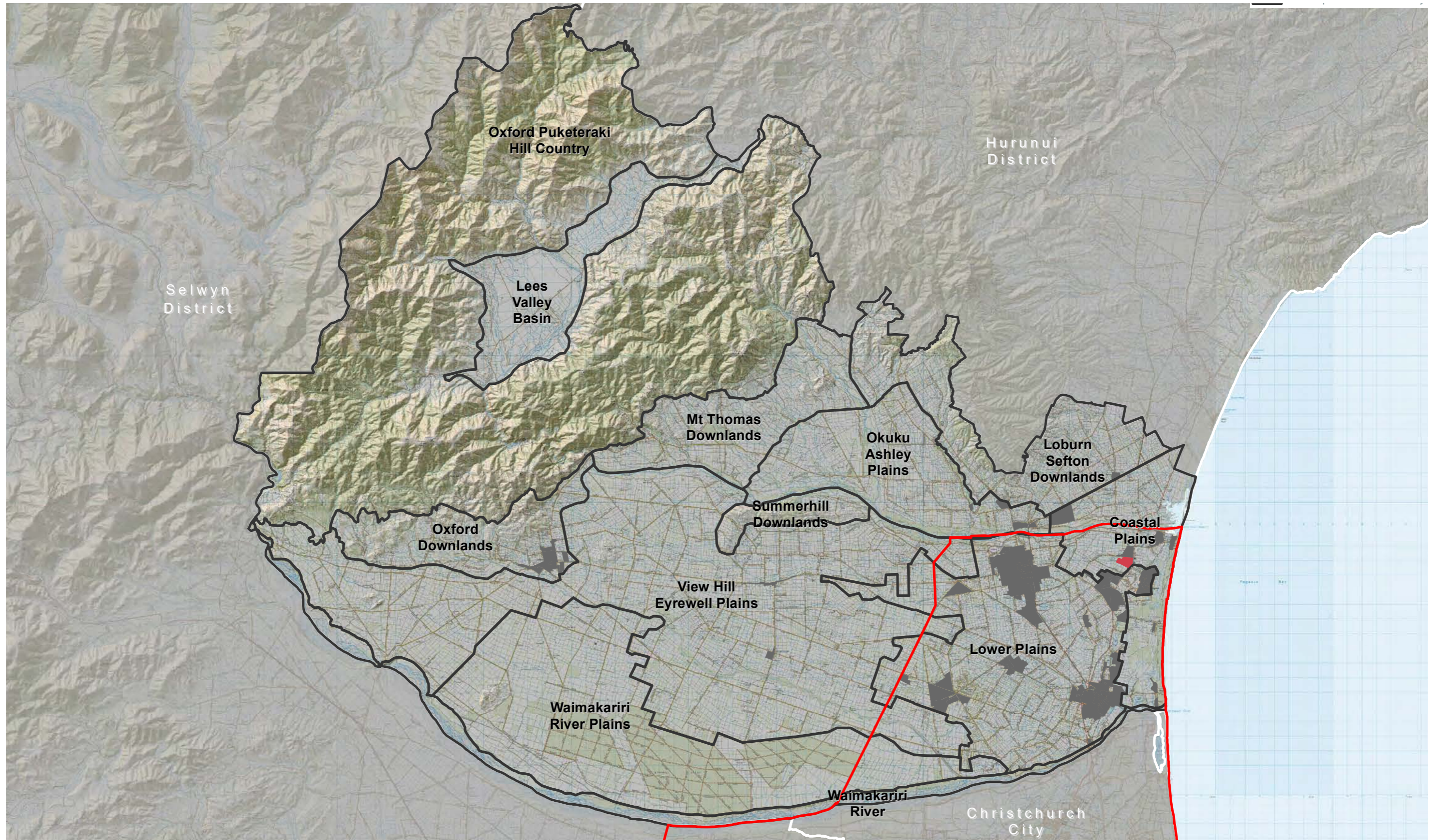
Non Rural Zones



Greater Christchurch Boundary



Landscape Character Boundary





# Coastal Plains Character Areas

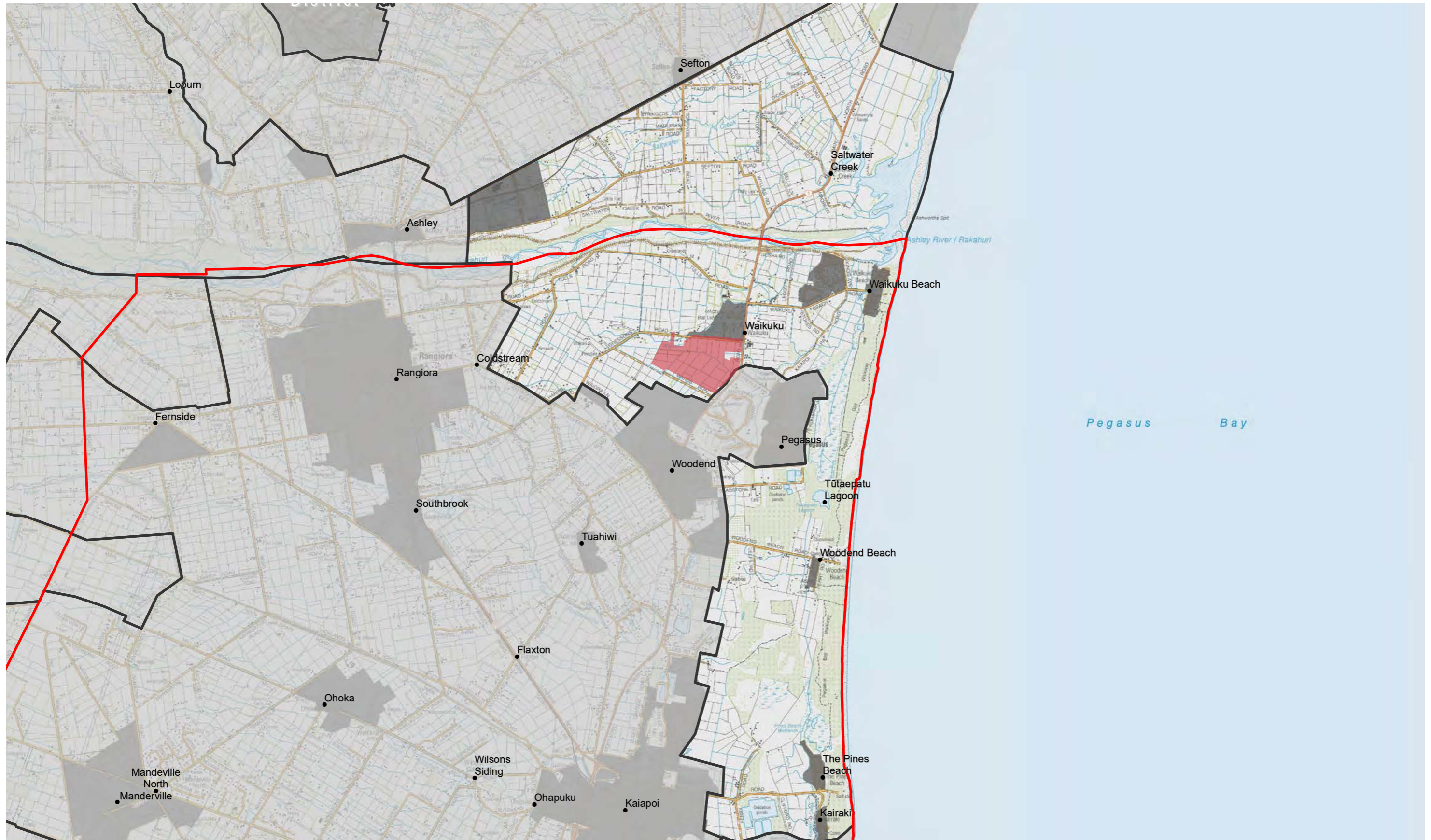


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Source: Boffa Miskell - Waimakariri District Rural Character Study

## Legend

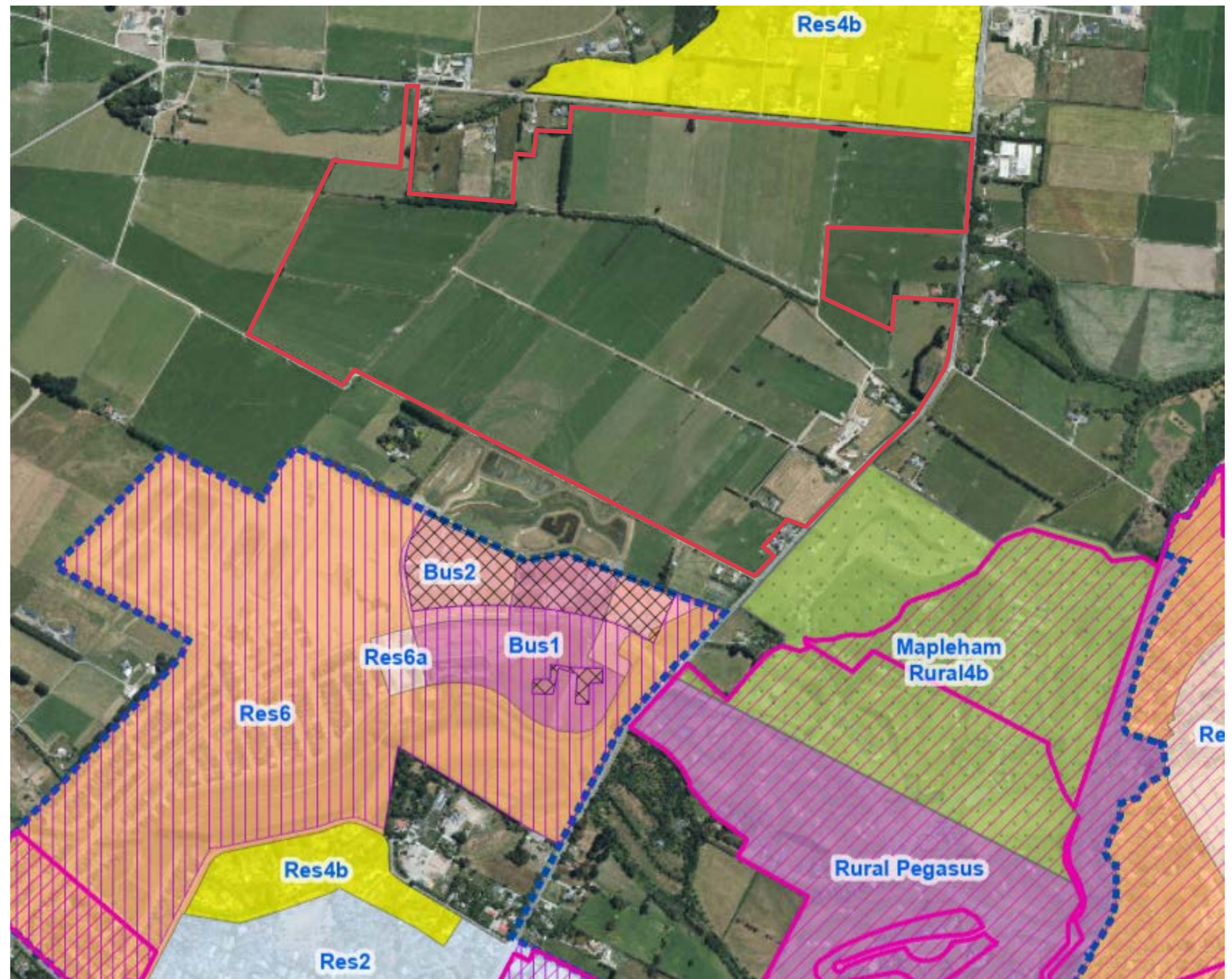
	The Site		Non Rural Zones
	Greater Christchurch Boundary		Coastal Plains Boundary





# Waimakariri Zoning Plan (Operative District Plan)

Legend	
	RU Zone
	Business 1 Zone
	Business 2 Zone
	Residential 6a Zone
	Residential 6 Zone
	Residential 2 Zone
	Residential 4b Zone
	Rural Pegasus
	Mapleham Rural4b Zone
	The Site
















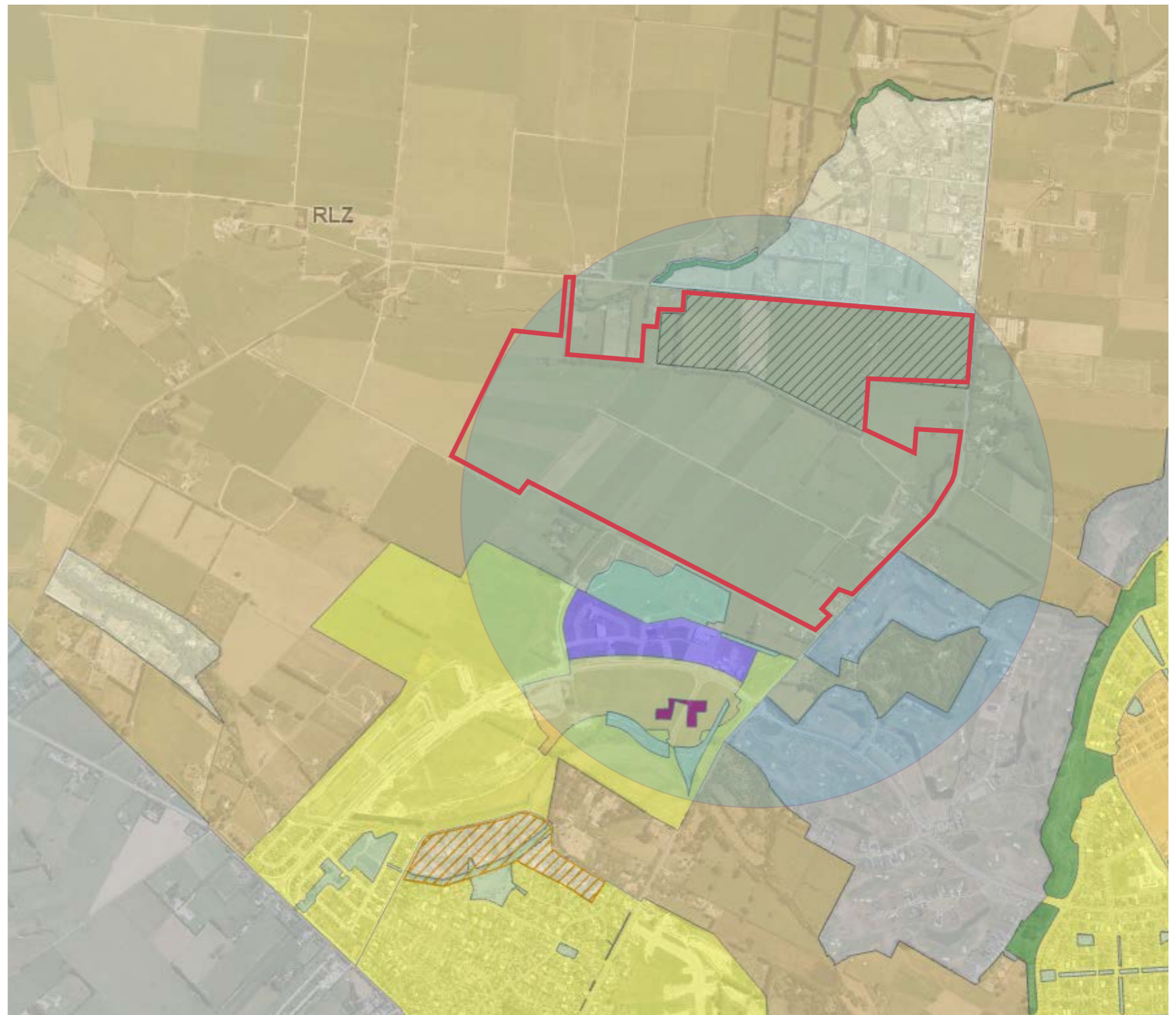
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Data Source: Waimakariri.isoplan.co.nz



# Waimakariri Zoning Plan (Proposed District Plan)







Legend	
	Large Lot Residential Zone (LLRZ)
	Rural Lifestyle Zone (RLZ)
	Open Space Zone (OSZ)
	General Industrial Zone (GIZ)
	Medium Density Residential Zone (MRZ)
	Town Centre Zone (TCZ)
	SPZ (PR)
	Natural Open Space Zone (NOSZ)
	Large Lot Residential Zone (LLRZ)
	Large Lot Residential Zone Overlay
	General Residential Zone Overlay
	The Site
	Silent file 017 Pekapeka



Not to Scale

Data Source: Waimakariri.isoplan.co.nz

# 2048 Waimakariri District Development Strategy Plan

Legend	
	Current Business Zoned Area
	Current Residential Area
	Proposed Residential Growth Direction
	Future Short Eastern By Pass
	Infrastructure Supported Boundary
	The Site





# Site Analysis and Site Photograph Location Plan

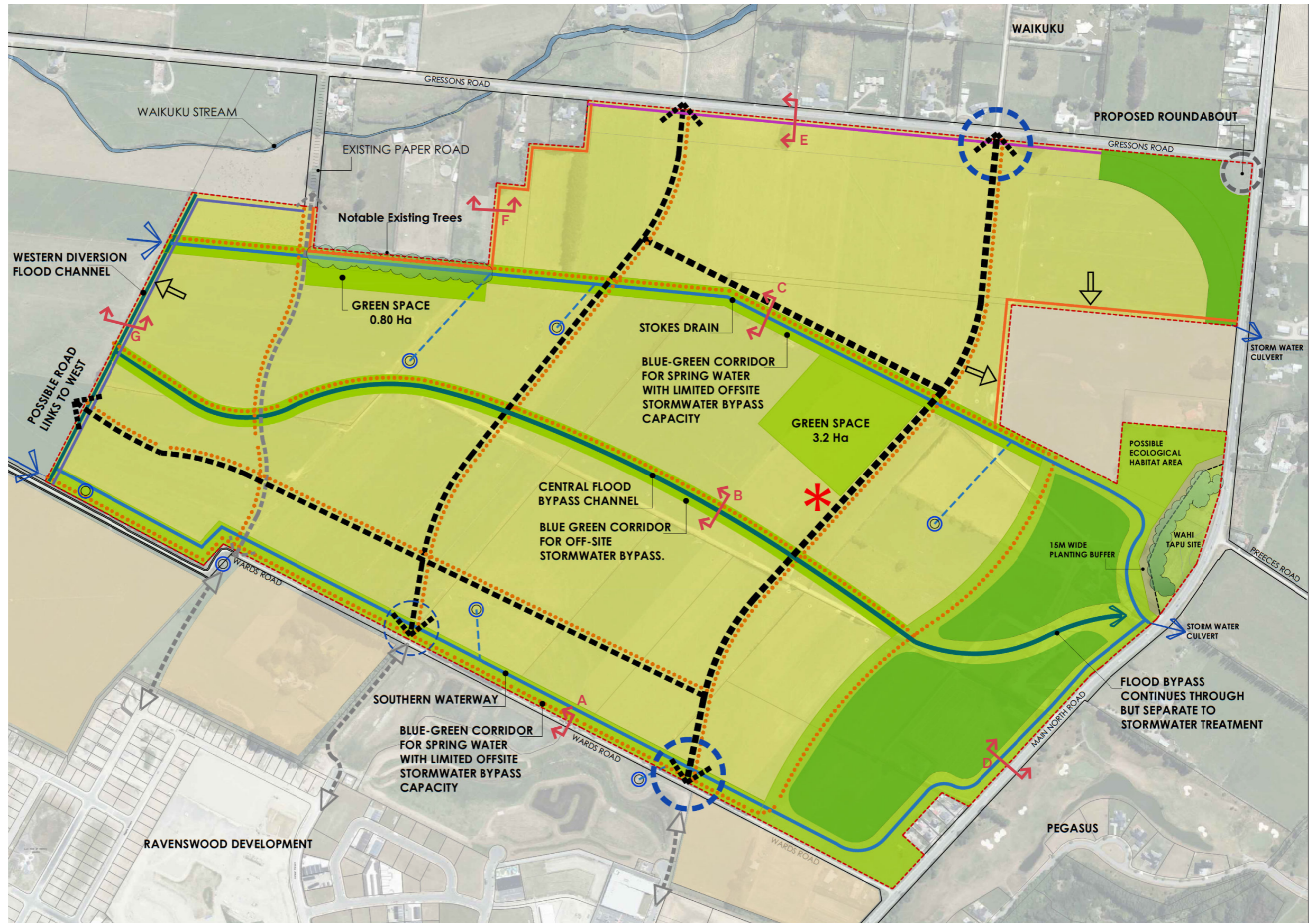
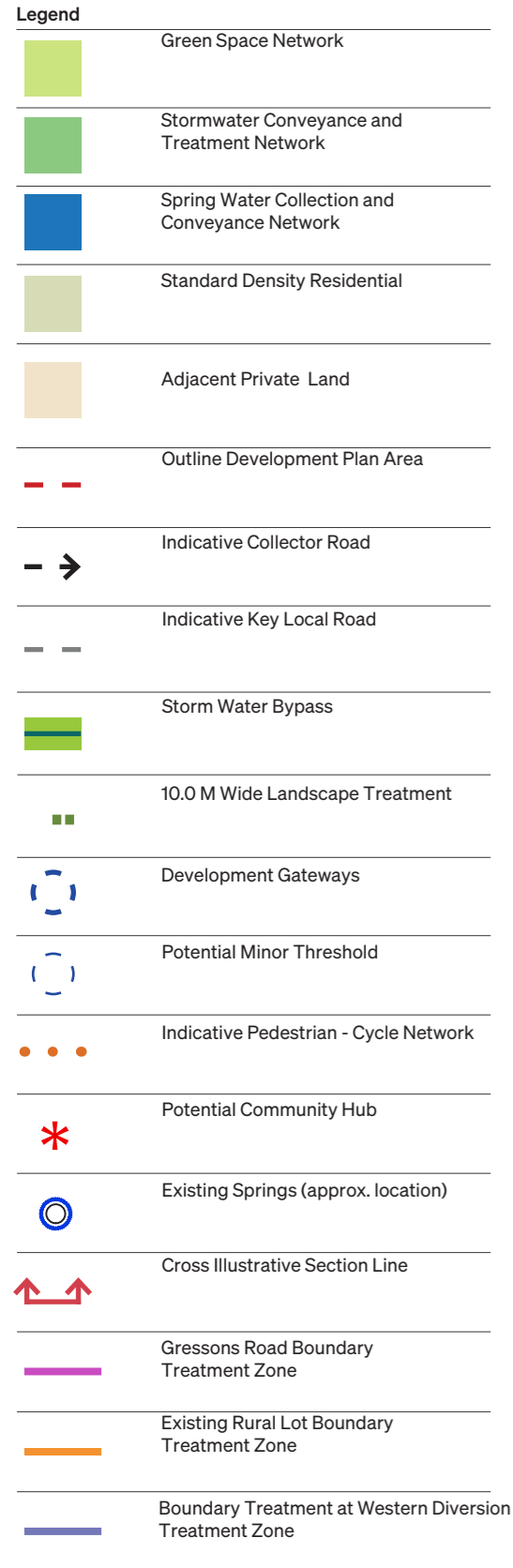


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# Outline Development Plan

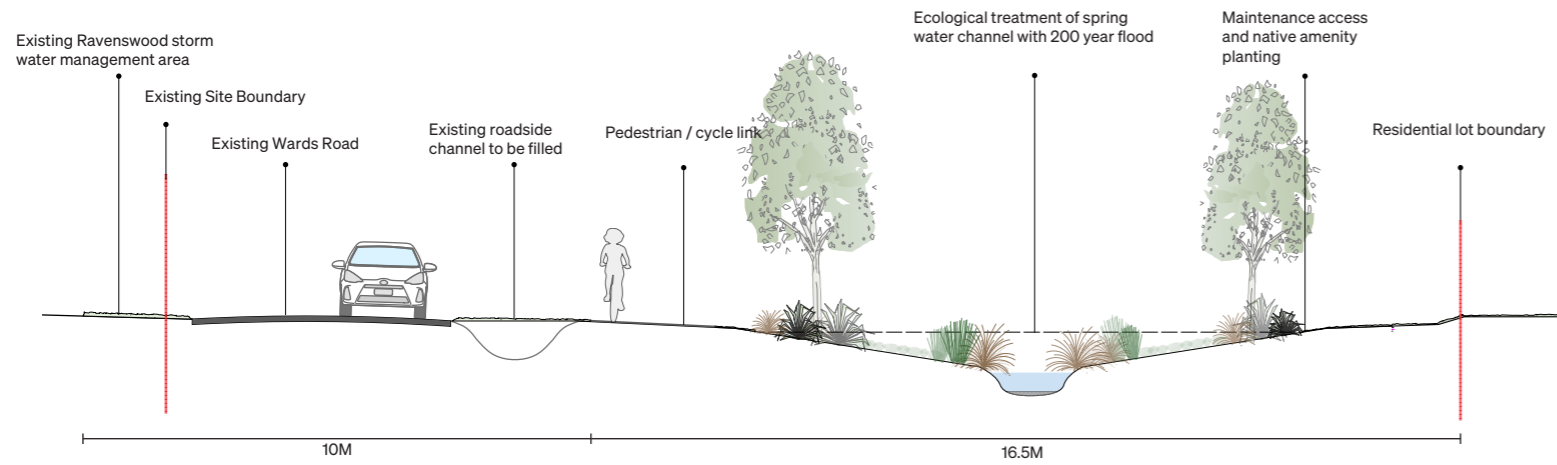


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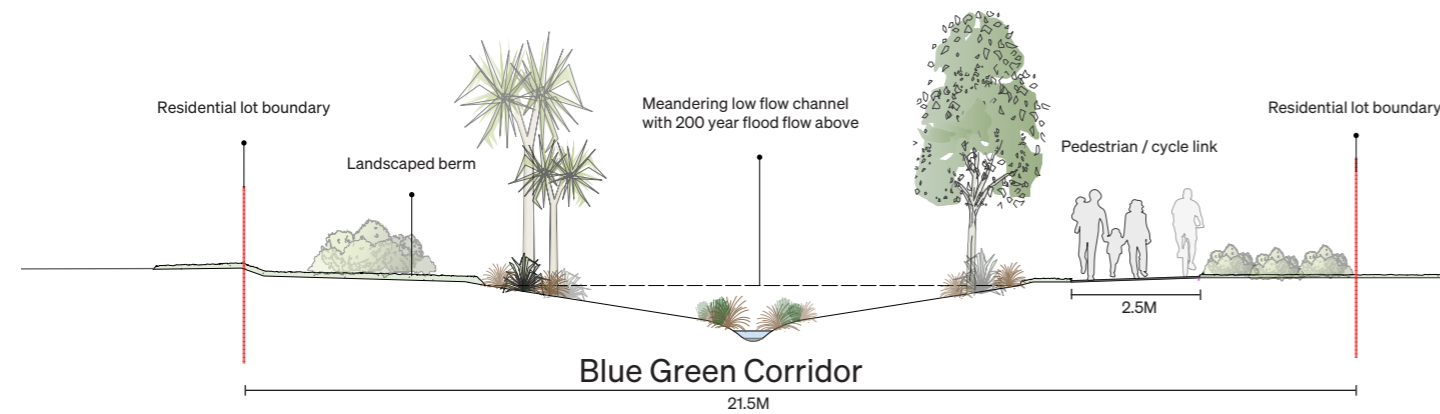


# Cross Sections

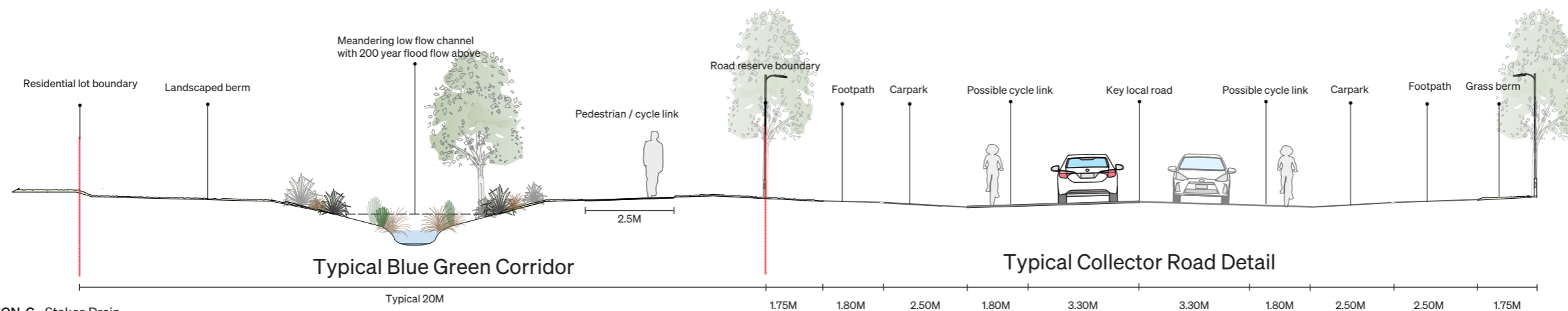
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**SECTION A - Southern Waterway**  
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**SECTION B - Central Flood Bypass Channel**  
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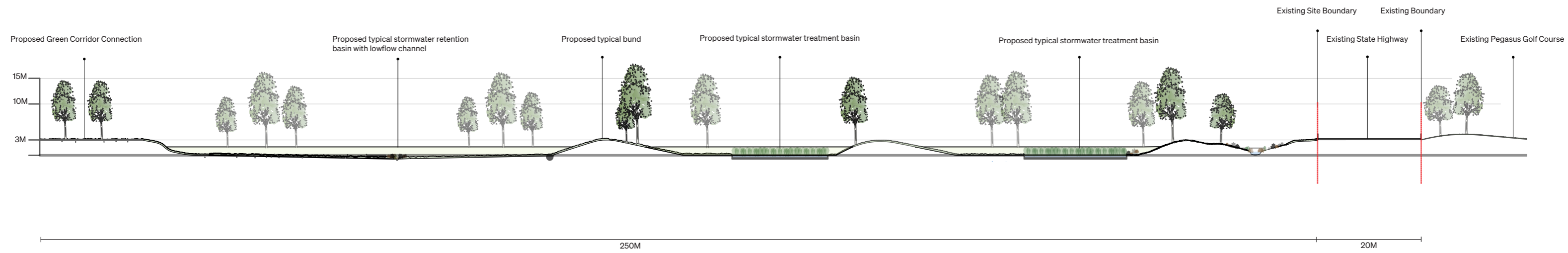


**SECTION C - Stokes Drain**  
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# Cross Sections

DIMENSIONS & NOTES TO BE CONFIRMED

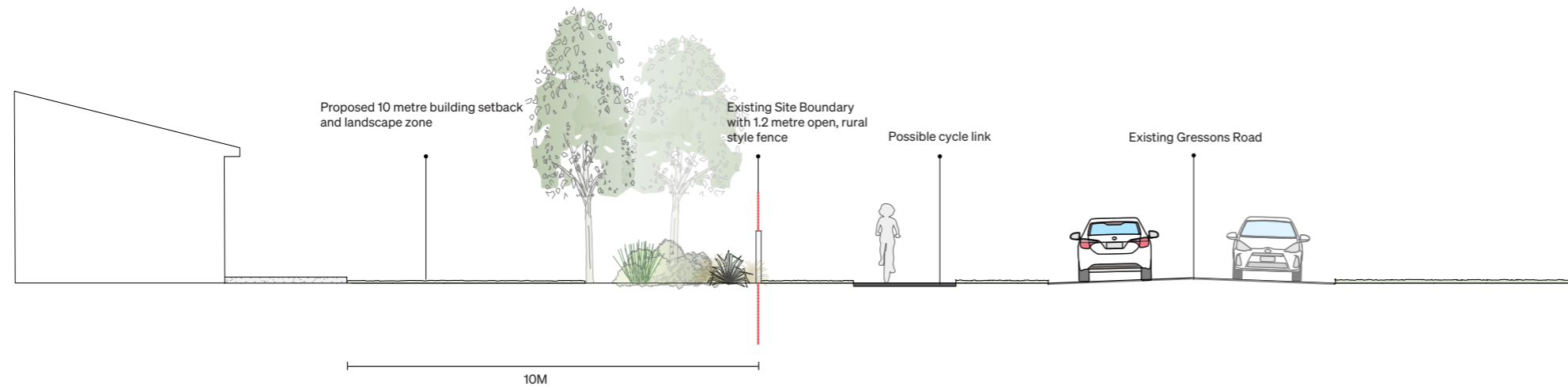


SECTION D - SH1 Main North Road

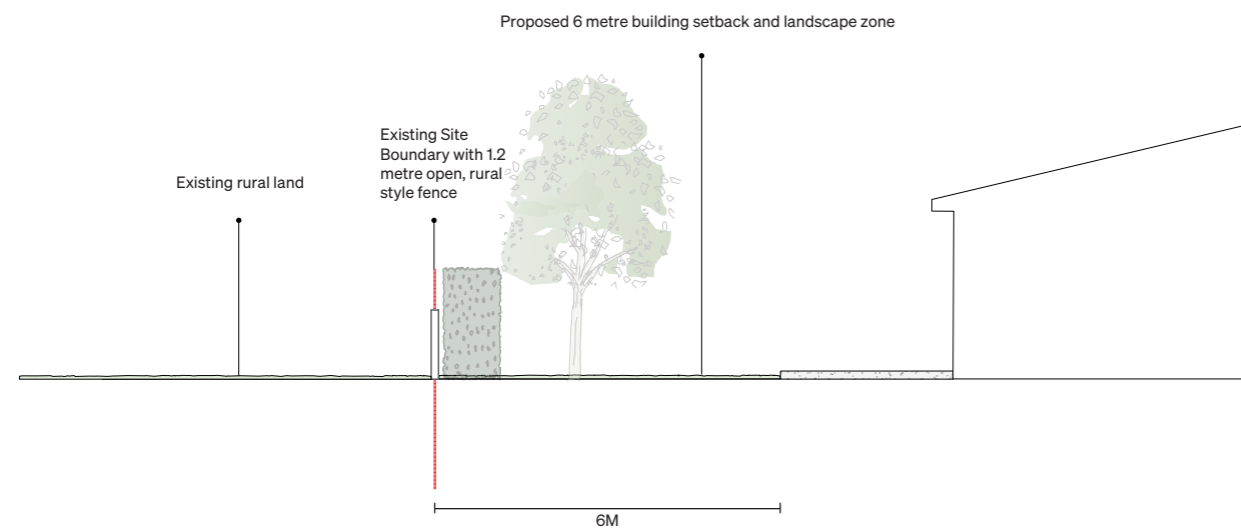
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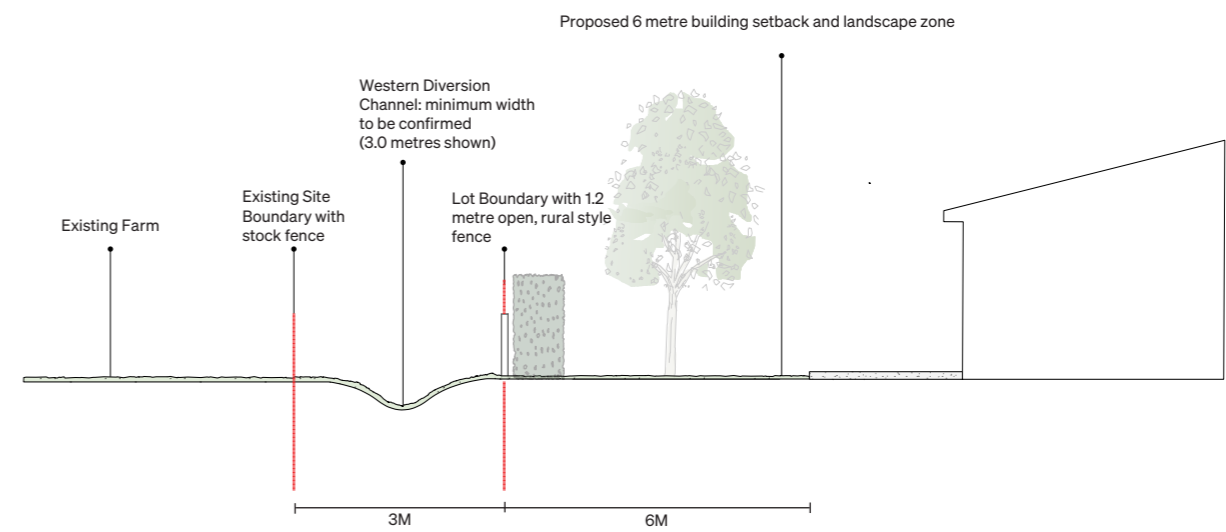
DIMENSIONS & NOTES TO BE CONFIRMED



SECTION E - Proposed Boundary Treatment at Gressons Road  
Scale 1 to 100 @ A3



SECTION F - Proposed Boundary Treatment at Existing Rural Lot Boundary  
Scale 1 to 100 @ A3



SECTION G - Proposed Boundary Treatment at Western Diversion  
Scale 1 to 100 @ A3



# Site Photographs



Site Photograph 1: Looking into the Site from the northeastern corner from Gressons Road.



Site Photograph 2: Looking south towards the western boundary from Gressons Road.



# Site Photographs



Site Photograph 3: Looking into west boundary of the Site from SH1.



Site Photograph 4: Looking over Pegasus Golf Course and houses from SH1.



# Site Photographs



Site Photograph 5: Looking into the Site from south on Wards Road.



Site Photograph 6: Looking into large lot residential area from Gressons Road.



# Site Photographs



Site Photograph 7: Looking to the north along SH1 from Preece Road.



Site Photograph 8: Looking to the south east from Preece Road.



# Site Photographs



Site Photograph 9: Looking west over the Wahi Tapu Site from SH1.



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